



Attitudes to Behaviours and Life Choices among Young People in Northern Ireland

**Mary Mullan and Christopher Alan Lewis
School of Psychology
University of Ulster at Magee College**

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Summary

This report provides data relating to attitudes to behaviour and life choices among young people in Northern Ireland. It provides analysis of such attitudes by key demographic characteristics, the relationships between them, and comparisons with similar data available from England and Wales.

Data were collected in 2002 from a total of 2134 Year 12 pupils in 22 schools with a wide geographical distribution in Northern Ireland. They comprised 7 grammar, 14 secondary and 1 comprehensive. Nine of the schools are predominantly attended by members of the Protestant community, 12 are predominantly attended by Catholic pupils and 1 is integrated. Children in Year 12 were asked to complete a questionnaire booklet. Pupils of all academic ability completed the questionnaires anonymously, under exam conditions, in each school.

The questionnaires provide data on: demographic variables i.e. gender, locality, age, academic achievement at Key Stage 3, parental employment and marital status; morality and moral influences; religiosity – denomination, practice, attitudes; media exposure – TV, reading, internet; aspects of personality including self-esteem.

The demographic breakdown of the sample is approximately as follows: 57% male, 43% female; 53% urban, 43% rural; 82% of parents married, 18% of parents separated or divorced; 53% Catholic, 28% Protestant (which includes Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist and URC/Presbyterian), 4% 'Other' and 15% of no religious denomination.

Young People in this survey displayed almost universal disapproval of some behaviours such as stealing (96%), bullying (94%) and drug-taking (85%). There were also high levels of disapproval for behaviours such as suicide (76%) and abortion (75%). Approximately half of the young people considered homosexuality and homosexual practice to be wrong. On the other hand, a considerable level of tolerance with regard to issues around alcohol, and a liberal attitude to sexual intercourse before/outside marriage and under the legal age, contraception and divorce is apparent.

When the data are analysed on the basis of gender, girls are more tolerant of homosexuality and homosexual practice than boys, but have a slightly less liberal attitude to sexual intercourse before/outside marriage and under the legal age, while boys are more opposed than girls to divorce and contraception. Boys are less likely than girls to hold the view that law-breaking issues such as cycling after dark without lights and writing graffiti are wrong, while with regard to substance use, they are more liberal, except in the case of cigarette smoking.

When data are analysed on the basis of school type, grammar school pupils are more liberal than secondary school pupils with regard to sexual behaviours, homosexuality, divorce, contraception and abortion. On law-abiding issues, secondary school pupils are more liberal than grammar school pupils with regard to playing truant and buying cigarettes under the legal age. On substance use, grammar school pupils are more liberal on the use of marijuana than secondary school pupils, but slightly less tolerant with regard to other substances.

When data are analysed on the basis of location, rural pupils are less liberal in their attitudes to sexual behaviours, homosexuality, divorce and contraception than urban pupils. On law-abiding

issues, there are only slight differences between the two groups on a few behaviours, but no clear pattern of difference. On issues of substance use, where significant differences occur, urban pupils are more liberal than rural pupils.

When data are analysed on the basis of parents' marital status, those pupils whose parents are divorced or separated are more tolerant of 'sexual behaviours, homosexuality, divorce, contraception and abortion' than those whose parents are married. On law-abiding issues, the only notable differences are on the issues of buying cigarettes under the legal age and writing graffiti, where pupils whose parents are divorced or separated are more tolerant than those whose parents are married. Pupils whose parents are divorced or separated are also the more liberal on the issues of using marijuana, becoming drunk and smoking cigarettes.

When data are analysed on the basis of parental social class, the only significant differences occur on the issues of contraception, with pupils from social class three manual most opposed, and the writing of graffiti, with young people from social classes one and two most opposed. The data suggest that social class is not an important influence on the attitudes of young people in Northern Ireland.

Pupils were asked if they belonged to a church or other religious group. They could define themselves as either belonging to no religious group ('None'); being Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist or URC/Presbyterian (grouped together as 'Protestant' for the purpose of analysis) or they could define themselves as being 'Catholic' or belonging to some other religious group ('Other'). When the data are analysed on the basis of religious denomination, pupils who define themselves as 'Other' are more opposed to sexual behaviours, homosexuality and divorce than Protestant pupils, Catholic pupils and pupils of no religious denomination. Protestant pupils are more opposed to homosexuality and sexual behaviours than Catholic pupils and those of no religious denomination. Catholic pupils are more opposed to abortion than the other three groups. Pupils of no religious denomination have the most liberal attitudes to sexual intercourse before marriage or under the legal age, and divorce. On law-abiding issues, pupils of 'Other' denominations are notably more opposed to drinking, buying alcohol under the legal age, and buying cigarettes under the legal age, than other groups, while pupils of no religious denomination are the most liberal on all law-abiding issues where the differences are significant. On substance use, the biggest differences in attitude are on the issue of drunkenness, with pupils of 'Other' denominations most opposed, Protestant pupils notably more opposed than Catholic pupils, and pupils of no religious affiliation most liberal in attitude.

Data from the Northern Ireland sample have been compared, where possible, with data from England and Wales. On issues of sexual behaviours, homosexuality, divorce, contraception and abortion, the pupils in Northern Ireland are less liberal than those in England and Wales but they are more liberal in their views on law-breaking behaviours, such as cycling after dark without lights and writing graffiti. On issues of substance use, they are less liberal than those in England and Wales except in the case of marijuana where there is no difference in attitude.

Analysis of the questionnaire data shows that a significant relationship exists between attitudes to virtually all of the behaviours considered, i.e., those who believe that using marijuana is wrong also believe that all of the other behaviours are wrong. Moderate or stronger relationships exist between attitudes to issues of alcohol use, other substance use and other risk-taking behaviours, both sexual and legal.

The aim of this report is to provide information on attitudes to behaviour and life choices among young people in Northern Ireland, analysis of such attitudes by key demographic characteristics and analysis of the relationships between the observed attitudes. It is hoped that in doing so, the report provides valuable insights for those interested in, or concerned with, the well-being of young

people.

Attitudes to Behaviours and Life Choices among Young People in Northern Ireland

Bulletin Number 1 December 2005

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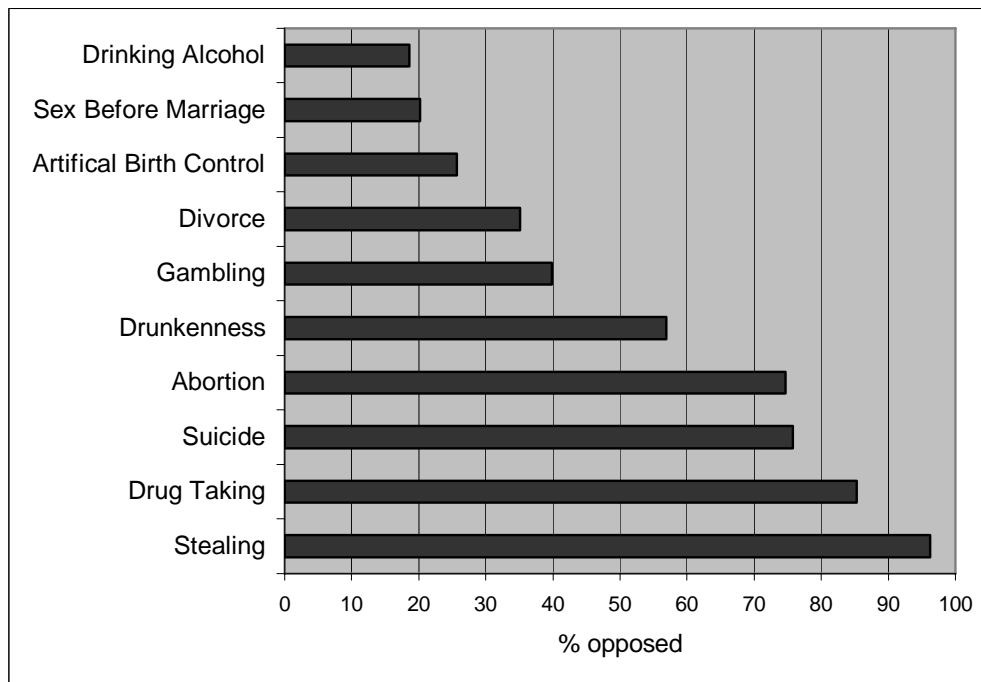
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Section A

Overview of Attitudes to Behaviours

The young people were asked if they considered certain behaviours wrong. They were able to choose that the behaviours were 'Never Wrong', 'Usually Excusable', 'Undecided', 'Usually Wrong' or 'Always Wrong'. For the purpose of this bulletin, the responses have been grouped into 'Not Wrong', 'Undecided' and 'Wrong'. The percentage which considers behaviours wrong is presented in the following graphs as '% opposed to behaviours' and includes those who answered 'Usually Wrong' or 'Always Wrong'.

Figure 1 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours

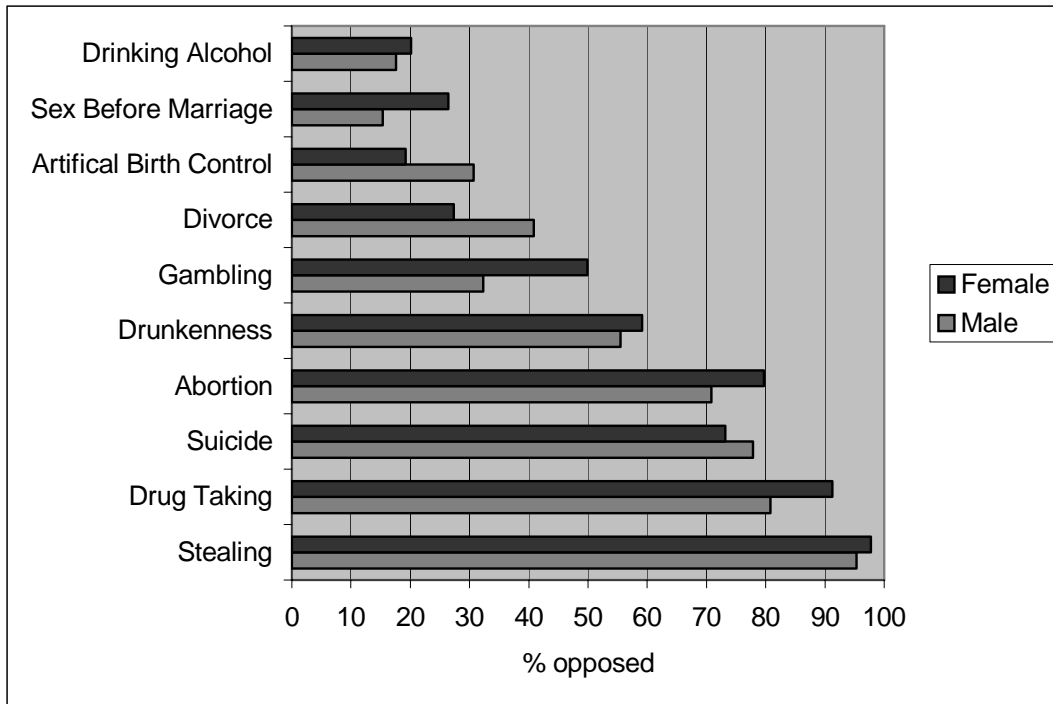


- Figure 1 contains the level of opposition to the ten behavioural issues, for the total sample.
- The vast majority of pupils in the sample consider stealing to be wrong (96%), consider drug taking wrong (85%), believe that suicide is wrong (76%); and consider abortion to be wrong (75%).
- Just over one half of the pupils believe that drunkenness is wrong and two fifths consider gambling to be wrong.
- Approximately one third of the pupils believe that divorce is wrong, one third do not consider it wrong and one third are undecided.
- One quarter of the pupils think that artificial birth control is wrong.
- Only one fifth of the pupils believe that sexual intercourse before marriage is wrong while just over half believe it is not wrong.
- Less than one fifth believe that drinking alcohol is wrong, while almost two thirds consider it acceptable.
- The pupils surveyed strongly disapprove of only four out of the ten behaviours considered. These are stealing, drug taking, suicide and abortion.

