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# CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN IRELAND

JAMES LAURENCE AND EMER SMYTH



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## ABBREVIATIONS

CES-D	Center for Epidemiological Studies depression scale
CSPE	Civic, social and political education
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GUI	<i>Growing Up in Ireland</i>
ICCS	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
PE	Physical education
SAPS	Small Area Population Statistics

### Abbreviations within tables

ESL	Early school leaver
HH	Household
JCERT	Junior Certificate
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied programme
LCERT	Leaving Certificate
NBREG	Negative binomial regression
OLOGIT	Ordered logistic regression
OLS	Ordinary least squares regression
PCG	Primary caregiver
YP	Young person

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### INTRODUCTION

International research has shown that civic engagement, that is, volunteering in local services, can benefit both young people and their communities, while political engagement can strengthen a society's democratic culture. The *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* (2019) policy framework highlights the importance of young people feeling connected, respected and contributing to their world. To date, however, there has been an absence of systematic research on this aspect of young people's transition to adulthood in Ireland. Further, although the government strategy *Our Rural Future* highlights a lack of access to facilities and transport for young people living in rural areas, little is known about how this might impact on their civic and political engagement. It is therefore crucial to have an evidence base to identify the drivers of civic engagement in order to better support young people's involvement. This study aims to fill this gap by drawing on rich information on 20 year olds from Cohort '98 of the *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) study.

This study adopts a multidimensional approach to examining civic and political engagement in urban and rural areas, covering: involvement in volunteering; taking part in political activities (including low-intensity activities, such as signing a petition, as well as high-intensity activities, such as taking part in a demonstration); level of interest in politics; and being registered to vote. In this study, rural areas are defined as living in open country or a town with a population of less than 5,000. Urban/rural location was measured when the Cohort '98 members were nine years of age, allowing us to examine how the local area shaped young people's middle childhood, adolescence and the transition to early adulthood.

The main research questions are:

1. Does civic and political engagement vary between rural and urban areas?
2. What factors are related to civic and political engagement? Do the factors associated with engagement differ between rural and urban settings?
3. How is civic and political engagement related to outcomes among young adults, including their wellbeing (life satisfaction and depressive symptoms), the extent to which they consider themselves an adult, their sense of trust in others and their confidence in institutions?

Both early (ages 9 to 13) and later (ages 17 to 20) factors are examined, tracking the period from 9 years of age to early adulthood (20 years of age).

## **RURAL–URBAN DIFFERENCES**

Levels of volunteering are found to be significantly higher among rural youth than among their urban counterparts. At 17 years of age, 31 per cent of rural young people were engaged in volunteering, compared to 27 per cent of those in urban areas. At 20 years of age, overall levels of involvement had increased for both groups, with 36 per cent of rural young adults volunteering, compared with 31 per cent of those in urban areas. On closer inspection, this pattern was driven by higher levels of sports-related volunteering in rural areas (13% compared with 9%), with similar levels of involvement in other kinds of volunteering. Higher rates of sports volunteering are evident in rural areas, even taking account of a wide range of individual, family and local characteristics, perhaps indicating the greater importance of sports organisations in rural community life.

Differences in political engagement by urban and rural background depend on the dimension examined. Urban youth are found to be more likely than those from rural areas to engage in both high-intensity political activities (21% vs. 13%) – such as taking part in a demonstration – and low-intensity activities (62% vs. 53%) – such as signing a petition. This difference is still apparent when we take account of a wide range of other characteristics. This may reflect some rural youth possessing lower levels of political efficacy – feeling less confident that they can influence politics – which can come with feeling further away from the political ‘centre’. However, levels of political interest and the proportion who were registered to vote are similar between urban and rural youth.

## **INFLUENCES ON VOLUNTEERING**

Levels of involvement in voluntary activity are found to vary by family socio-economic background, with significantly higher rates found among those whose mothers have higher levels of education, while those growing up in rented accommodation have lower rates. Young women are significantly less likely to engage in sports volunteering, in keeping with their lower levels of involvement in organised sports overall, but slightly more likely than young men to engage in other forms of volunteering. Young people’s own educational trajectory is strongly related to involvement: those who were more positive about school in adolescence, those who took part in the Transition Year programme and those who achieved higher grades in the Leaving Certificate are all more likely to be volunteers as young adults. Going on to higher education also serves to enhance engagement in volunteering, both sports and non-sports, while there is no evidence that part-time job commitments displace volunteering opportunities.

Young people are more involved in sports volunteering where they have facilities (such as sports clubs and youth clubs) for young people locally and ready access to public transport. Having these local facilities is linked to other forms of volunteering only for urban youth. Engagement in out-of-school activities appears

to act as an important pathway into (non-sports) volunteering, with higher rates of involvement among those who had previously been involved in organised clubs or groups (such as youth clubs or scouts/guides) or cultural activities (such as drama or music lessons/clubs). Similarly, early involvement in sports clubs or teams is associated with later sports volunteering. In addition, part of the reason young people with disabilities and migrant youth are less likely to volunteer in adulthood is accounted for by lower levels of involvement in extracurricular activities in their youth. This suggests that fostering extracurricular involvement among more marginalised groups, while they are growing up, could help close later-life inequalities in relation to social integration.

## **INFLUENCES ON POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT**

The factors associated with political engagement vary across different types of involvement. Involvement in political activities (such as signing a petition or joining a political protest) is greater among young women than men, and among young men with more women in their friendship network, most likely reflecting the timing of the survey against the backdrop of the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. Young women were also more likely to be registered to vote but expressed lower levels of interest in politics in general. There is a strong social gradient in all types of political engagement, with those with graduate mothers engaging in more political activities, expressing more interest in politics and being more likely to be registered to vote. In addition, those growing up in rented accommodation tend to participate less. Despite a strong social gradient in political engagement, area-level disadvantage operates in a different way: having a weaker social structure (with fewer friends, family and facilities such as youth/sports clubs) and more neighbourhood disorder locally are related to higher political activity, potentially in response to negative contexts. Migrant-origin young people (that is, those whose parents were born outside Ireland) tend to have lower levels of political engagement in terms of political activities, interest and voter registration, most likely reflecting the role of greater awareness of the political system among Irish-origin families.

Doing better academically in school and going on to higher education are related to greater political engagement, with having taken Transition Year also being associated with more involvement in political activities. As with volunteering, involvement in out-of-school activities plays a role in channelling young people towards particular kinds of political engagement. Those involved in cultural activities in adolescence tend to express more interest in politics and to be more involved in political activities. In contrast, sports involvement in adolescence is linked to lower levels of political engagement.

## ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES

Participation in volunteering is found to have clear benefits for young people: volunteers have higher levels of life satisfaction and a stronger adult identity than non-volunteers, even taking account of their life satisfaction and adult identity three years earlier. The picture for political engagement is more complex and varies across different aspects of such involvement. Political interest is associated with greater levels of social trust but not with overall wellbeing. Those more engaged in political activities do not differ from those less engaged in terms of their levels of life satisfaction, but they are more likely to report depressive symptoms. On closer inspection, greater depressive symptoms are found only among young people living in areas with weaker social infrastructures and this pattern holds only for more individualised political activities (such as signing a petition or posting online) rather than more high-intensity activities such as joining a protest. Furthermore, those more politically active are less confident in some institutions, such as the State and the media. It may be that political engagement is a response to feeling dissatisfied with the status quo but may also be related to a more negative view of the potential for change, at least in areas with poorer social networks and/or where young people are not linked into collective political actions.

The report also finds that young people living in areas with a stronger social infrastructure (with more friends and family in the area; leisure, and sports facilities suitable for young adults; and places to meet up with other people) have better life outcomes than their peers who do not. They report higher life satisfaction, lower depression, higher social trust, more confidence in the State, media and healthcare system, and they more strongly identify as being an adult. There is also evidence that volunteering can protect young people from the negative effects of living in areas with weaker social infrastructures on their life satisfaction, risk of depression, adult identity and social trust.

## LIMITATIONS

There are some limitations to the study, notably that the data do not measure whether a young person lives in an urban or rural area at every wave. The indicator of urban/rural location therefore captures differences between *growing up* in urban or rural environments. This information is available and could be matched to respondents in the GUI data by adding area-level identifiers (e.g., their Small Area Codes) to the data. Furthermore, we do not know whether volunteering and political engagement reflect the availability of opportunities to get involved locally or in young people's social networks, and we do not have information on young people's earlier motives and beliefs. Nonetheless, the longitudinal nature of GUI data provides rich insights into the dynamics of civic and political engagement, tracing the relationship with experiences from middle childhood to early adulthood.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

The study findings point to three important domains for policy development in relation to civic and political engagement: education; out-of-school structured activities; and rural and community development.

Educational experiences (such as school engagement, take-up of Transition Year and achieving better grades) are strongly associated with civic and political engagement, in keeping with international research, which highlights the importance of school-based citizenship education, particularly for more disadvantaged groups. Civic, social and political education (CSPE) has now been integrated into the wellbeing programme at junior cycle, though previous research highlighted the often-marginalised nature of the subject in an exam-focused system. There is no comparable provision at senior cycle and the study findings suggest the importance of such provision, particularly for more socio-economically disadvantaged and migrant-origin youth. Taking part in Transition Year is related to greater involvement in volunteering and political activities later on, even taking account of the prior profile of Transition Year participants. There are potentially lessons to be learned for the rest of senior cycle from the success of Transition Year in the sphere of civic learning. The findings suggest too that broader efforts to promote school engagement and educational achievement through curriculum reform and promotion of a more positive school climate may have a positive spill-over effect on civic and political engagement.

The study findings highlight the clear role of adolescent involvement in structured out-of-school activities in channelling young people towards different types of civic and political engagement (both at age 13 and age 17). However, the financial resources required to pay for such activities may act as a constraint on involvement for particular groups of young people, highlighting the need for subsidised provision for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Schools can play an important part in encouraging extracurricular participation, but smaller schools face greater challenges in offering such activities, suggesting the need for school-based provision to be supplemented with facilities based in the broader community.

The study findings provide a nuanced picture of rural–urban differences, with greater involvement of rural youth in sports volunteering and urban youth in political activities. The results suggest that family background, school and neighbourhood characteristics can crosscut the rural–urban difference in complex ways. Of notable interest is the buffering or protective role played by volunteering for young people living in areas with weaker social infrastructures (fewer networks and facilities). Here, volunteering may help protect young people from the negative effects of this environment on their life satisfaction, risk of depression, sense of identity as an adult and their trust in others. These patterns support the

concern of the *National Volunteering Strategy* with seeking to increase the diversity of groups involved in volunteering and point to the potential value of further involvement of young adults as volunteers in community development initiatives in enhancing outcomes for youth and the neighbourhoods in which they live.



## CHAPTER 1

---

### Introduction

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The acquisition of voting rights at the age of 18 has been a traditional marker of the transition to adulthood. However, young people are often involved in civic and political activities before they reach the age of 18, and the attitudes and values they form during adolescence may have longer-term influences on their political engagement (Neundorf and Smets, 2017). International research has shown that civic engagement, including volunteering and involvement in political groups, is beneficial for young people, improving their health and wellbeing (Aminzadeh et al., 2013; Borgonovi, 2008). In addition, volunteering benefits communities and society as a whole, such as providing help and support for residents, filling important gaps in resources, and contributing to community development (Putnam, 2000; Hodgkinson, 2003). In fact, recent estimates put the value of volunteering to the Irish economy at over €5 billion per annum (Volunteer Ireland, 2022). Political engagement is also critical for a healthy democracy (Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Burstein, 1998; Larcinese et al., 2013).

Little systematic research, however, has been conducted in Ireland on this aspect of young people's transition to adulthood. The government strategy, *Our Rural Future* (Government of Ireland, 2021), highlights issues around access to facilities and transport for young people living in rural areas and emphasises the importance of the participation of young people in community and civic life for the sustainability of rural communities. It is therefore crucial to have an evidence base to identify the drivers of civic engagement in order to better support young people's involvement. This study fills an important gap by looking at the ways in which family, school, peer networks and locality (in particular, being brought up in an urban or rural area) shape young people's civic and political engagement, drawing on Cohort '98 of *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) data at 20 years of age.

The study adopts a multidimensional approach to examining civic and political engagement, covering involvement in volunteering, taking part in political activities (including low-intensity activities, such as signing a petition, as well as high-intensity activities, such as taking part in a demonstration), level of interest in politics and being registered to vote. The main research questions are:

1. Does civic and political engagement vary between rural and urban areas?
2. What factors are related to civic and political engagement? Do the factors associated with engagement differ between rural and urban settings?
3. How is civic and political engagement related to outcomes among young adults, including their wellbeing (life satisfaction and depressive symptoms), the extent to which they consider themselves an adult, their sense of trust in others and their confidence in institutions?

The longitudinal nature of the GUI study enables us to explore factors both in early life (middle childhood, ages 9 and 13) and later life (late adolescence/early adulthood, ages 17 and 20) that are related to civic engagement, tracking the period from age 9 to early adulthood.

The following section (1.2) places this study in the context of previous research on civic and political engagement among young adults. Section 1.3 looks at why engagement might be expected to reflect place, Section 1.4 outlines the measures and analytical approach used in the study, while Section 1.5 presents descriptive analyses of patterns of engagement in rural and urban areas.

## **1.2 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG YOUNG ADULTS**

International research has highlighted the lower, and declining, rates of voter turnout found among young adults (Sloam, 2016) but other commentators have pointed to the issues-based nature of their political involvement, which is not always well captured in traditional measures of political engagement (Pickard, 2019). Furthermore, the degree of variation by age group in different forms of political engagement varies across European countries (Briggs, 2017; Sloam, 2016; Kitanova, 2020). Looking at broader civic engagement, particularly volunteering, the patterning by age group is reversed, with higher levels of participation among younger people (Dederichs and Kruse, 2023; Salamon et al., 2018). In addition, civic involvement in different types of organisations may have different drivers; for example, different motivations and resources are linked with people's involvement in sports and various non-sporting-related organisations (Gray et al., 2012; Stukas et al., 2014). These findings highlight the need to look at specific aspects of civic and political engagement and the way such engagement varies across different groups of young adults. The remainder of this section looks at the factors associated with different types of civic and political engagement, drawing on international and Irish research.

### **1.2.1 The role of individual and family factors**

Families have been seen as playing a central role in the political socialisation of young people. Family social background, particularly parental education, has been found to be associated with young people's knowledge of the political system and civic engagement (Beck and Jennings, 1982; Janmaat and Hoskins, 2021; Grasso and Giugni, 2022), with the highest levels of political disaffection found among socio-economically disadvantaged young people (Hoskins and Janmaat, 2016). Furthermore, these social differences are found to widen during early adolescence (Janmaat and Hoskins, 2021). In Italy, Riniolo and Ortensi (2021) have found that lower levels of political activity among migrant-origin youth are accounted for by socio-economic factors. Some commentators argue that the mechanism for political socialisation lies in the strong relationship between parental and offspring

educational attainment. Indeed, having attended higher education is positively associated with voting and volunteering, net of levels of involvement prior to higher education entry (Yang and Hoskins, 2022), while educational underperformance is predictive of political cynicism in adult life (Bynner et al., 1996). However, Jennings et al. (2009) suggest that at least some of the intergenerational effect is related to direct transmission, with discussions of political issues among family members playing a central role in promoting engagement in more middle-class families (see also Janmaat and Hoskins, 2021). In contrast, political disaffection may be intergenerational in more disadvantaged contexts (Brady et al., 2015). In general, commentators have highlighted the fact that this process has been given less attention than the transmission of social advantage in educational or occupational outcomes despite its obvious implications for broader social cohesion (Hoskins and Janmaat, 2019).

Gender differences in political engagement are found to vary by the dimension of activity analysed (Grasso and Smith, 2022). An American study of 14 year olds indicated that girls and boys do not differ in intention to engage in more conventional political activities, but that girls indicate more orientation towards social movement actions (such as volunteering or protesting) while boys indicate more orientation to radical action (such as occupying buildings or blocking traffic) (Hooghe and Stolle, 2004). One German study pointed to higher levels of male involvement in institutional activities (such as contacting a politician and joining a political party) as well as in expressive activities (such as taking part in public political discussions), but higher levels of female involvement in some types of non-institutional participation (such as signing a petition or boycotting products). Part of the gender gap is explained by greater political self-efficacy levels among men than women (Pfanzelt and Spies, 2019). A study in the UK indicated that the gender gap in political engagement widened between the ages of 16 and 30, though it was difficult to explain the drivers of this pattern (Janmaat et al., 2022).

Political engagement is found to be greater where connections with family, peers, school and neighbourhood are stronger (Duke et al., 2009). It is also influenced by the extent of political discussion with mothers, teachers and peers (Quintelier, 2015; Pfanzelt and Spies, 2019). Studies have found that higher levels of religiosity, particularly more religious attendance, can shape different forms of political engagement, with higher levels of religiosity increasing engagement in more conventional forms of participation, such as voting (Gerber et al. 2016) but potentially depressing more non-traditional forms of engagement, such as protest (Arikan and Bloom, 2018).

Research on more general forms of civic participation, particularly volunteering, also indicates the importance of early influences: youth volunteering is predictive of volunteering in adult life (Hart et al., 2007). This is largely because of integration into networks of relationships and the formation of civic attitudes and identities (Stolle and Hooghe, 2004). Voluntary group participation in adolescence is also associated with adult political participation (McFarland and Thomas, 2006). In addition, participation in school clubs is associated with political activity involvement and social and charitable involvement one year after leaving school (Glanville, 1999; Fredricks and Eccles, 2006).

Kitanova (2020), pooling Eurobarometer data on 28 European countries, indicates that young adults from a higher social class and those with higher educational attainment are more likely to engage in formal political participation (e.g., voting). The same study found no significant gender differences (Kitanova, 2020). A social gradient in political engagement among young people is evident across countries, but the size of this gap is found to vary, indicating the potential for malleability through school or other factors (Hoskins and Janmaat, 2019). In the latter six-country comparison, the relationship between social background and various kinds of political engagement in Ireland is around the middle of the distribution, with stronger social gradients in voting and legal protest in England and weaker gaps in Poland.

As with those involved in political activities, young people involved in volunteering (or who are members of a voluntary organisation) are more likely to come from highly educated and higher social class families (Kitanova, 2000). However, one German study suggests that the social gap in volunteering narrows as young people grow older because higher education participation is associated with a steeper rate of decline in involvement (Dederichs and Kruse, 2023). The findings regarding gender differences are less clear cut than those for social background. Some studies indicate that males are more likely to be volunteers (Kitanova, 2000; Mainar et al., 2015) while others point to higher volunteering levels among females (Sarre and Tarling, 2010; Mahatmya and Lohman, 2012). These contrasting findings may reflect differences in the type of volunteering covered, as Gil-Lacruz et al. (2015) find greater male involvement in leisure and professional organisations but greater female involvement in social-justice-related volunteering. Greater religiosity is associated with greater involvement in volunteering (Gibson, 2008), as are stronger connections with family and the broader community (Duke et al., 2009; Mahatmya and Lohman, 2012). Lastly, religiosity is found to be a key driver of volunteering, for both religious and non-religious organisations, which may be driven by greater prosocial values and/or stronger embeddedness into local community networks (Gibson, 2008; Putnam and Campbell, 2012).

### 1.2.2 The role of location

Looking at adult political participation, researchers have reached contrasting conclusions on urban–rural differences. The mobilisation model proposes that those closer to the political centre will be more involved in political activities (Milbrath, 1972). In contrast, others have suggested that urban areas have weaker social ties, reducing opportunities for engagement in political activities (Verba and Nie, 1972; Putnam, 2000). Place may further influence the political socialisation of young people through peer groups in the local neighbourhood and the school attended (Deimel et al., 2020). Schulz et al. (2010) found greater levels of political knowledge among adolescents in urban settings, at least in some countries taking part in the 2009 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), but this pattern was not evident in the later 2016 wave of data collection (Schulz et al., 2016). Similarly, analyses of German ICCS data for 2016 find that the degree of urbanisation or levels of wealth in the local area do not influence intentions to vote among secondary students (Deimel et al., 2022). Pooling European Values Study data across 21 countries, Gil-Lacruz et al. (2015) find that young adults (aged 18–29 years) living in urban areas are less likely to be involved in leisure-related volunteering, but no significant differences are found in relation to other forms of voluntary activity (professional, social justice or conscience-related).

Over and above location, there is evidence that civic and political engagement among young people tends to be greater in more cohesive communities (Duke et al., 2009; Lenzi et al., 2013). One American study found that young people’s commitment to democratic goals was stronger when they felt communities were more connected (Flanagan et al., 2007). Similarly, Kahne and Sporte (2008) found that neighbourhood social capital enhanced young people’s commitment to civic participation, and that growing up in environments richer in local connectivity and a sense of community can drive prosocial behaviour later in life (Duke et al., 2009). Accordingly, community-level factors that are associated with more cohesive communities, such as less disadvantage, greater stability and more older adults (e.g., aged 65+), may also foster greater civic engagement among young people (Laurence, 2011, 2016).

### 1.2.3 The role of schools

The cross-national International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) has provided an important evidence base for examining the political socialisation of young people and the potential role of schools in this process. Schools can influence political awareness through the formal curriculum, mainly the provision of citizenship education or related subjects (Whiteley, 2012), though countries differ in the place of this subject within the overall curriculum (Broom, 2017; Keating, 2009; Schulz et al., 2016). However, other research points to a much more important role for the informal school climate, particularly the extent to which

students are encouraged to engage in open discussion in the class, expressing their own opinions and being respected by teachers for doing so (Hoskins et al., 2012). Schools may also foster political engagement through allowing students a say in decision-making processes in the school, for example, through school councils (Hoskins et al., 2012).

Some studies have highlighted significant between-school variation in some aspects of political engagement (such as intention to vote and to engage in illegal protests) but not in others (such as intention to participate in political organisations) (Diemel and Abs, 2022). Political activities in school (such as school councils) and an open classroom climate are found to promote political engagement, as measured by intention to vote (Hoskins et al., 2017). At least some of the social gap in political engagement relates to unequal access to an open classroom climate for discussion and to the opportunity for engaging in political activities at school (Hoskins et al., 2017). This inequality is manifest in differences by the social composition of the school population and by variation in experiences by social background among students attending the same school (Claes et al., 2017; Hoskins and Janmaat, 2016, 2019). Gender differences are also found, with girls more likely than boys to see the classroom climate as open (Claes et al., 2017). However, at least in England, the amount of citizenship education is found to be particularly effective in enhancing the political engagement of those from more working-class backgrounds (Hoskins et al., 2017), with the authors suggesting the value of extending compulsory citizenship education to the 16–18 age group. A systematic review of controlled trials has further found that participatory approaches to citizenship education are the most effective and that high-quality teacher training is a crucial ingredient in effectiveness (Donbavand and Hoskins, 2021).

Levels of school belonging are found to predict civic and political engagement among young adults (Duke et al., 2009; Mahatmya and Lohman, 2012). The structure of the educational system can also play a part, with social background differences in political engagement among young adults larger in systems with early tracking between academic and vocational pathways (Hoskins and Janmaat, 2019). At the individual level, political engagement is found to be lower among young people in vocational or less academic tracks than among those in college-bound pathways (Janmaat et al., 2022).

