British Integration Survey 2019

"The findings demonstrate a clear need for continued proactive efforts to bring people together "

Oliver Lee OBE
Chief Executive, The Challenge

About The Challenge

The Challenge is the UK's leading social integration charity. We design and deliver programmes that bring different people together to develop their confidence and skills in understanding and connecting with others.

The Challenge worked with the government to design the National Citizen Service (NCS) and is now a major provider of the programme. In addition to NCS, we deliver HeadStart – an incentivised volunteering scheme with social integration at its heart – and a range of other social mixing initiatives in partnership with business and government.

Alongside our primary role as a programme delivery organisation, we also develop ideas to forge a more connected and integrated Britain. During 2014 and 2015, The Challenge convened the Social Integration Commission. Following the Commission's conclusion, we set up the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Social Integration, which is chaired by Chuka Umunna MP.

Authorship and acknowledgements

Foreword

More relevant than ever

We are living through challenging and uncertain times. Our society is becoming more complex and diverse.

Oliver Lee OBE
Chief Executive, The Challenge

This brings great richness and new freedoms to shape our lives and connect with new people, but that does not necessarily translate into more diverse networks or more cohesive communities. Indeed, our society often feels more divided than ever, with new forms of division emerging alongside more established differences.

The Challenge's vision of an integrated society where there is understanding and appreciation of each other's difference is therefore more relevant than ever. This compels us not only to re-double our efforts to bring people together, but also to seek to understand better the extent and patterns of social integration and segregation in Britain today.

> " The Challenge's vision of an integrated society where there is understanding and appreciation of each other's difference is therefore more relevant than ever "

This research builds on work done by the Social Integration Commission and The Challenge's 2016 British Integration Survey. Its findings should not I think be taken as a counsel of despair – there are some encouraging things to take from these results. However, they do reveal persistent divides and some of the findings should give us serious pause for thought. Significant numbers of people remain isolated from those of different ages, classes, ethnicities and educational backgrounds to them, and isolation in one sphere often appears to be connected with isolation in others.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate a clear need for continued proactive efforts to bring people together, to overcome differences and, now more than ever, to promote understanding, empathy and a sense of community. This means that the programmes we deliver, like the National Citizen Service and HeadStart, are more important than ever before, as is The Challenge's commitment to spreading good practice and sharing what we know to work when it comes to social integration.

We hope, through this work, not only to underscore the importance of social integration for a harmonious and prosperous society, but also to evidence the persistent nature of certain dividing lines. Some differences may be new and must be considered in the context of our political and economic climate, but all require tenacity and a continual process of renewal to re-forge and strengthen anew the ties that bind us together.

I am very grateful to those who have produced this report and I commend it to the reader.

Olive Lee.

May 2019

Bridging the divides

British society is at a difficult juncture.
We believe that social segregation is a major
factor contributing to and exacerbating
some of the most serious problems and
divisions our society faces.

44%

of British people report that none of
the contacts they spend time with
socially are of a different ethnic
background to them.

10%

Less than 10% of the close contacts
of those aged 55 and above are
under the age of 18.

15%

of the closest contacts of those
with a school level education have
a university education.

As such, understanding the extent
to which British people do and don't
interact with each other across
certain types of differences is crucial
in understanding both the challenges
we face as a society and how we can
go about solving them.

The British Integration Survey was
a survey of more than 6,500 people
across Great Britain, which has been
designed to provide a fact base on
the state of social integration in
Britain today.

Through ten years of working to
build a more integrated society, we
at The Challenge understand that
social integration is a topic on which
there is a lack of hard data, often
with a reliance on the subjective
self-reporting of attitudes and
actions. While inevitably this survey
does not entirely fill the gaps in
our understanding, we hope that
it helps to shine a light on current
levels of connection.

In many ways the survey shows an encouraging picture. A majority of Britons have networks that include people from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds to them; as a nation, we broadly view those around us, including those who are different from us, as being capable, friendly and moral; and most of us are empathetic to those who face disadvantage.

However, the survey also shows there are substantial numbers of people in society who are largely or completely isolated from those of a different ethnicity, different educational or socio-economic background, and even those of different age groups from them. Our purpose as an organisation is to find new ways to help people bridge these divides. We hope others will be inspired and informed by this survey to work with us towards this.

Here we present some of the key findings in each section of this report and then what we think are the most important cross-cutting messages to take from this survey.

> " A majority of Britons have networks that include people from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds to them "

Mixing across social class

– Wherever people place themselves on the social ladder (see 'About the survey'), they are most likely to identify their closest contacts as also being from the same section of the ladder.

– 76% of Britons have at least some contacts in their wider networks they consider to be on a different section of the social ladder, but nearly one in five (18%) do not.

Mixing across ethnicity

– Most Britons (53%) of all ethnic groups have at least some contact in their wider social networks with people from other ethnic backgrounds, but 44% have none.

– Being in a higher social grade (i.e. in professional, managerial or clerical occupations) is strongly correlated with a greater degree of ethnic diversity in one's social network.

– Those who only mix with others from the same place on the social ladder as them are far more likely than those with more socio-economically diverse networks to say that they have no social contact with people of a different ethnicity (72% to 39%).

Mixing across age groups

– The oldest and youngest age groups have little close interaction with each other – less than 10% of the closest contacts of those aged 55+ are under the age of 18.

23%

23% of Londoners report no ethnic diversity at all in their social networks despite the city's high level of diversity.

Mixing by education

– Those with school level education and below appear to be relatively socially segregated from those with a university level education and above – only 15% of the closest contacts of those with a school level education have a university education.

– The wider social networks of those with school level education and below are markedly more likely to be made up only of people of the same ethnicity, and slightly more likely to be made up only of people on the same section of the social ladder.

The regional picture

– People in London are much more likely to interact with those from different ethnic backgrounds, but despite the city's high level of diversity, 23% of Londoners report no ethnic diversity at all in their social networks.

– Some regions do much better than others for social mixing relative to the percentage of the population from BAME communities (e.g. the South East).

Attitudes towards difference

– Those with social networks that are ethnically or socio-economically diverse are significantly more likely than those with non-diverse networks to associate black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people with positive attributes, and recognise the difficulties that others, including people from BAME backgrounds and those at the bottom of the social ladder, may face.

Key learnings

1. **There are pockets of high segregation within each line of difference**. For example, levels of connection are particularly low between the old and young, and between those with a school level education and those with a university education. At the same time, 44% of British people report that none of the contacts they spend time with socially are of a different ethnic background to them, but this is slightly higher for white Britons and those in lower socio-economic grades, and is true for the majority of those aged 55 and over. *These and other cold-spots of integration are likely to contribute to lower levels of trust and understanding between different groups in society, and therefore should be a focus of efforts to build bridges between people.*

> **Greater attention to social integration is needed in all areas of the country**

2. **Segregation along one line of difference often appears to be connected to segregation along other lines of difference.** For example people with more individuals from a different socio-economic background in their social network are also likely to be better connected to those from different ethnic and educational backgrounds to them. *This is encouraging, as it shows the potential for programmes that help people to bridge with others across one line of difference to help people open up their social network more widely.*

3. **No UK region is a star performer or a laggard on integration**, and people in some localities naturally face harder obstacles to connect with people different to them. Even in the most diverse areas of the country, such as London, there are a large number of people who connect only with those similar to them. *Greater attention to social integration is therefore needed in all areas of the country, and this needs to be tailored according to the particular characteristics of different areas.*

> **People with more individuals from a different socio-economic background in their social network are also likely to be better connected to those from different ethnic and educational backgrounds**

4. **Those with social connections to people from different backgrounds are more likely to think positively and with empathy towards others who are different from them**. For example those with social networks that are ethnically or socio-economically diverse are significantly more likely than those with non-diverse networks to associate BAME people with positive attributes, and recognise the difficulties that may be faced by particular groups, including those from BAME backgrounds and those at the bottom of the social ladder. *Whilst this is a correlation, not proof of causation, it shows the difficulties in trust and empathy that are faced in communities where there is not an opportunity to mix with different groups and the imperative to take note of the areas of segregation identified in this report.*

Introduction

Working harder to build bridges

The British Integration Survey aims to show the extent to which people in Britain socialise and interact across a range of differences, such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, age and educational background.

It is an attempt to take a reading of how integrated a society we are and where we need to work harder to build bridges between people. This matters because we know that the more we cluster only with 'people like us', the less likely we are to trust, understand, or feel empathy for our fellow citizens.

This survey builds on previous surveys by the Social Integration Commission and The Challenge's 2016 British Integration Survey. In those surveys, questions focused on the last social event that people had attended and who they had interacted with at that event. For this 2019 survey we developed a different, and we believe improved, methodology. We asked respondents a set of questions about their closest contacts and their wider networks designed to understand to what extent these were made up of people different or similar to them. We believe this has allowed us to draw a broader and more accurate picture of the nature of people's day-to-day interactions. For a more detailed understanding of the survey questions, please read the 'About the survey' section and for details of the sample size and methodology see Appendix 1.

This report sets out our findings by looking at the extent to which people mix across a range of differences starting with mixing across class or socio-economic divides, then ethnicity, age and educational background. It then gives an overview as to how responses differed by region, and looks in more detail at the Government's five 'Integration Areas'. It finishes by presenting people's responses to a range of questions which tested attitudes towards, empathy for and comfort engaging with, those who might be different from them.

The findings detailed in this report suggest some stark divisions. Although most people have some degree of diversity in their networks, significant numbers of people remain largely cut off from those from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and the youngest and oldest age groups appear to have only limited contact with one another.

Education also emerges as an important factor in explaining the make-up of social networks and the likely extent of social integration. Furthermore, the research bears out that, in general, people with more diverse social networks are less likely to hold prejudicial attitudes. It also serves to highlight the extent to which social segregation in one sphere (ethnicity, class, age, education) is often closely associated with segregation in other spheres.

The findings in this report are, we hope, food for thought about what more can be done, and where our collective efforts might best be placed. This research confirms The Challenge's view that social integration is a multi-dimensional process. The ability to confidently engage with others, to see our commonalities and the strength in our differences, can help us individually to be our best selves, but together it will help us to improve the strength and resilience of our communities, and to build foundations that can weather the future.
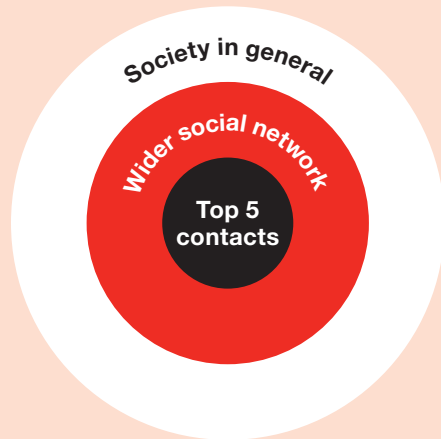
> " In general, people with more diverse social networks are less likely to hold prejudicial attitudes "

About the survey

The survey was structured around four sets of questions designed to capture people's social interactions in three broad spheres.

'Top five' closest contacts

We asked respondents a series of questions about their **five closest contacts – those with whom they spend the most time**. Immediate family were included in this, so we need to be aware that the inclusion of family will have a strong influence on results in terms of the makeup of close contacts.

Wider social network

We next asked questions about respondents' **wider social network**, focusing on **looser bonds, such as friends and acquaintances, neighbours and colleagues**. These questions were aimed at testing contact across difference in the places we inhabit daily – work, university or school, public social spaces such as parks, or community groups.

Society in general

The final section of the survey posed questions on interactions with members of different groups in **society in general, for instance in passing conversations in shops, or on public transport**. These questions were asked alongside questions about attitudes towards other groups in society at large, to determine a connection between the composition of an individual's interactions and whether this has any bearing on their thinking about certain groups in society.

Describing social class

We asked respondents questions which allowed us to ascertain their and their closest contacts' socio-economic status according to the A-E socio-economic classifications used by the Office for National Statistics and other research bodies.

However, in order to be able to ask questions about social class when referring to larger numbers of people (e.g. wider social networks) we also posed a number of questions using a 'ladder' of British society with ten rungs.

Rungs 1–3 represent those at the bottom of society – those with the least money, least education, the least respected job or no job. Similarly, rungs 4–7 represent those in the middle, and rungs 8–10 those at the top of society. This method also provides potentially interesting insights as to how respondents view themselves and their social networks. In this report, we have predominantly used the 'social ladder' measure to measure mixing across social class, but we have also used the A-E social grade system to provide some comparative analysis.