Section B

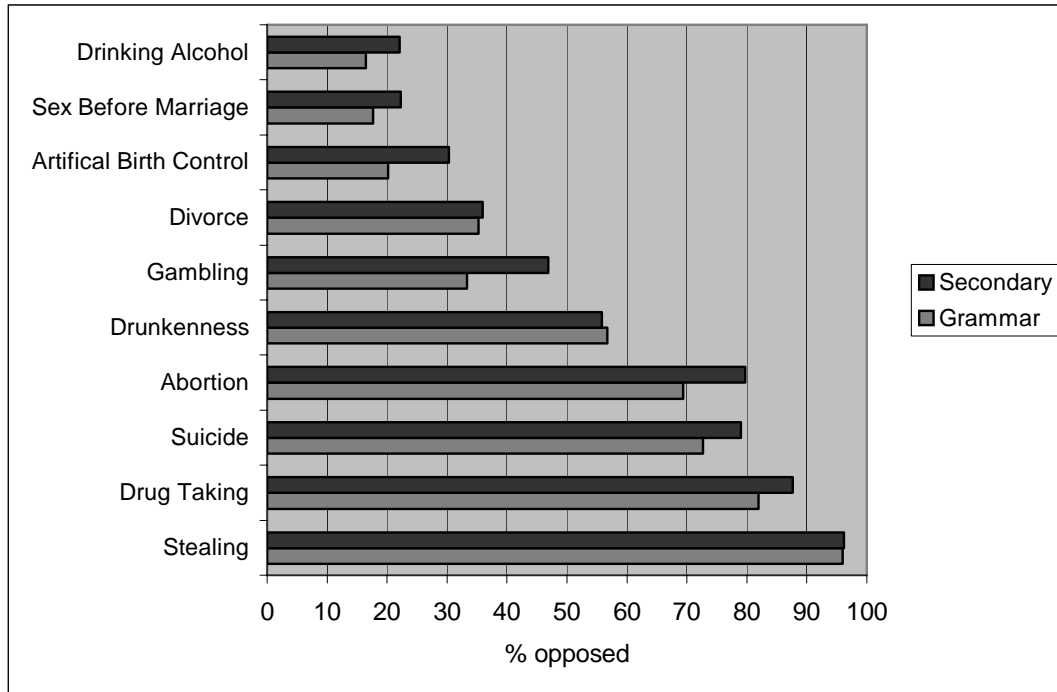
Analysis of Data by Key Demographic Characteristics

Figure 2 By Gender: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



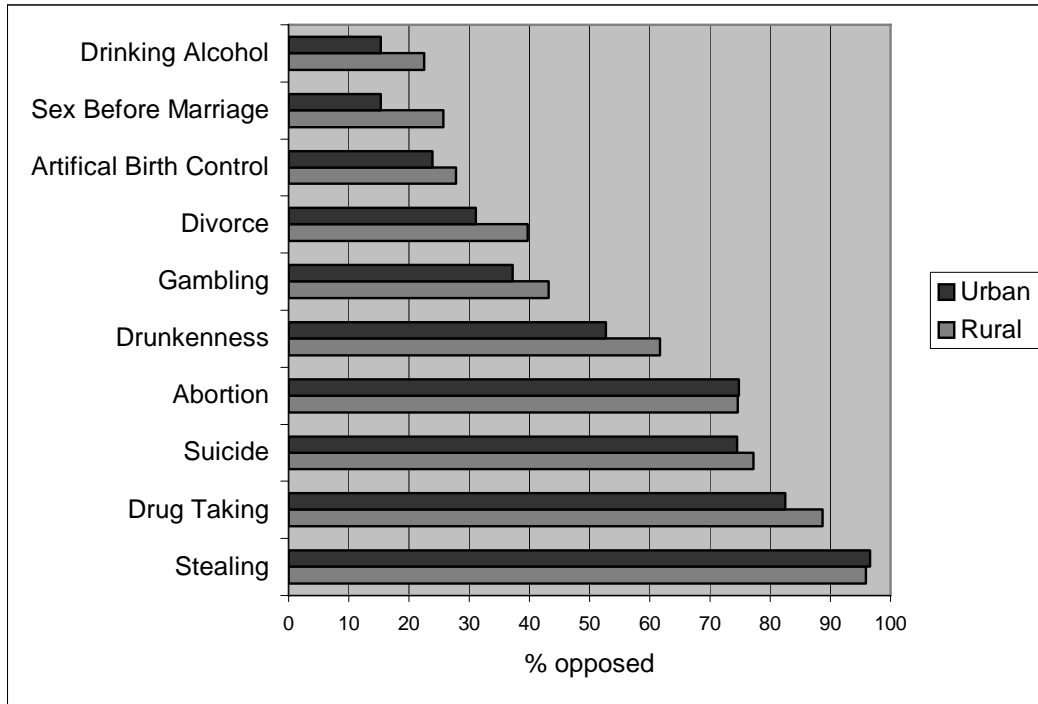
- Figure 2 presents comparison of responses, with clear differences of opinion emerging between the sexes in relation to some issues.
- The greatest divergence of opinion between boys and girls is found in relation to gambling, with 50% of girls viewing it as wrong compared to 32% of boys.
- More boys than girls viewed divorce and artificial birth control as wrong.
- More girls than boys viewed sexual intercourse before marriage, abortion and drug taking as wrong.
- The issues which produce the biggest differences between boys and girls are, in descending order of difference: gambling, divorce, artificial birth control, sexual intercourse before marriage, drug taking and abortion.

Figure 3 By School Type: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



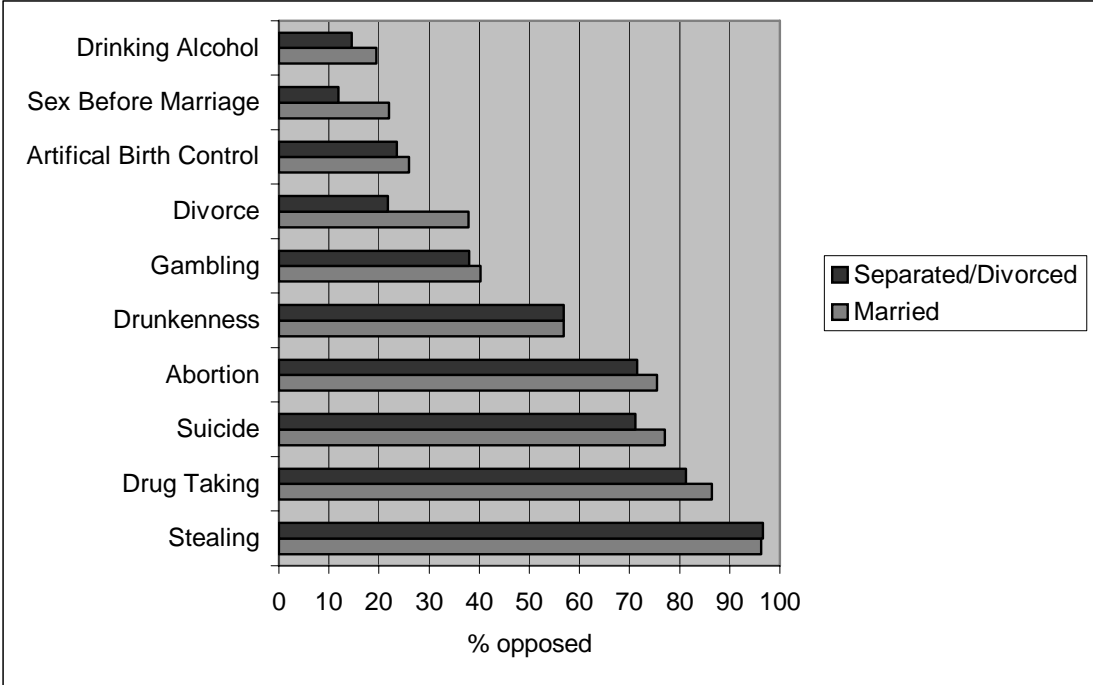
- Figure 3 contains the comparison of responses to the ten behavioural issues by school type. The data suggests that grammar school pupils have more liberal views than their peers in secondary schools. In relation to the attitudes to all behaviours except one (drunkenness), higher percentages of secondary school pupils found the behaviours wrong.
- The issues where notable differences occur are gambling, artificial birth control, abortion, suicide, drug taking and drinking alcohol.
- Almost half of secondary school pupils consider that gambling is wrong, but only one third of grammar school pupils agree.
- On the issue of artificial birth control, 30% of secondary school pupils and 20% of grammar school pupils consider it wrong.
- There are also ten percentage points of difference between the two groups on the issue of abortion. 80% of secondary school pupils and 70% of grammar school pupils believe it is wrong.
- On the issues of suicide, drug taking, drinking alcohol and sexual intercourse before marriage, there are smaller, but significant differences between the two groups, with more secondary pupils than grammar school pupils believing that these behaviours are wrong.

Figure 4 By Location: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



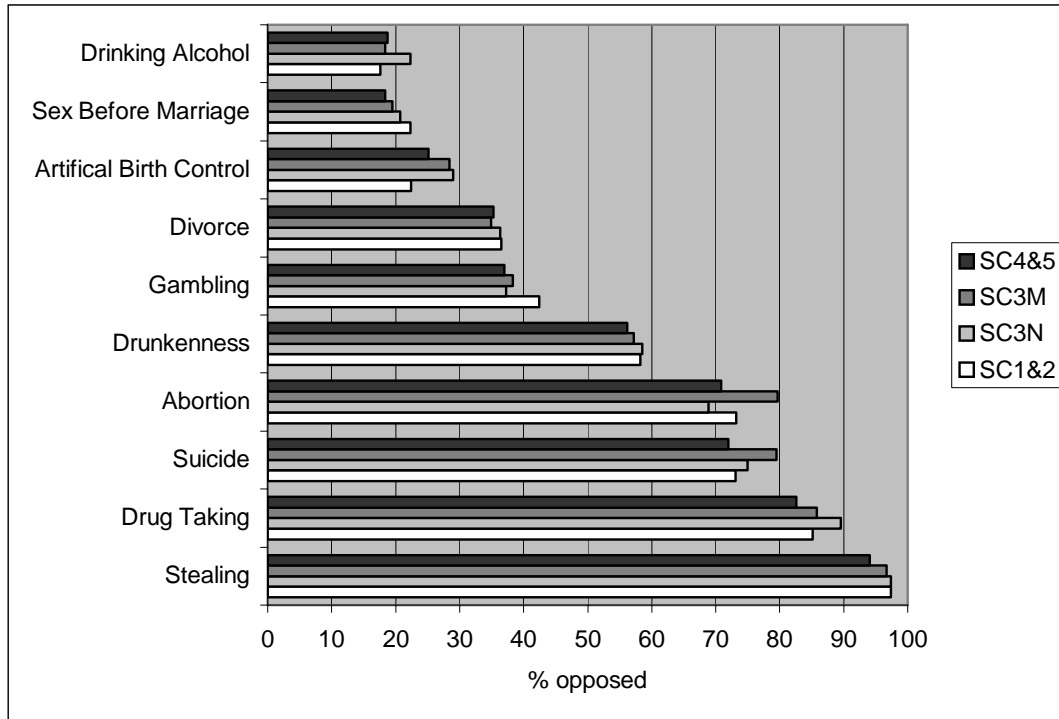
- Overall, the data in Figure 4 suggests that pupils living in urban areas have a more liberal stance than those living in rural areas, with higher percentages of pupils living in rural areas viewing as wrong all of the behaviours listed, where the difference is significant.
- The issues where notable differences occur are: sexual intercourse before marriage, divorce, drunkenness and drinking alcohol.
- One quarter of rural pupils, and 15% of urban pupils consider sexual intercourse before marriage wrong.
- 40% of rural pupils consider that divorce is wrong, while 31% of urban pupils agree.
- 62% of rural pupils consider that drunkenness is wrong, while 53% of urban pupils agree.
- 23% of rural pupils consider that drinking alcohol is wrong, while 15% of urban pupils are in agreement.
- Rural pupils are more opposed to drug taking, gambling and artificial birth control than urban pupils.
- Differences in scores on the issues of suicide, stealing and abortion are not significant.

Figure 5 By Parental Marital Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



- Figure 5 shows that, on all the issues where significant differences have been discerned between pupils whose parents are married and those whose parents are divorced or separated, the latter appear to take a more liberal stance.
- Divorce and sexual intercourse before marriage are the only two issues where notable differences occur between the two groups of pupils.
- 38% of pupils whose parents are married believe divorce is wrong, as opposed to 22% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated.
- 22% of pupils whose parents are married believe that sexual intercourse before marriage is wrong, while 12% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated hold this view.
- Slight significant differences occur in the responses of the two groups to the issues of artificial birth control, suicide, abortion and drug taking with a higher percentage of pupils whose parents are married considering them to be wrong.
- Differences in responses to the issues of gambling, drinking alcohol, drunkenness and stealing are not significant.

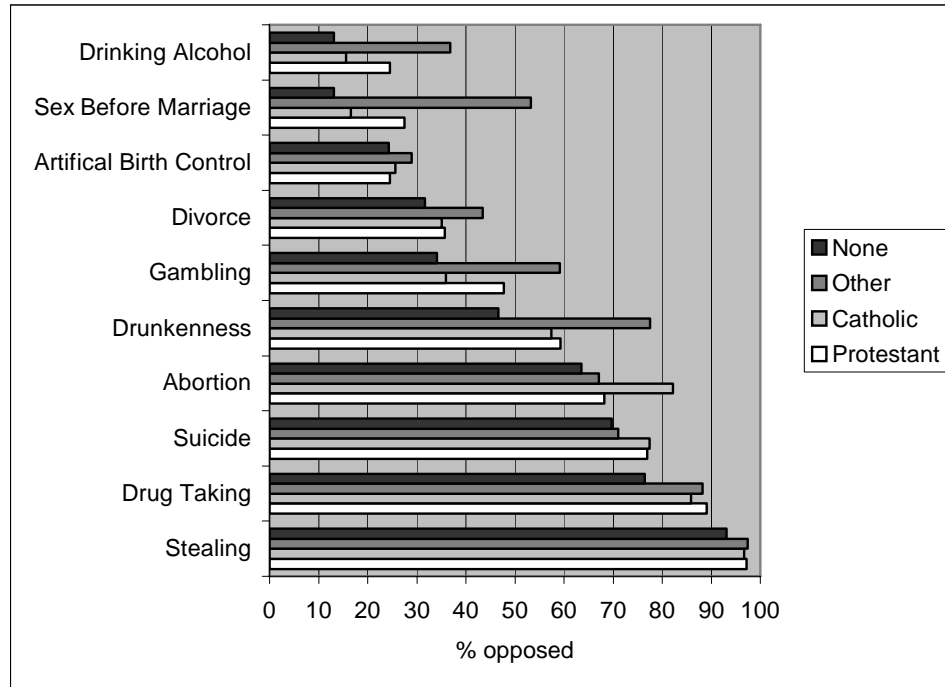
Figure 6 By Parental Social Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



Note SC1 & 2 = Social Classes 1 and 2 (Professional occupations and Managerial and Technical occupations); SC3N = Social Class 3 Non-manual (Skilled occupations – non-manual); SC3M = Social Class 3 Manual (Skilled occupations – manual); SC4 & 5 = Social Class 4 and 5 (Partly skilled occupations and Unskilled occupations).