#### **1.2.4 Civic engagement and outcomes**

Research findings on the relationship between civic engagement and outcomes among young adults have often been inconsistent, frequently because studies fail to take account of the selective characteristics of those who take part in civic and political activities, and because of reverse causality (where better wellbeing can enhance involvement) (Laurence, 2021). Furthermore, several studies group civic participation (such as volunteering) with involvement in other structured out-of-

school activities (see, for example, Fredricks and Eccles, 2006; Bundick, 2011); this makes it difficult to identify the precise effects of volunteering separately from those of other activities.

On the one hand, a systematic review of the literature (Fenn et al., 2022) indicates a lack of consensus in the literature on the relationship between civic and political engagement and wellbeing among young adults. Similarly, using data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, Fox (2019) found no significant relationship between volunteering and mental wellbeing, but that volunteering was an effective way of building social capital (measured in terms of membership of local groups, neighbourhood cohesion and connection). Using British Household Panel Survey data, Tabassum et al. (2016) found that the mental health benefits of volunteering are confined to those over 40 years of age.

On the other hand, studies from the US and Australia have indicated significant benefits from engagement. Analyses of data from the Add Health study in the US found that youth volunteering was negatively associated with later depressive symptoms (Ballard et al., 2019; Wray-Lake et al., 2019). However, involvement in community work or fundraising, where required by the school or other group, did not yield the same benefits to wellbeing (Kim and Morgül, 2017). Volunteering was also positively associated with years of schooling and later earnings, though not with adult voting behaviour (Ballard et al., 2019; Kim and Morgül, 2017). Similarly, an Australian longitudinal study found that adolescent volunteering was positively related to school completion (Moorfoot et al., 2015). Using pre- and post-test data from a UK youth engagement scheme, youth engagement was found to lead to significant improvements in subjective wellbeing, up to six months after completion, and to narrow the gap in wellbeing among young people from disadvantaged communities (Laurence, 2021).

### **1.2.5 Irish research**

There has been a lack of systematic research on civic and political engagement among young adults in Ireland. The ICCS study, however, in which Ireland took part in 2009 only, reveals some interesting insights into the experiences and behaviours of 14 year olds in this country. In a six-country study based on 2009 data, Irish teenagers were found to have relatively high levels of political engagement, with both family social background and the social mix of the class associated with access to an open classroom climate at school (Hoskins and Janmaat, 2019).

Looking across the full set of countries taking part in ICCS, levels of interest in political and social issues in Ireland are around average, though rates of involvement in voluntary groups are high (50% compared with a cross-country average of 34%) and expecting to vote in the future is somewhat above average (Schulz et al., 2010). Also using 2009 data, Irish students are found to perform

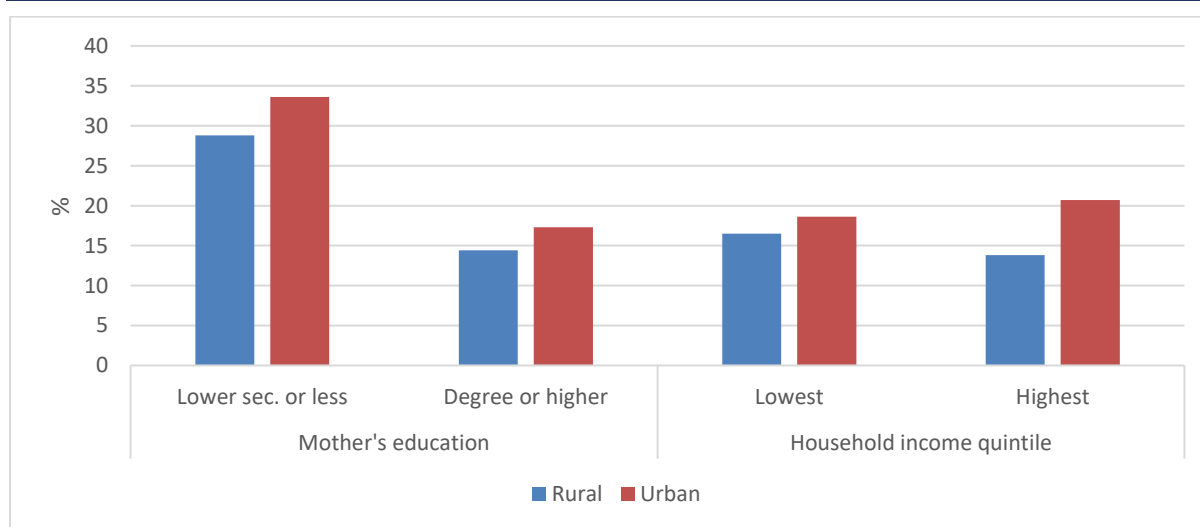


relatively well in tests of civic knowledge, with higher scores among those from more socio-economically advantaged families, where they discuss political or social issues with their parents regularly, where they engage in reading for pleasure more frequently and where they see classroom discussions as open. However, Irish students had relatively low levels of perceived influence on school decision-making processes compared with those in other countries (Cosgrove and Gilleece, 2012). Looking at the situation for young adults, Ireland has relatively high levels of involvement in voluntary organisations, with 36 per cent reporting being involved in a local organisation aimed at improving your local community, compared to an EU27 average of 15 per cent (Kitanova, 2020; Eurobarometer, 2021). In contrast, it is around the European average for formal political participation, with 56 per cent reporting having voted in the past three years, the same as the EU27 average (Kitanova, 2020).

### 1.3 WHY MIGHT PLACE MATTER?

This section draws on GUI data to trace some of the ways in which living in a rural or urban area might matter for young adult outcomes. In doing so, the discussion focuses on both composition – the social profile of families living in particular areas – and context – the characteristics of those areas in terms of availability of facilities and access to local networks. This section focuses on four groups of factors: the social and economic resources possessed by the population; access to social capital and networks locally; neighbourhood quality and access to services and facilities; and educational experiences. For the purposes of the study, rural areas relate to young people living in open country or a town with a population of less than 5,000, as measured when they were nine years of age (see Section 1.4.2 for more details). Later analyses also investigate a more finely differentiated measure of population density, but this binary distinction is found to capture the main axis of variation.

**FIGURE 1.1 MATERNAL EDUCATION AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME QUINTILE BY LOCATION**



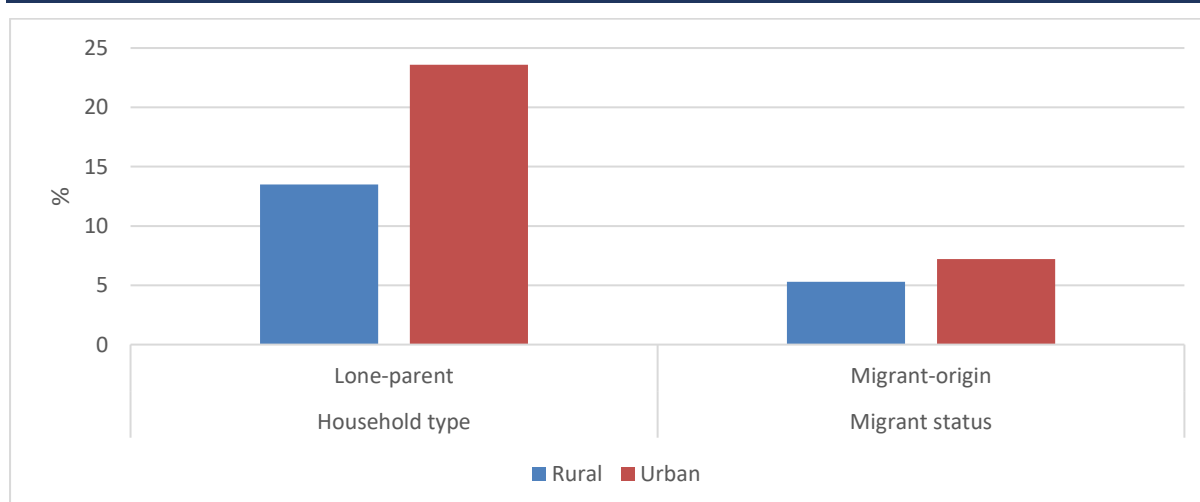
Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 1–4.*



Because of variation in the economic conditions and types of employment available locally, rural–urban differences are evident in the profile of families. Figure 1.1 looks at levels of maternal education and (equivalised) household income quintile in rural and urban areas. It is evident that urban areas are more polarised in profile, containing more graduates (17% vs. 14%) *and* more mothers with lower secondary education (or less) (34% vs. 29%). Similarly, families in urban areas are more likely to fall into the highest income group (21% vs. 14%), but are also more likely to have the lowest income levels (19% vs. 17%). Rural families are much more likely to be owner occupiers (87% vs. 73%) with a particular difference in the likelihood of being in the private rented sector (8% vs. 18%).

Other family characteristics differ by location. Lone-parent families are overrepresented in urban areas, comprising 24 per cent of households compared with 14 per cent in rural areas (Figure 1.2). Migrant-origin families are more likely to live in urban areas, making up 7 per cent of families there, as opposed to 5 per cent in rural areas. However, there is no significant difference in the proportion of children who were born outside Ireland. Mothers in urban areas are slightly more likely to report having an ongoing chronic illness or disability (13% compared with 10%), though no such difference is found in the prevalence of illness/disability among the nine-year-old children themselves. In addition, because GUI respondents were sampled on the basis of the primary school they attended, the female proportion is somewhat higher in urban than in rural areas (52% compared with 47%). Because of gender differences in patterns of civic and political participation (see Section 1.2), all of the analyses presented in this study control for gender.

**FIGURE 1.2 FAMILY STRUCTURE AND MIGRANT BACKGROUND BY LOCATION**

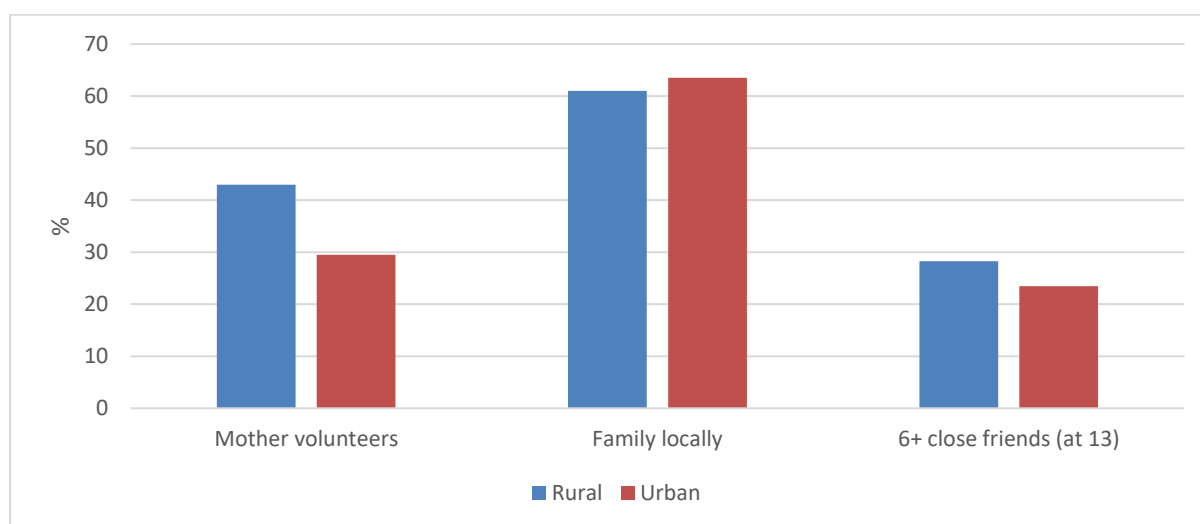


Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 1–4.*

Differences are evident in the kinds of social networks to which families and young people have access. Mothers living in rural areas are much more likely to be

involved in local voluntary groups than their urban counterparts (43% compared with 30%) (Figure 1.3). This is a pattern that we would expect, on the basis of international research, to influence the young person's own involvement (see, for example, Bekkers, 2007). Levels of belonging to a religious denomination, a potential indicator of social capital, were universally high among the sample, though slightly higher in rural areas (94% vs. 91%). Greater differences exist in the frequency with which young people attend religious services, with 60 per cent of 9 year olds and 22 per cent of 17 year olds attending weekly in rural areas, compared to 39 per cent of 9 year olds and 10 per cent of 17 year olds in urban areas. There are only modest differences in having family members living locally, with 64 per cent of urban households doing so compared with 61 per cent of rural households. There were no differences between rural and urban areas in the number of close friends that nine year olds had, though urban children were much more likely to 'do something' with their friends outside school on a frequent basis (36% compared with 15% doing so six or seven days a week). By age 13, some differences were evident, with rural young people slightly more likely to have large friendship groups (that is, six or more close friends) (28% vs. 24%).

**FIGURE 1.3 ACCESS TO SOCIAL CAPITAL AND NETWORKS BY LOCATION**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 1–4.*

In the first wave of the survey (when the child was nine years old), mothers were asked about access to a list of facilities locally. Not surprisingly, those living in urban areas are much more likely to have local facilities, including grocery shops (97% vs. 89%), a GP/health clinic (96% vs. 81%), regular public transport (84% vs. 48%), banks/credit unions (94% vs. 71%), a social welfare office (75% vs. 50%) and a library (89% vs. 65%). Almost all families report having a local school, whether they live in an urban or rural area.

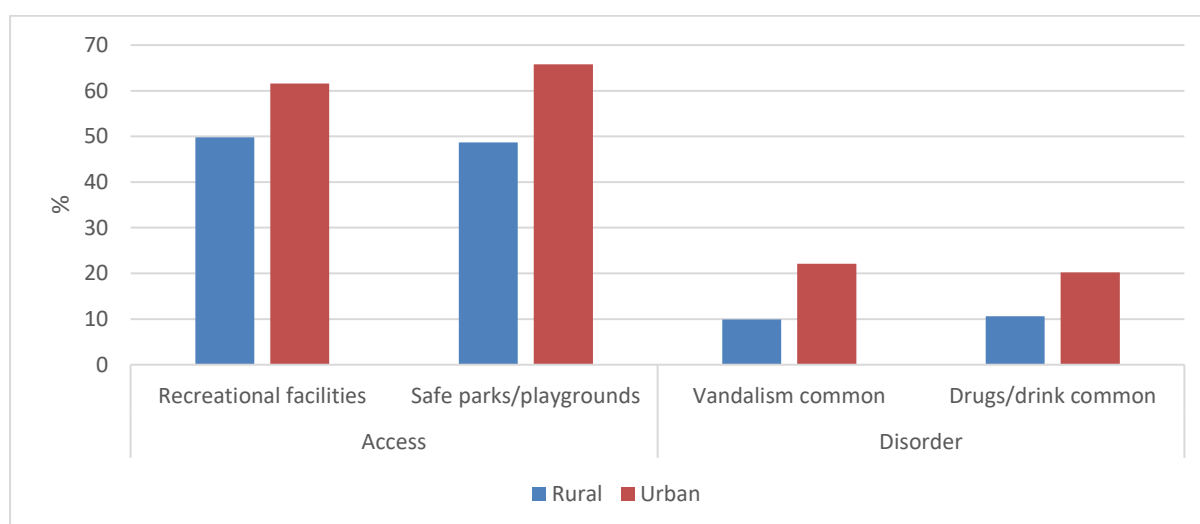
These differences are also evident in relation to facilities for children and young people (Figure 1.4). Urban parents are more likely to report having local

recreational facilities appropriate for a nine year old (62% vs. 50%), safe parks/playgrounds (66% vs. 49%) and safe places in which to play outside during the day (66% vs. 50%). Nonetheless, differences in participation in out-of-school activities are less clearcut than these patterns of provision might suggest. In fact, nine-year-old children living in a rural area are more likely to be involved in sports/fitness clubs (80% vs. 71%) and are slightly more likely to take part in cultural activities (such as music or drama clubs/lessons) (51% vs. 47%). Involvement in scouts/guides and youth clubs is slightly higher in urban areas (16% vs. 13%; 8% vs. 5%).

Similar urban–rural differences were evident at the age of 13, with urban young people more likely to have access to a club or facility locally (80% vs. 70%). At 13, levels of involvement in cultural activities were similar between urban and rural areas, while sports involvement remained somewhat higher in rural areas: 67 per cent of rural youth played sports with a coach or instructor at least once a week compared with 55 per cent of their urban counterparts.

Mothers were also asked about the quality and safety of their local neighbourhood. Those living in urban areas were more likely to report indicators of disorder in the local area, including vandalism and drinking/drug-taking in public. As a result, mothers in urban areas were less likely to see the area as safe for themselves to walk alone in after dark (66% vs. 71%) or for their children to hang out there (89% vs. 95%).

**FIGURE 1.4 ACCESS TO FACILITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD QUALITY BY LOCATION**



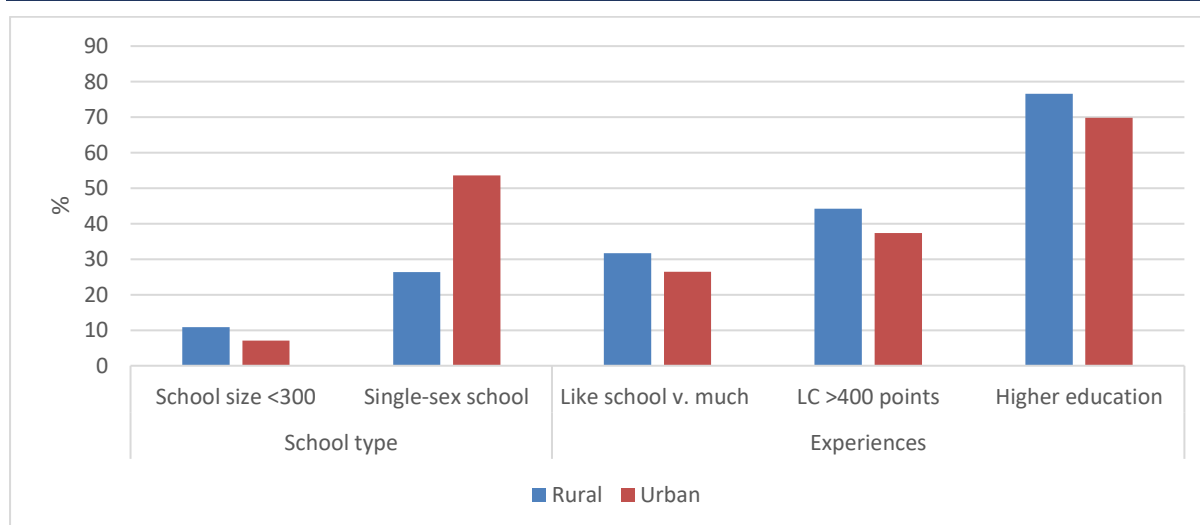
Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 1–4.*

Differences by location are found in the type of school attended, with urban young people much more likely to attend a single-sex school (54% compared with 26%) or a fee-paying school (12% vs. 4%), and somewhat less likely to attend a small

school (with 300 students or fewer; at 7% vs. 11%) (Figure 1.5). Differences in school size at primary level had been much more marked, with 60 per cent of rural nine year olds attending schools of 200 students or less, compared with 14 per cent of urban children. Urban schools offer slightly more extracurricular activities on average than rural schools (5.97 vs. 5.78 activities) but there is no difference in the level of involvement of students in school decision-making processes, as reported by the school principal. Similarly, student-reported levels of positive and negative interaction between teachers and students are similar across urban and rural areas. Students in rural areas are somewhat more likely to report liking school very much at the age of 13 (36% vs. 31%). Rates of involvement in Transition Year are similar in rural and urban schools.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, young people in urban areas are more likely to fall into the highest quartile in terms of Junior Certificate performance (28% compared with 21%). Levels of Leaving Certificate performance are somewhat more polarised in urban areas (Figure 1.6), with higher proportions in the highest and lowest groupings. However, 46 per cent of those in rural areas receive 400 or more points compared with 41 per cent in urban areas. Overall, rates of progression to higher education are higher for those from rural areas – 77 per cent compared with 70 per cent (by age 20).

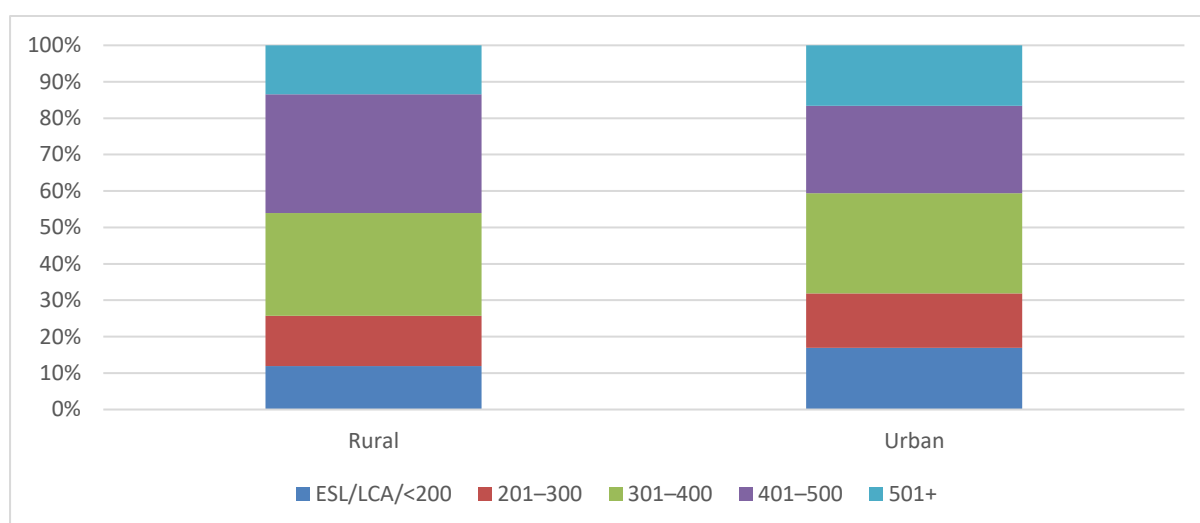
**FIGURE 1.5 SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOL TYPE AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES BY LOCATION**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 1–4.*

Note: LC = Leaving Certificate.

<sup>1</sup> The Transition Year programme is an optional year-long programme at the end of lower secondary (junior cycle) education. It allows students to sample different kinds of subjects, take part in work experience and become involved in voluntary and community activities.

**FIGURE 1.6 LEAVING CERTIFICATE PERFORMANCE BY LOCATION**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 1-4.*

Note: ESL = Early school leaver; LCA = Leaving Certificate Applied programme. The figure shows Leaving Certificate points.

