

# Arts and cultural participation among 17-year-olds

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# Outline

1. Background to the study
2. Patterns of participation at 17
3. Schools and cultural participation
4. Cultural participation and young people's outcomes
5. Implications for policy

# Background to the study

- Builds on an earlier study of arts and cultural participation among 9- and 13-year-olds; and those under 5
- Broad definition of cultural participation, including playing a musical instrument, taking music/ drama/ dance lessons, reading, digital culture
- Draws on Growing Up in Ireland data on over 6,000 17/18-year-olds, their families and schools
- Key transition period: senior cycle or have left school; may set the tone for post-school engagement

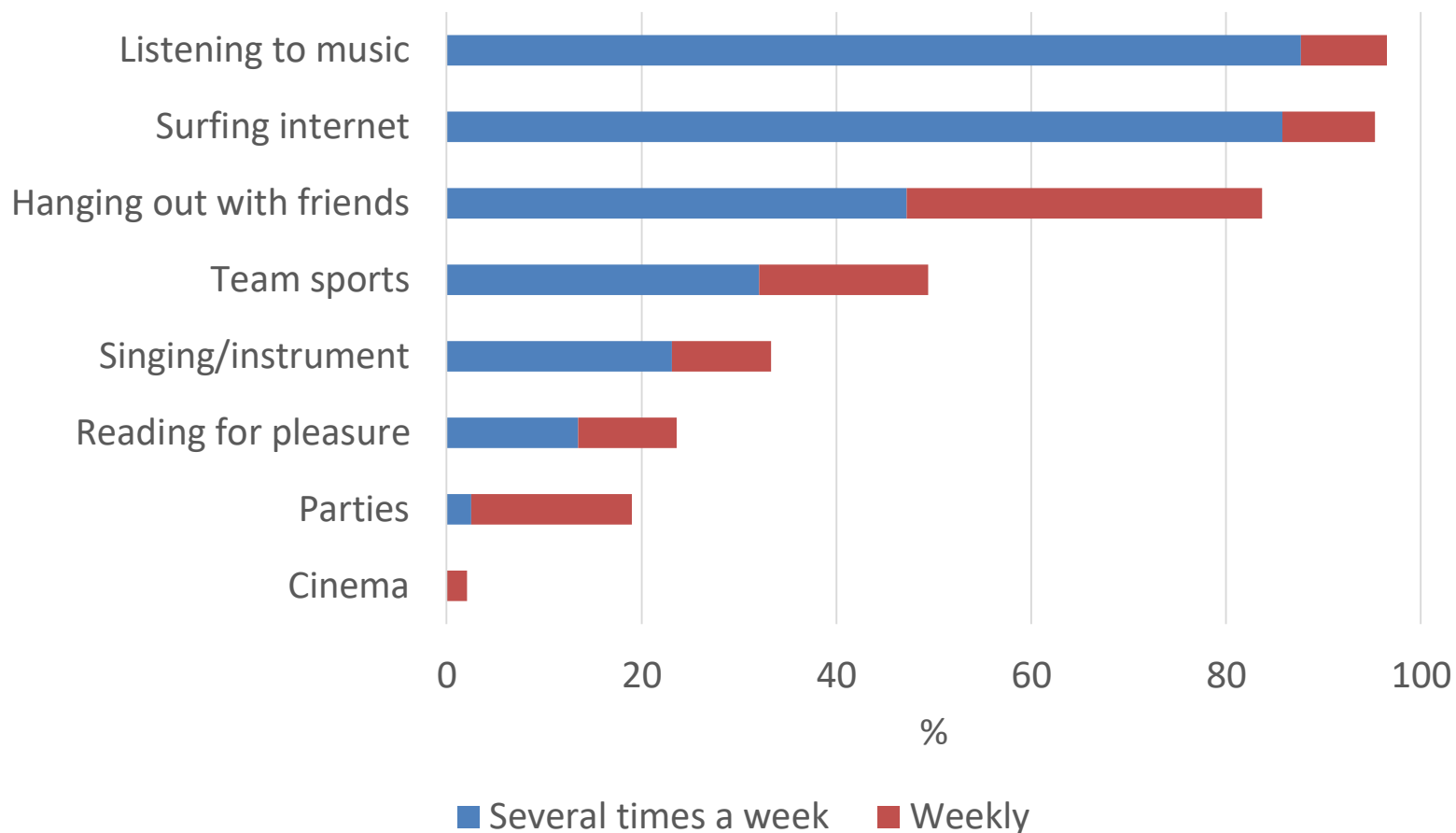
# Research questions

1. How does cultural participation at 17 years of age vary by gender, family background, migrant status and having a special educational need (SEN)?
2. How do young people access the arts at school and does this vary by type of school?
3. Does cultural participation have an impact on cognitive skills (such as vocabulary development and academic performance) and non-cognitive outcomes (such as self-esteem and socio-emotional wellbeing)?