- Figure 6 shows that only small differences in attitudes are related to social class background.
- Artificial birth control, abortion and suicide are the issues that produce a small significant difference in the responses of different social groups. Young people from social classes three manual and non-manual show more opposition to artificial birth control than those from other backgrounds. Those from social class three manual are the group most opposed to abortion and suicide.

Figure 7 By Religious Denomination: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



Note: Pupils were asked if they belonged to a church or other religious group. They could define themselves as either belonging to no religious group ('None'); being Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist or URC/Presbyterian (grouped together as 'Protestant' for the purpose of analysis) or they could define themselves as being 'Catholic' or belonging to some other religious group ('Other').

'None' - Approximately 15% of the Sample; 'Other' - Approximately 4% of the Sample; 'Catholic' - Approximately 53% of the Sample; 'Protestant' - Approximately 28% of the Sample.

- Those students who identify themselves as 'Other' are notably more opposed to sex before marriage, drunkenness, drinking alcohol and gambling than any other group.
- Catholic pupils are more opposed to abortion than any other group.
- Protestant pupils are notably more opposed to gambling, sex before marriage and drinking alcohol than Catholic pupils.
- Pupils who belong to no religious denomination have the most liberal attitude to all the behaviours considered. This is most notable on the issues of drunkenness and drug taking, and least on the issue of artificial birth control.

Section C

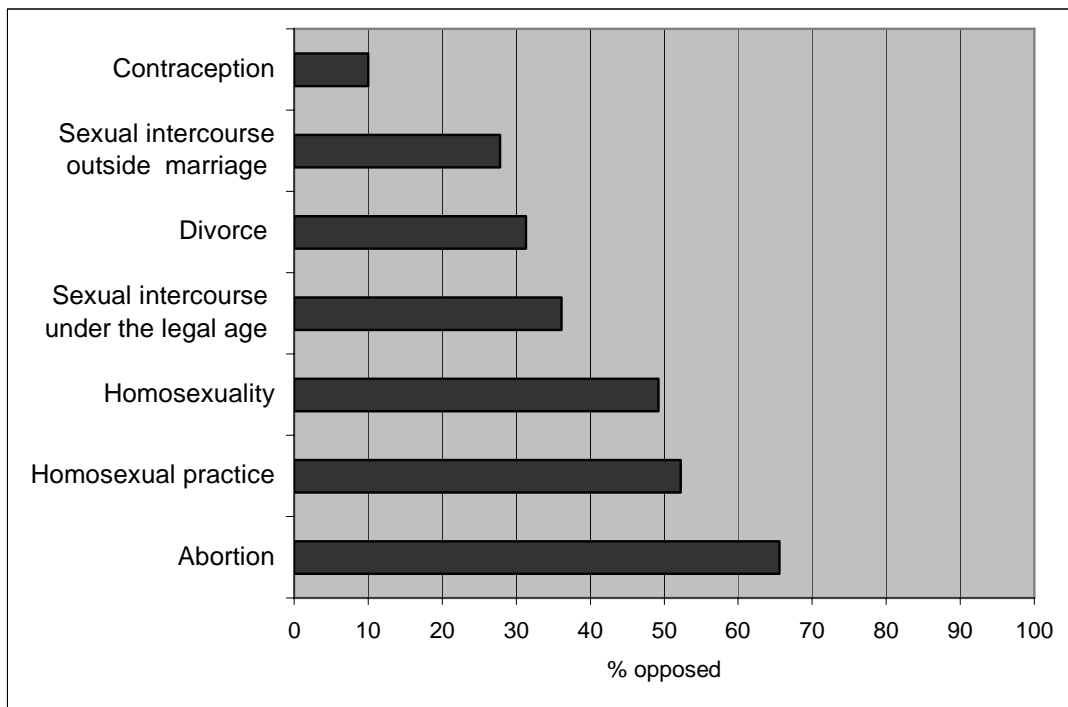
Overview of Attitudes to Behaviours grouped in themes from 'Teenage Religion and Values' (Francis & Kay, 1995)

The questionnaire for this study included three sets of questions from the questionnaire Teenage Religion and Values (Francis & Kay, 1995), which was used in a large study in England and Wales. These questions were used to allow comparison with data available from England and Wales, though some behaviours previously considered are repeated in these sets or 'themes'. The themes were referred to as 'Sexual morality', 'Right and wrong' and 'Substance use' by Francis and Kay (1995), but in this report the themes are called 'Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion', 'Law-breaking' and 'Substance Use'.

Different formats than that used in Section A of this report were used to examine these themes. For example, the questions shown in Section A were presented as a list of behaviours to which respondents could choose that they were "Never Wrong", "Usually Excusable", "Undecided", "Usually Wrong" and "Always Wrong". However, with regard to the results presented in this section of the report, respondents were presented with statements such as "Abortion is wrong", to which respondents could indicate a level of agreement from five options, i.e., 'Agree Strongly', 'Agree', 'Not Certain', 'Disagree' and 'Disagree Strongly'. The different question and response format, used to examine the issues in these themes, may account for differing results, when various issues such as contraception, abortion, divorce and drunkenness appear in both Section A and B of this report.

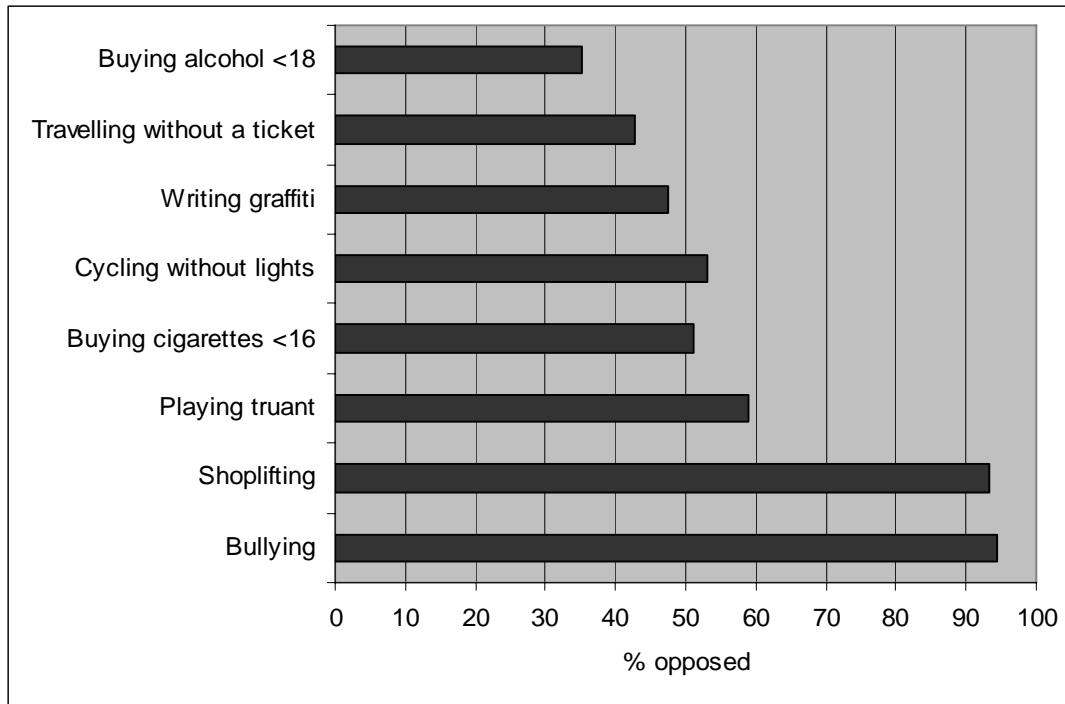
Figures 8 to 28 present data from the Northern Ireland sample only. Comparison of data from England and Wales with Northern Ireland data follows in Section E.

Figure 8 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion



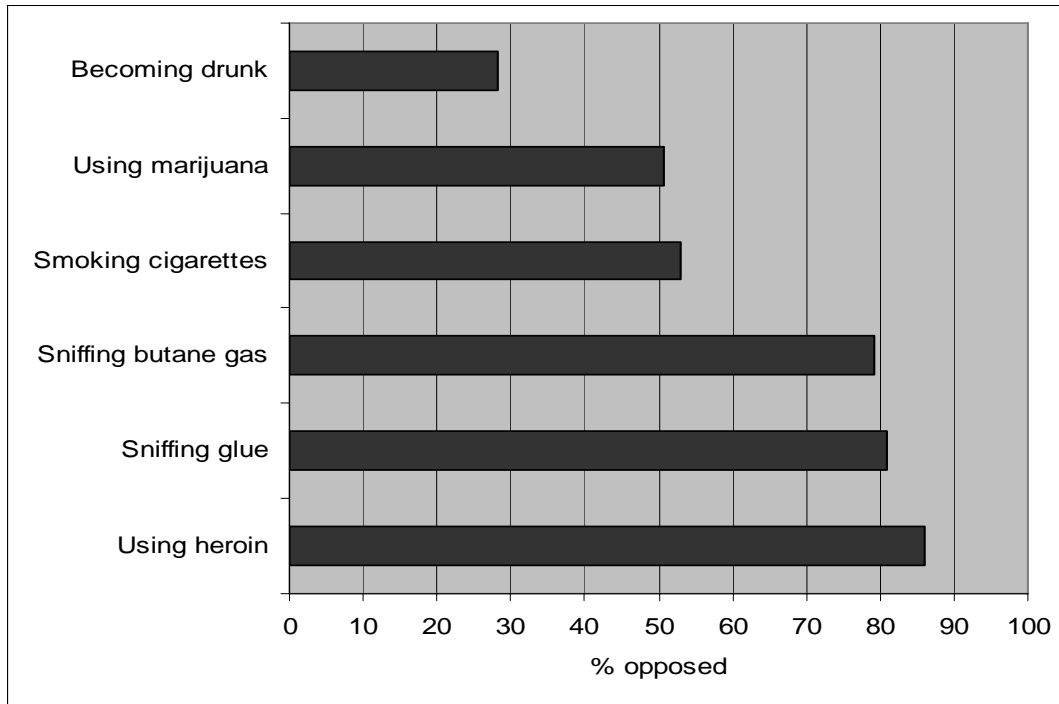
- Abortion is considered wrong by two thirds of the total sample. (In Section A the response to the issue of abortion showed that 75% of the young people considered it wrong. The difference in results may be accounted for by the differing format of the questions and response options.)
- Homosexual practice is considered wrong by just over half of the respondents, while just under half of the sample think homosexuality is wrong.
- Sexual intercourse outside marriage or under the legal age, contraception and divorce are not considered wrong by the majority of young people in the sample.

Figure 9 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours



- Figure 9 shows that the young people in this survey make a clear distinction between bullying, shoplifting and the other issues examined in this theme. 94% believe bullying is wrong, and 93% believe shoplifting is wrong.
- Thereafter, the proportion considering the specified behaviours wrong is greatly reduced. Playing truant is considered wrong by three fifths of the pupils. 53% consider cycling after dark without lights is wrong, and 51% believe that buying cigarettes under the legal age is wrong.
- Less than half think that writing graffiti or travelling without a ticket is wrong and only a third think buying alcohol under the legal age is wrong.