## 1.4 DATA AND MEASURES

This study draws on data from Cohort '98 of the *Growing Up in Ireland (GUI)* study, which first interviewed families when the children were age 9 and followed them up at 13, 17/18 and 20 years of age. As the young people grew older, civic and political engagement was included as a dimension of their experiences, providing the first systematic data in Ireland on the groups of young adults engaged in civic and political activities and the extent to which this involvement varies between rural and urban areas. Analyses presented in this report relate to the 4,710 young adults who took part in all waves of data collection and for whom complete information on their civic and political engagement was available. The fieldwork with the 20 year olds took place over the period of August 2018 to June 2019. The timing is worth noting as the referendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution (which had banned abortion in Ireland) took place in May 2018. For most of the sample, therefore, the reference period for political activities includes the period of the referendum campaign. This may be expected to influence the level of engagement and the groups of young people involved in political activity.

To test the effect of urban and rural environments on young people's engagement behaviours, we use a measure of whether they were living in an urban or rural environment at age 9, based on the mother's (primary caregiver's) response to a question on the population density of the area in which the family lived when the child was age 9. Rural environments are those where parents reported their home being in open country, a village, or a town with less than 5,000 residents (50 per cent of young people at age 9). Urban environments encapsulated towns of more than 5,000 residents up to the major cities of Galway, Cork and Dublin (50 per cent of young people at age 9). This delineation provides a sufficiently large sample of

urban/rural youth to generate robust estimates; however, additional testing demonstrated this cut-off to be highly salient for civic engagement.<sup>2</sup> The data do not contain an urban/rural indicator for young people at every wave. Only parents were asked this question, in Wave 1 and Wave 4. Several tests are undertaken to examine potential bias in our results.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, the analyses can be taken to reflect the influence of place at a formative period of a young person's life to explore the effect of *growing up in urban or rural areas* on civic engagement in adulthood.

### 1.4.1 Measuring civic and political engagement

The study adopts a multidimensional approach to measuring civic and political engagement, given that previous research has shown that patterns may vary across particular dimensions (see Section 1.2). The analyses focus on engagement levels at 20 years of age, though information on volunteering at 17 is also used. To capture civic engagement, 20 year olds were asked whether they had done 'any volunteer activities through or for an organisation'. Those involved were further asked about the type of volunteer activity; in the analyses, we distinguish between those involved in sports-related activities and all others, as a significant number of young people are involved in sports volunteering and their profile may differ from other volunteers.

A number of different measures of political engagement were available from the GUI data. The young adults were asked about whether they had been involved in a range of specified political activities over the last 12 months. In the analyses, we distinguish between high- and low-intensity activities, as follows.

- Low-intensity political activities:
  - worn or displayed a campaign badge or sticker
  - signed a petition (paper/online) about a political or social issue
  - boycotted certain products
  - posted or shared anything about politics online
  - contacted a politician/councillor.

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<sup>2</sup> We examined whether patterns of volunteering and political engagement differed substantially across the full urban–rural spectrum versus our current binary category. Where there were significant urban/rural differences in engagement, these were most salient between areas with less than 5,000 and greater than 5,000, in line with our categorisation.

<sup>3</sup> Between the ages of 9 and 20, only 10 per cent of families who were in urban areas when the young person was aged 9 were found to be in rural areas when they were aged 20. Similarly, only 10 per cent from rural areas were subsequently found in urban areas. Running all models excluding these young people or testing whether differences exist between them, and urban/rural stable families, does not change the substantive findings of the report, which is unsurprising given they constitute a small portion (10 per cent) of the entire sample. See the limitations section in the conclusion for further discussion.

- High-intensity political activities:
  - took part in a public demonstration
  - worked in a political party
  - worked with an environmental group.

The 20 year olds were asked about their level of interest in politics, on a scale of zero (not at all interested) to ten (very interested). They were asked whether they were currently registered to vote. They were also asked to rate how concerned they were about a range of political and social issues, which included terrorism, climate change, racism, gender inequality, animal rights, poverty in Ireland, access to decent employment opportunities in Ireland, access to housing in Ireland, and the global gap between rich and poor countries. Responses were on a scale, from zero (not at all concerned) to ten (very concerned). Answers to this set of questions are presented descriptively in Section 1.5. Their association with civic engagement is also discussed in the analysis.

#### 1.4.2 Explanatory variables

Drawing on international research findings, the analyses presented in this report focus on five sets of predictors: individual and family background; parental and peer social capital; characteristics of the locality; educational experiences; and involvement in structured out-of-school activities.

In terms of individual and family background, the analyses include: gender; maternal education; household income equivalised for household size and composition and divided into quintiles; housing tenure (whether owner-occupied, social rented or private rented); family structure (whether a two- or lone-parent family); and whether the family is of migrant origin.<sup>4</sup> Measures of child chronic illness/disability and the mother's rating of the child's health over the previous year are also taken into account. The rich set of background variables captured in the GUI study allows us to compare like with like in looking at potential rural–urban differences. At age 20, the analyses take account of the young adult's own situation, including whether they live in the parental home,<sup>5</sup> whether they feel that accommodation costs limit their opportunities, their ease in making ends meet financially and time spent in informal caregiving.

Social capital measures include: whether the mother was involved in voluntary groups locally (when the child was aged nine); the number of friends the young person had at 13 years of age and whether their parents had met these friends;

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<sup>4</sup> Migrant-origin families are those where both parents were born outside Ireland; in the case of lone-parent families, migrant status is based on that parent being born outside Ireland.

<sup>5</sup> An additional robustness check was conducted, which looked at whether young people are moved out of the parental home for further/higher education. See discussion in sections below.

and attendance at religious services and the young person's self-rated level of spirituality.

Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) from the Census were matched to the electoral division in which families lived at Wave 1 (age nine). This information was used to derive a scale of area-level disadvantage; in addition, an indicator of the proportion of the population aged 65 years or over was taken into account as a potential measure of social capital. Characteristics of the locality were also derived from mothers' reports of the level of neighbourhood disorder (such as vandalism), the availability of facilities (such as sports/youth clubs) for children (at age nine) and for young people (at age 13), the availability of public transport to go to school and residential stability. At age 20, the young person's own reports of neighbourhood safety, disorder and social infrastructure are taken into account.

At primary school level, the importance of sports and arts and of social justice and politics to the school ethos was based on reports by school principals. The characteristics of second-level schools (including school size, gender and social mix) were used in preliminary analyses. Any relationship between school characteristics and civic engagement was related to the composition of students in the school so these variables are not included in the analyses presented in the following chapters. A young person's experience of school is captured through the extent to which they liked school at age 13. A dummy variable is included for whether they took part in Transition Year, as this is likely to affect their access to a range of community activities. A measure of Junior Certificate (lower secondary) grade point average is derived from a combination of the subject levels taken and grades received averaged over the total number of exam subjects, as reported by the young person; the scale ranges from 0 (all fail grades) to 10 (all A grades at higher level). For measures analysed at age 17, a dummy variable is included to indicate whether the young person was in their Leaving Certificate year or not, as this is known to disrupt non-school activities (Smyth et al., 2011).

At age 20, the young adults were asked to report their Leaving Certificate points, with responses pre-grouped in the Research Microdata Files dataset. In order to take account of early school leavers and those who had taken the Leaving Certificate Applied programme (and therefore did not have 'points'), these groups are assigned to the 'low' points group. This approach is consistent with the post-school outcomes of these groups (O'Mahony et al., 2022). Because higher education participation can affect civic and political participation (see Section 1.2), a measure of the main post-school pathway was included. Respondents who had taken part in higher education for any period of time were included in the 'higher education' group; those who took part in any further education and training were



included in the 'further education' group, with the remainder assigned to the 'labour market/economically inactive' group.<sup>6</sup>

Measures of involvement in structured out-of-school activities at ages 9, 13 and 17 are included in the analyses, distinguishing between organised sports, cultural activities and other clubs/groups (such as scouts/guides). These analyses explore whether out-of-school activities serve as a channel into civic and political engagement and, if so, whether any differences in social background are mediated by these activities.

### 1.4.3 Outcomes

The study adopts a multidimensional approach to measuring the relationship between civic and political engagement and outcomes among young adults, focusing on wellbeing, the transition to adulthood, trust in others and confidence in institutions.

Wellbeing measures cover both positive aspects (life satisfaction) and negative aspects (depressive symptoms). The young adult was asked, 'If you were to describe how satisfied you are with your own life in general, how would you rate it on a scale of 0 to 10, 0 meaning you are extremely unsatisfied with your life in general, and 10 meaning that you are extremely satisfied with your life?' Young adults reported depressive symptoms using the threshold for the Center for Epidemiological Studies (CES-D) depression scale, an eight-item short self-report screening instrument for depression in the general population. The reference point relates to the previous seven days and items include, 'I felt depressed' and, 'I had crying spells'. Answers are given on a four-point rating scale, ranging from rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day) to most or all of the time (5–7 days), with a composite score calculated by summing responses across the eight items (range: 0–24). Composite scores of seven or more are classified as 'depressed' and scores below seven are defined as 'not depressed'. While a score above or equal to seven suggests a clinically significant level of psychological distress, it does not necessarily mean that the participant has a clinical diagnosis of depression. The transition to adulthood is captured by self-report to the statement, 'You consider yourself to be an adult', with five response categories ranging from 'entirely true' to 'not at all true'.

Lack of engagement in civic and political attitudes may result from, and in turn reinforce, feelings of alienation from other people and from key societal institutions. At age 20, young adults were asked whether they felt that 'most

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<sup>6</sup> This grouping was necessary because of small sample sizes for the NEET group.

people can be trusted', with response categories ranging from zero ('you can't be too careful') to ten ('most people can be trusted').

Young adults were also asked how much confidence ('a great deal' to 'none at all') they had in the following institutions: the Church, the education system, the Gardaí/police, the social welfare system, the healthcare system, politicians, the courts system and the media/press. Factor analyses demonstrated that young people's confidence in the courts, education system, the police, politicians and the welfare system loaded together to form a single, latent index of confidence in 'state institutions': young people who had greater confidence in one of these institutions also tended to have greater confidence in the others.<sup>7</sup> We therefore generate a mean score of confidence in 'state institutions' using these measures. Young people's confidence in the Church, the media and the healthcare system did not load strongly with the other institutional measures. We therefore analyse these three institutions separately.<sup>8</sup> However, as will be seen below (Figure 1.11), average levels of confidence differ markedly across different institutions.

#### 1.4.4 Methodology

Descriptive analyses of the dimensions of civic and political engagement are presented in the following section (1.5). Chapters 2 and 3 look at the factors associated with civic and political engagement, respectively. Multivariate models are used to identify rural–urban differences, controlling for individual and family background, social capital and networks, education experiences and involvement in structured out-of-school activities. In addition, the extent to which certain factors have a stronger or weaker relationship in rural versus urban areas is explored (see below). The analyses exploit the longitudinal nature of the GUI study by focusing first on early life influences, before examining the role of influences in later adolescence and early adulthood.

The tables report average marginal effects as opposed to odds ratios (for a rationale, see Mood, 2010). This means that the coefficients from nested models can be directly compared to explore potential mediation; for example, if the average marginal effect of having a graduate mother on the likelihood of a young person volunteering at age 20 decreases when we include structured activities at age 13, we know that some of the effect of social background operates through out-of-school activities. In other words, part of the reason socio-economically

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<sup>7</sup> The index has an Eigen value of 1.37. All component variables have factor loadings above 0.4. The variables have an Alpha statistic of 0.68. These demonstrate strong evidence that the variables capture a latent confidence in state institutions.

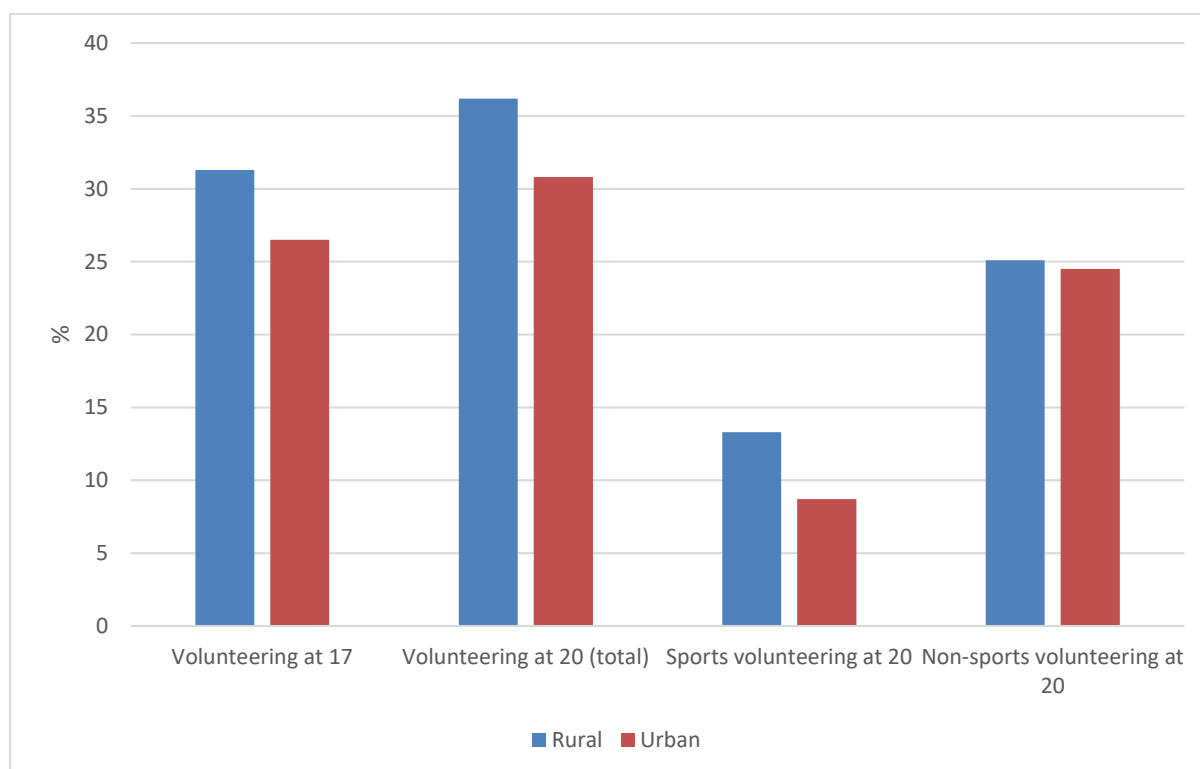
<sup>8</sup> We treat these measures as outcomes in the report. We elected to use them as outcomes given the literature focuses more on how civic participation can generate positive views towards state institutions. To be sure, confidence in such institutions could drive civic engagement. However, the approach of the report was to look at the role of behavioural and socio-demographic predictors (rather than attitudinal predictors) of civic engagement, given concerns regarding causality. These concerns cannot be avoided when treating confidence as an outcome (and we discuss in detail these issues in the report).

advantaged young adults engage more in volunteering is due to their greater involvement in structured activities when they were younger. Average marginal effects cannot be calculated for interaction terms; for example, if we want to see whether the effect of maternal education is greater in rural than in urban areas. In these instances, we therefore use graphs to depict the predicted values for these models (with full model results available from the authors, on request).

### 1.5 RURAL–URBAN DIFFERENCES IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This section provides a brief descriptive overview of patterns of civic and political engagement among young adults in rural and urban areas. The chapters that follow will examine whether rural–urban differences are found, taking account of the profile of families living in the two settings and whether the factors influencing civic engagement operate differently by location.

**FIGURE 1.7 INVOLVEMENT IN VOLUNTEERING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS BY LOCATION**

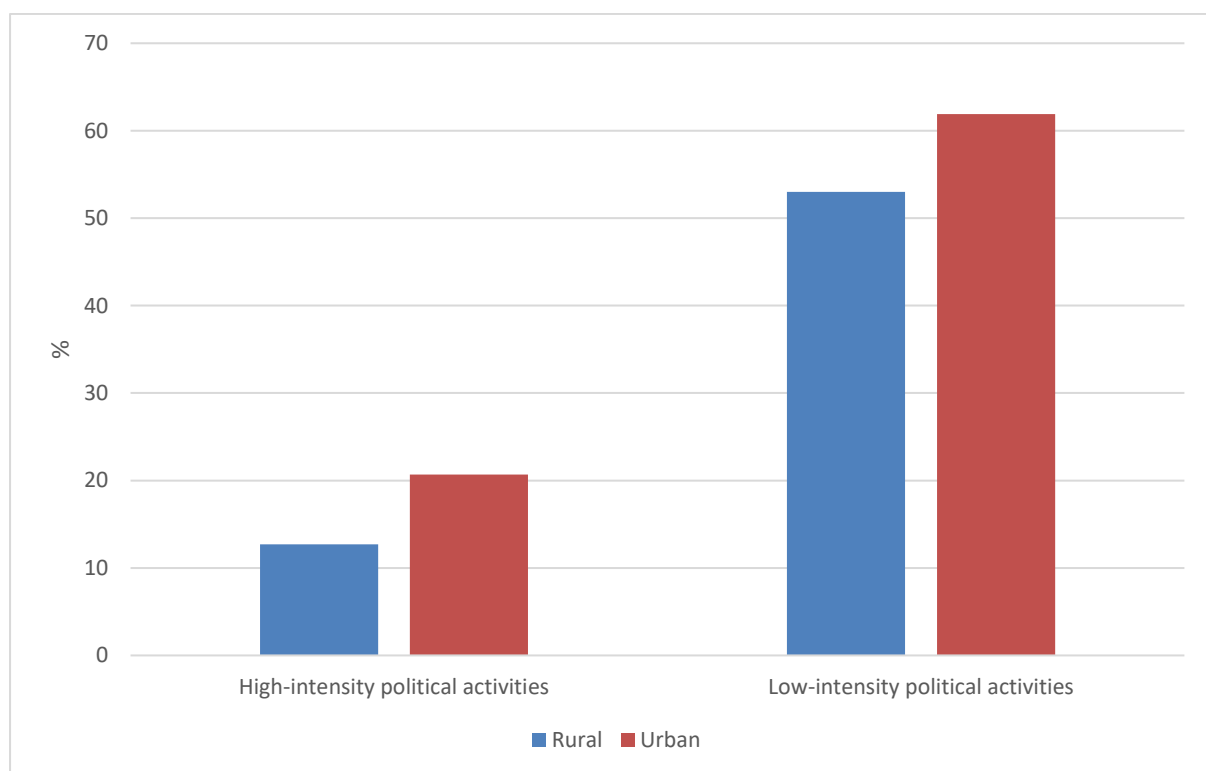


Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 3–4.*

Figure 1.7 shows involvement in volunteering at 17 and 20 years of age. Levels of volunteering are found to be significantly higher among young adults in rural areas (31% compared with 27% at 17 and 36% compared with 31% at 20 years of age). Young people were asked further about the type of volunteering in which they were engaged. It is apparent that rural–urban differences at age 20 are driven by the greater involvement in sports volunteering among young adults in rural areas (14% vs. 9%).

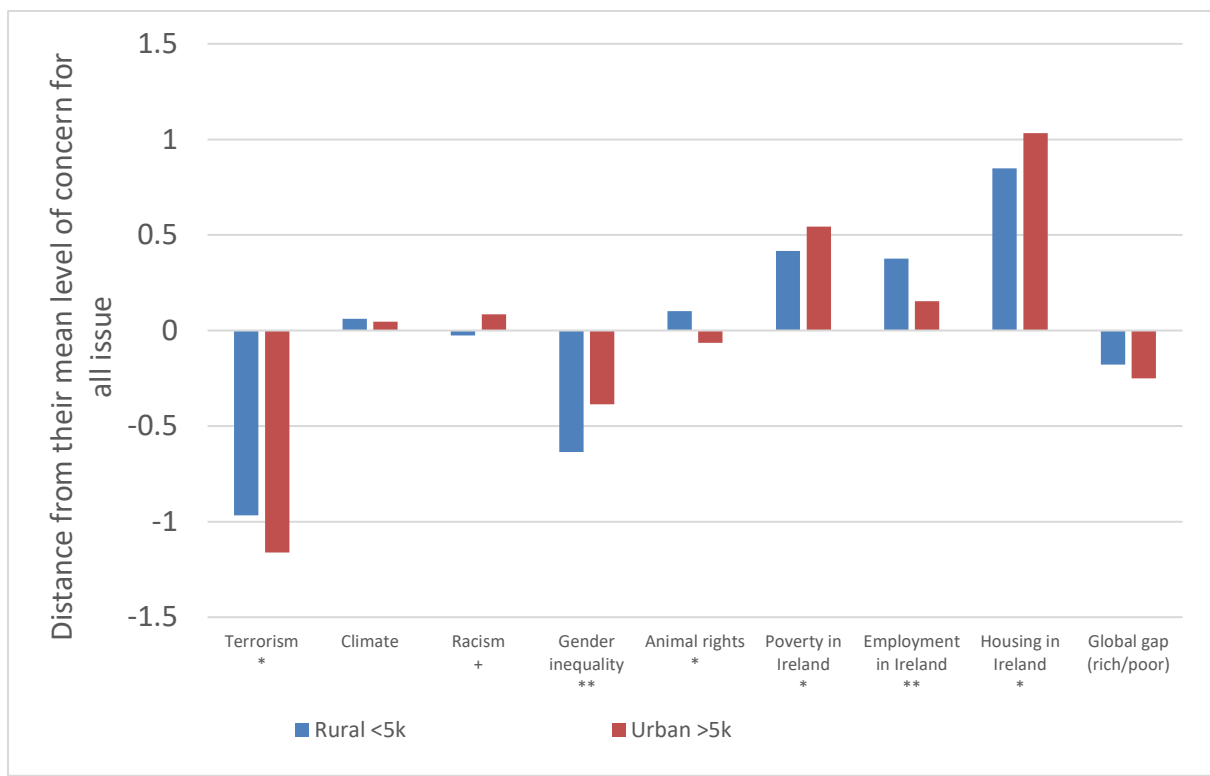
Turning to political engagement, urban youth are found to be significantly more likely to engage in both high-intensity activities (such as taking part in a demonstration) and low-intensity political activities (such as signing a petition). The rates were 21% vs. 13% and 62% vs. 53% respectively (Figure 1.8). Levels of political interest and the proportion who were registered to vote are similar between urban and rural youth, however.