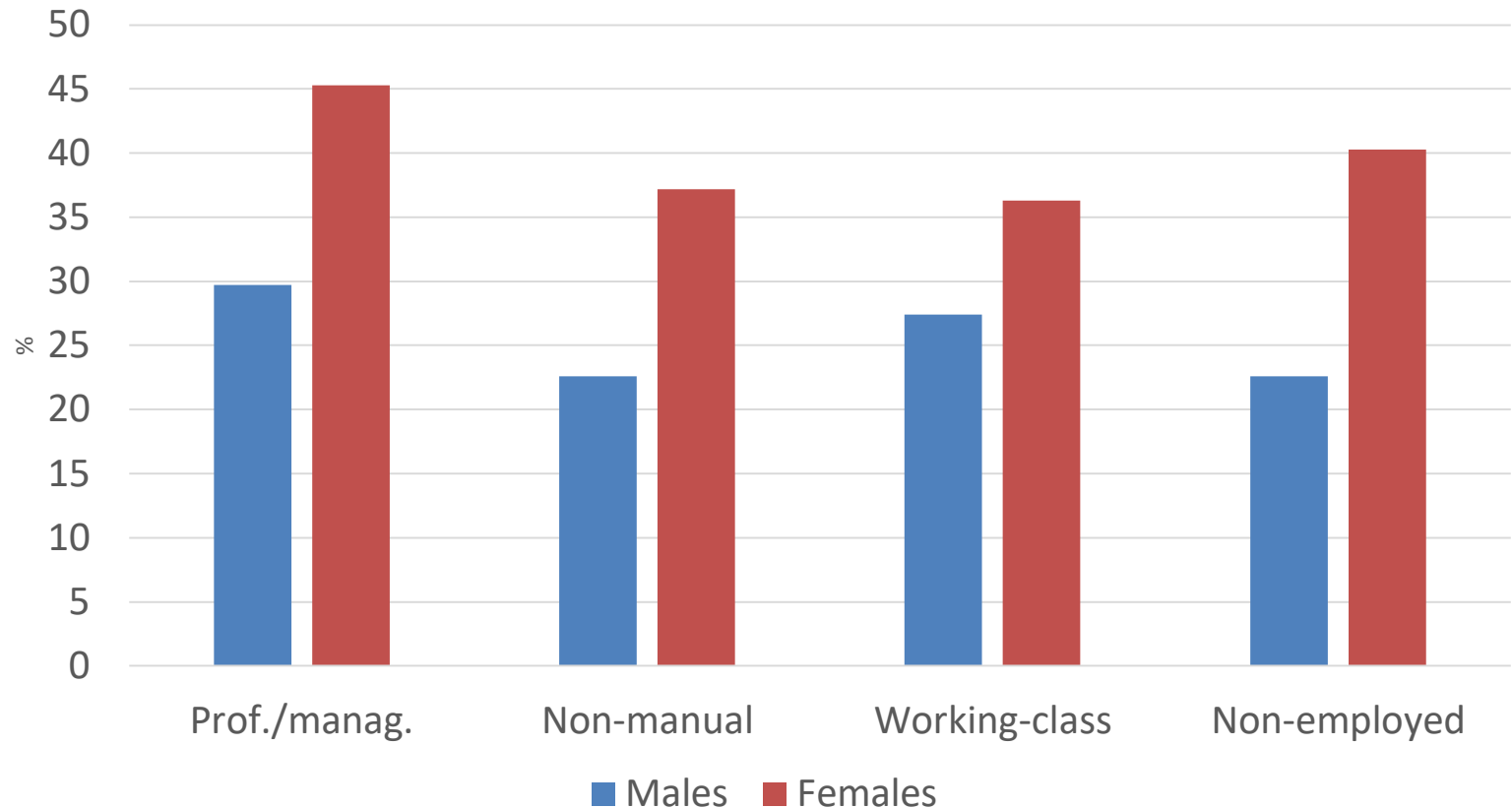
# Patterns of participation at 17



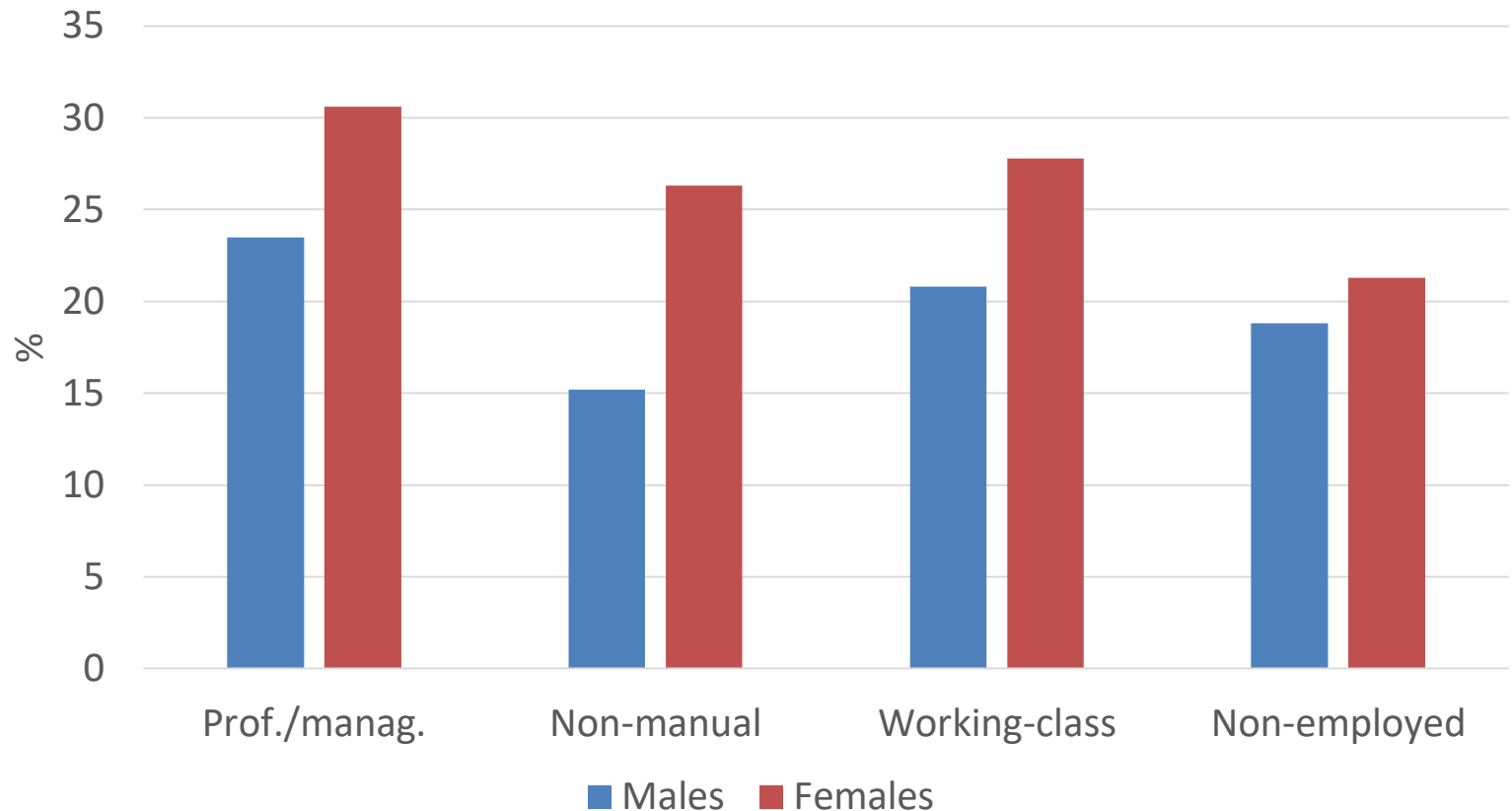
# Most common activities



# Gender and social background differences in singing/playing