Figure 10 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use

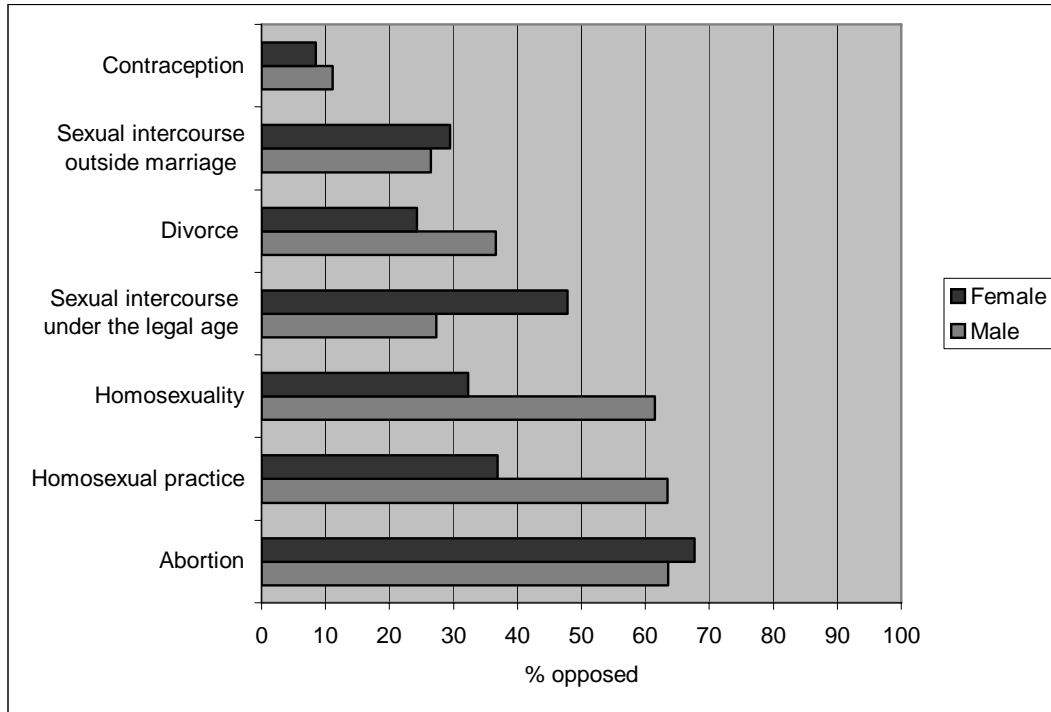


- The three issues on this scale that produce a strong negative response from the young people are using heroin (86%), sniffing glue (81%) and sniffing butane gas (79%).
- Just over half of the young people (53%) believe that smoking cigarettes is wrong, while marijuana is slightly more acceptable, with 51% considering its use wrong.
- 28% believe it is wrong to become drunk.

Section D

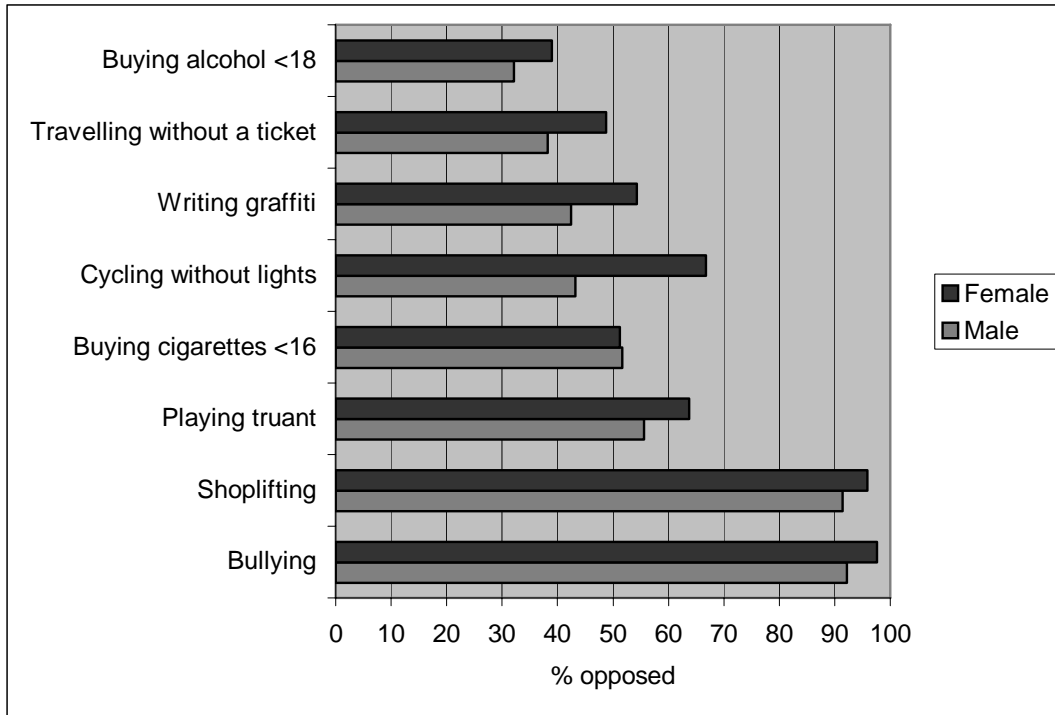
Analysis of the Data in Section C by Key Demographic Characteristics

Figure 11 By Gender: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion



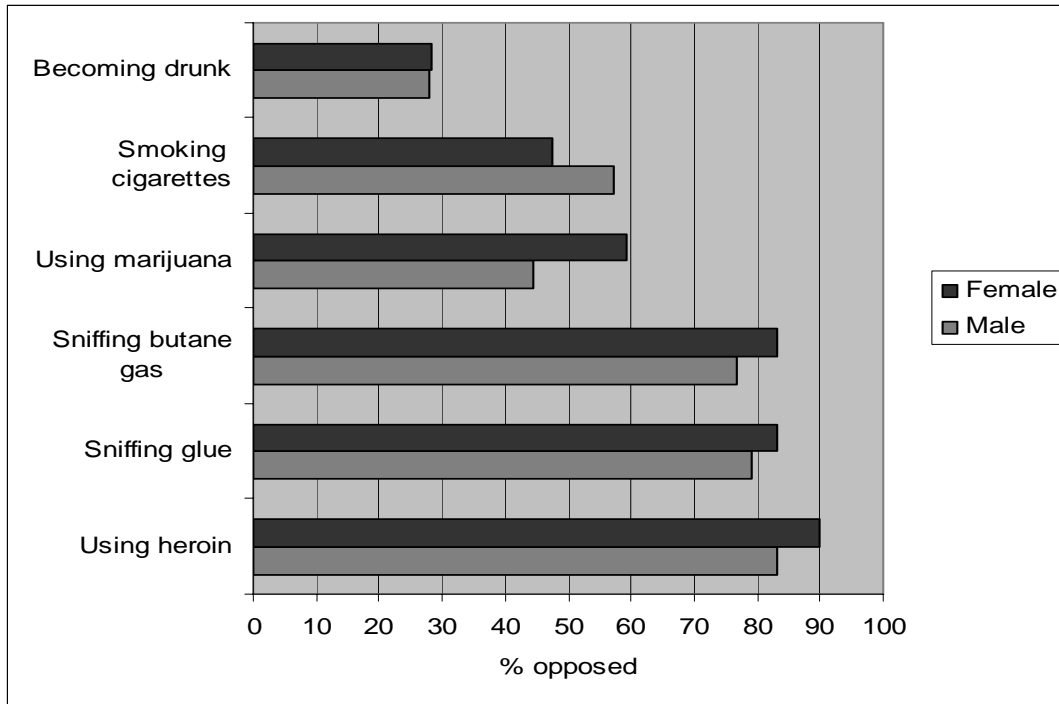
- The three issues where a difference of more than 20 percentage points occurs between the scores of boys and girls are homosexuality, homosexual practice and sexual intercourse under the legal age.
- More boys than girls believe homosexuality and homosexual practice are wrong.
- More girls than boys believe that sexual intercourse under the legal age is wrong.
- More than a third of boys are opposed to divorce, compared to a quarter of girls.
- Slight differences occur on the issues of contraception and sexual intercourse outside marriage, with more boys thinking that contraception is wrong and more girls thinking sexual intercourse outside marriage is wrong. There is no discernable difference in their attitudes to abortion.

Figure 12 By Gender: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours



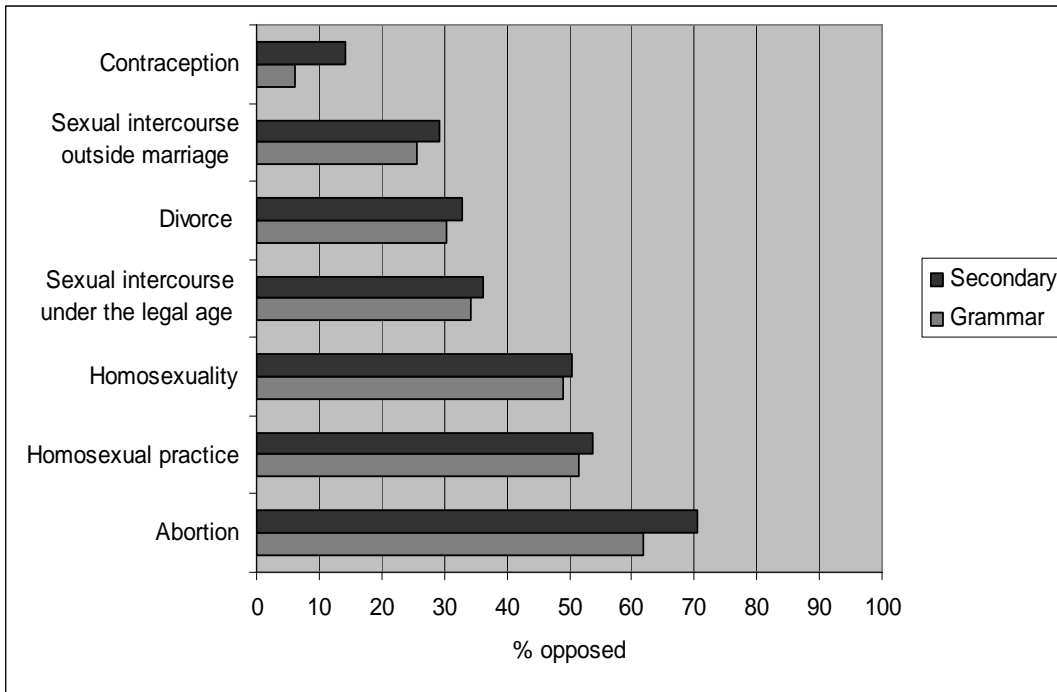
- In all cases (except buying cigarettes <16, where the difference is not significant), higher percentages of girls than boys find law-breaking behaviour wrong. The behaviours that produce the biggest differences in responses between boys and girls are cycling after dark without lights, writing graffiti and travelling without a ticket.
- On the issue of cycling after dark without lights, 67% of girls disapprove, as opposed to 43% of boys.
- 54% of girls and 43% of boys consider writing graffiti to be wrong.
- 49% of girls and 38% of boys think it is wrong to travel without a ticket.

Figure 13 By Gender: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use



- With the exception of cigarette smoking, on issues of substance use, boys are more liberal than girls.
- The issues that generate significantly different levels of response from boys and girls are using marijuana, smoking cigarettes, using heroin and sniffing butane gas.
- 59% of girls and 45% of boys believe that using marijuana is wrong.
- 57% of boys and 47% of girls, think cigarette smoking is wrong.
- Boys are more tolerant of the use of marijuana than of cigarette smoking, whereas girls are more tolerant of cigarette smoking than of marijuana use.
- 90% of girls think using heroin is wrong, as opposed to 83% of boys.
- 83% of girls and 77% of boys think sniffing butane gas is wrong.

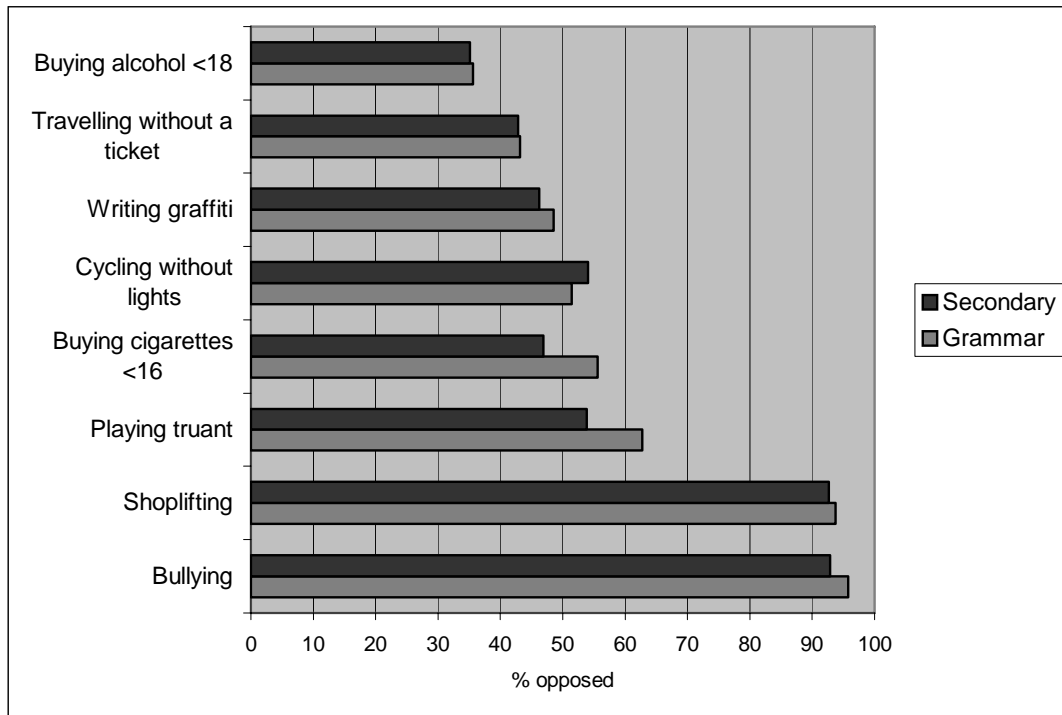
Figure 14 By School Type: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion



- Abortion and contraception are the issues where notable differences occur between the scores of grammar school and secondary school pupils.
- 71% of secondary school pupils believe abortion is wrong, compared to 62% of grammar school pupils,
- 14% of secondary school pupils consider contraception to be wrong compared to 6% of grammar school pupils.