**FIGURE 1.8 INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BY LOCATION AT AGE 20**



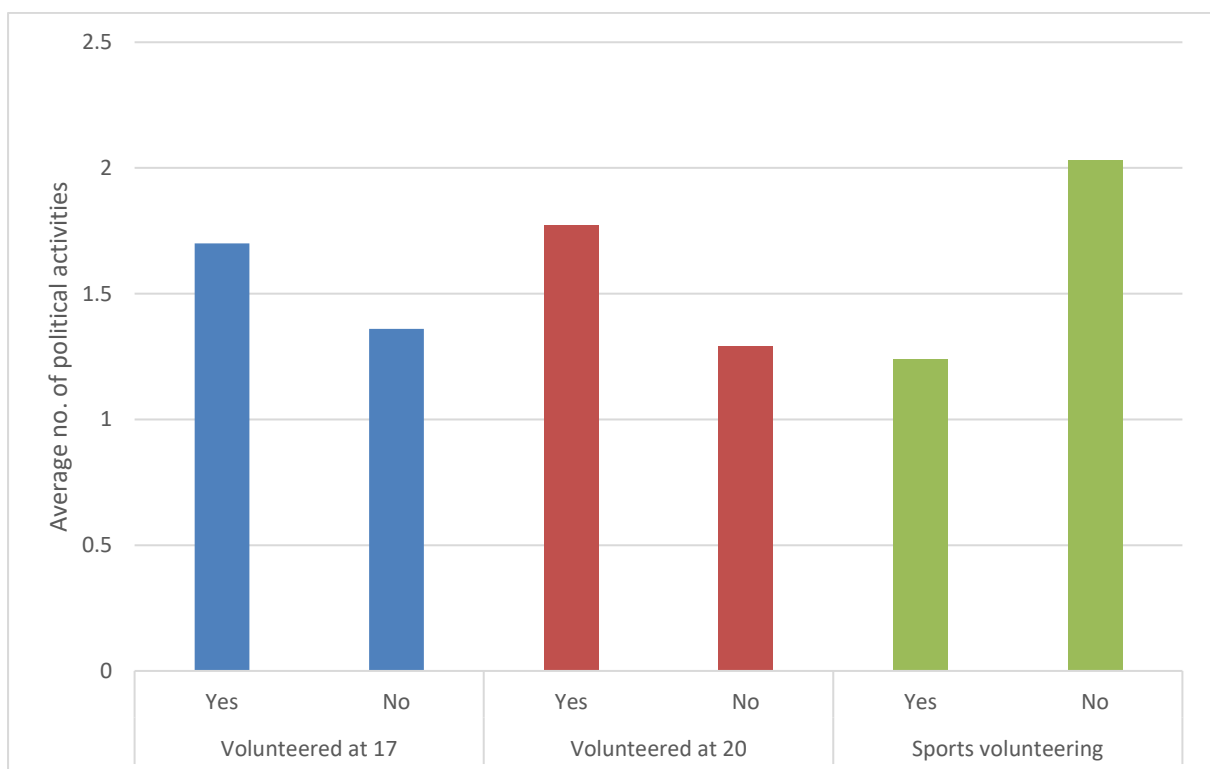
Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Wave 4.*

Young adults were asked about their level of concern about a selection of political and social issues. Because some young people had high levels of concern across all issues, Figure 1.9 shows their relative concern; that is, the difference between their concern about a specific issue and their average level of concern across all of the listed issues. Using this approach, we see that urban youth are more concerned about housing and poverty in Ireland, while rural youth are more concerned about employment. Contrary to popular perception, levels of concern appear to centre on local or Irish issues rather than climate change, at least in 2018/2019 when the survey was conducted.

**FIGURE 1.9 RELATIVE CONCERN ABOUT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES BY LOCATION AT AGE 20**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Wave 4.*

Notes: YP = Young person. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ , +  $p < .10$  signifies that a gap in relative concern between urban and rural areas is statistically significant.

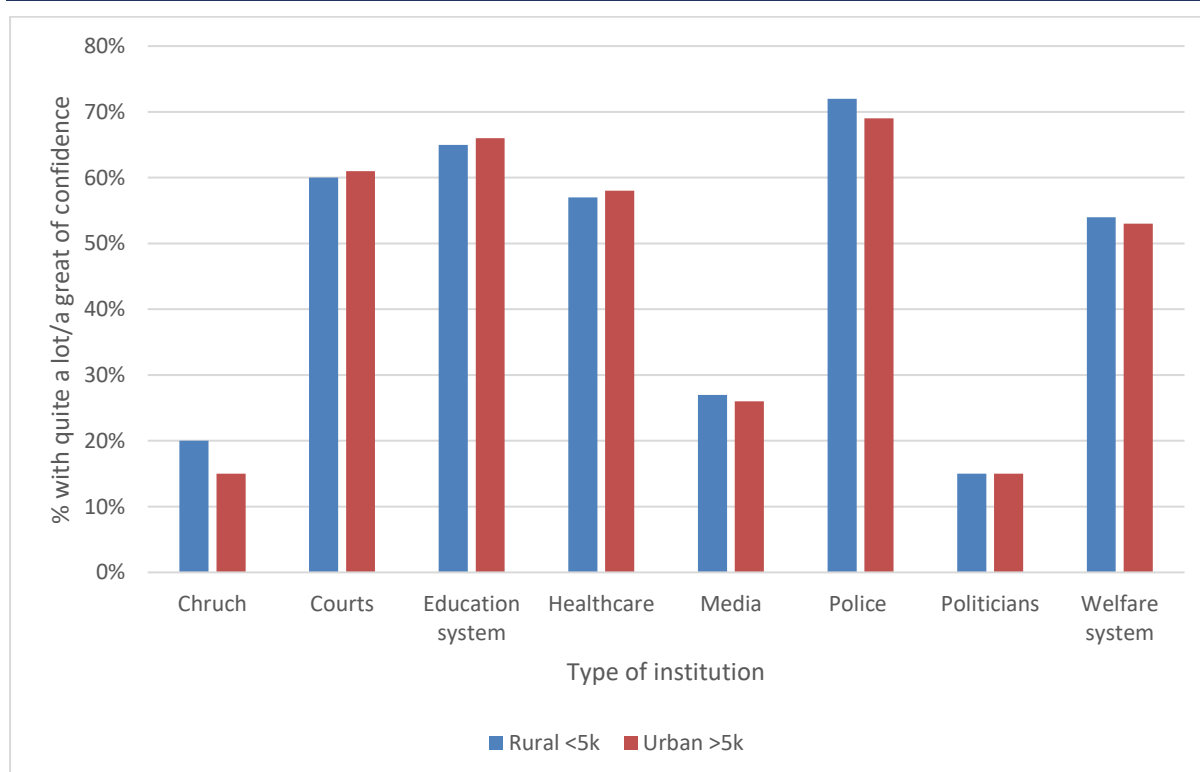
**FIGURE 1.10 POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AT AGE 20 BY INVOLVEMENT IN VOLUNTEERING**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 3–4.*

International research has indicated an association between civic and political engagement (see Section 1.2). Figure 1.10 shows that those involved in volunteering at ages 17 and 20 tended to engage in more political activities. However, when sports volunteering (at age 17 or 20) is examined separately, the pattern is reversed, with lower levels of political engagement among those involved. Those involved in volunteering at 17 were somewhat more likely to be registered to vote three years later (76% compared with 70%). Not surprisingly, those registered to vote tend to have higher levels of political engagement.

Young people's confidence in societal institutions at age 20 also differs markedly depending on the type of institution. Figure 1.11 shows the proportion of young people who have 'quite a lot'/'a great deal' of confidence in each institution, among urban and rural young people. Confidence is highest in the police, education system and courts (more than 60% have 'quite a lot'/'a great deal' of confidence in these). It is also comparatively quite high in healthcare (around 57%) and the welfare system (53%). Confidence is much lower, however, in the media (27%) and the Church, although rural young people have more confidence in the Church (20%) than urban youth (15%). Confidence is lowest for politicians (15%) among both urban and rural youth.

**FIGURE 1.11 CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS BY LOCATION**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98, Waves 1–4.*

## 1.6 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

This chapter has explored why we might expect place to matter, and has looked at descriptive patterns of civic and political engagement among urban and rural youth. In the remainder of the report, we use multivariate modelling to examine whether any rural–urban differences are related to the individual, family, educational or neighbourhood characteristics of the two groups. Chapter 2 looks at urban–rural differences in involvement in volunteering, the factors associated with such civic participation and whether these factors differ between rural and urban areas. Chapter 3 takes a similar approach to analysing the factors associated with three aspects of political involvement: the number of political activities in which young adults are involved; their level of interest in politics; and whether they are registered to vote. Chapter 4 examines the relationship between civic and political engagement and outcomes among young adults, focusing on their wellbeing (as measured by their life satisfaction and depressive symptoms), the extent to which they consider themselves an adult, their sense of trust and their confidence in institutions. Chapter 5 summarises the findings of the study and discusses the implications for policy development.

Potentially, the relationship between young people’s characteristics and their civic engagement behaviours may differ between urban and rural youth. For each characteristic we model, we test whether there are any statistically significant differences between urban and rural youth in its relationship with civic engagement. These tests are undertaken systematically in fully controlled models. However, we only report differences where they are statistically significant (in the form of figures showing predicted outcome scores for urban and rural youth). Non-significant differences are not reported.

## CHAPTER 2

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### Predictors of volunteering

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the factors in young people's lives that predict their volunteering behaviours in late adolescence (17 years) and early adulthood (20 years). As outlined in Chapter 1, these characteristics are grouped into six key domains: a young person's family background (e.g., their mother's education or household income); their parents' volunteering, peer networks and religiosity; the characteristics of their local area; their schooling and education; young people's own socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., if they are on a higher education pathway in early adulthood); and their involvement in extra-curricular clubs and activities.

The longitudinal nature of *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) data means that we can examine the influences on young people's volunteering at different stages of their life course (see Chapter 1). As children age, their social worlds can radically change and different predictors of volunteering may emerge, while others may become less salient (Oesterle et al., 2004). By late adolescence (age 17), young people will have become increasingly independent, their friendship groups more differentiated, and their interests more solidified (Brown and Larsson, 2009). By early adulthood (age 20), some will have gone on to do higher or further education, others will have gone into the labour market, some will have left home while others will have remained there, and most will have become increasingly financially independent, though the transition to adulthood has become more protracted in many Western countries (Sawyer et al., 2018), including Ireland (O'Mahony et al., 2021). All these factors may differentially shape their volunteering behaviours (Oesterle et al., 2004). To capture these differences, this chapter explores how the characteristics of young people during their middle childhood/early adolescence (ages 9 and 13) and their late adolescence/early adulthood (ages 17 and 20) shape their volunteering at 17 and 20 years.

As previously discussed, factors and motivations that can steer people into volunteering for sports organisations can differ from those that steer them into non-sports organisations (Gray et al., 2012; Stukas et al. 2014). In addition, we have seen how young people who grew up in more rural areas are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering than those who grew up in more urban areas (Chapter 1). Accordingly, predictors of sports and non-sports volunteering are analysed separately. This chapter begins by looking at middle childhood (ages 9 and 13) predictors of volunteering at ages 17 and 20 (Section 2.2), before turning to look at late adolescence/early adulthood predictors (ages 17 and 20) (Section 2.3).



## 2.2 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF VOLUNTEERING

### 2.2.1 Middle childhood predictors of volunteering at age 17

In the GUI survey, the measurement of volunteering at age 17 is different to the measurement used at age 20. At age 17, young people were asked whether they volunteered regularly in the past year, so we cannot distinguish volunteering for sports organisations from other forms of volunteering. To explore what middle childhood characteristics drive young people's volunteering, we undertake logistic regression analyses, modelling whether or not a young person was volunteering at age 17. All characteristics are measured when a young person was aged either 9 or 13 years. We take a nested model approach, modelling each domain of characteristics separately (while holding constant their family background characteristics) before modelling all domains together to gauge their relative importance.

Model 1 in Table 2.1 solely includes the indicator of whether a child grew up in a more urban or rural area (at age 9). In Model 2, we include all domains in a single model (from parental and peer social capital to education). In Model 3, we add in young people's involvement in extracurricular activities and any leadership role ('such as team leader, captain, secretary, etc.') they had at age 13.<sup>9</sup> Model coefficients are the estimated effects that each of the characteristics have on the probability of a young person volunteering at age 17 – known as marginal effects (probabilities) – among different groups compared to a baseline group. For example, the average marginal effect of living in private rented (as opposed to owner-occupied) housing is -0.105 (Model 2, Table 2.1). This tells us that, compared to living in owner-occupied housing (the excluded baseline category), the probability of volunteering is 10 per cent lower for those in private rented accommodation. Where a variable is treated as continuous, the coefficients represent the increase in probability of a one-unit increase in the continuous variable. For example, the marginal effect for how frequently a child attended church is 0.017. Therefore, a move from a child attending monthly to weekly is associated with an additional increase in the probability of volunteering of 1.7 percentage points. We also test whether young people's characteristics may have different associations with volunteering among those from an urban or rural background and report significant differences within the text.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This measure may partly pick up volunteering at age 13, given leadership roles often require additional commitment. However, the question refers to a leadership role in extracurricular activities so it is more likely they would have this role alongside their broader involvement in the activity.

<sup>10</sup> We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. However, all interaction effects are fully modelled alongside all characteristics. These model results are available on request.

**TABLE 2.1 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 17 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>
<b>Outcome (at age 17)</b>	Volunteers	Volunteers	Volunteers
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.051**	0.042*	0.031
Female (cf. Male)		-0.019	-0.020
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>			
Upper secondary		0.028	0.018
Non-degree		0.014	-0.000
Primary Degree/Postgrad.		0.045	0.030
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>			
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		ref.	ref.
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>			
Rent – Social housing		ref.	ref.
Rent – Private		0.019	0.003
Lives with parents/missing		-0.105**	-0.100*
Lives with parents/missing		0.003	0.036
Mother volunteers locally (ref. does not)		0.039*	0.028
N of friends YP normally hangs around with		-0.020+	-0.027*
How many YP’s friends that parents have met		0.026	0.007
Frequency of YP attending church		0.017*	0.014+
Mother’s spirituality/religiousness		-0.000	0.000
Yes, access to public transport to school		0.003	0.000
Yes, local recreational facilities for 9 year olds present		-0.017	-0.016
% aged 65+ in electoral district		-0.000	-0.000
Electoral district socio-economic disadvantage (index)		-0.009	-0.011
Mother’s perception of local social/physical disorder		0.015	0.013
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>			
Disagree		ref.	ref.
Disagree		0.020	0.013
Agree		0.080*	0.062+
Strongly agree		0.060+	0.037
<b>Mother’s sense of local security and stability (index)</b>			
Mother’s sense of local security and stability (index)		-0.009	-0.010
<b>Baseline – Low school importance of sports/arts activities</b>			
Medium importance		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.040	0.039+
High importance		0.054*	0.057*
<b>Baseline – Low school importance of science/social justice activities</b>			
Medium importance		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		-0.006	-0.010
High importance		-0.041	-0.047+
<b>Baseline – Young person hates/doesn't like school (at 13)</b>			
Likes school a bit		ref.	ref.
Likes school a bit		0.036	0.040
Likes school quite a bit		0.077*	0.072*
Likes school very much		0.144***	0.135***
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</b>			
Cultural activities ('dance, drama or music lessons')			0.027**
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			0.009
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community			0.055***

**TABLE 2.1 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 17 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Yes, has a leadership role in extracurricular activity</b>			0.089***
<b>Observations</b>	4,532	4,532	4,532
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.003	0.033	0.056

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*.

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. Models control for YP chronic illness, mother's report of YP's health, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household, and household income (not shown).

At age 17, 29 per cent of young people reported having volunteered regularly in the past year. Model 1 (Table 2.3) shows that young people who grew up in rural areas are significantly more likely to be volunteering at age 17 than urban youth (their probability is five percentage points higher). Living in privately rented accommodation (compared to owning a home) at age 9 is associated with less volunteering at age 17. Having a more educated mother is associated with more volunteering at age 17 but this difference is no longer significant when taking account of other domains. There are no differences in volunteering rates at 17 by gender,<sup>11</sup> having a chronic illness (at age 9) or having migrant parents.

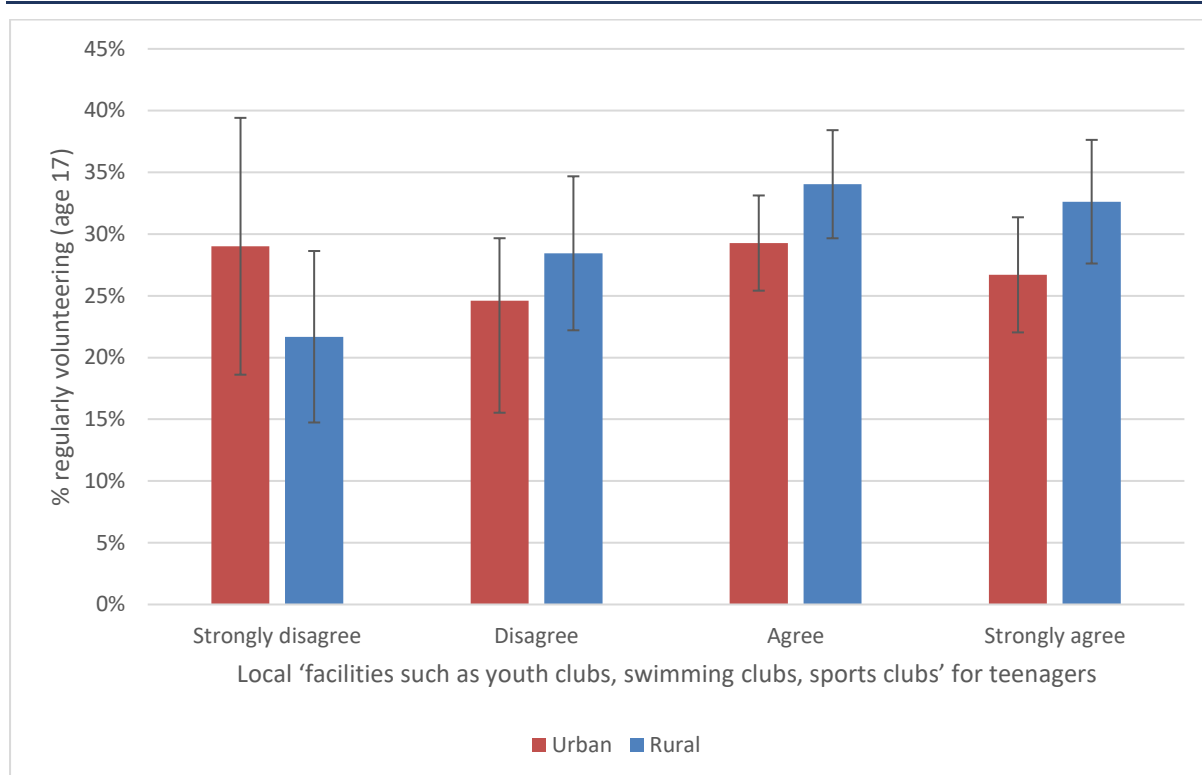
Some aspects of family and peer social capital matter for volunteering at 17. Those whose mothers volunteer are more likely to do so themselves, even accounting for family background. Attending church more regularly is linked with volunteering. Having a larger number of friends at age 13 is weakly negatively related to volunteering at age 17. Parents having met a greater share of one's friends also positively predicts volunteering at age 17, although this difference disappears after accounting for other domains.

Living in an area (at age 13) with more facilities (such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs) for teenagers is important for volunteering at age 17. However, this association is much more pronounced for young people who grew up in rural areas. Figure 2.1 shows the proportion of urban and rural young people who volunteered at age 17 by how far their parents agreed with the statement that there are 'facilities such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs' for teenagers in their local area (when the young person was 13 years old). Among young people who grew up in urban areas, there is no significant differences in volunteering at age 17 between different types of area. However, greater access to local youth facilities in rural areas is associated with an increasing likelihood of volunteering at

<sup>11</sup> This may be because both sports and non-sports volunteering at age 17 are amalgamated into a single indicator. At age 20, men are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering but less likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering (see below).

age 17. Access to youth facilities is therefore more important for volunteering at age 17 for rural youth.

**FIGURE 2.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENCE OF LOCAL YOUTH FACILITIES (AGE 13) AND VOLUNTEERING (AGE 17) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 2.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and local youth facilities for teenagers (age 13); data weighted to be representative.

In terms of educational experiences, attending a primary school that placed a higher importance on sports, arts, and drama and speech as extracurricular activities is associated with more volunteering at age 17.<sup>12</sup> Liking school (at age 13) is strongly linked with higher volunteering at age 17: those young people who enjoyed school very much had a probability of volunteering at age 17 that was 14 percentage points higher than those who reported hating it/not liking it.

Greater involvement in all types of extracurricular activities at age 13 is associated with higher levels of volunteering at age 17; by far the strongest predictor is involvement in 'clubs or groups such as guides or scouts, youth club, community, or church groups'. A young person's extracurricular involvement at age 13 also accounts for (part of) the relationship between volunteering at age 17 and factors such as mother's volunteering, church attendance, and living in a neighbourhood

<sup>12</sup> This measure is a tertile measure based on an index of how important a primary school reports that activities in sports, music, and speech and drama are as extra-curricular activities, where higher tertiles are schools who report these activities as being more important.

with facilities for teenagers. In other words, the reason why, for example, young people who have mothers who volunteer locally or who attend church more frequently are more likely to volunteer at age 17 is because those young people are more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities as a teenager.

To what extent do these sets of factors explain the difference in volunteering levels between rural and urban areas? The rural–urban gap is partly explained by differences in family background, parental and peer social capital, local area characteristics and educational experiences. However, a larger driver of the difference relates to involvement in extracurricular involvement at age 13, with urban–rural variation no longer significant when this is taken into account (Model 3, Table 2.1).

### **2.2.2 Middle childhood predictors of sports volunteering at age 20**

More detailed information on type of volunteering was collected at age 20, with young people asked about the type of organisation for which they volunteered (see Chapter 1). Because of differences in the patterns for sports and non-sports volunteering, the analyses distinguish between the two types.