an instrument



# Gender and social background differences in reading for pleasure





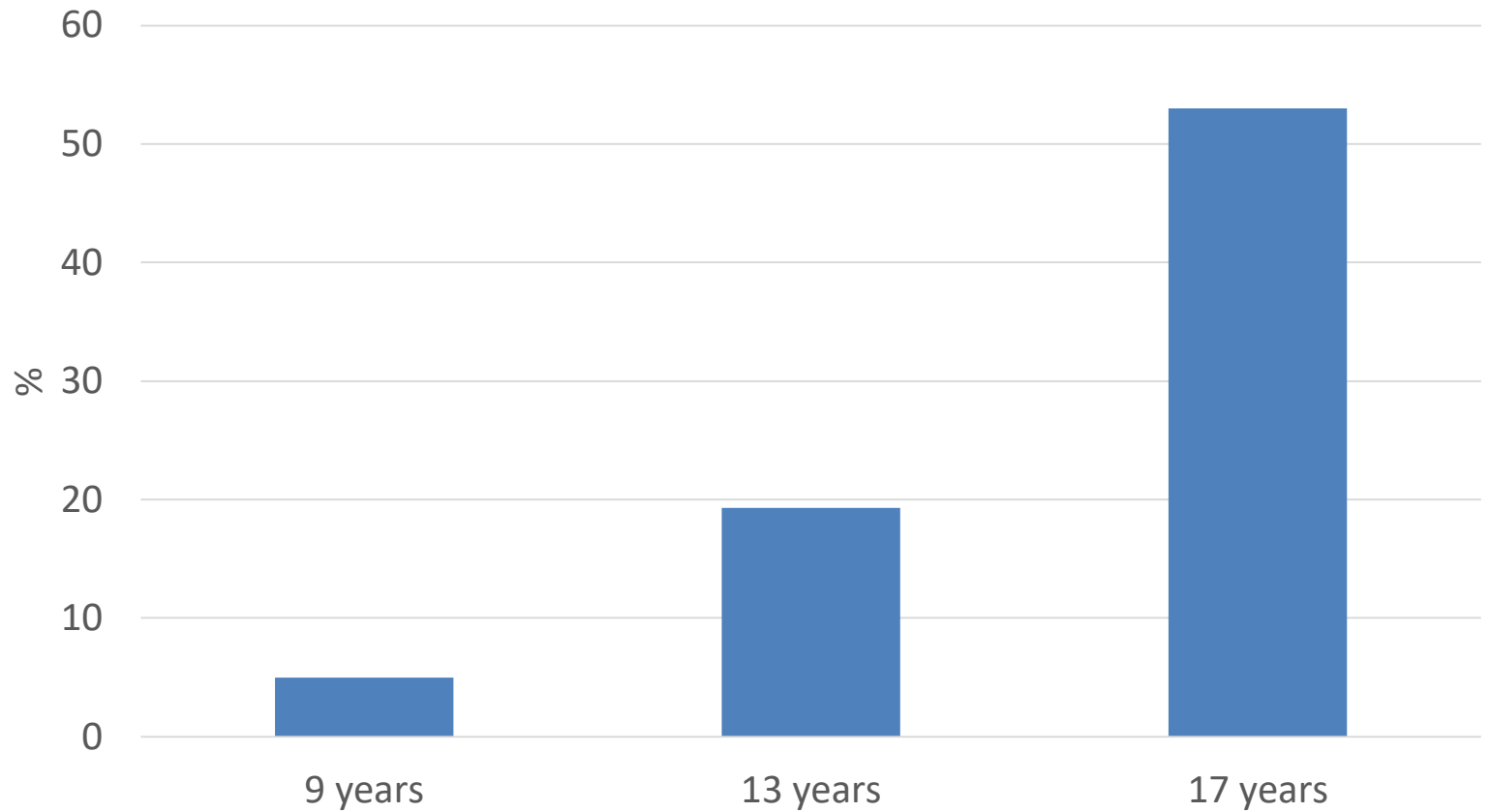
## Other activities

- Taking a music/drama/dance lesson is more common among young