Our social ladder

10 (highest)	**Top of the ladder**
9	
8	
7	
6	**Middle of the ladder**
5	
4	
3	
2	**Bottom of the ladder**
1 (lowest)	
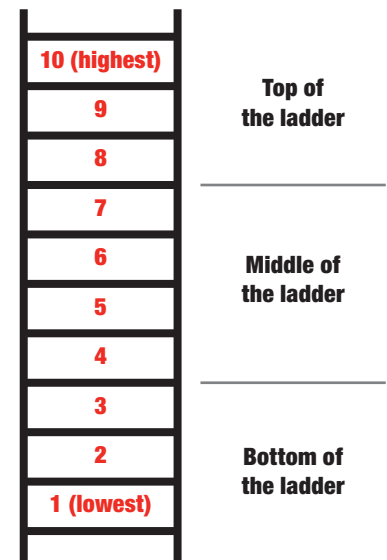
How we mix across social class

Snapshot

18%

of respondents do not have contacts in their wider social network who they consider to be on a different section of the social ladder from themselves.

25%

of those who place themselves at the top of the social ladder have no contacts who they consider to be on a different section of the social ladder from themselves.

Class distinctions have always been much-discussed in British society. In this chapter, our concern with class or social grade is focused on the extent to which people mix across different social classes. We have good reason to be concerned if they are not.

The Social Integration Commission found that socio-economic segregation may severely limit economic opportunity.[1] This is because narrower social networks are associated with a more limited ability to seek better employment and pay progression, and there is evidence that this relationship can be causal.[2] If this is the case, then socio-economic segregation will limit social mobility and could be serving to exacerbate existing inequalities, in the process creating or intensifying social divisions.

> " Wherever people place themselves on the social ladder, they are most likely to identify their closest contacts as also being from the same section of the ladder "

Findings

As explained, we asked people to identify where they and those in their social networks sat within a 'social ladder'. In parallel, we collected social grade data using the standard A-E socio-economic classification for respondents and their five closest contacts. We also examined how other factors, including ethnicity and age, influence socio-economic mixing.

Table 1: Breakdown of top five closest contacts, by place on the ladder[3]

Question: For each of the five people, please move the slider to where do you think they are on the ladder.

Place on the ladder – top 5	Respondent's place on the ladder		
	NET: 1–3 (Bottom)	NET: 4–7 (Middle)	NET: 8–10 (Top)
Bottom	46%	12%	6%
Middle	41%	67%	33%
Top	12%	21%	62%

Base: All respondents' closest contacts (n=28976); NET: Rungs 1–3 Bottom (n=2819); NET: Rungs 4–7 Middle (n=16954); NET: Rungs 8–10 Top (n=7928)

To begin with, we asked respondents where their five closest social contacts are on the social ladder. **Table 1** shows that:

– Wherever people place themselves on the social ladder, they are most likely to identify their closest contacts as also being from the same section of the ladder.

– Those who place themselves at the top or in the middle of the social ladder, place a clear majority of their closest contacts (67% and 62%) in the same section of the ladder as themselves.

– Those placing themselves at the bottom of the ladder place their closest contacts much more evenly between the bottom and the middle of the ladder.

We also asked respondents to estimate what proportion of their wider social network (e.g. friends, colleagues, neighbours) is on the same section of the ladder as themselves. From **Table 2** we can see that:

– A broadly similar proportion of each group has at least some level of socio-economic diversity in their wider networks.

– People who place themselves at the top of the ladder are significantly more likely to say that all of their wider network is on the same section of the ladder as them.

– People who place themselves at the bottom of the ladder are more likely to say that none of their wider network has the same social background as themselves.

Table 2: Proportion of wider social network that are same place on the ladder, by place on the ladder

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?

	Respondent's place on the ladder		
	NET: 1–3 (Bottom)	NET: 4–7 (Middle)	NET: 8–10 (Top)
All	13%	16%	25%
Most	29%	42%	38%
About half	12%	20%	18%
Some	27%	16%	12%
None	11%	1%	3%
Don't know	7%	5%	5%
NET: at least some	79%	78%	71%

Base: NET: 1–3 (n=654), NET: 4–7 (n=3816), NET: 8–10 (n=1803)

Figure 1: Proportion of wider social network that are same place on the ladder, by respondent's social grade

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc.), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?

NET: At least some on a different section of the ladder from me

Total	18%	38%	18%	16%	3%	6%	**76%**
AB	16%	42%	21%	15%	2%	5%	**80%**
C1	16%	41%	19%	16%	3%	5%	**79%**
C2	21%	38%	19%	14%	2%	6%	**72%**
DE	21%	33%	15%	18%	4%	9%	**70%**

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ All are on the same section of the ladder as me
■ Most are on the same section of the ladder as me
■ About half are on the same section of the ladder as me
■ Some are on the same section of the ladder as me
■ None are on the same section of the ladder as me
■ Don't know
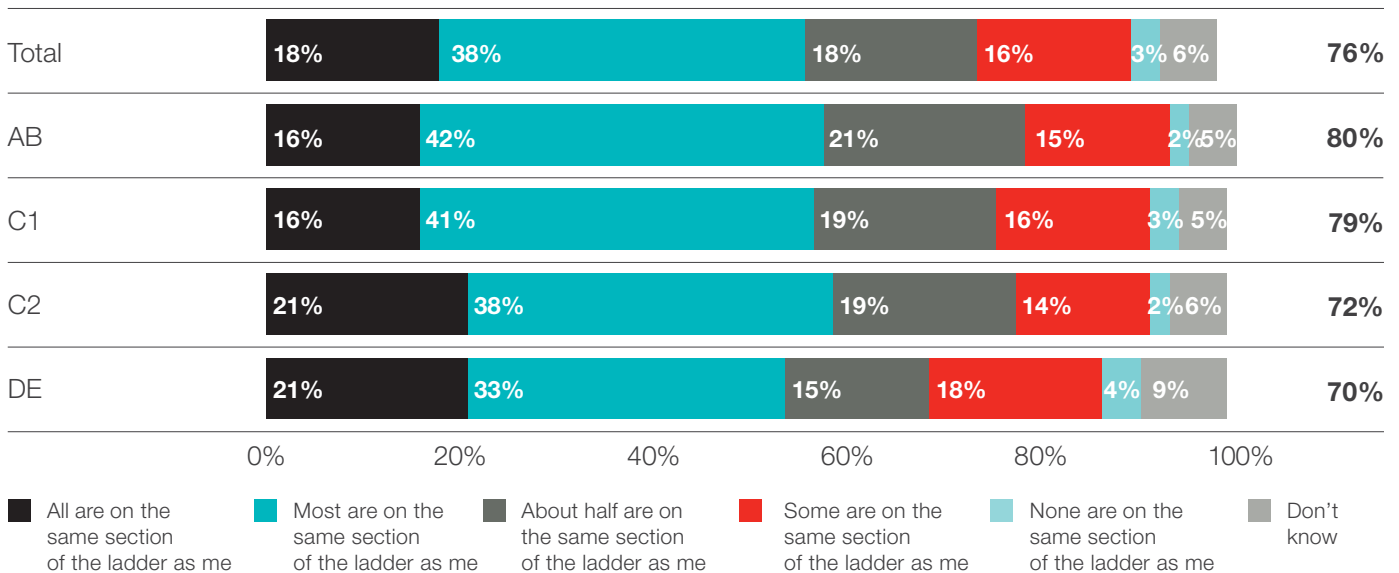
Baes: All respondents (n = 6562); AB (n=2025); C1 (n=1898); C2 (n=1211); DE (n=1428)

However, when we look at how respondents mix across social grade based on their objectively defined (rather than self-defined) socio-economic position, the picture is somewhat different. **Figure 1** shows us that:

– Three quarters of Britons (76%) have at least some contacts in their wider social network who they consider to be on a different section of the social ladder from themselves, but nearly one in five (18%) do not.

– Those in the lowest social grades (DE) are 10 percentage points *less* likely to say that at least some of their wider network comes from a different section of the social ladder, compared to the highest social grades (AB).

> " Those in the lowest social grades are 10 percentage points less likely to say that at least some of their wider social network comes from a different section of the ladder, compared to those in the highest social grades "

Figure 2: Proportion of wider social network that are same place on the ladder, by respondent's ethnicity

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?

NET: At least some on a different section of the ladder from me
77%

| NET: BAME | 14% | 32% | 23% | 19% | 4% | 8% |

NET: At least some on a different section of the ladder from me
75%

| NET: White | 19% | 39% | 18% | 15% | 3% | 6% |

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

- ■ All are on the same section of the ladder as me
- ■ Most are on the same section of the ladder as me
- ■ About half are on the same section of the ladder as me
- ■ Some are on the same section of the ladder as me
- ■ None are on the same section of the ladder as me
- ■ Don't know
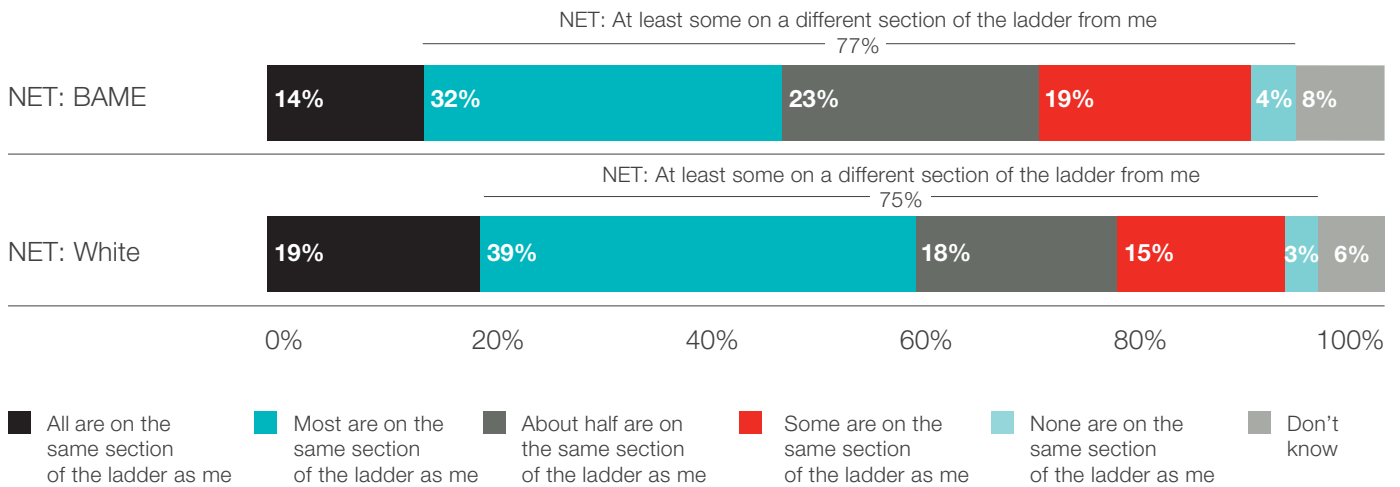
Base: White (n=4913); NET: BAME (n=1648)

Our survey data also allows us to look at the relationship between socio-economic diversity in a person's wider social network and their ethnicity. In **Figure 2,** for the sake of simplicity we have grouped responses from BAME respondents and those from white respondents.

Figure 2 shows that:

– There is very little difference overall in the proportion of white and BAME people who have at least some contacts from different socio-economic backgrounds to themselves.

– However, white Britons are more likely than Asian, black or mixed ethnicity Britons to say that all or most of those in their wider social network are on the same section of the ladder as them.

> "
> **White Britons are more likely than Asian, black or mixed ethnicity Britons to say that all or most of those in their wider social network are on the same section of the ladder as them**
> "

Table 3: Proportion of wider social network that are same place on the ladder, by respondent's age

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?

				Respondent's age			
	13–15	16–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
All	23%	18%	18%	16%	16%	19%	20%
Most	44%	39%	41%	39%	33%	39%	39%
About half	17%	21%	19%	21%	21%	16%	15%
Some	10%	15%	14%	16%	20%	17%	14%
None	*%	2%	2%	2%	4%	4%	4%
Don't know	6%	6%	6%	5%	6%	5%	9%
NET: at least some different	71%	76%	76%	78%	78%	76%	71%

Base: 13–15 (n=836), 16–24 (n=963), 25–34 (n=1052), 35–44 (n=970), 45–54 (n=914), 55–64 (n=820) 65+ (n=1002)

* Results below 1% have been excluded

When we look at the socio-economic diversity of a respondent's wider social network according to different age groups, **Table 3** tells us:

– There are broadly very similar patterns of socio-economic network diversity across all age groups.

– However, those of working age are more likely to report having at least some contacts from different sections of the ladder.

– The oldest and youngest age groups report having the least diverse socio-economic networks.