At age 20, 11 per cent of young people were found to be engaged in sports volunteering. Table 2.2 shows how young people’s characteristics during their middle childhood shape their probability of volunteering for a sports organisation at age 20 (see Appendix Table 2.1 for full results). Model 1 confirms the descriptive finding in Chapter 1 that young people who grew up in rural areas are significantly more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20 (five percentage points more likely). Regarding young people’s family background (Model 2, Appendix Table 2.1), those young people who had a chronic illness at age 9 are somewhat less likely to be involved in sports volunteering in early adulthood. Young people of migrant background (with two parents or one lone parent born abroad) are also less likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20. Furthermore, young people who were in private rented accommodation at age 9 are less likely to have gone on to do sports volunteering in early adulthood.<sup>13</sup> Young people whose mothers had higher qualifications when they were aged 9 (those with a post-secondary qualification and especially a degree or above) are somewhat more likely to be involved in sports volunteering than those with mothers with lower secondary (or less) education, but this difference is explained by the higher levels

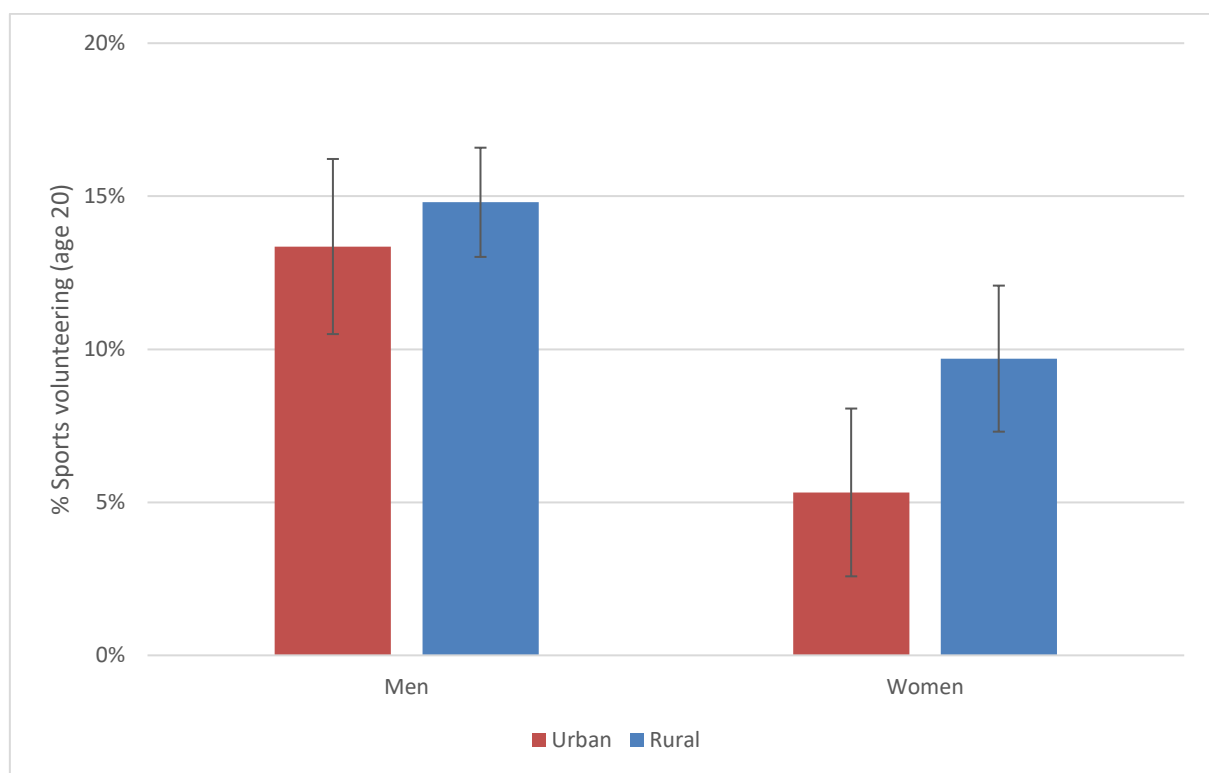
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<sup>13</sup> There may be a difference in the effect of private renting between those on rental supplement and those not. However, the number in private rental accommodation on rent supplement in the analytic sample of the final models (accounting for all other missingness) is relatively small (n = 58 in Wave 1 and too small to report in Wave 3). This precludes a fuller test of this issue. There was also no significant difference in the effects of tenancy between urban and rural youth.

of social capital (volunteering and church attendance) found among more highly educated families (compare Models 2 and 3 in Appendix Table 2.1).

Women are also less likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20 than men. However, this difference is larger among young people who grew up in more urban areas.<sup>14</sup> Figure 2.2 shows the proportion of men and women from urban and rural areas involved in sports volunteering at age 20. The confidence intervals on these charts represent the degree of certainty around the estimate of sports volunteering – where confidence intervals are only just (or not at all) overlapping, the difference is likely to be statistically significant.<sup>15</sup> The gender gap is found to be larger among those in urban areas (eight percentage points in favour of men) compared to those who grew up in rural areas (five percentage points). In fact, the urban–rural difference is solely due to lower participation among urban women.

**FIGURE 2.2** RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AMONG YOUTH



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 2.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and gender; data weighted to be representative.

<sup>14</sup> Derived from a model including all domains (akin to Model 2, Table 2.2) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and gender (model available on request).

<sup>15</sup> In fact, we only generate graphs for statistically significant heterogeneity.

**TABLE 2.2 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Outcome (volunteering at age 20)</b>	Sports	Sports	Sports
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.048***	0.028*	0.029*
Female (cf. Male)		-0.067***	-0.040**
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>		ref.	ref.
Upper secondary		0.007	0.007
Non-degree		0.021	0.012
Primary Degree/Postgrad.		0.028	0.015
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>		ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.048+	-0.042
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>		ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.003	-0.003
Rent – Private		-0.084***	-0.084***
Lives with parents/missing		-0.008	-0.001
Mother volunteers locally (cf. Does not)		0.02	0.015
No. of friends YP normally hangs around with		0.006	-0.006
How many YP’s friends that parents have met		0.036**	0.025*
Frequency of YP attending church		0.015**	0.012*
Mother’s spirituality/religiousness		0.003	0.004
Yes, access to public transport to school		0.025*	0.022+
Local rec. facilities for 9 y/o present (cf. Not)		0.003	0.001
% aged 65+ in electoral district		0.002	0.002
District socio-economic disadvantage (index)		-0.004	-0.003
Mother’s perception of local social/physical disorder		-0.005	-0.005
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>		ref.	ref.
Disagree		0.048*	0.047*
Agree		0.060***	0.059***
Strongly agree		0.048**	0.042*
<b>PCG sense of local security and stability (index)</b>		0.001	0.002
<b>Baseline – Low school importance of sports/arts activities</b>		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.004	0.003
High importance		-0.036*	-0.033*
<b>Baseline – Low school importance of science/social justice activities</b>		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.027+	0.027+
High importance		0.016	0.012
<b>Baseline – YP hates/doesn’t like school</b>		ref.	ref.
Likes school a bit		0.007	0.004
Likes school quite a bit		0.005	0.001
Likes school very much		0.009	0.002
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</b>			
Cultural activities (‘dance, drama, or music lessons’)			-0.012+
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			0.039***
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community			0
Yes, has a leadership role in activity			0.056***

**TABLE 2.2 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Observations</b>	4,536	4,536	4,536
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.009	0.077	0.114

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. Model 2 = Model 7 in appendix table. Model 3 = Model 9 in appendix table. Models control for YP chronic illness, mother's report of YP's health, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household, and household income (not shown). Full models in appendix Table A2.1.

Turning to parental and peer social capital (Model 3, Appendix Table 2.1), while number of friends at age 13 does not matter, young people who reported that their parents have met more of their friends are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering in adulthood. Furthermore, young people who attended church more regularly at age 9 are also more likely to go on to be involved in sports volunteering. Environments where parents know the friends of their children tend to have closer social networks between families, and such ties play a key role in increasing young people's involvement in their communities, providing opportunities for early socialisation into civic behaviours, with potential long-term consequences for civic engagement (Morgan and Sørensen, 1999). Religious engagement can play a similar role in encouraging youth involvement in their communities via greater social connectivity through congregations. Contrary to expectations, having a mother involved in local volunteering when a young person was aged 9 does not significantly predict sports volunteering in early adulthood. Living in an area with a higher proportion of people aged over 65 is associated with sports volunteering, a pattern related to the higher levels of social capital in such areas.

When it comes to the kinds of neighbourhoods that young people grew up in (Models 4 and 5, Appendix Table 2.1), the most important feature is whether 'there are facilities such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs' for teenagers in their local area when they were aged 13. Having access to such facilities is associated with being between six and seven percentage points more likely to be involved in sports volunteering in early adulthood than not having these facilities. Those with 'public transport to school where they live' are also somewhat more likely to be sports volunteering at age 20.

Lastly, looking at the education domain (Model 6, Appendix Table 2.1), the only significant factor associated with sports volunteering at age 20 is how important their primary schools report sports, music, and speech and drama to be as extra-curricular activities. Young people who attended primary schools that reported these extracurricular activities as being more important are actually less likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20. The pattern is largely driven by the school's emphasis on arts/drama extracurricular activities, given that primary



schools tend to regard sports as important (75% regarding sports as 'very important' and 95% as 'fairly' or 'very important').

We next explore whether greater involvement in extracurricular activities at age 13 has a lasting association with sports volunteering in early adulthood (Model 3, Table 2.2). Firstly, the strongest middle childhood predictor of sports volunteering is frequent participation in organised sports activities outside of PE classes ('sports with a coach or instructor, or as part of an organised team'). The probability of sports volunteering at age 20 was 12 percentage points higher for those who, at age 13, had been involved in sports clubs four or more times a week than it was for those who had never been involved in sports clubs. Secondly, young people who were more involved in cultural clubs at age 13 (who took part in 'dance, drama or music lessons') are somewhat less likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20 (but only significant at the  $p < .1$  level). As well as being asked about which activities young people took part in, they were also asked whether they had any special responsibilities (such as team leader, captain, etc.) in their extracurricular activities. Those young people who reported having special responsibilities at age 13 were five percentage points more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20.

Young people's involvement in clubs at age 13 can also explain (part of) the association between their other key characteristics and sports volunteering at age 20. In particular, lower involvement in sports volunteering among women, those with a chronic illness/disability, those from migrant backgrounds, those with lower social capital and those with less access to transport is found to be, at least partly, due to differences in extracurricular involvement as a teenager. In sum, many of the inequalities in sports volunteering at age 20 are driven by early involvement in structured out-of-school activities in adolescence.

On average, young people who grew up in rural areas are more likely to volunteer for sports organisations at age 20 than those who grew up in urban areas. Comparing the coefficients for the indicator of growing up in a rural (compared to urban) environment across models in Appendix Table 2.1 provides some insights into why this is the case. Some of this gap is due to urban–rural differences in family background characteristics and levels of social capital, with educational experiences and local area characteristics playing only a minor role in explaining such differences. Different levels of extracurricular involvement at age 13 do not account for any of the urban/rural sports volunteering gap after accounting for other factors (Table 2.2, Model 3). However, importantly, young people who grew up in rural areas continue to be significantly more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20.

### 2.2.3 Predictors of non-sports volunteering at age 20

We next consider characteristics of young people during their middle childhood that predict their likelihood of volunteering for non-sports organisations at age 20, such as a ‘social or charitable organisation’ or ‘other non-sports organisations such as Boy Scouts, or youth clubs’.<sup>16</sup> At age 20, 25 per cent of young people were engaged in some form of non-sports volunteering. Table 2.3 shows the relationship between a young person’s characteristics during their middle childhood and their probability of volunteering for a non-sports organisation in adulthood (see Appendix Table 2.2 for full results).

Model 1 (Table 2.3) shows, as seen descriptively in Chapter 1, that there is no significant difference in rates of non-sports volunteering between young people who grew up in rural areas and those who grew up in urban areas. Regarding young people’s family background (Model 2, Appendix Table 2.2), mother’s education is again important for later life volunteering. However, it has a stronger relationship with non-sports volunteering than sports volunteering, with those young people whose mothers had a degree or above being nine percentage points more likely to engage in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (compared to those whose mothers had lower secondary or less qualifications) (Model 2, Table 2.3). Other aspects of family background or the young person’s having an illness/disability are not significantly related to non-sports volunteering. However, being in social housing (compared to an owned home) at age 9 is linked to lower levels of non-sports volunteering (but on the margins of significance). Unlike for sports volunteering, where women were less likely to be involved, we find that women are somewhat more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering than men.

**TABLE 2.3 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Outcome (volunteering at age 20)</b>			
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	0.004	0.005	0.001
<b>Female (cf. Male)</b>		0.036*	0.021
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>			
<b>Upper secondary</b>		0.012	0.008
<b>Non-degree</b>		0.042	0.037
<b>Primary Degree/Postgrad.</b>		0.086**	0.079*
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>		ref.	ref.
<b>Both parents/lone parent born abroad</b>		-0.009	-0.01
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>		ref.	ref.
<b>Rent – Social housing</b>		-0.053	-0.060+
<b>Rent – Private</b>		0.088+	0.095+
<b>Lives with parents</b>		0.168	0.185+

<sup>16</sup> We also explored what middle childhood factors predicted a young person’s involvement in religious volunteering at age 20. Only frequency of attending church at age 9 and a young person’s self-reported level of spirituality at age 13 were significantly positively associated.

**TABLE 2.3 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Mother volunteers locally (cf. Does not)		0.014	0.01
N of friends YP normally hangs around with		-0.013	-0.014
How many YP's friends that parents have met		0.011	0.004
Frequency of YP attending church		-0.011	-0.012
Mother's spirituality/religiousness		0.005	0.004
Yes, access to public transport to school		0.003	0.002
Yes, local recreational facilities for 9 year olds present		0.016	0.017
% aged 65+ in electoral district		0.004*	0.004*
District socio-economic disadvantage (index)		-0.004	-0.005
Mother's perception of local social/physical disorder		0.008	0.007
Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities		ref.	ref.
Disagree		0.053	0.051
Agree		0.032	0.028
Strongly agree		0.039	0.035
PCG sense of local security and stability (index)		0.018	0.017
Baseline – Low school importance of sports/arts activities		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.061**	0.061**
High importance		0.048*	0.047*
Baseline – Low school importance of science/social justice activities		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		-0.006	-0.008
High importance		-0.005	-0.004
Baseline – YP hates/doesn't like school		ref.	ref.
Likes school a bit		0.034	0.036
Likes school quite a bit		0.051	0.048
Likes school very much		0.066*	0.061+
<i>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</i>			
Cultural activities ('dance, drama or music lessons')			0.029**
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			-0.005
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community			0.020+
Yes, has a leadership role in activity			0.023
Observations	4,536	4,536	4,536
Pseudo R-squared	0	0.03	0.036

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland Cohort '98*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. Model 2 = Model 7 in appendix table. Model 3 = Model 9 in appendix table. Models control for YP chronic illness, mother's report of YP's health, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household, and household income (not shown). Full models in appendix Table A2.2.

While social capital is important for involvement in sports volunteering into early adulthood, it appears to have no relationship with young people's involvement in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (Model 3, Appendix Table 2.2). The only neighbourhood factor significantly associated with non-sports volunteering is the age profile of the local area, which is an indicator of residential stability. Young people who, at age 9, lived in areas with a higher share of people aged 65 and over

are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (Model 4, Appendix Table 2.2).

Access to local services (including recreational facilities for 9 year olds and regular public transport), however, appears to matter for young people who grew up in urban areas but not rural areas. Figure 2.3 shows the proportion of young people from urban and rural areas who engaged in non-sports volunteering at age 20 by whether there was public transport to school at age 9.<sup>17</sup> Those young people who grew up in urban areas with public transport to school are six percentage points more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering than those urban youth who did not have public transport.<sup>18</sup> Among those growing up in rural areas, access seems to matter much less. Figure 2.4 similarly shows the proportion of young people from urban and rural areas involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 by whether there were recreational facilities for children in their local area.<sup>19</sup> Again, young people who grew up in urban areas with access to such facilities are six percentage points more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 than those who grew up without such facilities. Among those growing up in rural areas, again, such access matters much less.

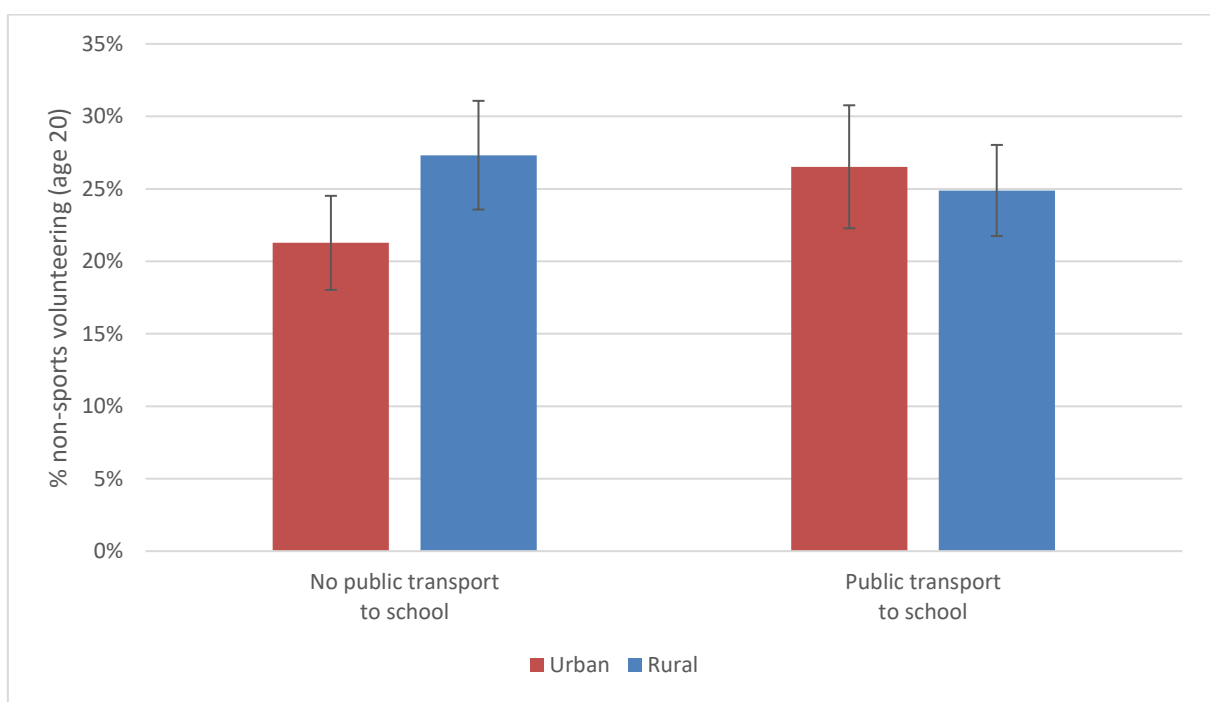
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<sup>17</sup> Derived from a model including all domains (akin to Model 2, Table 2.2) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and 'public transport to school' (model available on request).

<sup>18</sup> Public transport here is not acting as a proxy for size of urban area; i.e., a proxy for living in a city compared to a town.

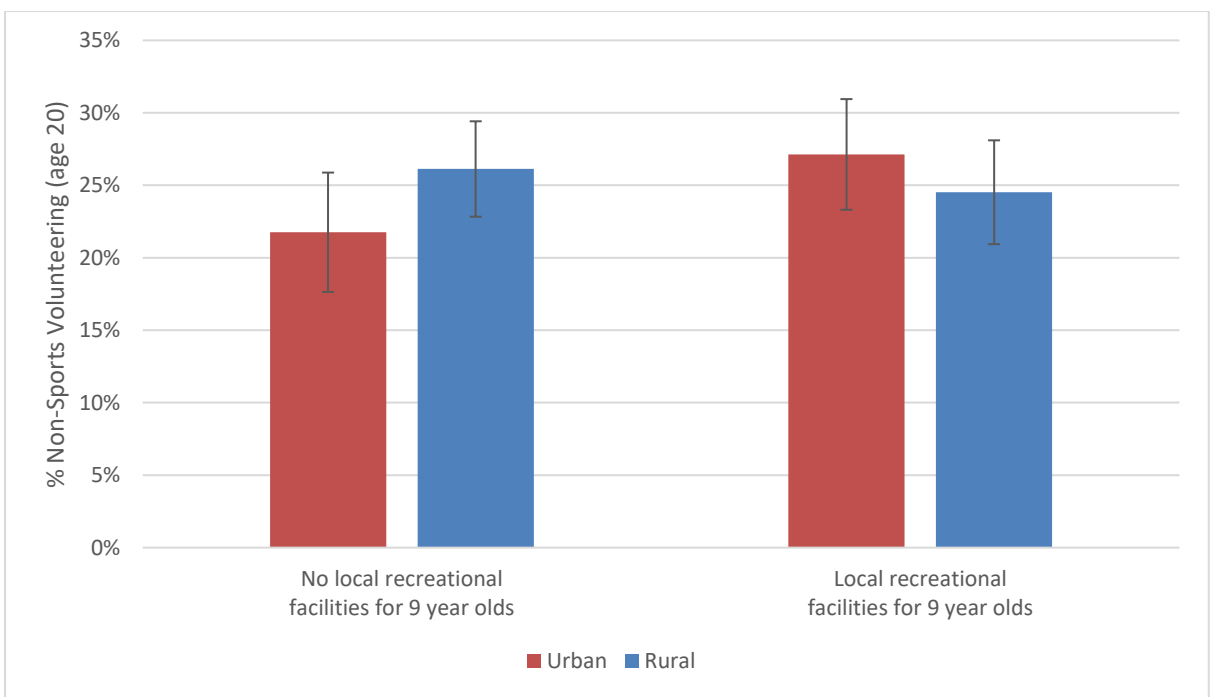
<sup>19</sup> Derived from a model including all domains (akin to Model 2, Table 2.2) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and 'local recreational facilities' (model available on request).

**FIGURE 2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENCE OF SCHOOL PUBLIC TRANSPORT (AGE 9) AND NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**



*Source:* Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.  
*Notes:* Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 2.3) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and presence of public transport to school at age 9; data weighted to be representative.

**FIGURE 2.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESENCE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES (AGE 9) AND NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**



*Source:* Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.  
*Notes:* Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 2.3) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and local recreational suitable for a 9 year old; data weighted to be representative.

Turning to the education domain, young people's middle childhood experience of school appears to be somewhat more important for non-sports volunteering than for sports volunteering (Model 6, Appendix Table 2.2). Firstly, young people who enjoyed school more at age 13 are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20. Secondly, young people who were in primary schools that placed a higher importance on sports, music, and speech and drama as extra-curricular activities are also more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering in early adulthood.

We next explore whether greater involvement in extracurricular activities at age 13 has a lasting association with non-sports volunteering in early adulthood, as it did for sports volunteering (Model 3, Table 2.3). Taking part in cultural clubs at age 13 (including 'dance, drama or music lessons') has a strong relationship with non-sports volunteering in adulthood. In fact, 13 year olds who were involved in cultural clubs four or more times a week have a probability of non-sports volunteering at age 20 that is 21 percentage points higher than for those who were never involved in cultural activities. Young people who participated more frequently in 'clubs or groups such as guides or scouts, youth club, community, or church groups' at age 13 are also more likely to be volunteering for non-sports organisations at age 20. Being more involved in sports organisations, however, had no relationship with non-sports volunteering later in life. Furthermore, having special responsibilities (such as captain) in any of these activities does not appear to matter for non-sports volunteering.

As with sports volunteering, involvement in extracurricular activities at age 13 accounts for (at least part of) the relationships between middle childhood factors and non-sports volunteering. In particular, the gender gap in non-sports volunteering is largely related to girls being much more likely than boys to be involved in cultural activities at age 13. Some of the effect of being positive about school is related to the greater involvement of these young people in extracurricular activities. The positive relationship for having a graduate mother is also partly explained by extracurricular involvement, although it remains a significant predictor of young people's non-sports volunteering at age 20.

#### **2.2.4 Summary of middle childhood predictors of volunteering in late adolescence (age 17) and early adulthood (age 20)**

Table 2.4 summarises the associations between each middle childhood characteristic and volunteering at 17 and 20 years of age. Only those effects that

are significant after accounting for family background characteristics are included.<sup>20</sup>

Young people's individual and family background in middle childhood are important for shaping their volunteering behaviours. Young people with more educated mothers are more likely to volunteer at ages 17 and 20, especially so for non-sports organisations at age 20. There is also some evidence that living in rented homes at age 9 is associated with less volunteering later in life. Involvement in volunteering is patterned by gender. Women, especially in urban areas, are much less likely to be involved in sports volunteering, but somewhat more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering in early adulthood. Young people with a chronic illness or disability at age 9 are less involved in sports volunteering but have similar levels of participation in non-sports volunteering.