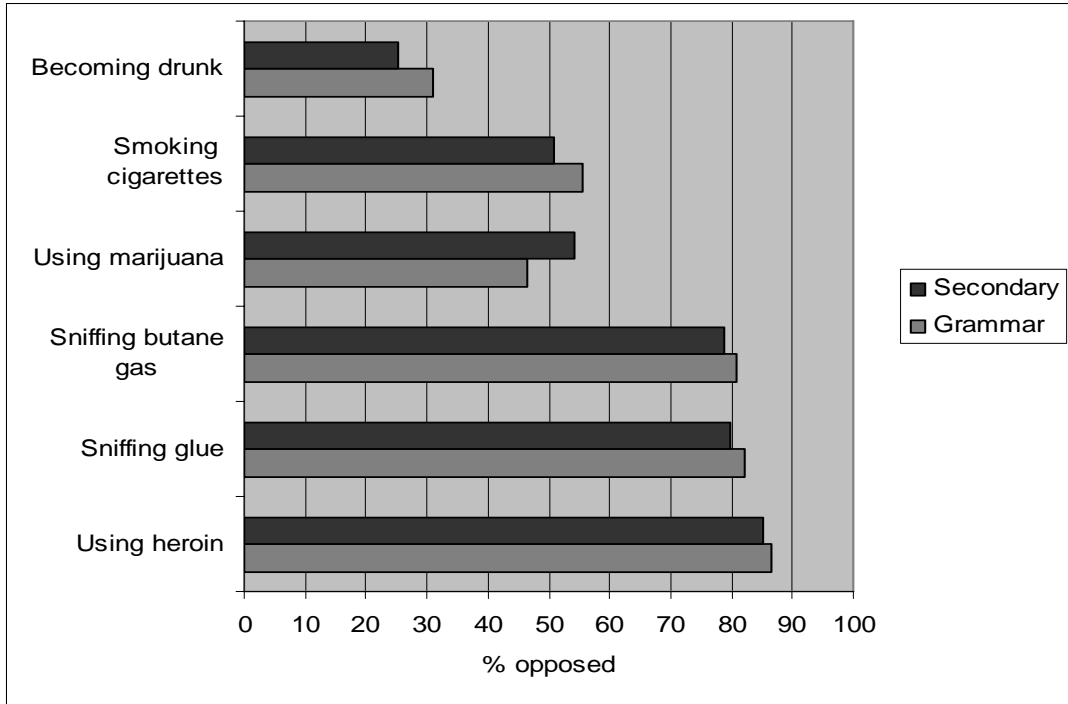
Slight differences occur between these school types on all the other issues in this theme, with the attitude of the grammar school pupils being more liberal than that of secondary school pupils. (Differences on homosexuality and homosexual practice are not significant).

Figure 15 By School Type: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours



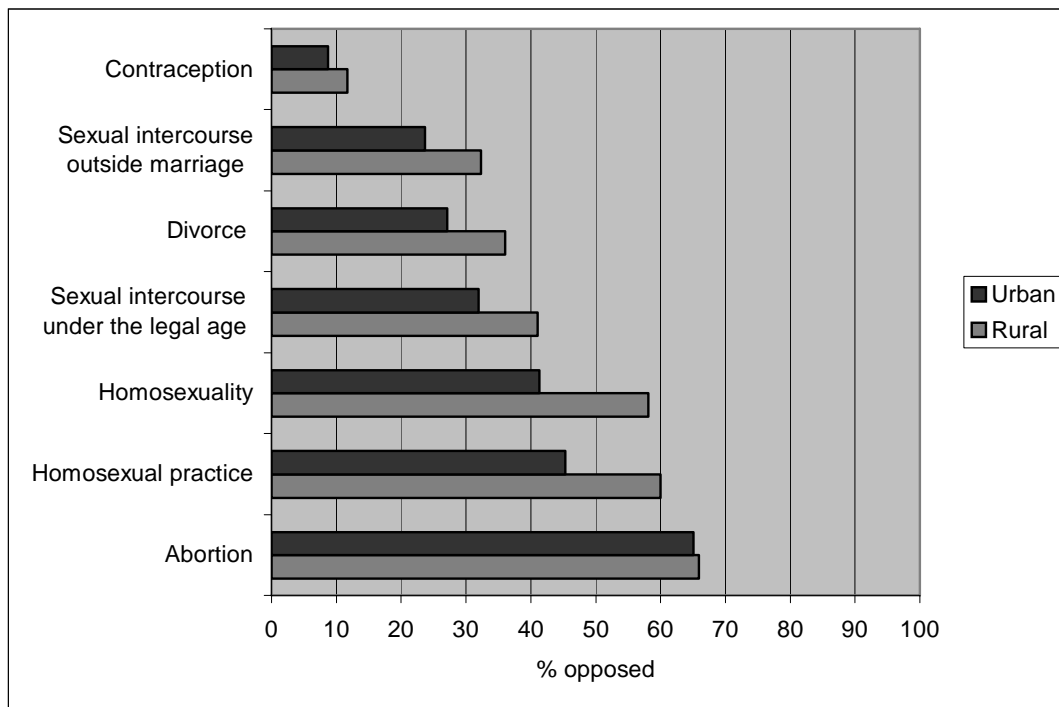
- Differences of almost ten percentage points occur on two issues, playing truant, and buying cigarettes under the legal age.
- Playing truant is considered wrong by 63% of grammar school pupils, compared to 54% of secondary pupils.
- Buying cigarettes under the legal age is considered wrong by 56% of grammar school pupils compared to 47% of secondary school pupils.

Figure 16 By School Type: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use



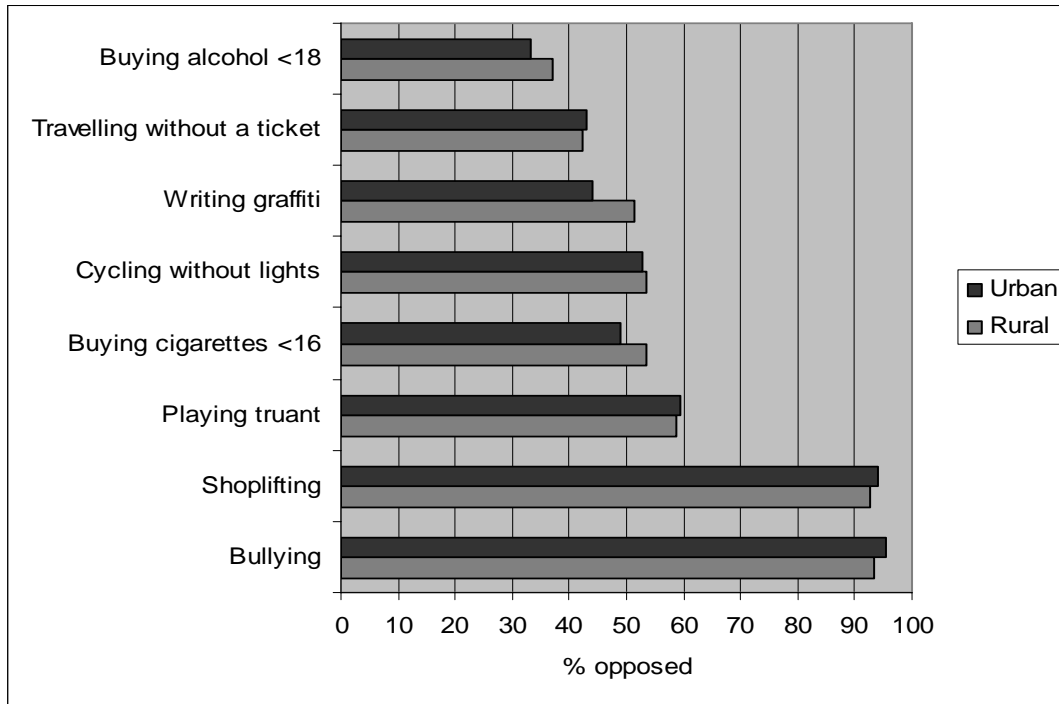
- The use of marijuana and becoming drunk are the two issues in this theme that produce a difference in response of greater than 5 percentage points between the school types.
- 54% of secondary school pupils believe it is wrong to use marijuana, compared to 46% of grammar school pupils,.
- Almost a third of grammar school pupils, compared to one quarter of secondary school pupils, believe it is wrong to become drunk.
- There are small, though significant, differences on the issues sniffing glue and sniffing butane gas. On these issues, fewer secondary school pupils than grammar school pupils consider them wrong.

Figure 17 By Location: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion



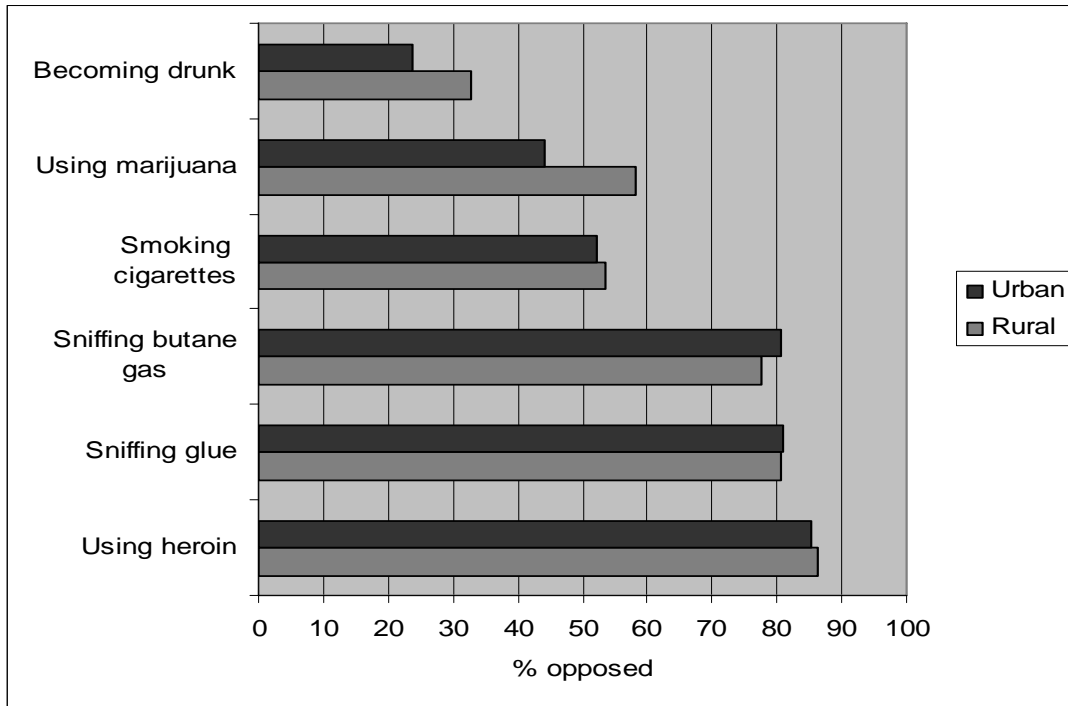
- Overall, Figure 17 confirms the finding in Figure 4, that urban pupils have a more liberal attitude than rural pupils on many issues.
- There are three issues where the responses from the urban and rural groups differ considerably. These are homosexuality, homosexual practice and divorce.
- 58% of rural pupils believe that homosexuality is wrong, as opposed to 41% of urban pupils.
- 60% of the rural pupils believe homosexual practice it is wrong, compared to 45% of urban pupils who hold this view.
- 36% of rural pupils believe that divorce is wrong, compared to 27% of urban pupils.
- Smaller differences occur in the responses to the issues of sexual intercourse under the legal age, sexual intercourse outside marriage and contraception, with more rural pupils than urban pupils considering them wrong.
- On the issue of abortion, there is no significant difference between these two groups.