Summary

In some senses, these findings are encouraging. In keeping with previous surveys, the great majority of British people report that they have some socio-economic diversity within their wider networks.

This is true of all age groups and all ethnicities, although those of non-working ages and white respondents report slightly less socio-economic mixing, and those of working ages and BAME respondents report slightly more.

The extent to which people mix across socio-economic groups appears to be relatively similar across all social grades, but there are some notable differences here which, according to how socio-economic position is being defined, point in different directions. Those who see themselves as being at the bottom of the social ladder report greater diversity among their contacts and networks than those who see themselves at the top.

However, those who would *actually* be placed in the lowest social grades report slightly less diverse networks than those who are *actually* in the highest social grades report. Quite why this would be is not clear, and warrants further attention.

What is clear from our findings is that people are far more likely to spend time with others from a similar socio-economic background to themselves. This is the case not only among people's closest contacts, but also in their wider social networks, where one might expect more diverse encounters.

Furthermore, the extent of socio-economic segregation that a significant minority of people are experiencing should give us pause for thought. At the very least, this suggests that we need to give greater consideration to socio-economic segregation and division, and that debates about social integration should move beyond the overwhelming focus often placed on ethno-social or ethno-religious segregation.

Initiatives designed to improve social integration should consider more carefully how we can enable people to form meaningful networks with others from a much wider range of socio-economic backgrounds, as well as from different ethnic groups. This becomes more important given the influence that class and education can have on other dimensions of social integration, as the next chapters of this report will show.

> "
> What is clear from our findings is that people are far more likely to spend time with others from a similar socio-economic background to themselves
> "

How we mix across ethnicity

Snapshot

44%

of all respondents report no ethnic diversity in their social networks at all.

72%

of those whose networks have no socio-economic diversity have no ethnic diversity in their social networks either.

Discussions of social integration and policies that follow from them often focus heavily on ethnicity, the relative segregation of certain BAME communities in different parts of the country, and the resulting negative impact on inter-community relations.

As such, the 'problem' of integration and cohesion can often be viewed as being for certain ethnic minority groups only, effectively presenting integration as a 'one-way street'. The Challenge's conception of social integration is that it is very much a 'two-way street' in which all individuals of all backgrounds have an active role to play. Our research sits firmly within this context.
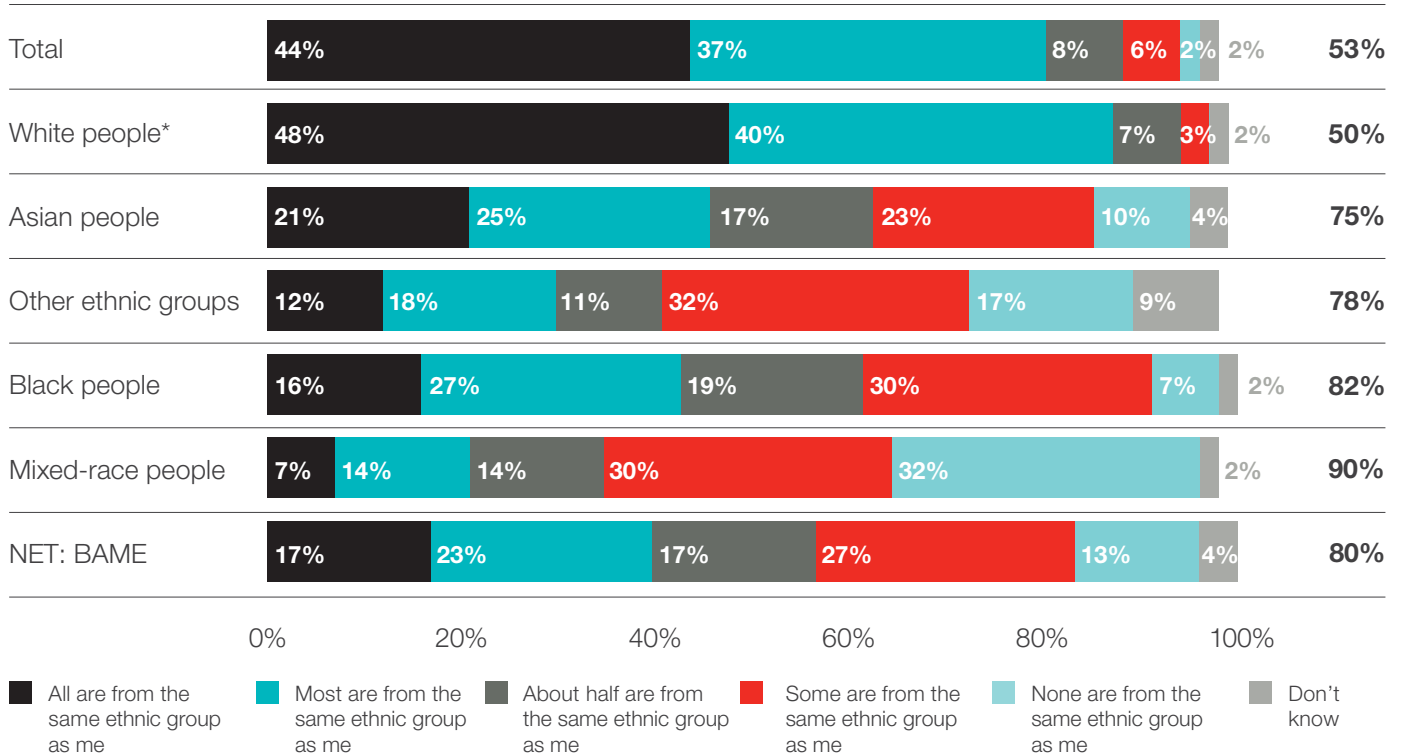
> "
> The Challenge's conception of social integration is that it is a 'two-way street' in which all individuals of all backgrounds have an active role to play
> "

Figure 3: Proportion of wider social network that are same ethnicity, by respondent's ethnic group

Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?

NET: At least some from a different ethnic group to me

Ethnic group	All are from the same ethnic group as me	Most are from the same ethnic group as me	About half are from the same ethnic group as me	Some are from the same ethnic group as me	None are from the same ethnic group as me	Don't know	NET
Total	44%	37%	8%	6%	2%	2%	**53%**
White people*	48%	40%	7%	3%		2%	**50%**
Asian people	21%	25%	17%	23%	10%	4%	**75%**
Other ethnic groups	12%	18%	11%	32%	17%	9%	**78%**
Black people	16%	27%	19%	30%	7%	2%	**82%**
Mixed-race people	7%	14%	14%	30%	32%	2%	**90%**
NET: BAME	17%	23%	17%	27%	13%	4%	**80%**

Legend:
- ■ All are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ Most are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ About half are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ Some are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ None are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ Don't know

Base: All respondents (n=6562); White (n=4913); Asian (n=818); Other ethnic group (n=39); Black (n=381); Mixed-race (n=410); NET: BAME (n=1648)

* Results below 1% have been excluded

Findings

We looked first at the level of diversity in people's wider social networks and the differences in this according to their ethnic background. Results presented in **Figure 3** show us that:
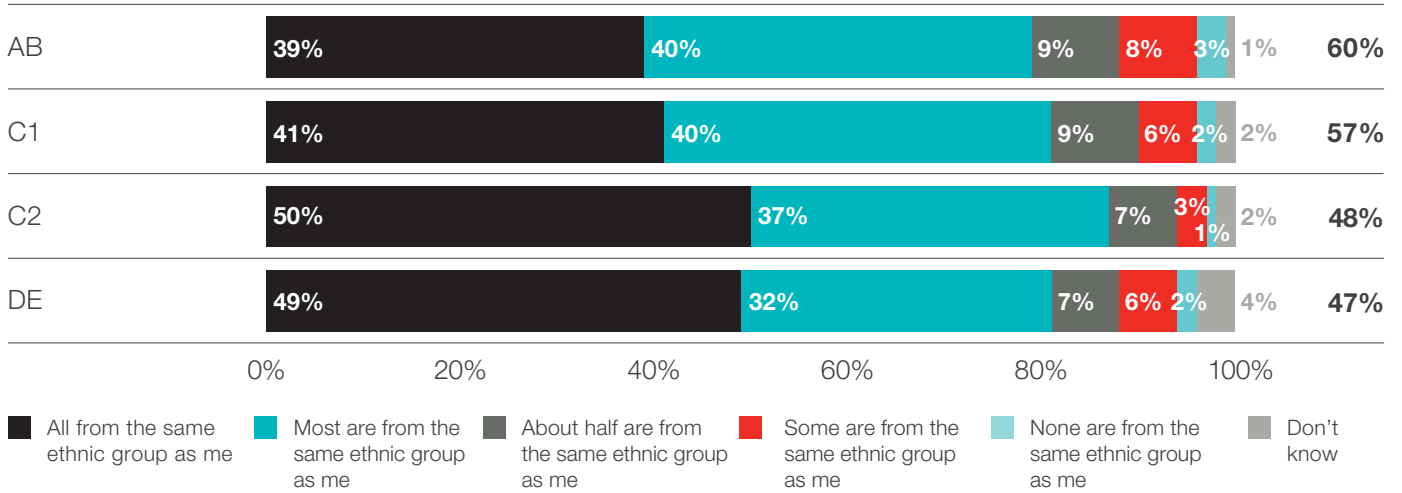
– Although most Britons (53%) and a majority within all ethnic groups have at least some contact in their wider social networks with people from other ethnic backgrounds, 44% of British people report that none of the contacts they spend time with socially are from a different ethnic background from them.

– White respondents are much more likely to have no one of a different ethnicity in their wider social network.

– Mixed-race respondents report the most ethnically diverse networks, with almost a third reporting that their entire social network is not of the same ethnicity as them.

> "White respondents are much more likely to have no one of a different ethnicity in their wider social network"

Figure 4: Proportion of wider social network that are same ethnicity, by respondent's social grade

Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?

NET: At least some from a different ethnic group to me

AB	39%	40%	9%	8%	3%	1%	**60%**
C1	41%	40%	9%	6%	2%	2%	**57%**
C2	50%	37%	7%	3% / 1%		2%	**48%**
DE	49%	32%	7%	6%	2%	4%	**47%**

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

- ■ All from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ Most are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ About half are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ Some are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ None are from the same ethnic group as me
- ■ Don't know

Base: All respondents (n=6562); AB (n=2025); C1 (n=1898); C2 (n=1211); DE (n=1428)

We were also interested in the extent to which social class might influence the ethnic diversity of people's wider social network. These findings, shown in **Figure 4**, demonstrate that:

– Being in a higher social grade is strongly associated with a greater degree of ethnic diversity in one's wider social network. Notably, half of respondents in social grades C2 and DE report no ethnic diversity in their social networks at all.

Table 4: Proportion of wider social network that are same ethnicity, by respondent's social ladder network diversity

Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?

	All the same place on the ladder as me	At least some from different place on the ladder
All	72%	39%
Most	17%	42%
About half	4%	9%
Some	2%	7%
None	1%	2%
Don't know	3%	1%
NET: At least some from a different ethnic group to me	25%	60%

Base: All respondents (n=6562); All the same place on the ladder as me (n=1228); At least some from different place on the ladder (n=4926)

Our survey data also allows us to look at the relationship between socio-economic diversity and ethnic diversity in respondents' wider social networks. The findings are quite stark. **Table 4** sets out the difference between those who say all of their wider networks are on the same place on the social ladder as them and those who don't. From **Table 4** we can see that:

– Those who only mix with others from the same place on the social ladder as them are nearly twice as likely as those with more socio-economically diverse networks (72% to 39%) to say that they have no social contact with people from different ethnic backgrounds to themselves.

> " Our survey data also allows us to look at the relationship between socio-economic diversity and ethnic diversity in respondents' wider social networks "

Table 5: Proportion of wider social network that are same ethnicity, by respondent's age

Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?

	Respondent's age						
	13–15	16–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
All	36%	32%	43%	38%	42%	53%	58%
Most	44%	42%	35%	39%	39%	35%	34%
About half	12%	13%	10%	11%	8%	4%	3%
Some	6%	8%	7%	7%	6%	4%	2%
None	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%
Don't know	1%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
NET: at least some from a different ethnic group to me	63%	66%	55%	60%	56%	46%	39%

Base: 13–15 (n=836); 16–24 (n=963); 25–34 (n=1052); 35–44 (n=970); 45–54 (n=914); 55–64 (n=820); 65+ (n=1002)

We can also see the extent to which age has an impact on the ethnicity of people's wider social network. As seen in **Table 5**, we found that:

– Older Britons are much more likely to say that all or most of their wider social network is made up of people of the same ethnic group as them, compared to younger Britons.

– A majority of those 55 and over report that no one in their wider social network is of a different ethnic background from them.