Some middle childhood domains are especially important for young people's sports volunteering in early adulthood; particularly, parental and peer social capital. Young people who attend church more frequently at age 9, or whose parents have met more of their friends, are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20 (as well as to volunteer at age 17). Greater involvement in church may foster more prosocial beliefs and values, encouraging volunteering (Gibson, 2008), while church involvement can also foster greater social connections and sense of community, which can socialise young people into more civic norms and recruit them into community involvement (Putnam and Campbell, 2012).<sup>21</sup> Similarly, in contexts where parents know their children's friends, social capital may be higher (stronger family and community connectivity), which is again an important driver of volunteering in adulthood (Duke et al., 2009). In addition, those young people whose mother was volunteering when they were age 9 are more likely to be volunteering at ages 17 and 20.<sup>22</sup> This may be because parents socialise young people into the value of engagement, such as justice, reciprocity and social responsibility (Wilson, 2000).<sup>23</sup>

While parental and peer social capital is important for sports volunteering, young people's educational experiences are much more important for non-sports volunteering. Young people who enjoyed school at age 13 engaged in more non-sports volunteering at 20 (and more volunteering at age 17). Furthermore, involvement in non-sports volunteering is higher among young people who

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<sup>20</sup> Inclusion was based on controlling for family background alone, given we cannot be sure of the causal ordering of the other variables. For example, locality effects could come through affecting peer networks. In this case, they would still matter for volunteering but would not be included as significant in the summary table.

<sup>21</sup> Although religious attendance at age 9 is only associated with sports volunteering at age 20, attendance at age 20 is associated with both more sports and non-sports volunteering.

<sup>22</sup> Although we do not find that maternal volunteering behaviour predicts sports or non-sports volunteering at age 20, it does predict a measure of 'any volunteering' at age 20.

attended primary schools that placed a higher importance on sports, music, and speech and drama as extra-curricular activities, though levels of sports volunteering are lower for this group. Given nearly all primary schools place a high importance on extracurricular sports activities, these relationships are being driven by schools placing a greater importance on arts activities.

The localities that young people grew up in can also shape their volunteering behaviours in adulthood. Living in a community (at age 9) with a higher share of residents aged 65 or over is associated with both sports and non-sports volunteering in young adulthood. Older age composition of an area is often associated with community stability and social capital (Laurence, 2011; Laurence, 2016). Growing up in environments richer in local connectivity and a sense of community can drive later life prosocial behaviour (Duke et al., 2009). Access to local facilities and services in middle childhood also appears important for volunteering in adulthood, especially for young people growing up in urban areas. Growing up in areas with more facilities (such as youth clubs, swimming clubs and sports clubs) and where young people have access to public transport to school is associated with more sports volunteering in adulthood, potentially capturing regular access to sports facilities and opportunities for sports involvement in their middle childhood. In addition, access to public transport to school and the presence of local recreational facilities for children both have a positive relationship with urban youth's non-sports volunteering as well.

Perhaps the strongest middle childhood predictor of early adulthood volunteering is young people's extracurricular involvement at age 13. Young people more involved in cultural activities are more likely to volunteer at age 17 and to volunteer for non-sports organisations at 20. Those involved in sports activities and clubs/groups such as guides or scouts, or community groups, are also more likely to volunteer at age 17, but do not differ in levels of non-sports volunteering at 20. However, those involved in sports activities at age 13 are more involved, and those involved in cultural activities less involved, in sports volunteering at age 20. Therefore, even at 13 years of age, teenagers may be beginning to form interests and identities that may have lasting impacts on their future forms of volunteering, not only steering them more into one form (as in the case of sports involvement) but steering them away from others (as in the case of cultural activities). In addition, even after accounting for type of extracurricular activity at age 13, having a leadership role in their groups/clubs at age 13 has a further positive association with sports volunteering later in life. Additional analyses (not shown here) indicate that having a regular part-time term-time job at age 13 has no relationship with later volunteering behaviour.

Young people's experience of extracurricular activities is also important for explaining (part of) why other middle childhood characteristics drive volunteering at age 20. For example, less sports involvement and more cultural involvement at



age 13 among women explains part of their lower sports volunteering in adulthood and all of their higher non-sports volunteering. Extracurricular involvement explains part of why young people who attended church more, or had more friends their parents had met, undertake more sports volunteering at 20. Extracurricular involvement also explains a large part of why growing up in areas with facilities for teenagers predicts volunteering at age 17.

Overall, middle childhood appears more important in explaining sports volunteering in adulthood than it does in explaining non-sports volunteering. A larger number of characteristics predict sports volunteering. Furthermore, the pseudo R-squared score (essentially a way of gauging how well our models explain patterns of civic engagement) for the full sports volunteering model is 0.11 and only 0.04 for non-sports volunteering. In addition, several characteristics that are important for volunteering in adulthood appear to matter less for volunteering at age 17, such as young people's local areas. Potentially, being still in school at 17 may suppress the impact of other aspects of their lives, with personal agency becoming more important for volunteering in adulthood.

The findings also shed light on different patterns of volunteering between urban and rural youth. Rural youth are more likely to be volunteering at age 17, a pattern that is partly influenced by differences in family background, parental and peer social capital, local area characteristics and educational experiences. The most important factor accounting for rural–urban differences at age 17 is the nature of extracurricular involvement at 13. There is no urban–rural gap in non-sports volunteering at age 20, but young people who grew up in rural areas are more likely to undertake sports volunteering than their urban peers. Some of this gap is due to urban–rural differences in family background characteristics and levels of social capital, but the gap remains significant even accounting for a range of factors.

**TABLE 2.4 SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND VOLUNTEERING IN EARLY ADULTHOOD AND LATE ADOLESCENCE**

		Age of measure	Sports (age 20)	Non-sports (age 20)	Any (age 17)
<b>Urban/Rural</b>	Rural (cf. Urban)	9	+	n.d.	+
<b>Family background</b>	Female (cf. Male)	9	– (stronger in urban areas)	+	n.d.
	Chronic illness	9	-	n.d.	n.d.
	Mother’s education	9	+	+	+
	Lone parent (cf. Two parents)	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Two migrant parents (or migrant lone parent)	9	-	n.d.	n.d.
	HH income	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Cf. Homeowner				
	Social renting	9	n.d.	-	n.d.
	Private renting	9	-	n.d.	-
	Other	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Child’s health past year	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Parental / Peer social capital</b>	Mother locally volunteers	9	n.d.	n.d.	+
	Number of friends	13	n.d.	n.d.	–
	Number of friends parents have met	13	+	n.d.	+
	Church attendance	9	+	n.d.	+
	Child’s spirituality	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Locality</b>	Public transport to school	9	+	+ (urban areas)	n.d.
	Recreational facilities for 9 year old	9	n.d.	+ (urban areas)	n.d.
	% aged 65+ in local electoral division (SAPS)	9	+	+	n.d.
	Local SAPS disadvantage	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Parent’s perception of disorder	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Facilities such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs	13	+	n.d.	+ (rural areas)
	Local family stability	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Education</b>	School importance on sports/arts extracurricular	9	–	+	+
	School importance on social justice/politics extracurricular	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Child enjoyment of school	13	n.d.	+	+

**TABLE 2.4 (CONTD.) SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND VOLUNTEERING IN EARLY ADULTHOOD AND LATE ADOLESCENCE**

		Age of measure	Sports (age 20)	Non-sports (age 20)	Any (age 17)
<b>Club involvement</b>	Cultural (dance, drama or music lessons)	13	–	+	+
	Sports with coach/instructor/ organised team	13	+	n.d.	+
	Club/groups; e.g., guides/scouts, youth club, community	13	n.d.	+	+
	Special responsibilities; e.g., team leader, captain	13	+	n.d.	+

Notes: N.d. = no significant difference; + = positive and significant effect; - = positive and significant effect. SAPS = Small Area Population Statistics.

## 2.3 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF VOLUNTEERING

### 2.3.1 Late adolescence predictors of volunteering at age 17

We now turn to characteristics of young people's lives during their late adolescence (age 17) and early adulthood (age 20) that drive their volunteering behaviours. To take account of change over time in individual and family circumstances, family structure and housing tenure are now captured at age 17. Similarly, the social capital, local area and education domains capture perceptions and experiences at age 17 and/or age 20. The young person's own socio-demographic situation, such as experiences of financial hardship, whether they took a higher education pathway, or whether they are still living at home, are also taken into account. We take a similar approach as above, applying logistic regression models (reporting marginal effects) and undertaking a nested approach to studying the relative importance of different domains in young people's lives. We again test whether young people's characteristics may have different associations with volunteering among those from urban or rural backgrounds and report significant differences within the text.<sup>24</sup> The tables in the main text present the main models, while the full results of all the models are available in the appendices.

Table 2.5 (Model 2) demonstrates that few individual or family factors are significantly associated with volunteering at age 17, once experiences in late adolescence are taken into account. Young people's self-rated health is positively associated with greater volunteering at age 17. In terms of social capital, having greater gender diversity in friendship groups is positively associated with more volunteering at age 17. Volunteering is more likely where there are facilities (such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs) for teenagers locally at age 17. Having taken part in Transition Year is positively associated with volunteering at age 17, but there is no significant relationship with Junior Certificate grades. Young people who were in their Leaving Certificate year at the time of the survey are less likely to have been volunteering, potentially suggesting that the Leaving Certificate exams may depress volunteering behaviours at the time, with young people directing their energies more to their exams.

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<sup>24</sup> We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given that the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

**TABLE 2.5 LATE ADOLESCENCE PREDICTORS OF VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 17 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (at age 17)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.045*	0.057**	0.029
Female (cf. Male)		0.002	0.022
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>			
Upper secondary		-0.004	-0.018
Non-degree		-0.017	-0.034
Primary Degree/Postgrad.		0.001	-0.024
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>		ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.021	-0.035
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>		ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.043	-0.059
Rent – Private		-0.033	-0.018
Lives with parents/missing		-0.071	-0.039
YP’s self-rated health		0.041**	0.021+
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different ethnicity</b>		ref.	ref.
Some are a different ethnicity		0.012	0.007
Most or all are a different ethnicity		0.030	-0.013
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different gender</b>		ref.	ref.
Some are a different gender		0.082**	0.055*
Most or all are a different gender		0.160**	0.110*
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>		ref.	ref.
Disagree		0.074+	0.062
Agree		0.084*	0.050
Strongly agree		0.105**	0.054
YP’s perception of local social/physical disorder		0.002	-0.006
<b>Baseline – Bottom quartile of JCERT grades</b>		ref.	ref.
2nd quartile		0.000	-0.005
3rd quartile		0.019	-0.001
Highest quartile		0.049	0.004
YP took Transition Year		0.074*	0.057*
Yes, in Leaving Certificate year at time of survey		-0.084***	-0.065**
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 17)</b>			
<b>Cultural activities</b>			0.069**
Debate club			-0.171
Religious groups or organisations			0.211***
Scouts or guides			0.215**
Sports clubs/teams			0.069**
School/student councils			0.103***
Youth clubs			0.154***
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</b>			
Cultural activities (‘dance, drama or music lessons’)			0.013
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			-0.007
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community groups			0.033**
Yes, has a leadership role in activities			0.094***

**TABLE 2.5 (CONTD.) ADOLESCENCE PREDICTORS OF VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 17 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Observations	4,025	4,025	4,025
Pseudo R-squared	0.002	0.113	0.123

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person; JCERT= Junior Certificate. Weighted data. Models include background characteristics, including whether YP has a chronic illness, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household and household income (not shown).

Model 3 demonstrates that involvement in any type of extracurricular activity at age 17, apart from debating clubs, is associated with greater volunteering at age 17. This ranges from young people involved in cultural clubs ('Art, drama, dance or music clubs/groups/rehearsals'), who were 8 percentage points more likely to be volunteering at age 17, to those young people involved in scouts and guides, who were 27 percentage points more likely to be volunteering. Having taken part in clubs/groups (such as guides/scouts) and having a leadership role at 13 are associated with greater volunteering, even taking account of activities at age 17. Extracurricular involvement explains part of the difference found in volunteering by self-rated health, gender diversity among friends, local facilities and having taken Transition Year.

These findings also shed light on the urban–rural gap in volunteering rates at age 17. Once we account for differences in urban and rural young people's characteristics at age 17, the urban–rural gap in volunteering actually widens (Model 2, Table 2.5). We can interpret this as meaning that rural youth are even more likely to volunteer than might be expected, given they have less access to facilities for teenagers than their urban peers. However, young people's extracurricular activities at age 17 explain a further part of the urban–rural gap (which is now only significant at the p<.1 level). This is because rural youth are more likely to be involved in sports clubs and religious organisations at age 17, which positively predict volunteering at age 17.<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3.2 Predictors of sports volunteering at age 20

Table 2.6 shows the relationships between a young person's characteristics during their late adolescence/early adulthood and their probability of volunteering for a sports organisation at age 20. Looking at those family background characteristics captured at ages 17 and 20 (Model 2, see Appendix Table 2.5 for full results), we find that having a chronic illness (at age 20) and living in private rental accommodation (compared to an owned home) (at age 17) are both again associated with lower sports volunteering at age 20. Better self-reported health by young people at age 20 is also associated with more sports volunteering at age 20.

<sup>25</sup> Urban youth are more likely to be involved in scouts and guides at age 17. However, only a small proportion of young people were involved in this at age 17 (<1 per cent).

Those with a graduate mother are more likely to volunteer, even taking account of socio-demographic factors in late adolescence/early adulthood.

Turning to parental and peer social capital (Model 3, Appendix Table 2.5), greater church attendance (at age 20) is similarly positively associated with sports volunteering at age 20. A more gender diverse friendship network (at age 17) is also associated with more sports volunteering at age 20. Closer analysis shows that this association is strongest among women. Men are just as likely to be involved in sports volunteering regardless of the proportion of women in their friendship network. However, the greater the number of men in a woman's friendship network, the more likely she is to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20 (a difference of eight percentage points between those with no male friends and who have most or all male friends).

Looking at the role of young people's neighbourhoods in late adolescence and early adulthood (Model 4, Appendix Table 2.5), the presence of facilities (such as youth clubs, swimming clubs or sports clubs) at age 17 does not predict sports volunteering at age 20 (as it did when young people were aged 13).<sup>26</sup> Instead, living in an area (at age 20) that a young person considers safe is positively associated with sports volunteering at age 20. Measures available at the age 20 wave allow us to capture the quality of the local social infrastructure, an index of the extent to which young people agree that, 'there are leisure and sports facilities suitable for young adults in the area', 'I have lots of friends/family living in this area' and 'there are places in this area to meet up with other people'. Young people who live in areas with better neighbourhood social infrastructure are also much more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20, even taking account of their family background.

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<sup>26</sup> This is due, in part, to the effect of neighbourhood social infrastructure (at age 20), although even excluding this measure, 'youth facilities' at age 17 matter less.

**TABLE 2.6 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering at age 20)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.054***	0.041**	0.036**
Female (cf. Male)		-0.052***	-0.007
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>			
Upper secondary		0.016	0.014
Non-degree		0.028	0.023
Primary Degree/Postgrad.		0.039*	0.024
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>		ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.043	-0.03
<b>Baseline – Family's tenancy: Homeowner</b>		ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.021	-0.018
Rent – Private		-0.084***	-0.074***
Lives with parents/missing		-0.060+	-0.052
<b>YP's self-rated health</b>		0.038***	0.028***
<b>Baseline – Friends all the same ethnicity</b>		ref.	ref.
Some different ethnicity		-0.007	-0.003
Most different ethnicity		0.024	0.016
<b>Baseline – Friends all the same gender</b>		ref.	ref.
Some different gender		0.033*	0.016
Most different gender		0.035	0.042
<b>N of friends YP has</b>		0.007	-0.002
<b>Frequency of YP attending church</b>		0.030***	0.026***
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>			
Disagree		0.028	0.031
Agree		0.018	0.008
Strongly agree		0.023	0.008
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure (index)</b>		0.015+	0.008
<b>Neighbourhood safety</b>		0.028*	0.025*
<b>YP's perception of local social/physical disorder</b>		0.021*	0.021**
<b>Baseline – Bottom quartile of Junior Certificate grades</b>		ref.	ref.
2nd quartile		-0.021	-0.017
3rd quartile		-0.034	-0.032
Highest quartile		-0.062**	-0.050*
<b>Yes, took Transition Year</b>		0.037**	0.026+
<b>Baseline – 0 to 300 Leaving Certificate points</b>		ref.	ref.
301–400 Leaving Certificate points		0.009	0.001
401–500 Leaving Certificate points		0.042+	0.026
501+ Leaving Certificate points		0.042	0.024
<b>Baseline – Difficult repaying loans: no loans</b>		ref.	ref.
No difficulty		0.013	0.003
A little/A lot		0.007	0.008
<b>Ease of making ends meet financially</b>		0.003	0.004
<b>Time spent in caring role</b>		0.019*	0.014+
<b>Accommodation costs limit opportunities (index)</b>		-0.01	-0.008
<b>YP lives at home</b>		0.037**	0.031*
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>		ref.	ref.
Higher education		0.035	0.039+
Further education		0.025	0.028



**TABLE 2.6 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

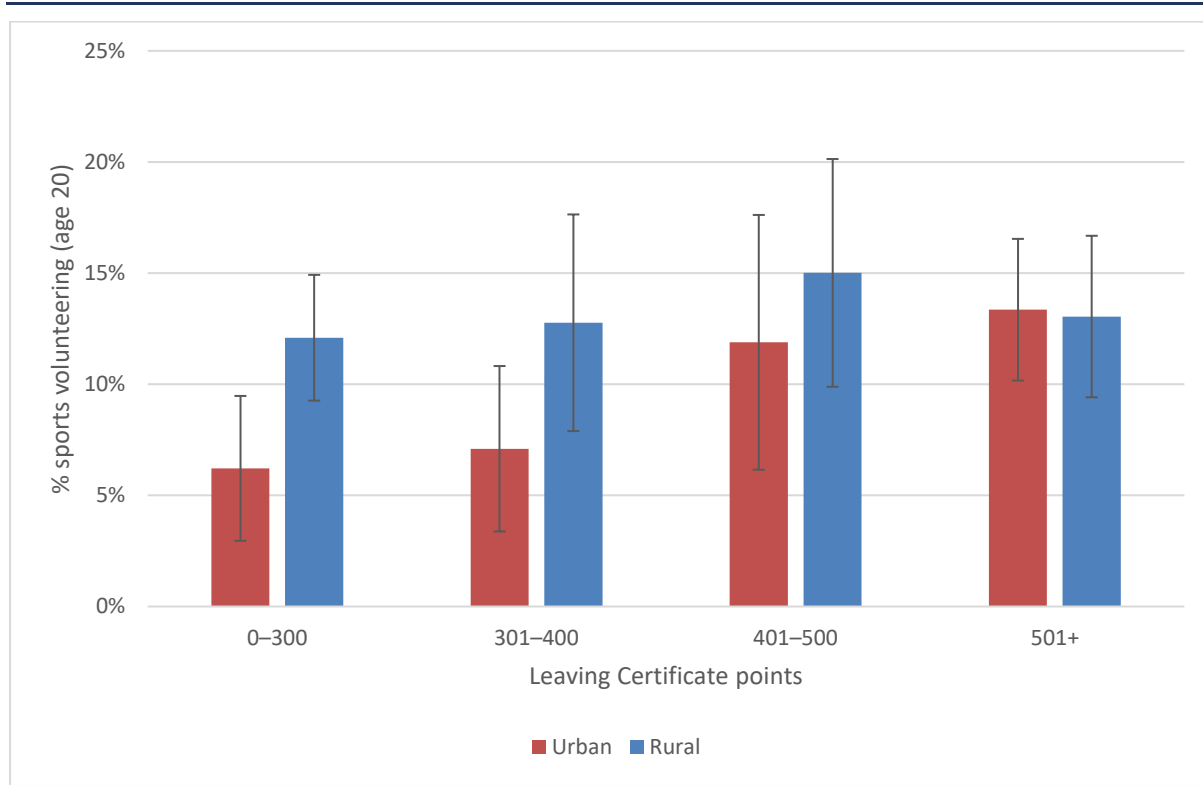
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Extracurricular (age 17)</b>			
Cultural activities			-0.011
Debate club			-0.099
Religious groups			-0.006
Scouts or guides			0.068
Sports clubs/teams			0.187***
School/student councils			-0.009
Youth clubs			-0.002
Volunteered at age 17			0.054***
<b>Extracurricular (age 13)</b>			
Cultural activities			-0.006
Organised sports			0.023**
Club/groups; e.g., guides/scouts, community groups			-0.002
Yes, has a leadership role			0.033**
Observations	4,502	4,502	4,502
Pseudo R-squared	0.011	0.122	0.21

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

Notes: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. N = Number of; F = Frequency of. Model 2 = Model 8 in appendix table. Model 3 = Model 10 in appendix table. Model 4 = Model 12 in appendix table. Models include background characteristics including whether YP has a chronic illness, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household, and household income (not shown). Full models in appendix table A2.5.

Turning to their education (Model 6, Appendix Table 2.5), young people who scored higher points on their Leaving Certificate exams are somewhat more likely to be involved in sports volunteering.<sup>27</sup> However, the positive gradient across Leaving Certificate points is stronger in urban areas. Figure 2.5 shows the proportion of young people who grew up in urban and rural environments who were involved in sports volunteering at age 20 by their number of Leaving Certificate points. Among rural youth, their Leaving Certificate score has no association with sports volunteering at age 20. However, among urban youth, those who scored fewer points on their Leaving Certificate (0 to 400 points) are less likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20 compared to those who scored 400 points or more (who are just as likely to be sports volunteers at age 20 as rural youth). Interestingly, even after accounting for Junior and Leaving Certificate educational performance, and family background, the probability of sports volunteering among young people who took Transition Year is four percentage points higher.

<sup>27</sup> The coefficients for Junior Certificate grades become negative when Leaving Certificate points are included because of the high correlation between the two.

**FIGURE 2.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEAVING CERTIFICATE POINTS AND SPORTS VOLUNTEERING (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1-4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 2.6) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and Leaving Certificate points; data weighted to be representative.

When it comes to young people's socio-demographic characteristics at ages 17 and 20 (Model 7, Appendix Table 2.5), those who took a higher education pathway, compared to being in the labour market or inactive, are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20. Those who took part in further education do not differ significantly in volunteering patterns from those in the labour market. Young people who still live at home (at age 20) and those in carer roles (at age 20) also see higher volunteering for sports organisations. Further analysis shows that young people living away from home for college (further/higher education) are less likely to engage in sports volunteering than students still living at home.

Model 3 (Table 2.5) examines whether extracurricular involvement in various groups and clubs in late adolescence affects sports volunteering in early adulthood. Only involvement in sports clubs/teams predicted later sports volunteering. This is a strong association, with young people in these clubs at 17 being around 20 percentage points more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20. We also see that those young people who were volunteering regularly when they were 17 are also more likely to be volunteering at age 20 (a difference of five percentage points).