Figure 18 By Location: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours



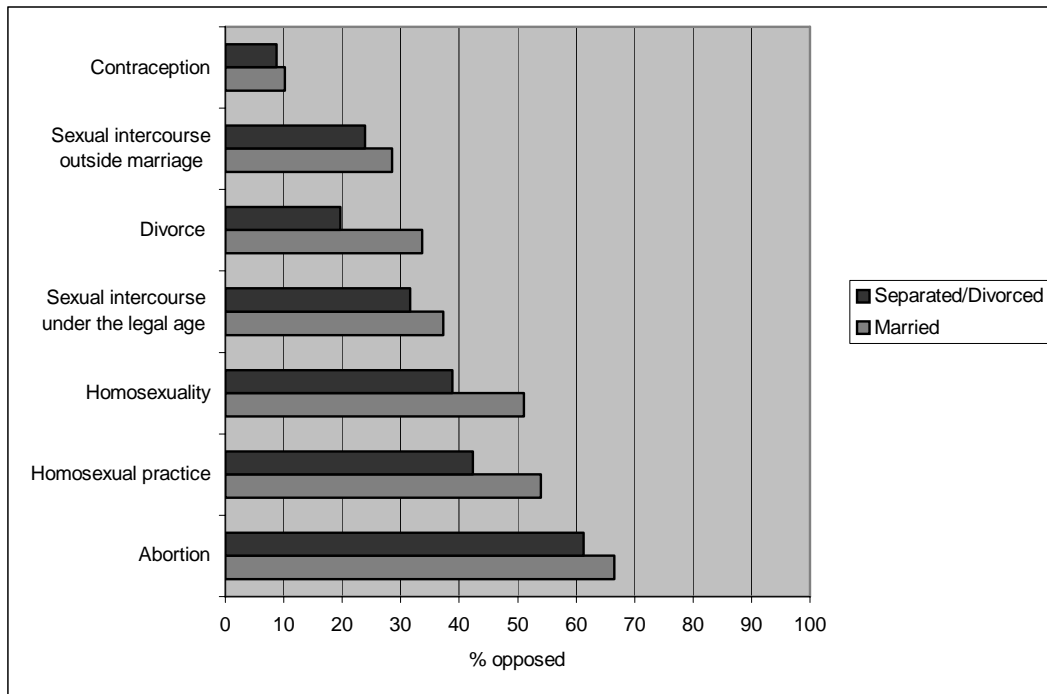
- In the law-breaking theme, there are significant differences between urban and rural pupils on only three issues.
- Writing graffiti is the issue that produces the biggest difference with 51% of rural pupils believing it is wrong, compared to 44% of urban pupils.
- Buying cigarettes under the legal age is considered wrong by 54% of rural pupils and 49% of urban pupils.
- On the issue of shoplifting, the difference between the two groups is only one percentage point, with rural pupils being less opposed than urban pupils.
- On all other issues in this theme, the differences are not significant.

Figure 19 By Location: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use



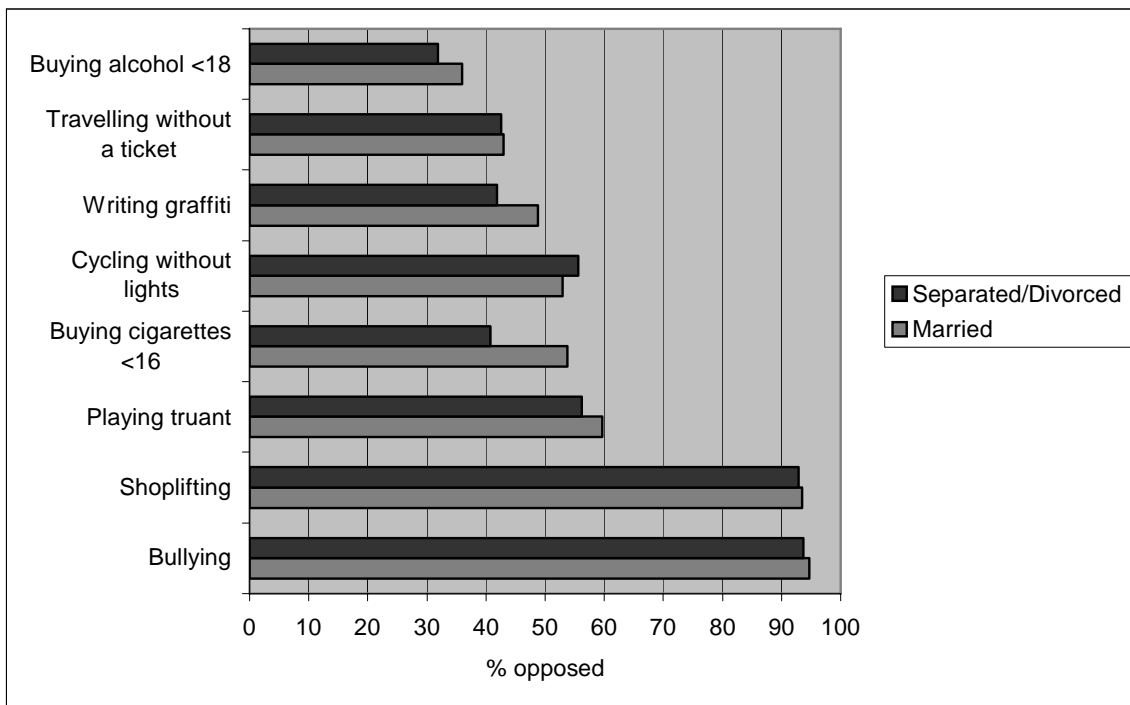
- On the issues in Figure 19, where significant differences occur, the urban pupils are more liberal than the rural pupils.
- The two issues, where notable differences exist between the responses of rural and urban pupils, are the use of marijuana and becoming drunk.
- 58% of rural pupils believe that the use of marijuana is wrong, as opposed to 44% of urban pupils.
- 33% of rural pupils believe that it is wrong to become drunk, as opposed to 24% of urban pupils.
- Only one percentage point difference occurs in the attitudes of these pupils to smoking cigarettes, with 53% of rural pupils and 52% of urban pupils believing it is wrong to smoke cigarettes.
- No significant differences occur between rural and urban pupils on the issues of sniffing glue, sniffing butane gas and using heroin.

Figure 20 By Parental Marital Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion



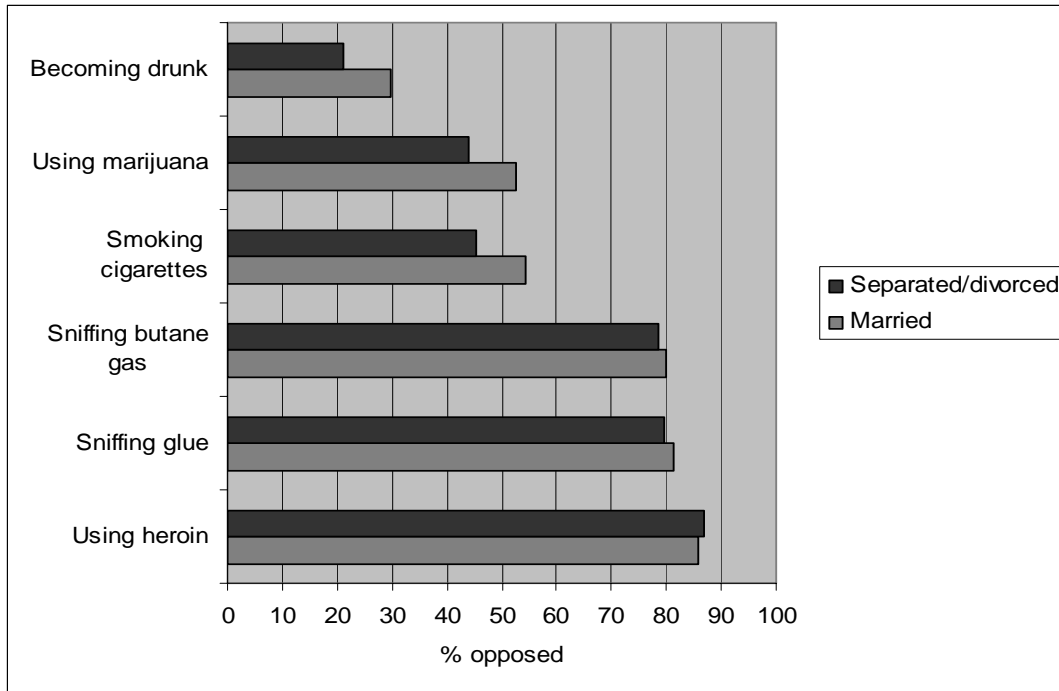
- On all the issues in Figure 20 where significant differences occur between the responses of the two groups, pupils whose parents are divorced or separated are more tolerant than those whose parents are married. These issues are divorce, homosexuality, homosexual practice, abortion and sexual intercourse outside marriage.
- One third of pupils whose parents are married believe divorce is wrong, compared to one fifth of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated.
- 51% of pupils whose parents are married believe that homosexuality is wrong, while 39% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated hold this view.
- On the issue of homosexual practice, similar differences occur. 54% of pupils whose parents are married believe this is wrong, compared to 42% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated.
- 67% of pupils whose parents are married believe abortion is wrong, compared to 61% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated.
- 29% of pupils whose parents are married believe sexual intercourse outside marriage is wrong, compared to 24% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated.

Figure 21 By Parental Marital Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours



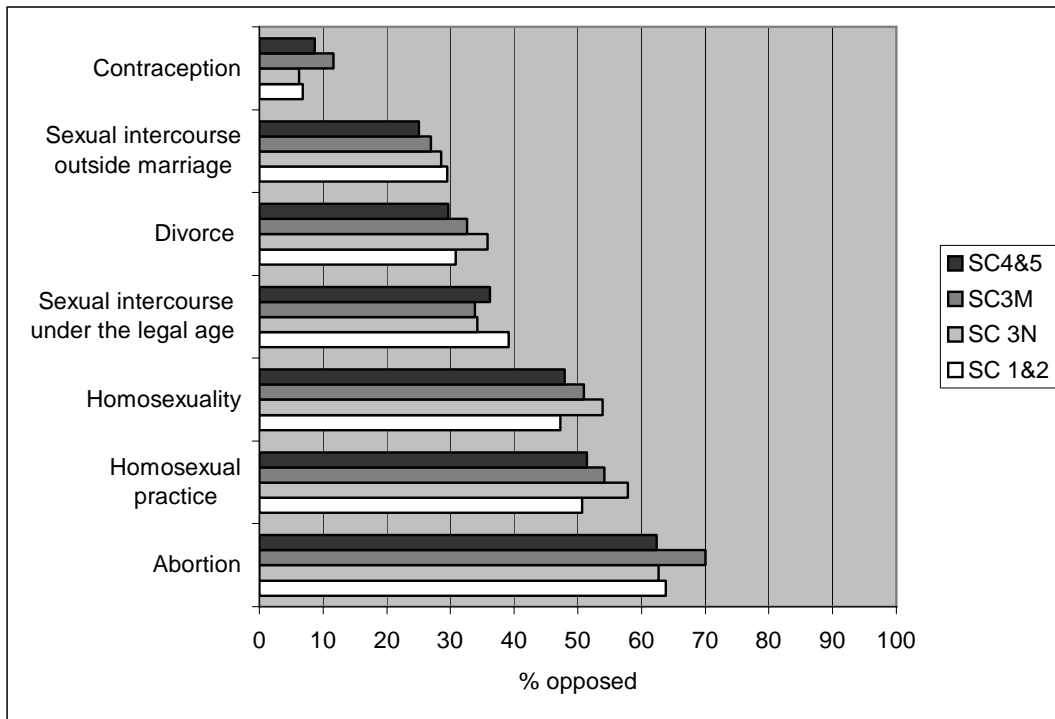
- In Figure 21 the two issues, where significant differences between these two groups occur, are buying cigarettes under the legal age and writing graffiti.
- 54% of pupils whose parents are married think buying cigarettes under the legal age is wrong, while 41% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated agree.
- 49% of pupils whose parents are married think writing graffiti is wrong, while 42% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated agree.

Figure 22 By Parental Marital Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use



- There are significant differences between these two groups on the issues of using marijuana, becoming drunk and smoking cigarettes. On these issues, the children of parents who are divorced or separated are more liberal than those whose parents are married.
- 53% of pupils whose parents are married think it is wrong to use marijuana, while 44% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated agree.
- On the issue of becoming drunk, 30% of pupils whose parents are married think it is wrong, whereas 21% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated hold this view.
- 54% of pupils whose parents are married, and 46% of pupils whose parents are divorced or separated, think it is wrong to smoke cigarettes.

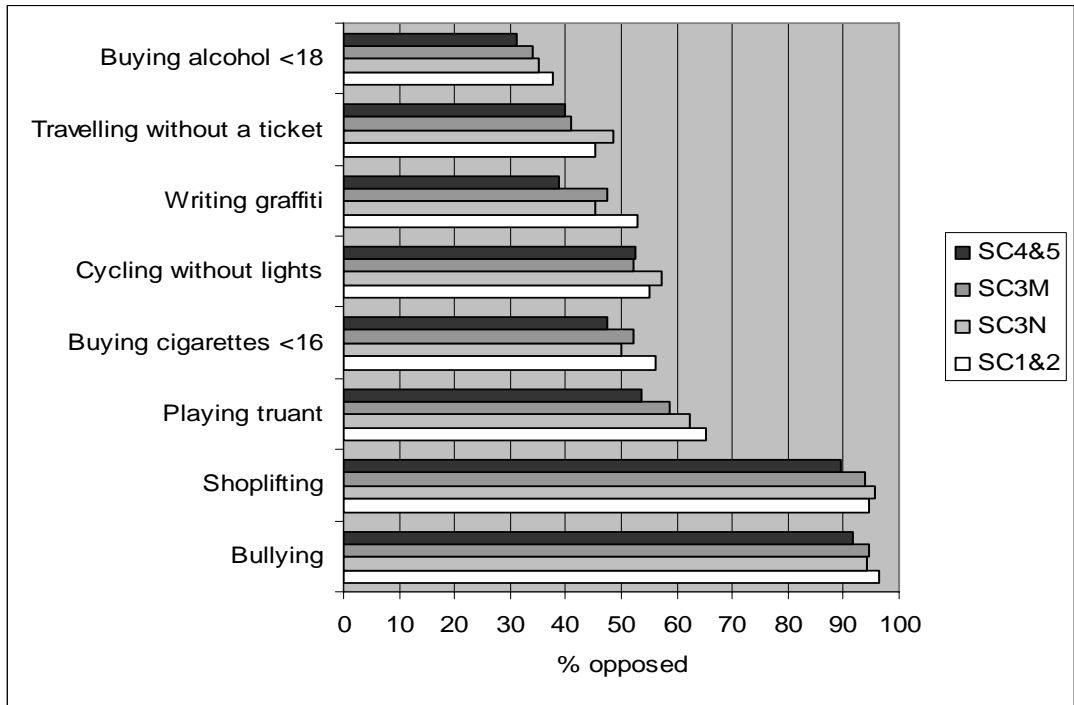
Figure 23 By Parental Social Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion



Note SC1 & 2 = Social Classes 1 and 2 (Professional occupations and Managerial and Technical occupations); SC3N = Social Class 3 Non-manual (Skilled occupations – non-manual); SC3M = Social Class 3 Manual (Skilled occupations – manual); SC4 & 5 = Social Class 4 and 5 (Partly skilled occupations and Unskilled occupations).