> "
> **There appear to be very strong connections between lack of socio-economic diversity in people's networks and lack of ethnic diversity in social networks**
> "

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter are encouraging. The majority of respondents report having some level of ethnic diversity in their wider social network and this is true of all ethnic groups. However there are notable disparities between the white majority population and minority groups. In some ways, this is not entirely surprising, as the majority ethnic population may have fewer opportunities to mix with those from minority ethnic groups, especially in areas of the country where ethnic diversity is low. This is discussed in the 'Regional picture' chapter.

On the other hand, we know that even in areas of the country with high levels of diversity, the social mixing of the majority population can still be relatively low.[4] These findings then should at least caution us against viewing ethnicity and social integration as being about ethnic minorities in Britain living 'parallel lives', a charge that has been made too easily, too often. Indeed, these findings underscore the urgency of viewing social integration as a 'two-way street', in which majority and minority populations must both participate fully.

Finally, there appears to be very strong connections between lack of socio-economic diversity in people's networks and lack of ethnic diversity in social networks. This may represent differences in individual preferences or disposition for socialising with those who are different, and/or more structural factors which restrict opportunities for such socialising. However, this and the differences across age groups when it comes to mixing across ethnicity, demonstrate that social integration is multidimensional. So when we think about how to build bridges and connections between people of different ethnic backgrounds, we must not forget to factor in the importance of socio-economic and intergenerational inclusion.

How we mix across age

Snapshot

11%

of the closest contacts (including family) of those aged 16-24 are above the age of 55.

10%

Less than 10% of the closest contacts of those aged 55 and above are under the age of 18.

Intergenerational connection – social mixing across all age groups – has always been a key element of The Challenge's vision for a more integrated society.

However, in recent years there has been mounting concern about the apparently growing extent and impact of intergenerational divides. Age was one of the major cleavages in the 2016 referendum on EU membership and the 2017 General Election[5], and there are some signs that people view the interests of their age cohort as being in direct opposition to those of other age groups.[6] Equally worrying is the evidence that young and old are becoming increasingly geographically segregated, with towns and villages becoming older, and the young increasingly concentrated in certain neighbourhoods within urban centres.[7] Interaction across age groups matters if we are to ensure that different generations continue to have the opportunity to learn from each other, and to understand and empathise with a range of attitudes, experiences and backgrounds.

> "Interaction across age groups matters if we are to ensure that different generations continue to have the opportunity to learn from each other"

Table 6: Breakdown of ages of top five closest contacts, by respondent's age

Question: These five people (your closest contacts) how old are they?

NET: age – top 5	Respondent's age						
	13–15	16–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Under 18	42%	18%	20%	25%	13%	8%	9%
18–34 years old	12%	47%	41%	16%	21%	23%	11%
35–54 years old	34%	24%	19%	34%	37%	26%	33%
55+	12%	11%	19%	25%	29%	42%	46%

Base: 13–15 (n=3987); 16–24 (n=4366); 25–34 (n=4623); 35–44 (n=4222); 45–54 (n=3936); 55–64 (n=3594); 65+ (n=4319)

Findings

Assessing the age diversity of someone's wider social network is extremely difficult. However, we did ask respondents to tell us the age of the five people they consider to be their closest contacts, those whom they spend the most time with. We can see from **Table 6** that:

– In all age groups, people are most likely to spend time with those of a similar age to them.

– The oldest and youngest age groups have very little close interaction with each other.

– Less than 10% of the close contacts of those aged 55 and above are under the age of 18.

– Those between the ages of 25 and 54 tend to have a more even spread of close contacts by age.

Summary

Given the inclusion of family members in the top five closest contacts, these findings may be read as being to a significant degree reflective of family relationships. For example, those aged 35–44 have the broadest range of contacts by age – while this group has the most contact with those of the same age range, they also maintain a relatively high level of contact with both under 18s and over 55s. This likely reflects the prevalence of parental roles at this point in life, and perhaps a still relatively high level of interaction with ageing parents.

However, the data would appear to show that the youngest and the oldest have limited close contact with one another. The relatively high contact that the youngest respondents have with those of around parental age is not matched by the contact they have with those of grandparental age. We suspect that removing familial contacts from the analysis would reduce the degree of social contact across these age groups still further.

> **The relatively high contact that the youngest respondents have with those of around parental age is not matched by the contact they have with those of grandparental age**

How we mix by education

Snapshot

15%

Only 15% of the closest contacts of those with a school level education or below have a university education.

48%

of those with school level education have social networks made up only of those of the same ethnicity, compared to 36% for those with a degree level education

There is plenty to suggest that social divisions along educational lines should be something that concerns us.

Voting patterns strongly suggest that educational background is a major influence in determining people's views on some of the most divisive political debates of our time.[8] A raft of evidence shows education as a key driver in cultural divisions, such as engagement with the arts.[9] Levels of social trust – an important basis for mixing with others who are in some way different – are also strongly associated with education and class.[10] As such, we believe it is increasingly important to understand both the extent to which people may be socially segregated along educational lines, and the impact which educational background may be having on levels of social integration across a range of other differences.

Findings

We asked respondents to tell us about the highest level of education reached by themselves and each of their five closest contacts. **Table 7** groups respondents into two categories – those with school level education and below (A-level or equivalent and below) and those with university degree and above qualifications. We can see that:

– Those with school level education and below appear to be relatively socially segregated from those with university level education and above.

– Those with a university degree and above have only slightly more close contacts who also have a degree.

– By contrast, the closest contacts of those with school level education are far more likely to also have a school level education and only 15% have a university education.

Table 7: Breakdown of top five closest contacts, by respondent's education

Question: And what is the highest qualification each have achieved so far?

| Qualification of top 5	Respondent's highest qualification	
	School level and below	**University degree and above**
School level and below	57%	39%
University degree and above	15%	41%

Base: School level and below (n=3729); University degree and above (n=2571)

> "
> **Higher education levels appear to be strongly associated with higher levels of social integration. There is a clear correlation between a higher level of education and having more diverse social networks**
> "

Figure 5: Proportion of wider social network that are same place on the ladder, by respondent's education

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?
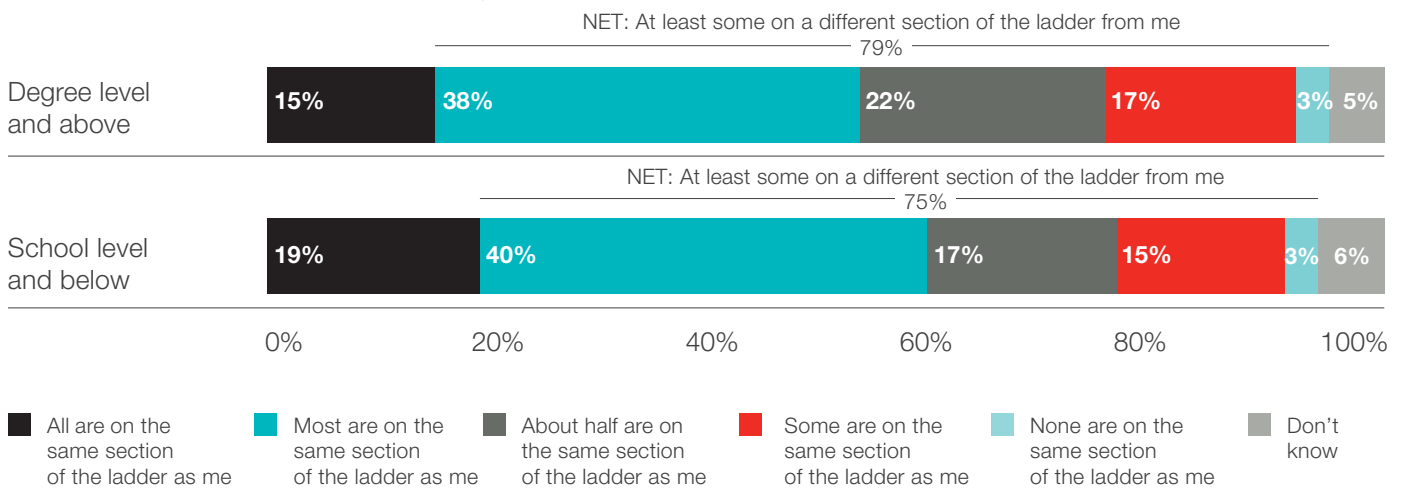
Base: School level and below (n=3729); University degree and above (n=2571)

Figure 6: Proportion of wider social network that are same ethnicity, by respondent's education

Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?
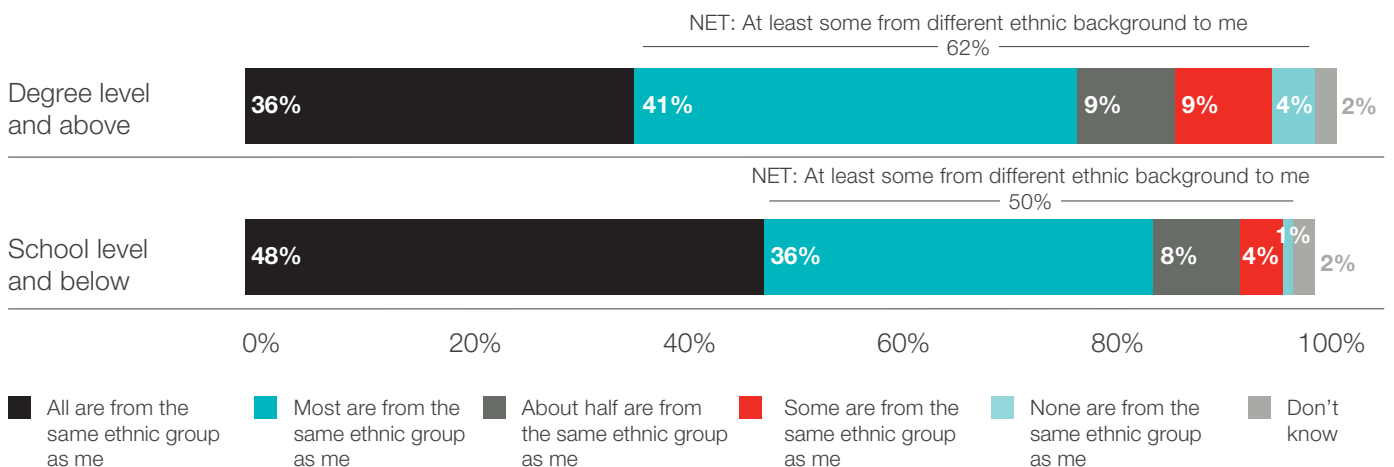
Base: School level and below (n=3729); University degree and above (n=2571)

Those with different educational backgrounds also vary in how socio-economically diverse their wider social networks are. **Figure 5** shows that those with school level education are slightly more likely to only or mainly mix with those on the same section of the social ladder as them. Although these differences are relatively small, they are statistically significant.

Those with different educational backgrounds also vary in terms of the ethnic diversity of their wider social network. The differences here are more striking. **Figure 6** shows that:

– The wider social networks of those with school level education and below are markedly more likely to be made up only of those of the same ethnicity (48% vs 36%).

– Those with a university education are nearly twice as likely as those without (22% vs 13%) to say that about half or more of their social network is made up of people of other ethnicities.

Summary

Higher education levels appear generally to be strongly associated with higher levels of social integration. There is a clear correlation between a higher level of education and having more diverse social networks. This is to some extent true when it comes to socio-economic diversity, but much more the case when it comes to ethnic diversity.[11]

We need to develop a clearer understanding of why this is the case. To what extent is university the point at which networks become more diverse; to what extent is it the gateway to more diverse workplaces and neighbourhoods? Equally, to what extent is university education more likely to draw young people with diverse networks who are more comfortable with difference? For instance, there is some evidence, that feeling one is a socially integrated individual can lead to better academic performance[12], and that friendships across group differences are related to a variety of outcomes associated with greater social mobility.[13 14 15]

The evidence also suggests that those with a school level education are relatively socially isolated from those with a university education. Only 15% of their closest contacts had a university education, though again we should note the likely influence of family on this. We believe that the extent of geographical and workplace segregation by educational background and the impact of this on social integration and social division demands further research.

Indeed, improving our understanding of this seems pressing, given the very apparent risk that disparities between groups with differing levels of education could grow into much deeper fissures in our social, economic and political landscape. Furthermore, given that relationships and attitudes formed at school are a foundation for social networks in later life, and that this may be even more the case for those who don't go on to university, it should also serve to make us take social mixing within and between schools much more seriously.