Potentially, early involvement in extracurricular activities during a young person's middle childhood could exert lasting impacts on their propensity to volunteer in early adulthood. One pathway is that young people who were, say, involved in clubs in their childhood are more likely to remain involved in clubs into adolescence, which, in turn, leads to greater volunteering in early adulthood. An alternative is that early involvement could exert an effect even after controlling for later extracurricular involvement. For example, early club involvement may socialise young people into more civically minded habits, leading to later life volunteering (Smith, 1999).

Model 3 in Table 2.6 therefore also includes extracurricular involvement at age 13, to test these ideas. We find that early involvement in sports clubs and playing a leadership role have a positive relationship with sports volunteering at age 20, even after accounting for a young person's characteristics and extracurricular activity at ages 17 and 20.<sup>28</sup> In fact, those who were involved in organised sports at age 13, four or more times a week, are still seven percentage points more likely to be involved in sports volunteering at age 20 than those who had no involvement. This could suggest early involvement in sports clubs exerts a long-term effect on later life sports volunteering.

As found in looking at early life factors, part of the gender and maternal education gap in sports volunteering is explained by patterns of extracurricular involvement at age 17. Taking part in these activities also explains part of the effect of gender-diverse friendship networks, living in an area with a greater social infrastructure, taking part in Transition Year and doing better in the Leaving Certificate.

The urban–rural gap in sports volunteering is partly explained by the socio-demographic background of the young person and their family, levels of peer social capital, local area characteristics, educational experiences and extracurricular involvement. However, a significant urban–rural gap in sports volunteering at age 20 remains, even taking account of all of these factors.

### 2.3.3 Predictors of non-sports volunteering at age 20

We now look at characteristics of young people during their late adolescence/early adulthood that predict volunteering for non-sports organisations in early adulthood.<sup>29</sup> Table 2.7 shows the relationships between a young person's

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<sup>28</sup> This finding holds if we also control in the models for all age 9 and age 13 domains.

<sup>29</sup> We also explored which late adolescence/early adulthood factors predicted a young person's involvement in religious volunteering at age 20. We previously saw only religious attendance at age 9 was important for religious volunteering at age 20. Religious attendance at age 17 and 20 is also a strong predictor on religious volunteering at age 20. However, having grown up in social housing (compared to an owned home) at age 17 is negatively related to religious volunteering, while growing up (at age 17) in a community with facilities (such as youth clubs) for teenagers is positively associated with religious volunteering at age 20.

characteristics aged 17 and 20 years and their probability of volunteering for a non-sports organisation at age 20 (see Appendix Table 2.6 for full results). Focusing on those family background characteristics captured at ages 17 and 20 (Model 2, Appendix Table 2.6), we see that living in social housing (compared to an owned home) at age 17 is again, as at ages 9 and 13, associated with less non-sports volunteering at age 20. The gap is sizeable, with nearly a ten percentage points difference.

Parental and peer social capital during young people's late adolescence/early adulthood appears to play a greater role in their non-sports volunteering at age 20 than sports volunteering (Model 3, Appendix Table 2.6). As with sports volunteering, those young people who had greater gender diversity in their social networks at age 17 are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (significant at a  $p < .1$  level).<sup>30</sup> Similarly, those who attend church more regularly at age 20 are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering. Therefore, interestingly, greater religiosity predicts both sports and non-sports volunteering. However, unlike sports volunteering, young people who have some ethnic diversity (compared to none) in their social networks at age 17 are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20, while those who have a larger number of friends at age 20 are also somewhat more likely to be involved. Unlike sports volunteering, none of the local area characteristics appears to matter for their likelihood of non-sports volunteering at age 20 (Models 4 and 5, Appendix Table 2.6).

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<sup>30</sup> Unlike for sports volunteering, there is no difference between genders in the effect of social network gender diversity, which appears equally beneficial to both men and women at age 20.

**TABLE 2.7 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULthood PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering at age 20)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.005	-0.002	-0.004
Female (cf. Male)		0.028	0.025
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>			
Upper secondary		-0.006	-0.009
<b>Non-degree</b>		0.016	0.014
Primary Degree/Postgrad.		0.035	0.027
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>		ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		0.06	0.057
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>		ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.065+	-0.074*
Rent – Private		0.002	0.005
Lives with parents/missing		0.124	0.136
<b>YP’s self-rated health</b>		-0.018	-0.018
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different ethnicity</b>		ref.	ref.
Some are a different ethnicity		0.047*	0.042*
Most or all are a different ethnicity		-0.021	-0.028
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different gender</b>		ref.	ref.
Some are a different gender		0.029	0.021
Most or all are a different gender		0.088*	0.055
<b>No. of friends YP has</b>		0.011	0.005
<b>Frequency of YP attending church</b>		0.024*	0.013
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>		ref.	ref.
Disagree		0.002	0.004
Agree		0.017	0.01
Strongly agree		0.013	0.001
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure (index)</b>		0.001	-0.001
<b>Neighbourhood safety</b>		-0.001	0.002
<b>YP’s perception of local social/physical disorder</b>		0.012	0.009
<b>Baseline – Bottom quartile of Junior Certificate grades</b>		ref.	ref.
2nd quartile		-0.007	-0.012
3rd quartile		-0.024	-0.039
Highest quartile		-0.029	-0.058+
<b>Yes, took Transition Year</b>		0.051*	0.037+
<b>Baseline – 0 to 300 Leaving Certificate points</b>		ref.	ref.
301–400 Leaving Certificate points		0.083**	0.084**
401–500 Leaving Certificate points		0.116***	0.125***
501+ Leaving Certificate points		0.178***	0.187***
<b>Baseline – Difficult repaying loans: No loans</b>		ref.	ref.
No difficulty		0.012	0.016
A little/A lot		-0.004	0.005
<b>Ease of making ends meet financially</b>		0.003	0.003
<b>Time spent in caring role</b>		0.024*	0.019
<b>Accommodation costs limit opportunities (index)</b>		0.011	0.01
<b>YP lives at home</b>		-0.024	-0.019

**TABLE 2.7 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering at age 20)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>		ref.	ref.
<b>Higher education pathway</b>		0.056	0.05
<b>Further education pathway</b>		0.033	0.027
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 17)</b>			
<b>Cultural activities</b>			0.079***
<b>Debate club</b>			0.143
<b>Religious groups or organisations</b>			0.012
<b>Scouts or guides</b>			0.168*
<b>Sports clubs/teams</b>			0.011
<b>School/student councils</b>			0.070***
<b>Youth clubs</b>			0.113***
<b>Volunteered at age 17</b>			0.107***
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</b>			
<b>Cultural activities ('dance, drama or music lessons')</b>			0.005
<b>Sports with coach/instructor/organised team</b>			-0.004
<b>Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community groups</b>			0.003
<b>Yes, has a leadership role in extracurricular activity</b>			0.022
<b>Observations</b>	4,502	4,502	4,502
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0	0.046	0.075

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*;

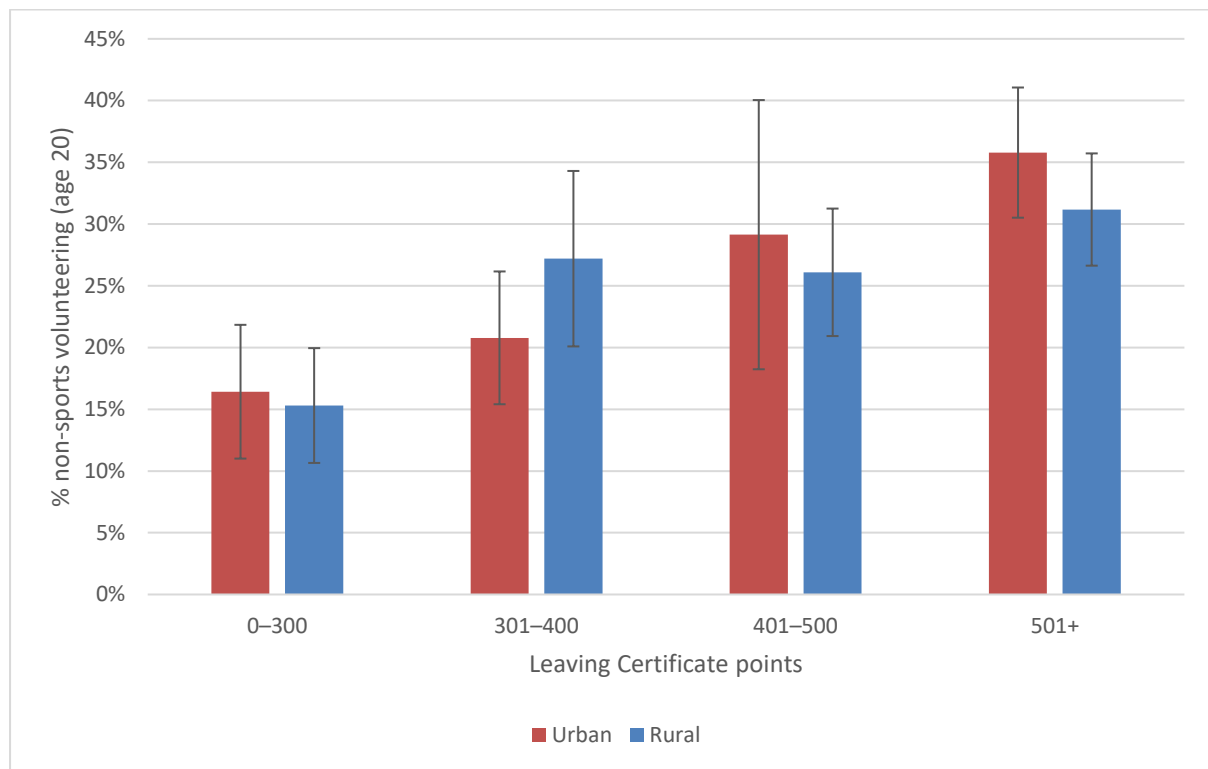
Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. N = Number of; F = Frequency of. Model 2 = Model 8 in appendix table. Model 3 = Model 10 in appendix table. Model 4 = Model 12 in appendix table. Models include background characteristics including whether YP has a chronic illness, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household, and household income (not shown). Full models in appendix Table A2.6.

Regarding the education domain, young people who took Transition Year are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (five percentage points more likely) (Model 6, Appendix Table 2.6). Therefore, Transition Year participation is associated with both sports and non-sports volunteering in early adulthood. However, of particular importance is young people's Leaving Certificate score. The probability of being involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 among young people who scored 501+ points in their Leaving Certificate is 20 percentage points higher than those who scored 0–300 points. This is compared to a difference of only five percentage points for sports volunteering. Again, as with sports volunteering, the difference in non-sports volunteering across Leaving Certificate points is more pronounced among young people who grew up in urban areas.<sup>31</sup> Figure 2.6 show the proportion of urban and rural young people who volunteered for non-sports organisations by their Leaving Certificate score. Both urban and rural youth who scored 0–300 points are less likely to be volunteering than those who scored 301+ points. However, among those who grew up in urban areas, rates

<sup>31</sup> These are predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 2, Table 2.6) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given that the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

of non-sports volunteering increase as a young person's Leaving Certificate score increases. In contrast, in rural areas, there is no difference in rates of volunteering between those who scored 301–400 points, 401–500 points and 501+ points.

**FIGURE 2.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEAVING CERTIFICATE POINTS AND NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 2.7) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and Leaving Certificate points; data weighted to be representative.

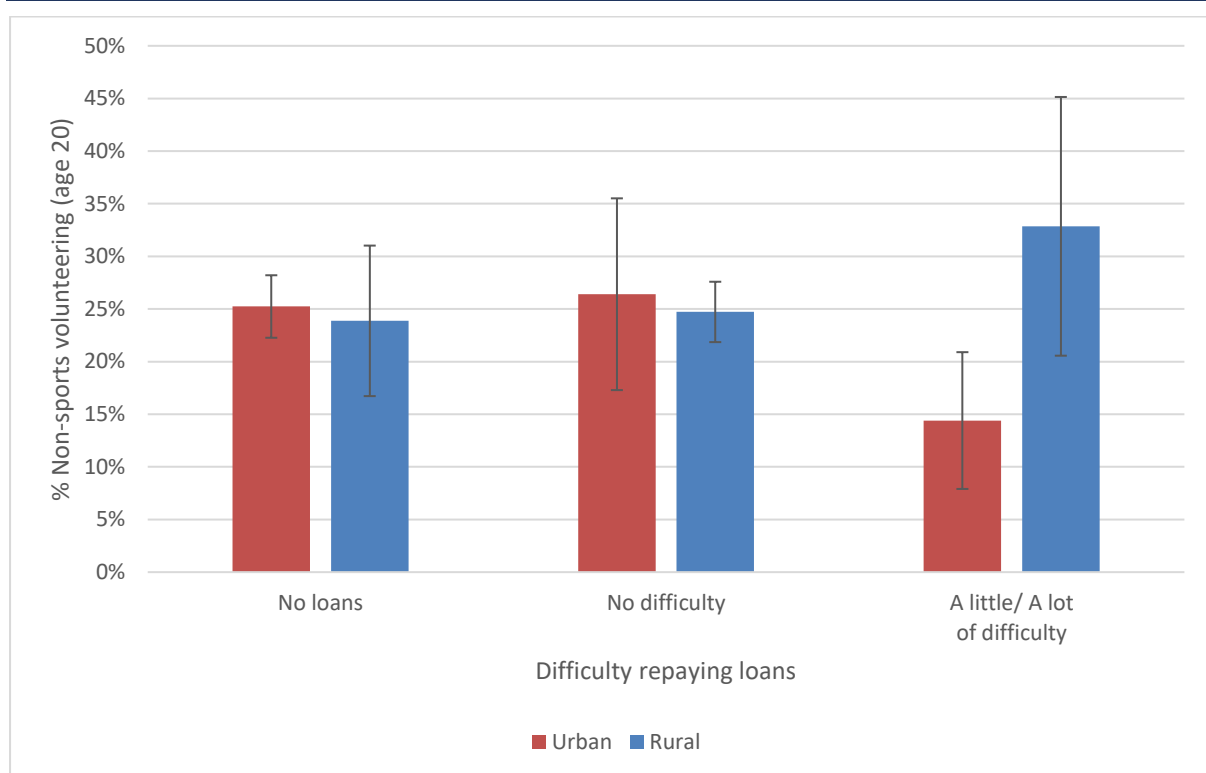
Examining the role of young people's socio-demographic characteristics during late adolescence/early adulthood (Model 7, Appendix Table 2.6), young people who took a higher education pathway are more likely to be engaged in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (as with sports volunteering). However, unlike sports volunteering, those who are still living at home at age 20 are less likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering (significant at a  $p < .1$  level).<sup>32</sup> We also find that young people (or their spouse/partner) experiencing difficulty in meeting any loan or debt repayments at age 20 are less likely to be engaged in non-sports volunteering, though this was only found among those who grew up in an urban area.<sup>33</sup> Figure 2.7 shows rates of non-sports volunteering among urban–rural youth by whether they have no loans, no difficulty repaying loans, or a little/a lot of

<sup>32</sup> There is no difference between those on a third-level pathway who live at home versus those who do not live at home.

<sup>33</sup> These are predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 2, Table 2.7) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms in the results table, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

difficulty repaying loans. Among rural youth, there is no significant difference in rates of non-sports volunteering by loan status. However, urban youth who report a little/a lot of difficulty have a probability of volunteering for non-sports organisations that is around ten percentage points lower than it is for those with no difficulty or no loans.

**FIGURE 2.7** RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIFFICULTY REPAYING LOANS AND NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 2.7) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and difficulty repaying loans; data weighted to be representative.

When all domains are modelled together (Model 2, Table 2.7), we find that the effects of maternal education and gender are largely explained by higher grades and greater third-level participation among women and those with highly educated mothers. Similarly, educational experiences play a role in explaining the effect of living in social housing, having a larger group of friends and living at home.

Turning to the role of extracurricular activities at age 17, only involvement in sports teams/clubs mattered for early adulthood sports volunteering. However, the following groups of young people were more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (Model 3, Table 2.6): those involved in cultural clubs ('Art, drama, dance or music clubs/groups/rehearsals') at age 17, who are 7 percentage points more likely; those in school/student councils, who are 6 percentage points more likely; and those involved in scouts and guides, who are 14 percentage points more likely. In addition, those young people who were engaged in volunteering activities at age 17 are also more likely to be volunteering for non-sports



organisations at age 20 (10 percentage points more likely). We also see that those involved in youth clubs at age 17 appear more likely to be volunteering at age 20 as well.

Model 3 (Table 2.7) therefore also includes extracurricular activities at age 13 alongside all domains, as well as extracurricular activities at ages 17 and 20. Extracurricular activities at age 13 have a positive, long-term relationship with non-sports volunteering into early adulthood, but this operates through continued involvement in extracurricular activities at age 17.<sup>34</sup> However, there are no direct long-term effects on non-sports volunteering in early adulthood. This contrasts with the significant direct effect of sports involvement at age 13 on sports volunteering at age 20.

Here again, we find that a young person's extracurricular involvement accounts for (at least some of) the association between non-sports volunteering and factors such as ethnic and gender diversity of friends, religious attendance and doing Transition Year. However, it is notable that involvement in extracurricular activities accounts for very little of one of the strongest predictors of non-sports volunteering at age 20: Leaving Certificate points.

### **2.3.4 Summary of late adolescence/early adulthood predictors of volunteering in late adolescence (age 17) and early adulthood (age 20)**

Table 2.8 summarises the associations between each late adolescence/early adulthood characteristic and volunteering at ages 17 and 20, distinguishing between sports and non-sports volunteering at 20. A factor is included if the association was significant after accounting for family background characteristics.<sup>35</sup>

The most consistent late adolescence/early adulthood predictor of volunteering, especially non-sports volunteering, is young people's parental and peer social capital. Those attending church more frequently (at age 20) are more involved in both sports and non-sports volunteering (as well as volunteering for religious organisations). Young people who had more gender diversity in their social networks (at age 17) are also more involved in sports and non-sports volunteering in adulthood, and those with more ethnic diversity in their networks and more friends undertake more non-sports volunteering. One possibility is that social network size and diversity may increase young people's exposure to new

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<sup>34</sup> These effects are present even if we also account for all age 9 and age 13 domain characteristics in the model.

<sup>35</sup> Inclusion was based on controlling for family background alone, given that we cannot be sure of the causal ordering of the other variables. For example, the effects of locality on engagement could operate by affecting young people's peer networks. In this case, they would still matter for volunteering but would not be included as significant in the summary table.

information, different ideas and perspectives, thus facilitating greater discussion on social and political issues and providing more opportunities for volunteering (Glanville, 2016). These ‘bridging ties’ may be more important for engagement in non-sports volunteering (e.g., a social or charitable organisation), potentially tied more to social justice issues, while opportunities for sports volunteering may be tied to more local, ‘bonding’ social networks (as outlined below).

Interestingly, local area characteristics in late adolescence/early adulthood play no role in non-sports volunteering. However, young people in areas with a stronger social infrastructure (that is, local leisure and sports facilities suitable for young adults, having lots of friends and family living in the area, and places to meet up with other young people), or which young people consider safer, are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering. Clearly, volunteering for sports organisations relies more on access to facilities than non-sports volunteering, so their presence, as well as feeling safe accessing them, may facilitate greater sports volunteering. Stronger networks of friends and family in the local area (higher local social capital) also foster greater community involvement, and opportunities for sports volunteering may be more likely to occur within people’s local areas. Non-sports organisations may be more dispersed and rely less on community involvement for their volunteers. Further evidence for this is that people who live at home are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering while those who live away from home are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering, even after accounting for whether they are on a higher/further education pathway.<sup>36</sup> Illness and disability also matter for sports volunteering: having a chronic illness and worse health at age 20 reduces sports volunteering in adulthood, while worse health at 17 predicts less volunteering at age 17.

Educational experiences in late adolescence/early adulthood have a complex relationship with patterns of volunteering in early adulthood. Young people who were in their Leaving Certificate year when surveyed at age 17 are less involved in sports volunteering, suggesting they might reduce engagement to focus on their studies (in keeping with findings on other activities; see Smyth et al., 2011). However, young people who took Transition Year are more likely to be involved in both sports and non-sports volunteering (and volunteering at age 17). Furthermore, young people with more Leaving Certificate points are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering and much more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering. Interestingly, the positive gradient in volunteering across higher Leaving Certificate points is stronger in urban areas, and weaker (or absent in the case of sports volunteering) in rural areas, with urban youth with lower points particularly susceptible to lower volunteering. A potential explanation for this might be that in urban areas, poorer educational performance could lead to

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<sup>36</sup> Living at home predicts more sports volunteering alongside all domains, while it is only rendered non-significant for non-sports volunteering after controlling for Junior/Leaving Certificate points.

greater alienation from social and civic engagement, while in rural areas, where volunteering may rely more on informal contacts and community networks, educational achievement may be less tied to volunteering.

Interestingly, young people's Leaving Certificate points are one of the strongest predictors of non-sports volunteering and help explain the role of several other late adolescence/early adulthood factors. This includes much of the relationship between non-sports volunteering and mother's education, being on a higher education pathway, as well as part of the gender gap in non-sports volunteering.<sup>37</sup>

Extracurricular involvement in late adolescence plays a critical role in early adulthood volunteering behaviour. Most extracurricular activities at age 17 predict volunteering at age 17. Involvement in cultural groups, scouts/guides, school/student councils and youth clubs (in rural areas) are also key predictors of non-sports volunteering in early adulthood. In addition, involvement in cultural activities in early adolescence has a positive, long-term relationship with non-sports volunteering in adulthood. Thus, early engagers in cultural activities are still involved in these activities at age 17, leading to higher non-sports volunteering at 20. Involvement in sports activities at age 17 only predicts sports volunteering at age 20. However, involvement in sports activities at 13 has a positive, independent long-term relationship with likelihood of volunteering for sports groups in adulthood, as does being in a leadership role. Young people who were regularly volunteering at age 17 are also more likely to be volunteering at age 20. Extracurricular involvement also helps explain some of the effects of religious attendance, gender and Transition Year participation. Additional analyses (not shown here) show that, contrary to being a barrier to volunteering, having a regular part-time, term-time job is associated with more non-sports volunteering, though it is not significantly related to sports volunteering.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Women are more likely to score higher in their Junior/Leaving Certificate exams and to have entered higher education, which helps explain why they are more likely to undertake non-sports volunteering than men.

<sup>38</sup> In a model controlling for all domains, respondents who had a regular part-time, term-time job at age 17 or at age 20 were more likely to be engaged in non-sports volunteering at age 20 (but not sports volunteering). However, being employed compared to being on a further/higher education pathway is not associated with more volunteering (results available on request).