- Contraception is the only issue where a significant difference occurs between the responses of pupils from different parental social classes.
- Pupils from parental social class three manual are more opposed to contraception than those from other parental social classes, in that 12% of them believe contraception is wrong, whereas 6% of parental social class three non-manual and 7% of parental social classes one and two hold the same view.
- It appears that parental social class is not a factor influencing pupils' attitudes to sexual behaviours, homosexuality, divorce and abortion.

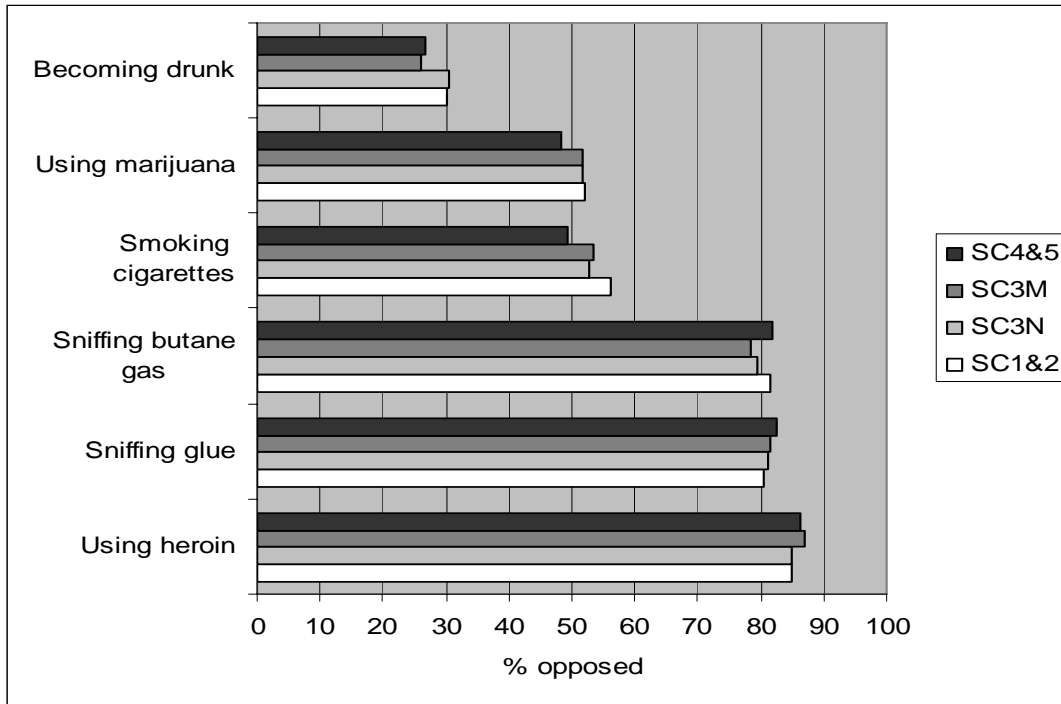
Figure 24 By Parental Social Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours



Note SC1 & 2 = Social Classes 1 and 2 (Professional occupations and Managerial and Technical occupations); SC3N = Social Class 3 Non-manual (Skilled occupations – non-manual); SC3M = Social Class 3 Manual (Skilled occupations – manual); SC4 & 5 = Social Class 4 and 5 (Partly skilled occupations and Unskilled occupations).

- Writing graffiti is the only issue where a significant difference occurs on the basis of social status. It is considered wrong by 53% in parental social classes one and two, and 39% of pupils of parental social classes four and five.
- On the other law-breaking issues, there are no significant differences based on parental social class.

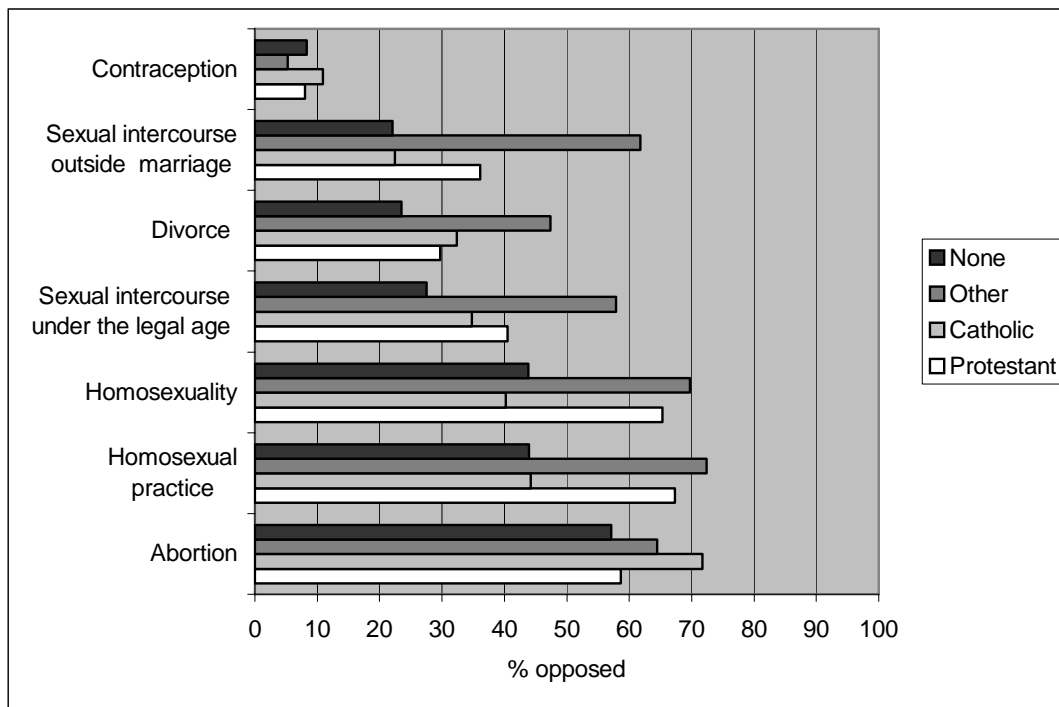
Figure 25 By Parental Social Status: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use



Note SC1 & 2 = Social Classes 1 and 2 (Professional occupations and Managerial and Technical occupations); SC3N = Social Class 3 Non-manual (Skilled occupations – non-manual); SC3M = Social Class 3 Manual (Skilled occupations – manual); SC4 & 5 = Social Class 4 and 5 (Partly skilled occupations and Unskilled occupations).

- There are no issues where significant differences in attitude occur according to parental social class.
- Parental social class does not appear to be a significant influence on attitudes to substance use among pupils in the survey.

Figure 26 By Religious Denomination: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion

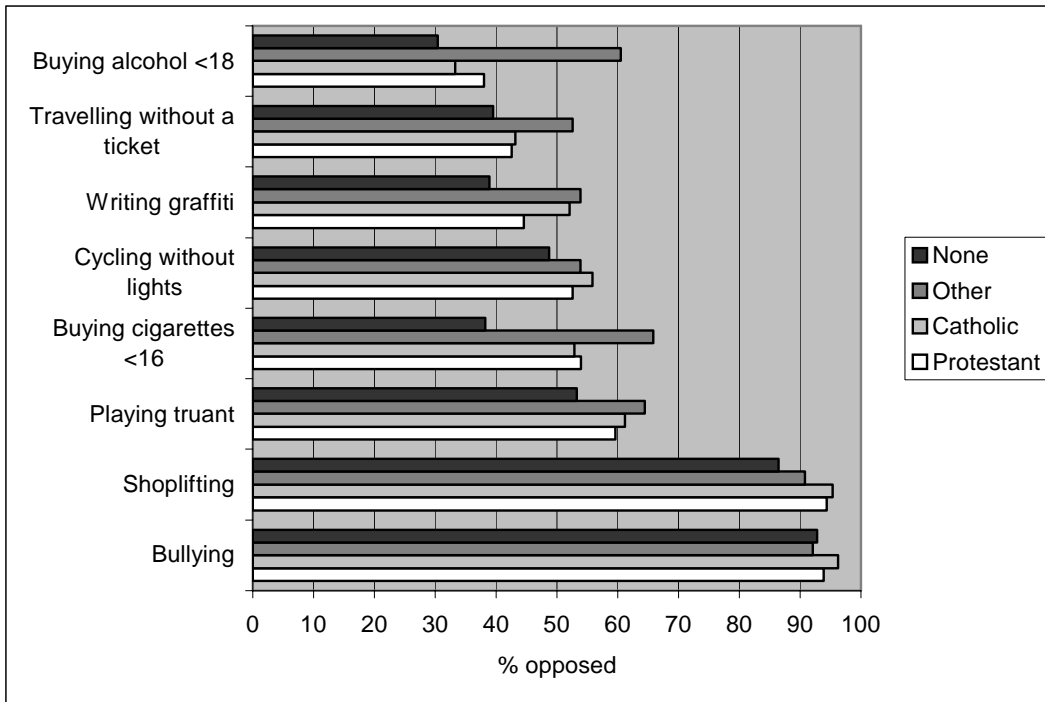


Note: Pupils were asked if they belonged to a church or other religious group. They could define themselves as either belonging to no religious group ('None'); being Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist or URC/Presbyterian (grouped together as 'Protestant' for the purpose of analysis) or they could define themselves as being 'Catholic' or belonging to some other religious group ('Other').

'None' - Approximately 15% of the Sample; 'Other' - Approximately 4% of the Sample; 'Catholic' - Approximately 53% of the Sample; 'Protestant' - Approximately 28% of the Sample.

- Higher proportions of pupils from 'Other' denominations are opposed to homosexual practice, homosexuality, sexual intercourse outside marriage, sexual intercourse under the legal age and divorce, than Protestant or Catholic pupils, or those of no religious denomination.
- Higher proportions of Protestant pupils are opposed to homosexual practice and homosexuality than Catholic pupils, or pupils of no religious denomination.
- A higher proportion of Protestant pupils are opposed to sexual intercourse outside marriage than Catholic pupils, or pupils of no religious denomination.
- The behaviours considered wrong by the greatest number of Protestant pupils and pupils of 'Other' denominations are homosexual practice and homosexuality.
- The behaviours considered wrong by the greatest number of Catholic pupils and pupils of no religious denomination are abortion and homosexual practice.
- Pupils of no religious affiliation are the most liberal group in their attitudes to sexual intercourse under the legal age and divorce.

Figure 27 By Religious Denomination: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours

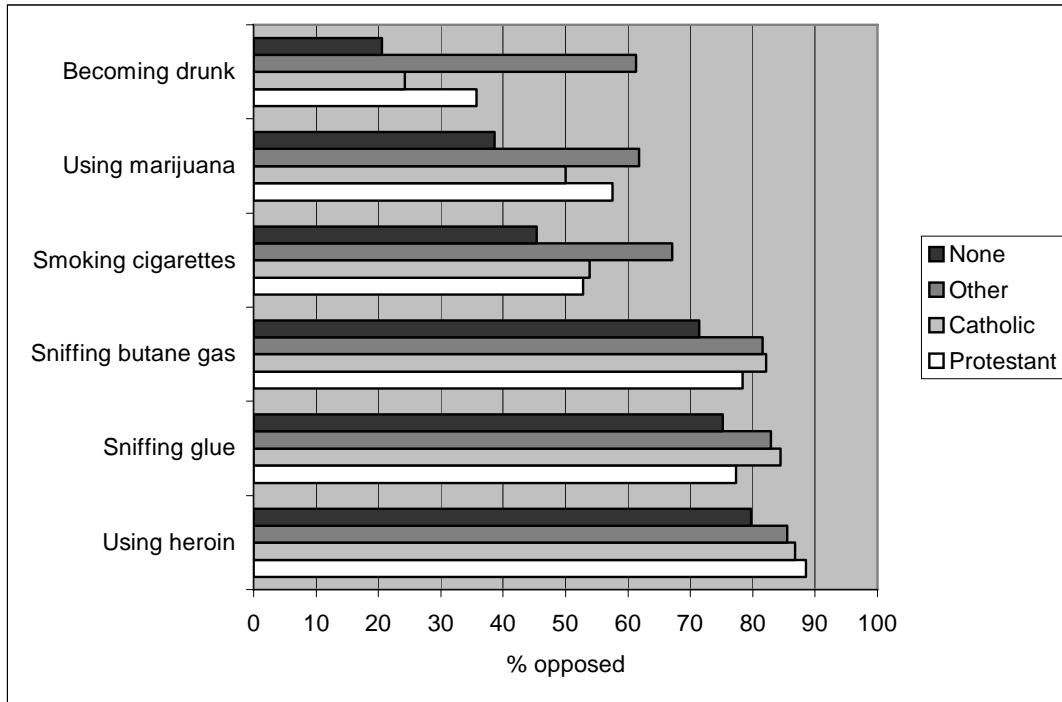


Note: Pupils were asked if they belonged to a church or other religious group. They could define themselves as either belonging to no religious group ('None'); being Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist or URC/Presbyterian (grouped together as 'Protestant' for the purpose of analysis) or they could define themselves as being 'Catholic' or belonging to some other religious group ('Other').