> " The extent of geographical and workplace segregation by educational background and the impact of this on social integration and social division demands further research "

The regional picture

Snapshot

23%

Despite the city's diversity, 23% of Londoners report no ethnic diversity at all in their social networks.

63%

of people living in the five Integration Areas have ethnically diverse social networks compared to the national average of 53%.

Context

Social integration is heavily influenced by local factors – not just demographics, but local geography, economy and history.

In building a more integrated society, different places will face different challenges and will want to shape different solutions, as envisaged in the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy.[16] For this reason, we carried out regional and some local analysis and in this chapter we have broken results down by region. Our analysis includes the English regions, plus Scotland and Wales. We also sought additional samples of the Government's five 'Integration Areas': Bradford, Blackburn with Darwen, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest. We show findings on these areas in the context of the national picture, as well as the wider region of these local authorities.

"
In building a more integrated society, different places will face different challenges and will want to shape different solutions
"

Table 8: Proportion of wider social network same ethnicity, by respondent's region

Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?

	National	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	West Midlands	East Midlands	Wales	Scotland	Eastern	London	South East	South West
All	44%	57%	50%	45%	42%	47%	52%	54%	47%	23%	41%	52%
Most	37%	34%	35%	38%	39%	39%	37%	36%	38%	39%	40%	33%
About half	8%	3%	8%	7%	10%	7%	5%	6%	6%	16%	7%	7%
Some	6%	1%	4%	4%	6%	4%	3%	1%	4%	16%	7%	5%
None	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	*%	1%	2%	5%	2%	1%
Don't know	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%	1%
NET: at least some different	53%	40%	49%	52%	56%	51%	45%	44%	51%	75%	57%	47%
BAME population (%)[17]	13%	5%	10%	11%	17%	11%	4%	4%[18]	9%	40%	9%	5%

Base: All respondents – GB (n=6562). Regions: North East (n=223); North West (n=803); Yorkshire & the Humber (n=758); West Midlands (n=755); East Midlands (n=369); Wales (n=247); Scotland (n=394); Eastern (n=789); London (n=1035); South East (n=749); South West (n=440)

* Results below 1% have been excluded

Findings

Table 8 shows a breakdown of responses for the ethnic diversity of a respondent's wider social network according to the region where they live:

– People in London are more likely than those in other regions to interact with those from different ethnic backgrounds, but despite the city's diversity, 23% of Londoners report no ethnic diversity at all in their social networks.

– Some regions do much better than others for social mixing proportionate to the percentage of the population from BAME communities. For example, the South East has the second highest reported ethnic diversity of wider social networks despite four other regions having a higher percentage BAME population.

Table 9: Proportion of wider social network same place on the ladder, by respondent's region

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?[19]

	National	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	West Midlands	East Midlands	Wales	Scotland	Eastern	London	South East	South West
							Respondent's region					
All	18%	19%	21%	19%	18%	19%	19%	18%	16%	13%	20%	18%
Most	38%	41%	39%	37%	39%	35%	38%	39%	40%	38%	39%	37%
About half	18%	13%	18%	19%	20%	19%	19%	17%	16%	22%	17%	20%
Some	16%	16%	14%	16%	16%	18%	15%	16%	16%	17%	14%	17%
None	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	3%	4%	2%
Don't know	6%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	8%	7%	7%	6%	5%	5%
NET: at least some different	76%	73%	73%	74%	76%	75%	73%	75%	77%	80%	74%	77%

Base: All respondents – GB (n=6562). Regions: North East (n=223); North West (n=803); Yorkshire & the Humber (n=758); West Midlands (n=755); East Midlands (n=369); Wales (n=247); Scotland (n=394); Eastern (n=789); London (n=1035); South East (n=749); South West (n=440)

Table 10: Interactions with people at the bottom of the ladder (rungs 1–3), by respondent's region

Question: And likewise for each of the following groups, how frequently do you interact with them? People at the bottom of the ladder (rungs 1–3)

	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	West Midlands	East Midlands	Wales	Scotland	Eastern	London	South East	South West
					Respondent's region						
At least sometimes	87%	85%	87%	88%	85%	88%	89%	86%	81%	84%	86%
Rarely/never	13%	15%	13%	12%	15%	12%	11%	14%	19%	16%	14%

Base: All respondents – GB (n=6562). Regions: North East (n=223); North West (n=803); Yorkshire & the Humber (n=758); West Midlands (n=755); East Midlands (n=369); Wales (n=247); Scotland (n=394); Eastern (n=789); London (n=1035); South East (n=749); South West (n=440)

We also assessed the socio-economic diversity of people's social networks across regions. **Table 9** shows us that:

– There are only limited differences between regions in terms of the socio-economic diversity of networks.

– People in London are slightly more likely to report higher levels of socio-economic diversity in their networks than other regions, but – as shown in **Table 10** – they are less likely to have any contact with people at the bottom of the social ladder and more likely to have contact with those at the top than other regions.

The Government's Integration Areas

In March 2018 the government announced a programme of activities to support five local authorities to develop and implement local integration strategies. These areas – Bradford, Blackburn with Darwen, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest – experience different socio-economic challenges such as pockets of deprivation and isolation, and are located in some of the most ethnically diverse parts of Britain. These areas were chosen because they had "already demonstrated a keen grasp of the challenges they face and shown a desire to try new things and learn what works".[20] This section highlights findings from additional samples drawn from these areas, which allows us to compare them to their wider region, and the average across Britain.

Figure 7 shows the proportion of people reporting different levels of ethnic diversity in their wider social network, comparing the integration areas to the British average. **Table 11** provides further depth on the results of each Integration Area, compared to their respective regions. Responses are grouped according to those with "at least some" ethnic diversity in their networks. This shows us:

– People living in these five Integration Areas are more likely to have ethnically diverse social networks than the national average (**Figure 7**).

– All of the Integration Areas show higher levels of ethnic mixing than their wider regions, with the exception of Waltham Forest which has slightly lower levels than London as a whole (**Table 11**).

> **People living in these five Integration Areas are more likely to have ethnically diverse social networks than the national average**
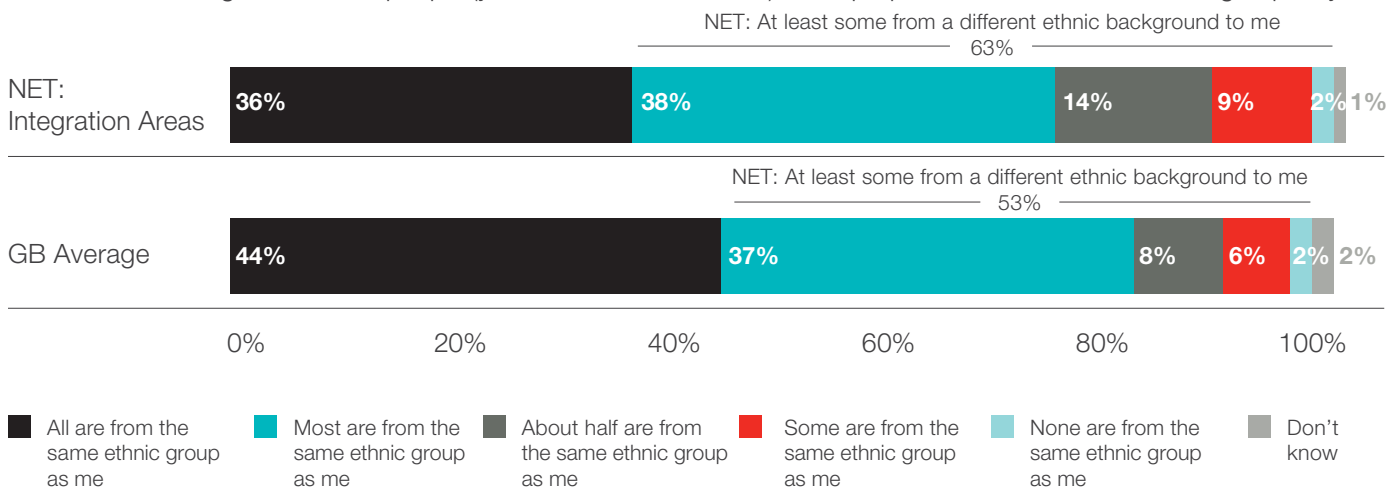
In **Figure 8**, we compare self-reported levels of socio-economic diversity in the Integration Areas to the average for Britain, and **Table 12** provides further detail on results for each area with respect to the wider region. These findings indicate:

– There is only limited difference between the Integration Areas and the rest of Britain in terms of the socio-economic diversity of one's wider social network.

– All of the Integration Areas show slightly lower levels of socio-economic mixing than their wider regions, with the exception of Waltham Forest and Blackburn, which show very slightly higher levels of socio-economic mixing, however these differences are not large enough to be significant.

Figure 7: Proportion of wider social network same ethnicity, Integration Areas vs GB average
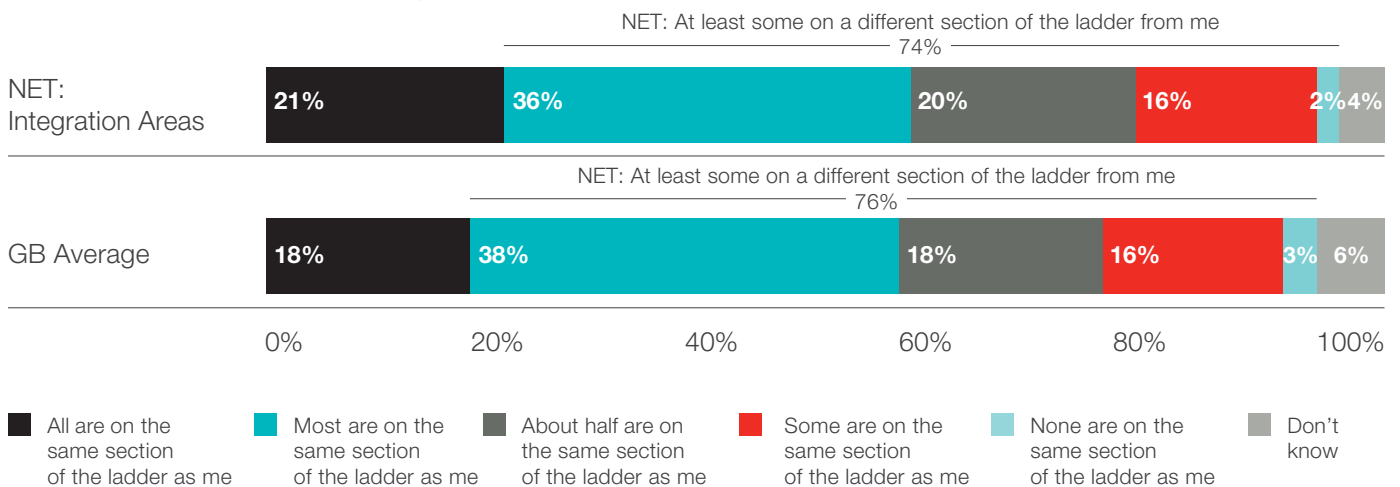
Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?

NET: At least some from a different ethnic background to me
63%

NET: Integration Areas — 36% | 38% | 14% | 9% | 2% | 1%

NET: At least some from a different ethnic background to me
53%

GB Average — 44% | 37% | 8% | 6% | 2% | 2%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- All are from the same ethnic group as me
- Most are from the same ethnic group as me
- About half are from the same ethnic group as me
- Some are from the same ethnic group as me
- None are from the same ethnic group as me
- Don't know

Base: All respondents – GB (n=6562); Integration Areas (n=1411)

Figure 8: Proportion of wider social network same place on the ladder, Integration Areas vs GB average

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?

NET: At least some on a different section of the ladder from me
74%

NET: Integration Areas — 21% | 36% | 20% | 16% | 2% | 4%

NET: At least some on a different section of the ladder from me
76%

GB Average — 18% | 38% | 18% | 16% | 3% | 6%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

- All are on the same section of the ladder as me
- Most are on the same section of the ladder as me
- About half are on the same section of the ladder as me
- Some are on the same section of the ladder as me
- None are on the same section of the ladder as me
- Don't know

Base: All respondents – GB (n=6562); Integration areas (n=1411)

Table 11: Proportion of wider social network same ethnicity, by integration area, compared to wider region

Question: Thinking about these people (your wider social network), what proportion is of the same ethnic group as you?

Showing: NET 'at least some from a different ethnic background'

At least some from a different ethnic background (%)*			
Blackburn	54 (+5)	North West	49
Bradford	62 (+10)	Yorkshire and the Humber	52
Peterborough	56 (+5)	Eastern	51
Walsall	64 (+8)	West Midlands	56
Waltham Forest	73 (-2)	London	75
NET: Integration Areas	63 (+6)	5 regions	57
	63 (+10)	NET: National	53

Base: All respondents (n=6562); Integration Areas (n=1411): Blackburn (n=224); Bradford (n=374); Peterborough (n=327); Walsall (n=284), Waltham Forest (n=202). Corresponding regions (n=4140): North West (n=803); Yorkshire & the Humber (n=758); Eastern (n=789); West Midlands (n=755); London (n=1035).