women and those from more advantaged families
- This group is less likely to engage in digital culture (TV/internet), at least on weekdays
- Cinema attendance is the only activity that is equally common across social groups
- No significant differences in participation by migrant status or SEN (in contrast to younger ages)

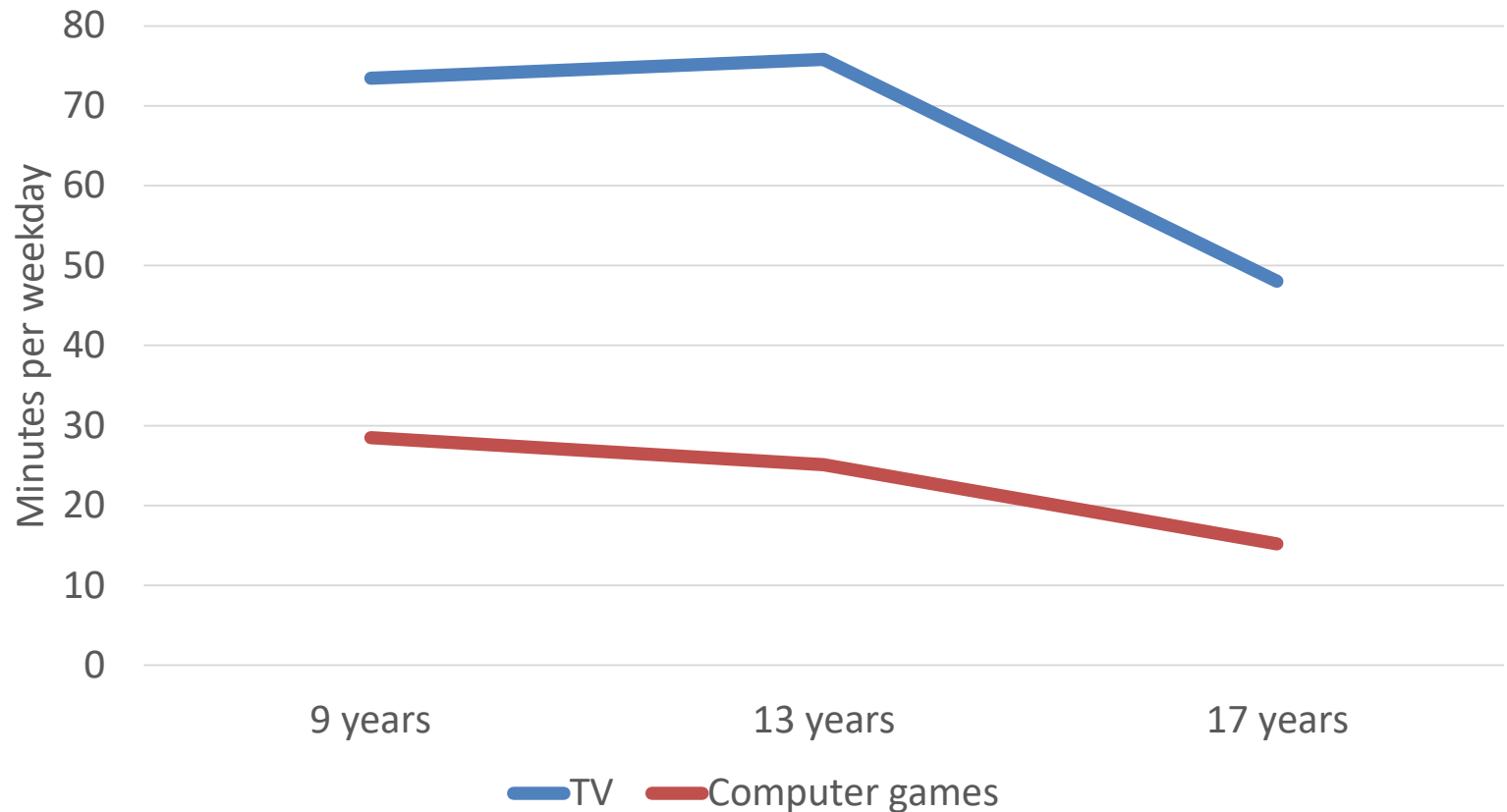
# Cultural participation from 9 to 17 years of age