'None' - Approximately 15% of the Sample; 'Other' - Approximately 4% of the Sample; 'Catholic' - Approximately 53% of the Sample; 'Protestant' - Approximately 28% of the Sample.

- Higher proportions of pupils of 'Other' denominations consider buying alcohol or cigarettes under the legal age to be wrong, than all other pupils.
- Differences in attitudes on bullying, cycling without lights and travelling without a ticket are not significant.
- The biggest difference between Protestant and Catholic pupils is on writing graffiti, which is considered wrong by 52% of Catholic pupils and 45% of Protestant pupils.
- Pupils of no religious affiliation are less opposed to all behaviours (where the differences are significant) than pupils of other groups.

Figure 28 By Religious Denomination: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use



Note: Pupils were asked if they belonged to a church or other religious group. They could define themselves as either belonging to no religious group ('None'); being Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist or URC/Presbyterian (grouped together as 'Protestant' for the purpose of analysis) or they could define themselves as being 'Catholic' or belonging to some other religious group ('Other').

'None' - Approximately 15% of the Sample; 'Other' - Approximately 4% of the Sample; 'Catholic' - Approximately 53% of the Sample; 'Protestant' - Approximately 28% of the Sample.

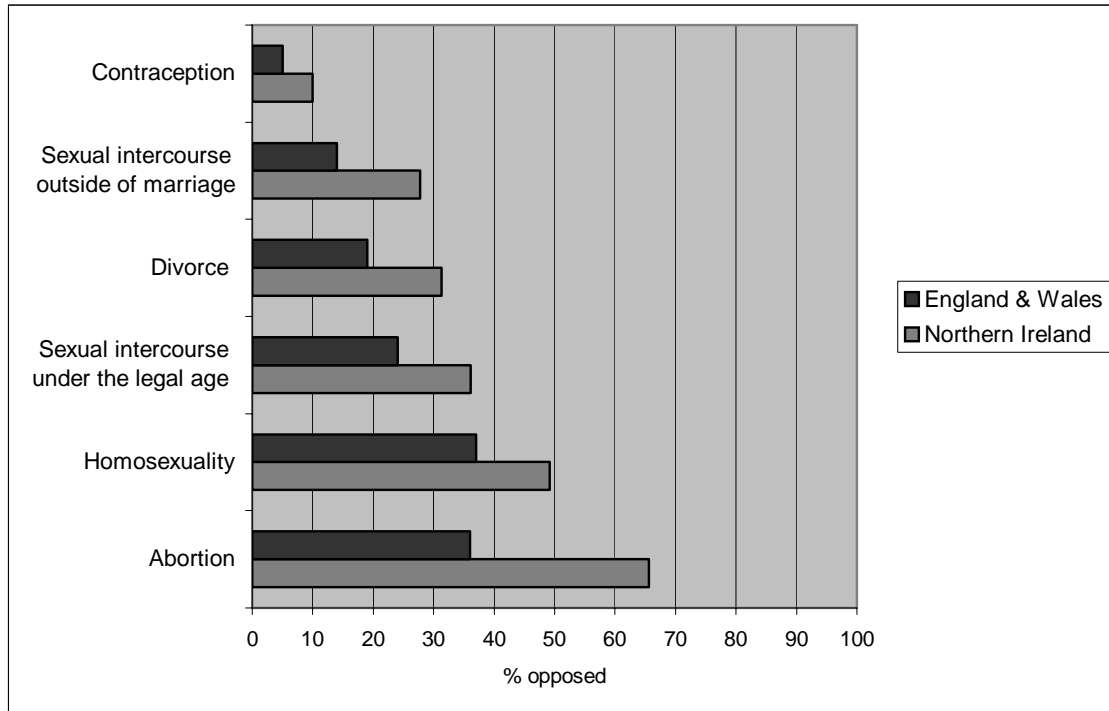
- Higher proportions of pupils of 'Other' denominations consider becoming drunk, using marijuana and smoking cigarettes to be wrong.
- Of the four groups, a higher proportion of Catholic pupils consider sniffing glue and sniffing butane gas to be wrong.
- A higher proportion of Protestant pupils are opposed to using heroin, though, on this issue, differences are slight between pupils of all the religious denominations.
- The issue of becoming drunk produces the most notable difference in attitudes, with a difference of 41 percentage points between pupils of no religious denomination and those of 'Other' denominations.
- There is a difference of twelve percentage points between Catholic pupils and Protestant pupils on the issue of becoming drunk, with more Protestant pupils opposed than Catholic pupils.
- Pupils of no religious affiliation have the most liberal attitude to all the Substance Use behaviours.

Section E

Comparison of Data from England and Wales with Northern Ireland Data

Data from England and Wales are available on 13,000 young people in 'Teenage Beliefs and Values' (Francis & Kay, 1995). Nearly 34,000 young people participated in the most recent survey, reported in 'The Values Debate' (Francis, 2001). Data from this survey are now presented, as available, in conjunction with comparable data from the Northern Ireland sample.

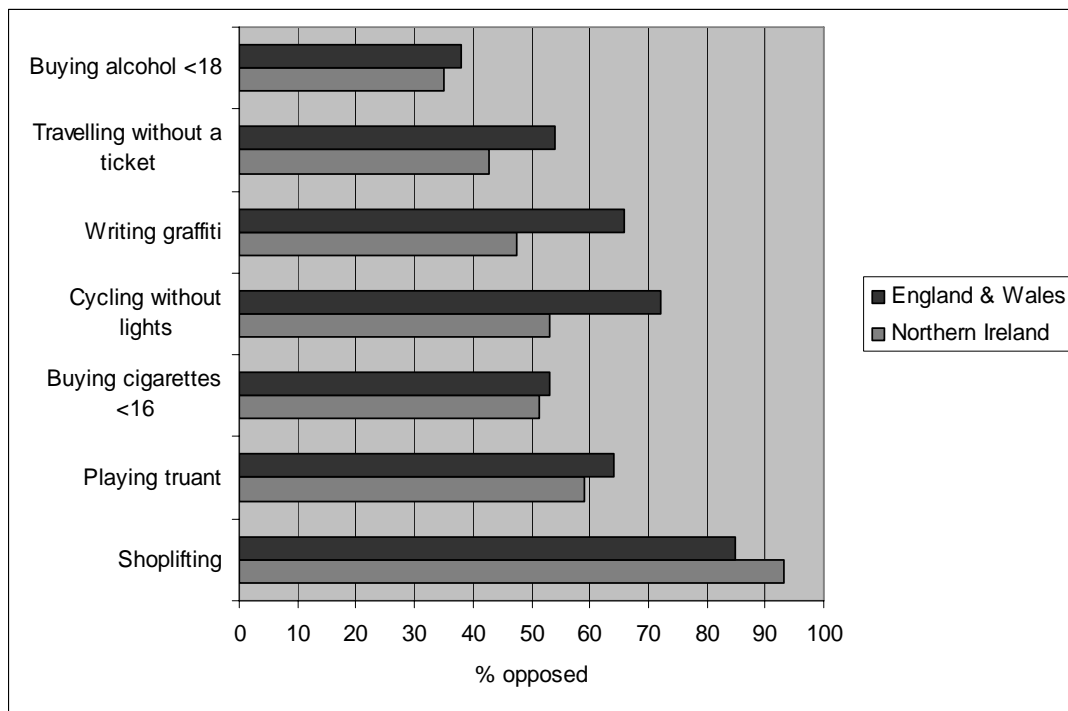
Figure 29 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion in England and Wales, compared to Northern Ireland



- On every issue in this theme, a higher percentage of pupils in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales consider the behaviours to be wrong.
- Almost two thirds of pupils in the Northern Ireland survey are opposed to abortion, whereas in England and Wales it is opposed by just over one third of young people.
- Twice as many young people in the Northern Ireland survey (28%) compared to England and Wales (14%) consider sexual intercourse outside marriage to be wrong.
- Almost one third of the pupils in the Northern Ireland survey believe that divorce is wrong, whereas only one fifth of young people in England and Wales survey consider it wrong.
- On the issue of sexual intercourse under the legal age, over one third of pupils in the Northern Ireland survey believe it is wrong, as opposed to less than one quarter in the England and Wales survey.
- Almost half of the pupils surveyed in Northern Ireland believe that homosexuality is wrong, compared to 37% of the young people surveyed in England and Wales.

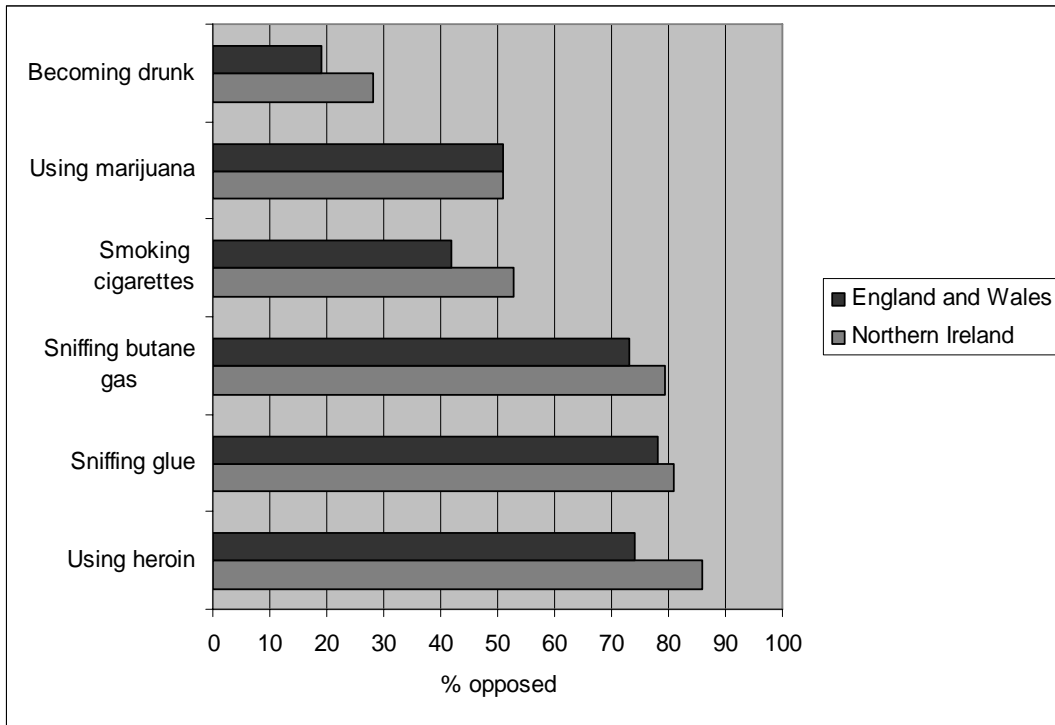
- 10% of the pupils surveyed in Northern Ireland think contraception is wrong, compared to 5% of young people in the England and Wales survey.

Figure 30 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours in England and Wales, compared to Northern Ireland



- The issues in Figure 30 pertain to the civil law and, with the exception of shoplifting, responses reveal that the young people surveyed in England and Wales are more accepting of the civil law than the young people surveyed in Northern Ireland.
- Shoplifting is considered wrong by 93% of pupils in the Northern Ireland survey, but by 85% of young people in the England and Wales survey.
- In the England and Wales sample, almost three quarters believe it is wrong to cycle after dark without lights, whereas in the Northern Ireland sample, just over half hold this view.
- On the issue of writing graffiti, two thirds of the England and Wales sample believe it is wrong, as opposed to less than half of the Northern Ireland sample.
- A higher proportion of the pupils in the England and Wales survey, than in the Northern Ireland survey believe certain law-breaking behaviours are wrong: travelling without a ticket (by 11 percentage points); playing truant (by 5 percentage points); buying alcohol under the legal age (by 3 percentage points) and buying cigarettes under the legal age (by 2 percentage points).

Figure 31 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use in England and Wales compared to Northern Ireland



- Comparison of responses on the substance use theme shows that, with the exception of marijuana, a higher proportion of the young people included in the Northern Ireland survey are opposed to substance use, than their counterparts in England and Wales.
- The differences in levels of response indicating that they believe the behaviour to be wrong are 12 percentage points on using heroin, 11 percentage points on smoking cigarettes, 9 percentage points on becoming drunk, 6 percentage points on sniffing butane gas and 3 percentage points on sniffing glue.

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Francis L.J. & Greer, J.E. (1992). Measuring moral values among Catholic and Protestant adolescents in Northern Ireland. Journal of Moral Education, 21, 59-65.