*Figures in brackets represent +/- change compared to right hand column

Table 12: Proportion of wider social network same place on the ladder, by integration area, compared to wider region

Question: Thinking now about your wider social network (friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc), what proportion is on the same section of this 'ladder' as you?

Showing: NET 'at least some from a different place on the ladder'

At least some from a different section of the ladder (%)*			
Blackburn	74 (+1)	North West	73
Bradford	72 (-2)	Yorkshire and the Humber	74
Peterborough	72 (-5)	Eastern	77
Walsall	73 (-3)	West Midlands	76
Waltham Forest	81 (+1)	London	80
NET: Integration Areas	74 (-2)	5 regions	76
	74 (-2)	NET: National	76

Base: All respondents (n=6562); Integration Areas (n=1411): Blackburn (n=224); Bradford (n=374); Peterborough (n=327); Walsall (n=284), Waltham Forest (n=202). Corresponding regions (n=4140): North West (n=803); Yorkshire & the Humber (n=758); Eastern (n=789); West Midlands (n=755); London (n=1035).

*Figures in brackets represent +/- change compared to right hand column

Summary

Overall, there is quite a high regional variation of ethnic diversity in networks, but much of this variation is likely explainable by differences in the ethnic diversity of the regional population. Further variation may also be the result of differential population densities. For example, the relatively low levels of mixing for Scotland may be partly explainable by the fact that Scotland has the lowest population density in Britain, added to which it also has a relatively small BAME population more likely to be concentrated in urban centres. So opportunities for interaction, even within wider social networks, for many suburban and rural residents may be very low. This is a question that merits further research. There are much more limited differences between regions in terms of the socio-economic diversity of networks.

People living in the Integration Areas are more likely to know or interact with people from different ethnic backgrounds, compared to the national average, and compared to their wider region (expecting Waltham Forest and Blackburn as noted). This should not be particularly surprising as one of the reasons – though by no means the only reason – these places were chosen is that they each have relatively diverse populations. Interestingly however, most of the Integration Areas show slightly lower levels of interaction across the socio-economic scale compared to their wider regions, although the difference is relatively small.

> **"**
> **Overall, there is quite a high regional variation of ethnic diversity in networks, but much of this variation is likely explainable by differences in the ethnic diversity of the regional population**
> **"**

Attitudes towards difference

Snapshot

52%

of those who have no social contacts from a different place on the social ladder recognise the obstacles faced by those at the bottom of society, compared to 74% of those who mix more widely

74%

of people feel comfortable discussing everyday life with people who are different from them (different social class or ethnicity), but only 50% feel comfortable discussing race

Introduction

As well as understanding the extent to which people are mixing with those who are different from them, we wanted to better understand the attitudes people have towards those differences and how the degree to which they interact across those differences may help shape their views. In doing this, we are building on a major body of theoretical and action-based research on contact across difference spanning more than 60 years.

Contact theory suggests that spending time with those who are in some way different from us can reduce prejudices and stereotypes, while increasing empathy and trust. For instance, Robert Putnam's work on social capital highlights that, when people learn to work together, mutual trust increases, and perceptions of moral standing improve.[21]

We therefore asked a series of questions about characteristics associated with different groups in society. These questions are drawn from, or emulate, existing attitudinal surveys and the stereotype content model.[22] We also asked questions designed to elicit the degree of empathy people have with certain 'out-groups' and how comfortable they feel discussing certain topics with those who are different from them.

Figure 9: Attributes associated with people from the bottom of the ladder, by social ladder background of wider social network

Question: To what extent, if at all, do you feel that the following attributes are associated with people from the following ethnic groups? People at the bottom of the ladder (rungs 1–3)

Showing: NET responses: 'at least sometimes'
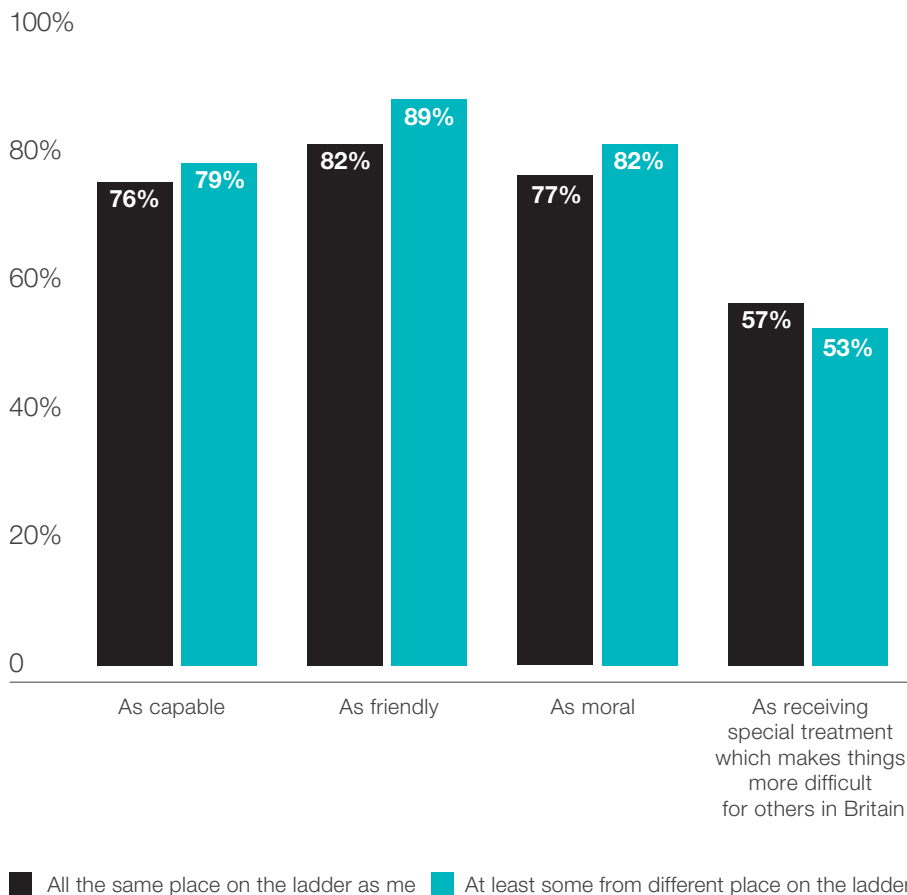
■ All the same place on the ladder as me ■ At least some from different place on the ladder

Base: All the same place on the ladder as me (n=1228); At least some from the same place on the ladder as me (n=4926)

> "
> **A large majority of people view other people, including others who are different from them, positively and as being capable, friendly and moral**
> "

Perceptions of others

We wanted to know how people perceive different groups in society. In this sense, we asked questions about the qualities people associated with those from ethnic minority backgrounds, and with those from different parts of the social ladder, and whether or not they believed these groups received special treatment.

Looking at the results broadly:

– A large majority of people view other people, including others who are different from them, positively and as being capable, friendly and moral (**Figures 9 and 10**).

– However, a majority of all respondents viewed those at the bottom of the ladder and ethnic minorities as receiving special treatment in a way which makes things more difficult for others (**Figures 9 and 10**).

– That said, a majority (52%) of all respondents also agreed with the statement that white people receive special treatment which makes things more difficult for others (results not presented here).

When we asked about **those perceived as being at the bottom of the social ladder**:

– People whose social networks are made up entirely of those from the same section of the ladder as themselves are less likely to say that they associate people at the bottom of the ladder with positive attributes and more likely to see these people as receiving special treatment (see **Figure 10**).

– We found no significant difference between those with more or less ethnically diverse networks and perceptions of the bottom of the ladder, although those with no ethnic diversity in their networks were more likely to perceive those at the bottom as receiving special treatment by 55% to 50% (results not presented here).
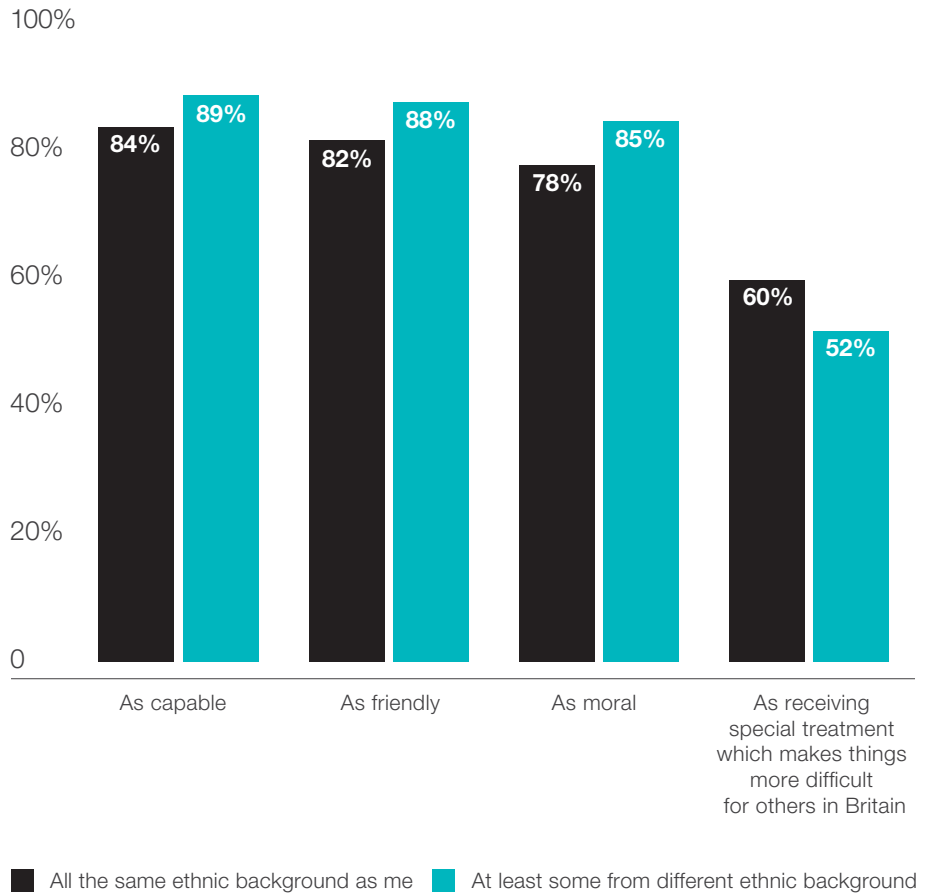
When we look at people's **perceptions of ethnic minorities** and different ethnic groups, we found that:

– Those with ethnically diverse social networks are significantly more likely than those with non-diverse networks to associate BAME people with positive characteristics and significantly less likely to view BAME people as receiving special treatment (see **Figure 10**).

– Those who say that at least some of their social network are at a 'different place on the ladder' from themselves are significantly more likely than those whose network is more homogeneous to describe BAME people as capable, friendly, and moral, and significantly less likely to perceive BAME people as receiving special treatment (see **Figure 11**).

– There was no difference in terms of perceptions of white people according to the ethnic diversity of networks (i.e. whether people had diverse networks or not their perceptions of white people were the same) other than that those with ethnically diverse networks were slightly more likely to think that white people receive special treatment by 53% to 50% (results not shown here).