- Those who are involved in cultural activities at 9 and 13 are more likely to be involved at 17
- But decline in all types of cultural participation between 13 and 17
- The decline is greatest for those in their Leaving Certificate year and those who have already left school

# % who never read for pleasure



# Decline also evident for time on TV and computer games (time use diary data)



# Schools and cultural participation

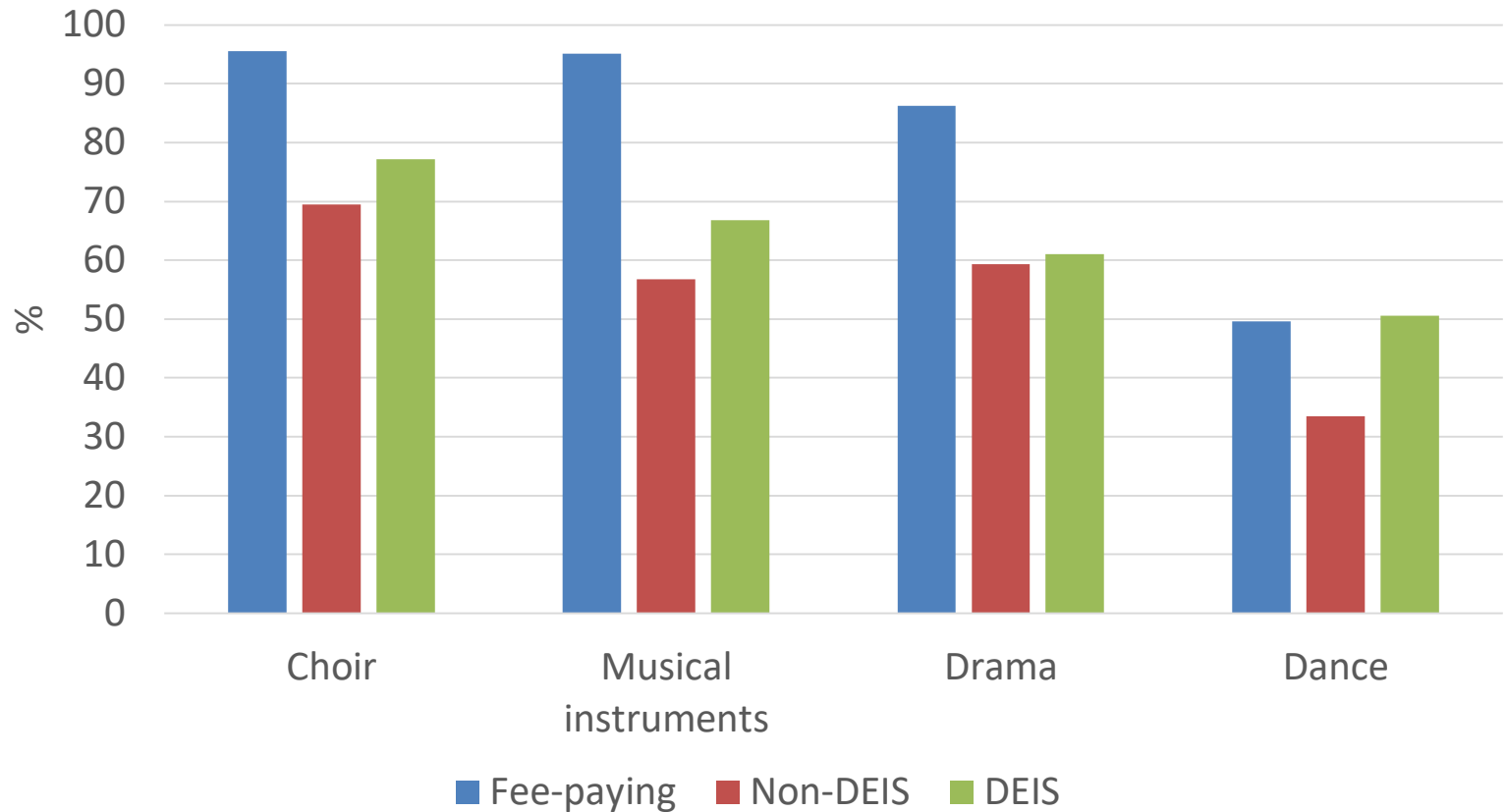


# Art and Music as Leaving Certificate subjects

- More likely to be offered in larger schools, fee-paying schools and girls' schools
- Young women are much more likely to take Art and Music
- Music is taken by more advantaged groups
- Those who took Transition Year are more likely to take Art or Music

# Extracurricular arts provision by school social mix

Also higher in girls' and larger schools



# DEIS schools

- As likely as (non-fee-paying) non-DEIS schools to provide arts/culture after school
- Students in DEIS schools do not differ in their take-up of cultural classes, all else being equal
- They were more likely than those of similar backgrounds in non-DEIS schools to say that second-level education was a ‘lot of help’ in appreciating arts/culture



# Cultural participation and outcomes



# Influence of earlier participation on outcomes at 17

- Reading for pleasure: improved vocabulary test scores and Junior Certificate performance
- Music/drama/dance lessons: higher JC grades
- Less evidence for non-cognitive outcomes but:
  - Music-making and cinema-going associated with greater life satisfaction
  - Three or more hours per day on computer games: lower grades, poorer life satisfaction, lower self-esteem and greater socio-emotional difficulties

# Implications for policy

- Challenge in making the arts fully inclusive, given gender and background differences in participation
- Importance of early involvement; also need to bolster engagement at key transition phase
- Schools as an important domain for access to the arts/culture but provision may reinforce gender and social differentiation – cross-school cooperation/ community provision
- Success of DEIS schools in bridging some of the gap
- Potential for greater exposure through senior cycle short courses; need for an improved balance between formal and informal learning (senior cycle review)
- Impact of Covid-19: lack of systematic evidence but school closures may have widened the gap in cultural participation; disruption may have accelerated a decline in involvement (except for digital culture)