Question: To what extent, if at all, do you feel that the following attributes are associated with people from the following ethnic groups? NET: BAME groups

Showing: NET responses: 'at least sometimes'

	All the same ethnic background as me	At least some from different ethnic background
As capable	84%	89%
As friendly	82%	88%
As moral	78%	85%
As receiving special treatment which makes things more difficult for others in Britain	60%	52%

Base: All answers about all BAME groups. All the same ethnic background as me (n=10288); At least some from different ethnic background (n=15408)

Figure 11: Attributes associated with BAME people by social ladder background of wider social network

Question: To what extent, if at all, do you feel that the following attributes are associated with people from the following ethnic groups? NET: BAME groups

Showing: NET responses: 'at least sometimes'
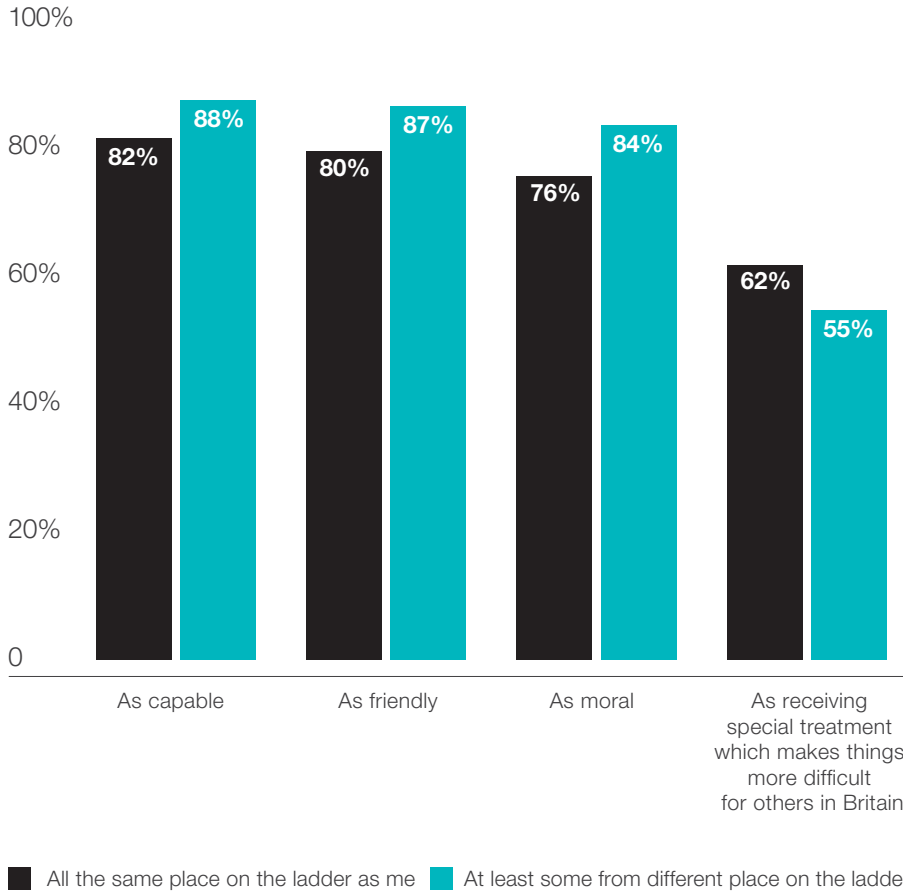
Base: All answers about all BAME groups. All the same place on the ladder as me (n=4912); At least some from different ethnic background (n=19704)

> **"**
> **Those with socio-economically or ethnically diverse social networks are significantly more likely to associate BAME people with positive characteristics**
> **"**

Figure 12: Ease of doing well in Britain – People at the bottom of the ladder (rungs 1–3), by social background of wider social network

Question: And how easy or difficult do you think it is for people from the following groups to do well (e.g. have a decent salary, and place to live) in Britain today?
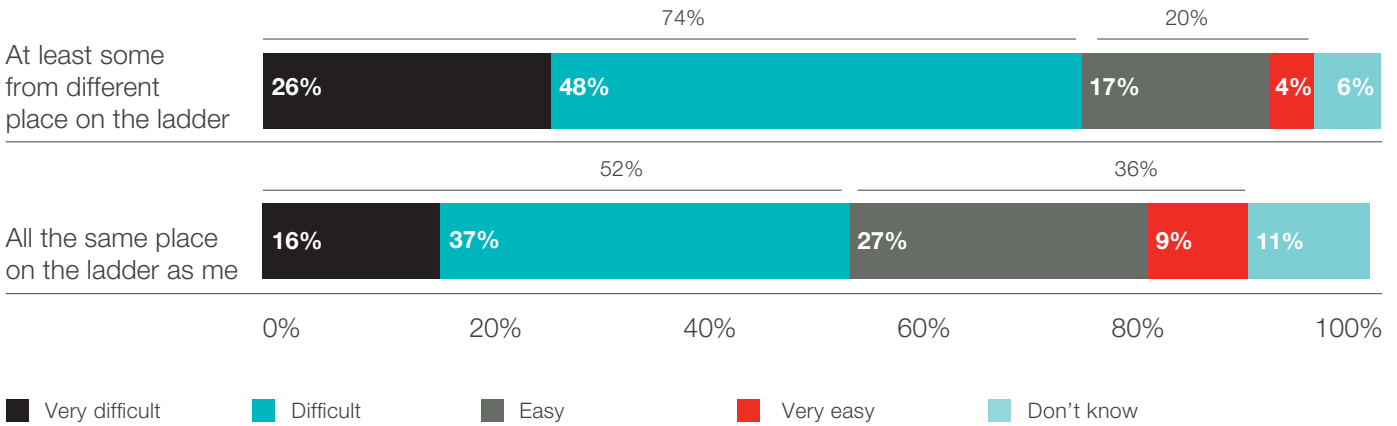
Base: All the same place on the ladder as me (n=1228); At least some from the same place on the ladder as me (n=4926)

Empathy with others

We asked respondents to tell us how easy or difficult they think it is for certain groups in society to do well in Britain today. We wanted to understand the extent to which people recognise the difficulties that other people, particularly minority groups and out-groups, may have as a result of societal inequalities, and the impact that higher levels of social integration might have on this. Generally speaking we found that those with more diverse networks are more likely to recognise the difficulties that others may face.

Firstly, we asked people how easy it is for those on the **bottom of the social ladder** to do well in Britain today. From **Figure 12** and **Figure 13**, we can see that:

– A clear majority of people think that it is difficult for those at the bottom of the ladder to do well in Britain today.

– People with diverse networks, whether in terms of perceived social status (**Figure 12**) or ethnicity (**Figure 13**), are much more likely to recognise the difficulties faced by those at the bottom of the ladder than those whose networks are all on the same place on the social ladder as them, or all the same ethnicity as them.

– Those whose networks are all on the same place on the social ladder as them are markedly less likely to recognise the difficulties faced by those at the bottom of the ladder, compared to those with ethnically homogeneous networks, or those with more diverse networks.

> " A clear majority of people think that it is difficult for those at the bottom of the ladder to do well in Britain today "

Figure 13: Ease of doing well in Britain – People at the bottom of the ladder (rungs 1–3), by ethnic background of wider social network
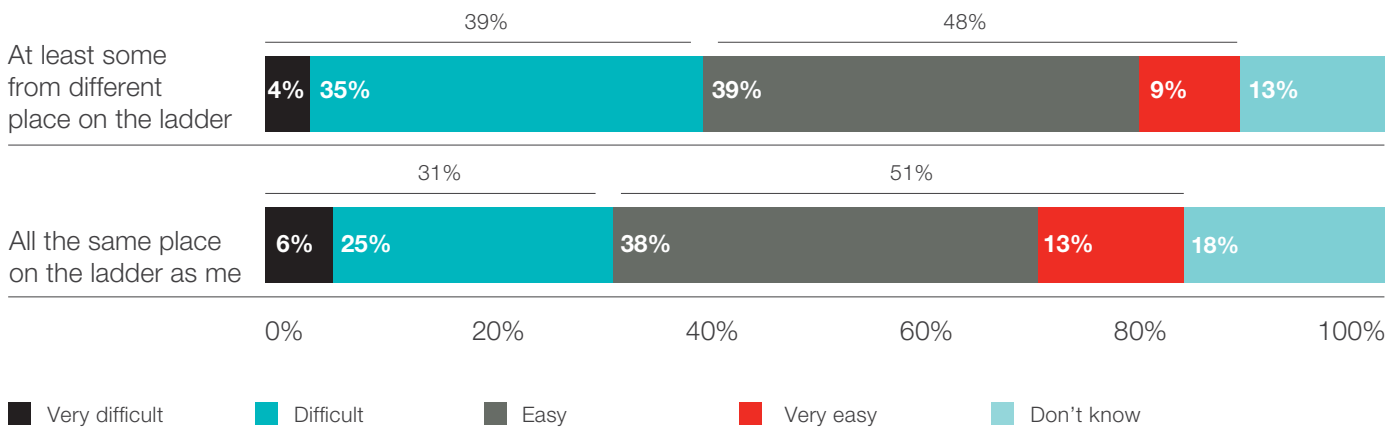
Question: And how easy or difficult do you think it is for people from the following groups to do well (e.g. have a decent salary, and place to live) in Britain today?
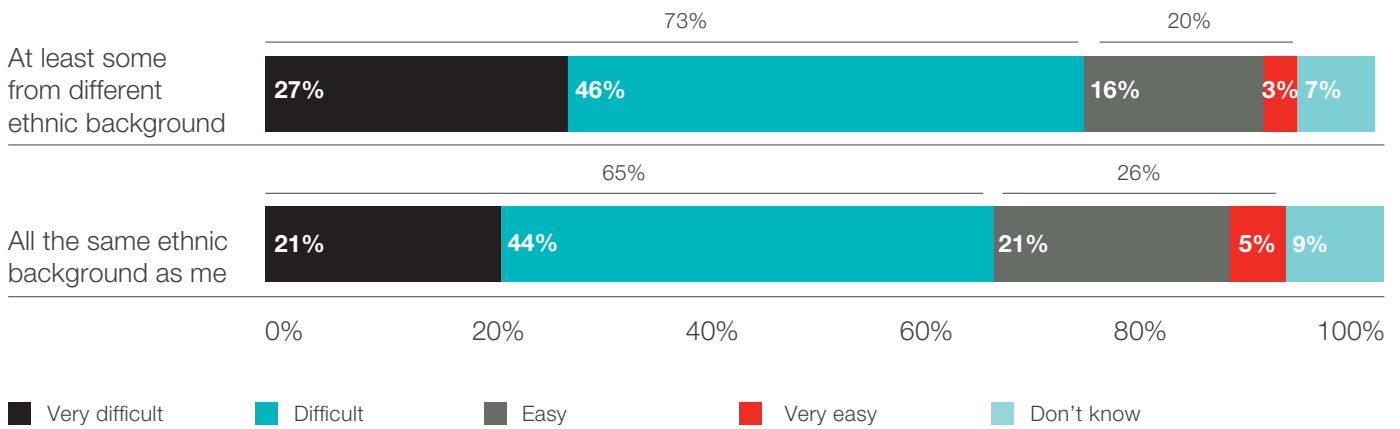
Base: All the same ethnic background as me (n=2572); At least some from different ethnic background (n=3852)

Figure 14: Ease of doing well in Britain – BAME, by social background of wider social network

Question: On average, how easy or difficult do you think it is for people from the following groups to do well (e.g. have a decent salary, and place to live) in Britain today?

Base: All answers about all BAME groups. All the same place on the ladder as me (n=4912);
At least some from the same place on the ladder as me (n=19704)

Figure 15: Ease of doing well in Britain – BAME, by ethnic background of wider social network

Question: On average, how easy or difficult do you think it is for people from the following groups to do well (e.g. have a decent salary, and place to live) in Britain today?
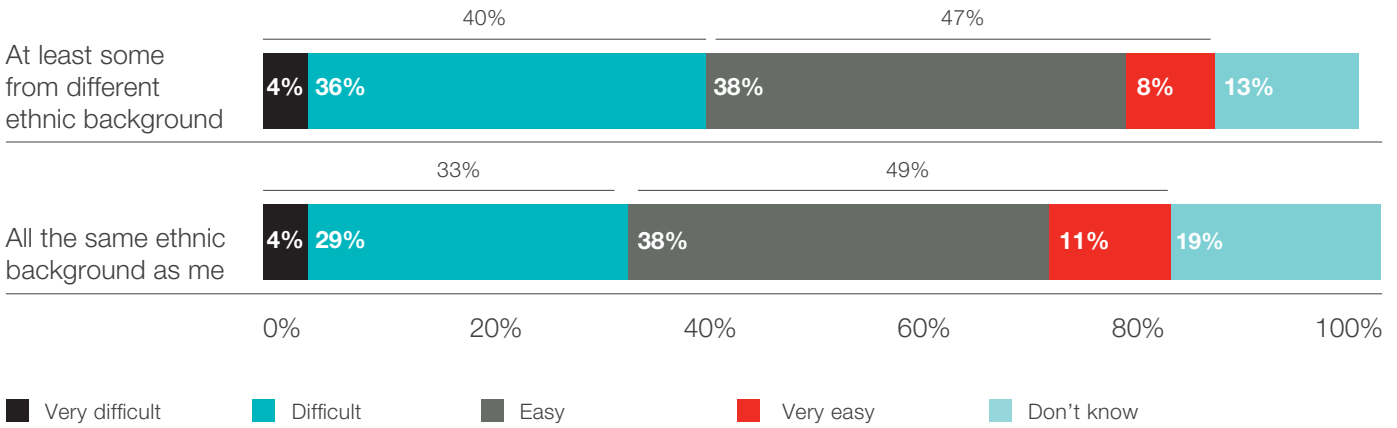
Base: All answers about all BAME groups. All the same ethnic background as me (n=10288); at least some from different ethnic background (n=13408)

Secondly, we asked people how easy it is for **those from an ethnic minority background** to do well in Britain today. From **Figure 14** and **Figure 15**, we can see that:

– People with diverse networks (again, whether in terms of perceived social status or ethnicity) are much more likely to recognise the difficulties faced by BAME people than those whose networks are all on the same place on the social ladder as them, or all the same ethnicity as them.

– Those with ethnically diverse networks are slightly more likely to see the difficulties faced by BAME people than those with socio-economically diverse networks, but the difference is slight.

– Just under half of all people (47%) believe that it is easy for people from ethnic minorities to do well in Britain today; just over a third (36%) think that it is difficult (results not shown here).

> **Just under half of people (47%) believe that it is easy for people from ethnic minorities to do well in Britain today**

Comfort engaging with others

Finally, we asked respondents to tell us whether they would be comfortable or uncomfortable discussing a variety of topics with people in society who are more or less like them – i.e. from the same place on the ladder and the same ethnic background as them – as opposed to people from a different ethnic and socio-economic background.

Figure 16 sets out the overall responses to these questions, and shows that:

– Topics such as race, politics and religion are not just the topics people find most difficult to discuss, but also the topics that people become much more cautious talking about with people who are different from them.

– By contrast, we find people are generally more comfortable talking about subjects like sport, and the drop off when it comes to discussing sport with people different from them is proportionately smaller.

Figure 16: Comfort talking about certain topics with people like you vs. not like you

Question: How comfortable would you feel talking about each of the topics below with people like you (e.g. same ethnic background, same place on ladder)?

Legend:
- ■ With people not like you
- ■ With people like you
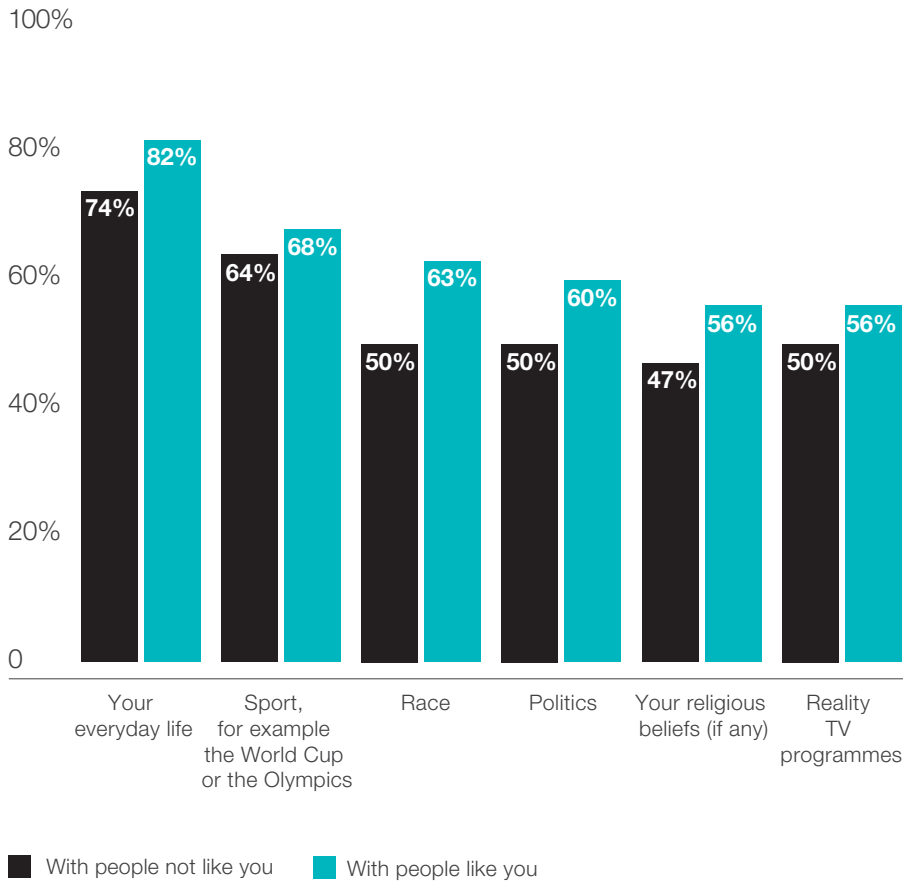
Base: All respondents (n=6562)

Findings from breaking these results down by different socio-economic, ethnicity, age and education groups include:

– **Those at the top of the ladder** are more comfortable talking about all topics, both with similar and dissimilar people, and they are significantly more comfortable than those at the bottom in discussing politics, both with people unlike themselves (58% versus 46%), and with people similar to themselves (68% versus 54% of those at the bottom).

– **Ethnic minority Britons** are much more likely than white Britons to say they would feel uncomfortable talking about politics to someone different (18% versus 3%). But on the topics of race, religious beliefs and reality television, BAME people are more likely to be comfortable talking to people either similar or dissimilar to themselves.

– **Older age groups** are much more comfortable talking about politics in general, significantly more so when talking to someone who shares their background.

– Those with a **higher level of education** (university degree and above) show more comfort in discussing potentially controversial subjects such as politics than those with a school level of education, whether it is talking to people like themselves (66% versus 57%), or people unlike themselves (55% versus 48%).

Summary

The general picture that emerges very clearly from the findings in this chapter is that having any form of network diversity – knowing people from different socio-economic backgrounds and from different ethnic groups – is strongly associated with more sympathetic views towards those from BAME backgrounds and those at the bottom of the social ladder. There were few exceptions to this trend, although ethnic network diversity appeared to have no bearing on attributes associated with those at the bottom of the ladder. Even then, those with some ethnic diversity in their networks were significantly more likely than those without to recognise difficulties faced by those at the bottom of the British social ladder.

Finally, these findings generally speaking suggest that most people have positive views of others and some of the results suggest a high degree of empathy and widespread recognition of inequalities. However, there are a couple of findings that are somewhat contrary to this. First, there is a widespread view that groups of people are receiving special treatment in a way that makes things difficult for others – the majority of people (52%) said this about those at the bottom of the social ladder, about ethnic minorities (56%), and a majority also said this about white people (52%). Second, while a clear majority of people recognise that those at the bottom of the ladder face difficulties in doing well in life, only 36% of people recognise that it might be difficult for people from BAME backgrounds to do well. Given the very strong evidence that those from ethnic minority backgrounds continue to face significant obstacles, including high levels of discrimination in the labour market, this should give us pause for thought.[23]

> "
> **Knowing people from different socio-economic backgrounds and from different ethnic groups is strongly associated with more sympathetic views towards those from BAME backgrounds and those at the bottom of the social ladder**
> "

Appendix 1: Methodology

The Challenge commissioned ComRes to survey 6562 people aged 13+ across Britain, to try to understand how socially mixed we are as a society. ComRes surveyed 836 13–15 year olds, as well as 1870 BAME people. Data were weighted by age, gender and region to be representative of the British public.

In addition, 1411 people across the government's Integration Areas were surveyed. These areas are Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest. We note that the size of this sample in each place does not allow us to say conclusively that the findings for each integration area truly represent the local population, but this does allow us to provide a brief snapshot of the extent of social mixing, and attitudes towards out-groups, in each of these areas in comparison to the national picture.

The fieldwork took place between the 6th and 28th August 2018.

Appendix 2: Terminology

Social integration – at the time of the 2016 British Integration Survey, we defined Social Integration as "the extent to which people interact with others who are different to themselves in relation to age, ethnicity and social grade". In early 2018, our definition was much the same in scope, but was revised to reflect the depth of – and renewal of – The Challenge's mission and vision.[24] As such, we define social integration as the extent to which "people from different ethnicities, cultures, social backgrounds and generations are able to confidently forge relationships as friends, colleagues, neighbours and citizens".

In-group – a group of people who share a characteristic, for example, people in the same age group.

Out-group – a group of people who do not share a particular characteristic, for example, people in a different ethnic group.

Note: it is possible for the same individual to be part of an in-group for one characteristic (such as age) but part of an out-group for another characteristic (such as ethnicity).

Social grade – a standard socio-economic classification based on occupation, the categories used in this report are as follows:

– A – Higher managerial, administrative or professional

– B – Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional

– C1 – Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional

– C2 – Skilled manual workers

– D – Semi and unskilled manual workers

– E – Casual or lowest grade workers, unemployed with state benefits only

Social ladder – approximated socio-economic position as an alternative to social grade. On a ladder with ten rungs representing British society, respondents were asked to estimate their position, and to do the same for their friends, family and wider social network.

Ethnicity – respondents were asked to choose from standard ethnicity classifications for themselves, and their closest five contacts. Responses were then grouped to allow respondents to place their wider social network more easily. The final data is presented according to grouped categories.

White
– White British

– Irish

– Gypsy / Roma / Irish Travellers

– Other White Background

Mixed-race
– White and Black Caribbean

– White and Black African

– White and Asian

– Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background

Black
– Black African

– Black Caribbean

– Other Black Background

Asian
– Indian

– Pakistani

– Bangladeshi

– Chinese

– Other Asian Background

Any Other Ethnic Group

Endnotes

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2   Bentolila, S., Michelacci, C. & Suarez, J. (2010), 'Social Contacts and Occupational Choice', *Economica*, 77:305, pp. 20–45

3   Where chart percentages do not add up to exactly 100%, this is due to rounding of decimal places.

4   Social Integration Commission (2015), *Kingdom United? Thirteen steps to tackle social segregation* (London: Social Integration Commission)

5   Skinner, G. & Gottfried, G. (2016), *How Britain voted in the 2016 EU referendum* (London: Ipsos MORI), Available at: https://www.ipsos.com/ ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2016-eu-referendum

6   YouGov and The Challenge (2017), *New Poll Finds that Generations are Prepared to Sell Each Other Out Over Brexit*. Available at: https://the-challenge.org/news/new-poll-finds-that-generations-are-prepared-to-sell-each-other-out-over-brexit/

7   Intergenerational Foundation (2016). *Generations Apart? The growth of age segregation in England and Wales* (London: Intergenerational Foundation). Available at: http://www.if.org.uk/ wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ Generations-Apart_Report_ Final_Web-Version-1.pdf

8   Skinner & Gottfried (2016); Zhang, A. (2018), 'New Findings on Key Factors Influencing the UK's Referendum on Leaving the EU', *World Development*, Vol: 102, pp. 304–314

9   Parkinson, A., Buttrick, J. & Wallis, A. (2014), *Equality and diversity within the arts and cultural sector in England: Evidence and literature review final report* (London: Arts Council England); Oskala, A., Keaney, E., Wing Chan, T. & Bunting, C. (2009), *Encourage children today to build audiences for tomorrow: Evidence from the Taking Part survey on how childhood involvement in the arts affects arts engagement in adulthood* (London: Arts Council England); Knell, J. (2015), *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth* (Coventry: University of Warwick)

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11   We should note here that education is also likely to be, at least to some extent, a proxy for other factors. For instance, respondents who were older, in lower social grades, or white were all less likely to have a university degree.

12   Cheung, C. & Llu, S. (2000), 'Acculturation, Social Integration and School Achievement among Low-ability Seventh Graders' School Achievement in Hong Kong', *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 8:1, pp.81–108; Melnick, G., Kaur, G. & Yu, A. (2011), 'Social Integration and Academic Outcomes: The Case of an International Public Policy and Management Program', *Journal of Public Affairs Education,* 17:4, pp. 569–584

13   Caparelli, L. & Tatsiramos, K. (2011), 'Friends' Networks and Job Finding Rates', *Institute for Social and Economic Research*, 21, pp. 14–15

14   Ooka, E. and Wellman, B. (2006), 'Does Social Capital Pay off More Within or Between Ethnic Groups? Analyzing Job Searches in Five Toronto Ethnic Groups' in *Inside the Mosaic* edited by Fong, E, pp. 199–226 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press)

15   Ioannides, Y. M. & Loury, L. D. (2004), 'Job Information Networks, Neighbourhood Effects and Inequality', *Journal for Economic Literature*, 42:4, pp. 1056–1093

16   Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018), *Integrated Communities Strategy* green paper (London: HM Government)

17   Parity has been assured with categories of ethnicity between our survey and ONS 2011 Census.

18   Scotland Census 2011

19   As this data uses the social ladder methodology, it would be inappropriate to compare this to census data on the breakdown of social grades in Britain. (See the 'About the survey' section for a description of this methodology.)

20   Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2018), *Integrated Communities Strategy* green paper (HM Government)

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