**TABLE 2.8 SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS: YOUNG PERSON'S LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND VOLUNTEERING IN EARLY ADULTHOOD AND LATE ADOLESCENCE**

		Age of measure	Sports (age 20)	Non-sports (age 20)	Any (age 17)
<b>Urban–Rural</b>	Rural (cf. Urban)	9	+	n.d.	+
<b>Family background</b>	Female (cf. Male)	9	–	+	n.d.
	Chronic illness	20	–	n.d.	n.d.
	Mother's education	9	+	+	+
	Lone parent (cf. Two parents)	17	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Two migrant parents (or migrant lone parent)	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	HH income	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Cf. Homeowner				
	Social renting	17	n.d.	–	n.d.
	Private renting	17	–	n.d.	n.d.
	Other	17	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Child's health past year*	20	+	n.d.	+
<b>Parental / Peer social capital</b>	Gender diversity of friends	17	+	+	+
	Ethnic/racial diversity of friends	17	n.d.	+	n.d.
	Number of friends	20	n.d.	+	N/A
	Church attendance	20	+	+	N/A
<b>Locality</b>	'Facilities such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs' (YP)	17	n.d.	n.d.	+
	Neighbourhood social infrastructure (YP)	20	+	n.d.	N/A
	Neighbourhood safety	20	+	n.d.	N/A
	Perceived disorder* (YP)	20	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Education</b>	Junior Certificate exam grades	17	-	n.d.	n.d.
	Leaving Certificate exam points	20	+ (urban areas)	+ (stronger in urban areas)	N/A
	Transition Year	17	+	+	+
<b>Young person's socio-demographics</b>	Difficulties repaying loans	20	n.d.	– (urban areas)	N/A
	Ease of making ends meet financially	20	n.d.	n.d.	N/A
	Time spent in caring role	20	+	+	N/A

**TABLE 2.8 (CONTD.) SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS: YOUNG PERSON'S LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND VOLUNTEERING IN EARLY ADULTHOOD AND LATE ADOLESCENCE**

		Age of measure	Sports (age 20)	Non-sports (age 20)	Any (age 17)
	Feels accommodation costs limit opportunities	20	n.d.	n.d.	N/A
	Lives at home	20	+	-	N/A
	Further/Higher education pathway	20	+	+	N/A
	In Leaving Certificate year at time of age 17 survey	17	N/A	N/A	-
<b>Club involvement</b>	Cultural activities	17	n.d.	+	+
	Debate club	17	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Religious groups or organisations	17	n.d.	n.d.	+
	Scouts or guides	17	n.d.	+	+
	Sports clubs/teams	17	+	n.d.	+
	School/student councils	17	n.d.	+	+
	Youth clubs where you can hang out with other people	17	n.d.	+	+

Notes: N.d. = No significant difference; + = Positive and significant effect; - = Positive and significant effect; \* signifies that the characteristic was measured at age 17 when predicting volunteering at age 17.

Overall, young people's late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics play a more important role in explaining their involvement in sports volunteering than in non-sports volunteering. The pseudo R-squared value for the fully controlled sports volunteering model is 0.21 compared to 0.08 for non-sports volunteering. Late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics account for a sizeable part of the urban–rural gap in sports volunteering, although a significant difference remains even when accounting for a wide range of factors.

Chapter 3 explores patterns of political engagement among young adults. However, at this stage, it is worth looking briefly at the interplay between volunteering and political perceptions. Young people's concern with different issues in the world (measured when they were 20 years old) is found to be associated with volunteering. In fully controlled models, young people who are more concerned with poverty in Ireland are more likely to be engaged in non-sports volunteering, while those more concerned with animal rights and climate change are less likely to be involved in sports volunteering.<sup>39</sup> However, given volunteering may itself shape young people's concern (and both were measured at age 20), these findings need to be treated with caution.

## 2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has shown that education plays a key role in young people's volunteering behaviours in early adulthood. Volunteering is higher among those: with more educated mothers; who scored higher on their Leaving Certificate exams; who took part in Transition Year; who enjoyed school; and who attended a primary school that placed greater importance on sports/arts extracurricular activities. Peer and parental social capital across a young person's life course are also important for volunteering and appear to become more so as children move into late adolescence/early adulthood. Local area characteristics are important for sports volunteering but not for non-sports volunteering. Involvement in extracurricular activities is one of the strongest predictors of volunteering, with early involvement (at age 13) continuing to shape volunteering into adulthood. Early interests in, or experience of, different types of activities appear to shape preferences for, or recruitment into, volunteering with sports or non-sports organisations.

Overall, this chapter shows how young people's characteristics in late adolescence/early adulthood play a more important role for their volunteering in adulthood than their middle childhood characteristics. For late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics, the pseudo R-squared score is 0.21 for the full sports volunteering model and 0.08 for non-sports volunteering, while the equivalent R-

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<sup>39</sup> These findings are derived from full models, which also included the attitudinal measures of people's concern for different issues. The full results are available on request.

squared scores for middle childhood models are 0.11 and 0.04, respectively. The chapter also finds no difference in rates of non-sports volunteering between urban and rural youth, even after accounting for differences in their characteristics. Rural youth, however, remain more likely to engage in sports volunteering in adulthood, suggesting that some feature of growing up in a rural area, such as involvement in the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), continues to lead to volunteering for sports organisations beyond the social worlds captured here.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Further evidence on the role of urban/rural environments for different types of volunteering can be found by looking at differences in volunteering behaviours among urban/rural youth who attended university based on whether they lived at home or not. Rural youth in higher education who remained at home are more likely to do sports volunteering and less likely to do non-sports volunteering than rural youth who left home for higher education. This further suggests that some aspect of rural environments encourages greater sports volunteering.

## CHAPTER 3

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### Predictors of political engagement

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the factors in young people's lives that shape their political engagement in early adulthood (age 20). As in the previous chapter on volunteering, the aim is to explore the role of the characteristics of young people during their middle childhood/early adolescence (ages 9 and 13) and their late adolescence/early adulthood (ages 17 and 20), using the same set of domain characteristics as for volunteering: a young person's family background; their parental and peer social capital; the characteristics of their local areas; their schooling and education; their own socio-demographic characteristics; and their involvement in extra-curricular clubs and activities.

To capture the various ways young people can be engaged with politics, we draw on three separate measures (see also Chapter 1). The first measure is the number of political activities (from zero to eight) that a young person was involved with in the previous 12 months. We look at the total number of political activities and then separately at more low-intensity activities, such as 'signing a petition' or 'boycotting certain products for political, social or environmental reasons', and more high-intensity activities, such as 'taking part in a public demonstration' or 'working (on a voluntary basis or otherwise) in a political party'. The second measure is an indicator of how interested young people say they are in politics at age 20 (from 'not at all interested' to 'very interested'). The third is whether a young person is currently registered to vote at age 20. This provides us with a breadth of forms of political engagement to capture: formal and informal engagement (e.g., voter registration versus demonstrations); individual and collective forms (e.g., boycotting products versus working for political/environmental groups); and more cognitive (such as an interest in politics) and behavioural dimensions (Grasso and Smith, 2022). The survey of young people when they were age 20 was conducted between August 2018 and May 2019. It coincided with the referendum on repealing restrictions on a woman's right to an abortion, in May 2018, which may shape the findings. The chapter begins by looking at middle childhood (ages 9 and 13) predictors of political engagement at age 20 (Section 3.2), before turning to look at the late adolescence/early adulthood predictors (ages 17 and 20) (Section 3.3).

#### 3.2 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

To explore the characteristics of a young person's middle childhood (measured at ages 9 and 13) that drive their early adulthood political behaviour, we undertake negative binomial analyses, a type of model used for count data, as in the case of number of political activities undertaken. We model the number of political



activities undertaken by a young person at age 20. Model coefficients show the marginal effects among different groups compared to a baseline group. In the case of number of political activities, the coefficients represent the difference in the number of activities undertaken by the young person. For example, the marginal effect (coefficient) for women is 0.582. This tells us that women are predicted to have undertaken 0.6 more political activities than men (the excluded baseline category). Where a variable is treated as continuous, the marginal effect represents the increase in the number of political activities, with a one-unit increase in the continuous variable. For example, the marginal effect for how frequently a child attended church is -0.1. Therefore, a move from a child attending 'monthly' to 'weekly' is associated with 0.1 fewer political activities.

An identical nested approach is taken here, as in Chapter 2. Table 3.1 shows the raw difference between rural and urban youth (Model 1), before adding in family background and other characteristics in Model 2 and extracurricular involvement in Model 3. The full results of all the models are available in the appendices. We also test whether young people's characteristics may have different effects on political engagement among young people who grew up in urban or rural areas, and report significant differences within the text.<sup>41</sup>

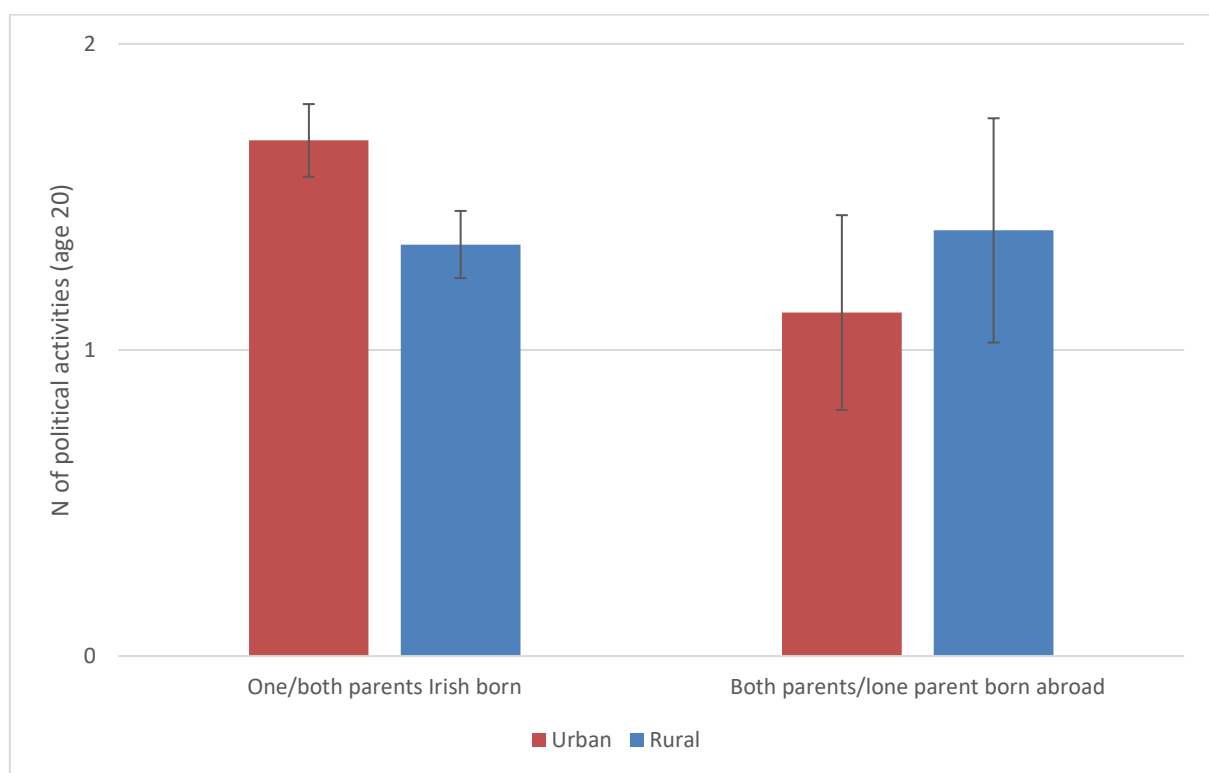
### 3.2.1 Middle childhood predictors of political activities at age 20

At age 20, young people had undertaken, on average, 1.5 political activities over the last 12 months. Table 3.1 shows the associations between a young person's characteristics during their middle childhood and their number of political activities at age 20 (see Appendix Table 3.1 for model results). As shown descriptively in Chapter 1, Model 1 (Table 3.1) confirms that young people who grew up in rural areas undertake fewer political activities than urban youth at age 20 (0.4 fewer activities), and that this difference is statistically significant. We find gender is a strong predictor, with women undertaking more activities than men (0.6 more) (Model 2, Appendix Table 3.1). Young people whose mothers had higher qualifications, especially those with a degree-level or higher qualification, perform more activities at age 20. Interestingly, children in lone-parent households at age 9 are involved in more political activities at age 20. Young people from a migrant background are less politically active at age 20. However, as Figure 3.1 shows, this difference is confined to urban areas; rural youth with a migrant background engage in the same number of political activities as other rural youth.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> We do not report interaction terms in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

<sup>42</sup> Derived from a model including all domains (akin to Model 2, Table 3.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and migration background of parents. These model results are available on request.

**FIGURE 3.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MIGRANT BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and young person's parental migrant background status; data weighted to be representative.

Young people's parental and peer social capital at ages 9 and 13 matters little for political activities in adulthood (Model 3, Appendix Table 3.1). Only more frequent religious attendance at age 9 is associated with fewer political activities in early adulthood. Local area characteristics (at age 9) are also less important for political activities in early adulthood (Models 4 and 5, Appendix Table 3.1). However, two neighbourhood factors do operate differently among young people who grew up in an urban versus a rural area. Figure 3.2 shows the predicted number of political activities at age 20 among young people who grew up in an urban versus a rural area, by the proportion of the area's population aged 65 or over when the young person was aged 9.<sup>43</sup> Among urban youth, the share of residents aged over 65 has no significant relationship with later life political activity. However, among rural youth, an increasing share of residents aged over 65 in their neighbourhood depresses rates of political activity by age 20.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, Figure 3.3 shows that perceived neighbourhood security at age 13 has no relationship with later life political activities in urban areas.<sup>45</sup> However, in rural areas, young people who, at age 13, lived in more secure neighbourhoods were less likely to be politically active

<sup>43</sup> Derived from a model including all domains (akin to Model 2, Table 3.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and SAPS proportion aged 65+. These model results are available on request.

<sup>44</sup> This effect is significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

<sup>45</sup> Derived from a model including all domains (akin to Model 2, Table 3.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and index of perceived neighbourhood security. These model results are available on request.

at age 20, although the level of socio-economic disadvantage in the area was not statistically significant.<sup>46</sup> Turning to the education domain, young people who attended primary schools that placed a higher importance on sports, arts, and drama and speech extracurricular activities are more politically active at age 20 (significant at the  $p < .1$  level).

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<sup>46</sup> This effect is significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

**TABLE 3.1 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.384***	-0.303***	-0.325***
Female (cf. Male)		0.597***	0.512***
Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary		ref.	ref.
Upper secondary		0.349***	0.350***
Non-degree		0.492***	0.520***
Primary Degree/Postgrad.		0.574***	0.600***
Baseline – One/both parents Irish born		ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.286*	-0.301*
Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner		ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.208	-0.228
Rent – Private		-0.025	-0.023
Lives with parents/missing		-0.312	-0.319
Mother volunteers locally (cf. Does not)		0.053	0.059
Number of friends YP normally hangs around with		-0.069	-0.047
How many YP’s friends that parents have met		-0.001	-0.004
Frequency of YP attending church		-0.099***	-0.098***
Mother’s spirituality/religiousness		-0.003	-0.006
Yes, access to public transport to school		-0.021	-0.022
Yes, local rec. facilities for 9 y/o present		0.061	0.067
% aged 65+ in electoral district		0.001	0.002
District socio-economic disadvantage (index)		-0.054	-0.061
Mother’s perception of local social/physical disorder		0.051	0.045
Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities		ref.	ref.
Disagree		0.166	0.169
Agree		0.101	0.099
Strongly agree		0.127	0.136
PCG sense of local security and stability (index)		-0.022	-0.03
Baseline – Low school importance of sports/arts activities		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.169+	0.160+
High importance		0.164+	0.156+
Baseline – Low school importance of science/social justice activities		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.104	0.112
High importance		0.027	0.043
Baseline – YP hates/doesn’t like school		ref.	ref.
Likes school a bit		0.083	0.084
Likes school quite a bit		0.205+	0.203+
Likes school very much		0.151	0.153
<i>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</i>			
Cultural activities (‘dance, drama or music lessons’)			0.103**
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			-0.143***
Club/groups – E.g., guides/scouts, community			0.052
Yes, has a leadership role in activity			-0.031

**TABLE 3.1 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

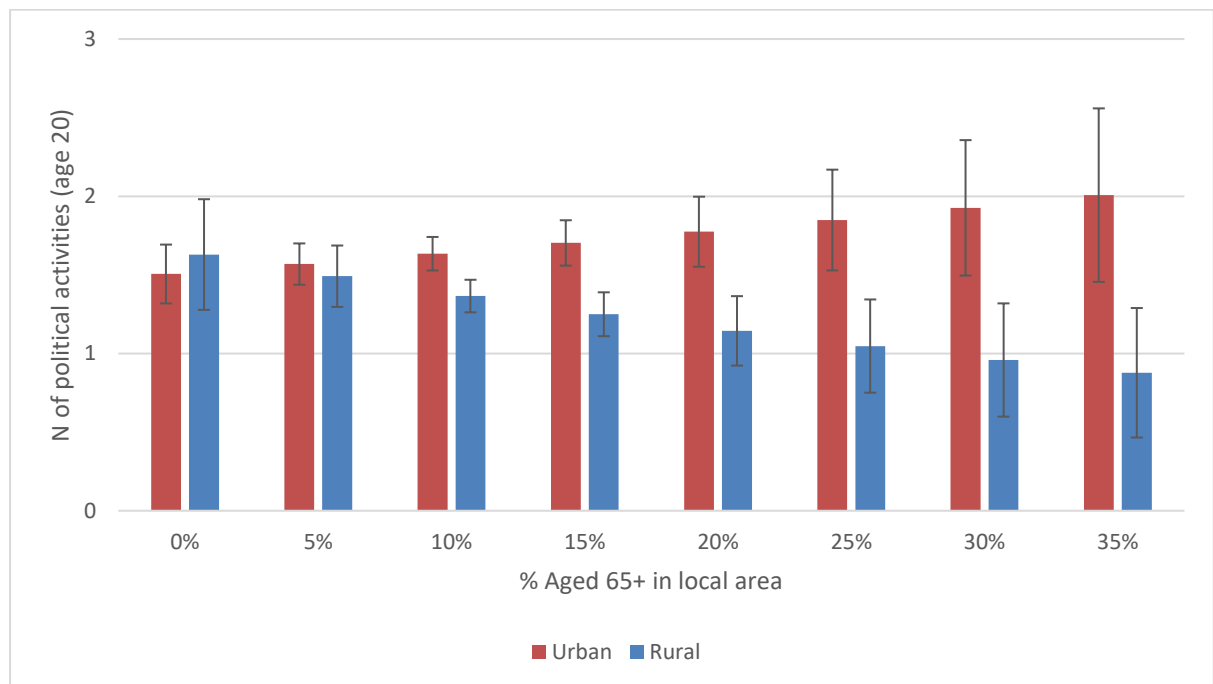
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Observations	4,528	4,528	4,528
Pseudo R-squared	0.003	0.023	0.026

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. Model 2 = Model 7 in appendix table. Model 3 = Model 9 in appendix table. Models control for YP chronic illness, mother’s report of YP’s health, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household and household income (not shown). Full models in appendix Table A3.1.

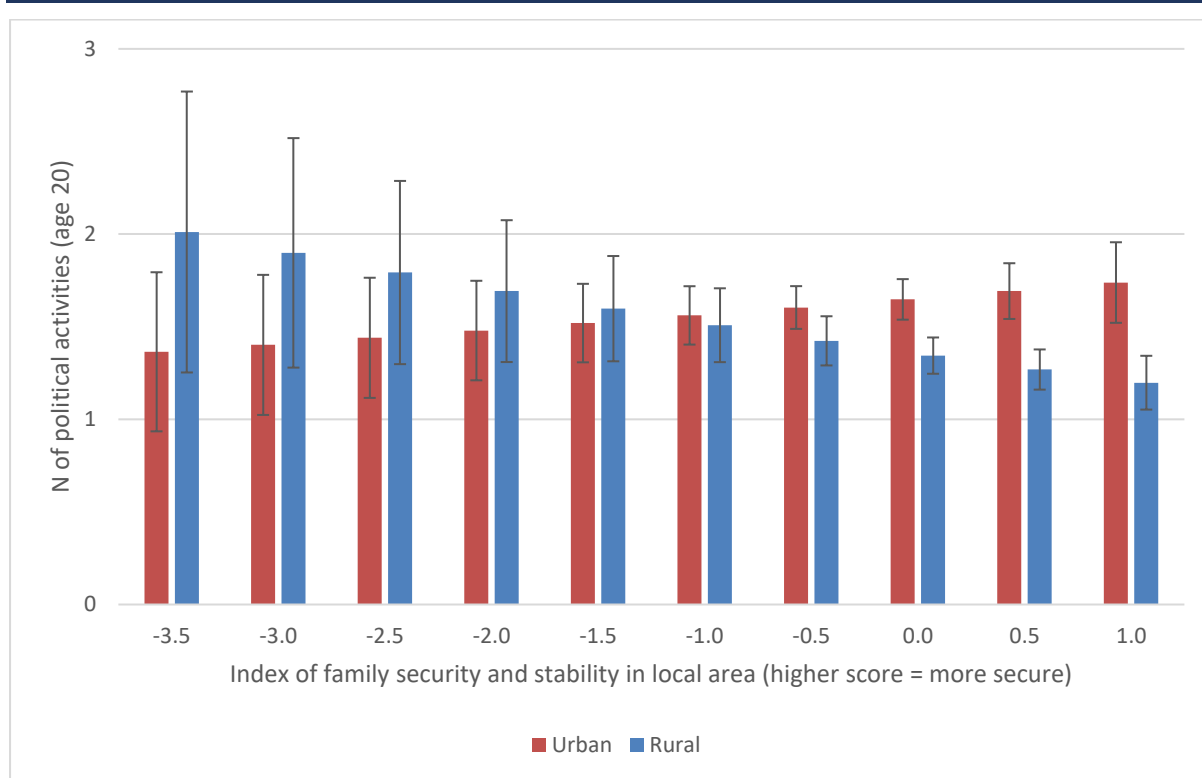
We next explore the extent to which young people’s involvement in extracurricular activities at age 13 shape their political behaviours into adulthood (Model 3, Table 3.1). The type of activity young people engaged in during middle childhood is an important predictor of their adult political behaviours. Young people who were more involved in cultural activities at age 13 undertake more political activities at age 20. However, young people who participated more frequently in organised sports activities outside of physical education (PE) classes undertake fewer political activities at age 20. Having leadership responsibilities in their extracurricular activities at age 13 does not predict later life political activities. Unlike the patterns found for volunteering, extracurricular involvement does not explain social inequalities in political activities.

**FIGURE 3.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCENTAGE AGED 65 OR OVER IN LOCAL AREA AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and % aged 65+ in local area; data weighted to be representative.

**FIGURE 3.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY'S LOCAL SENSE OF SECURITY AND STABILITY AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.1) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and a family's sense of local security and stability; data weighted to be representative.

### 3.2.1.1 Differences between high- and low-intensity political activities

The quantity of political activities provides a useful overall indicator of young people's political engagement. However, the activities themselves differ in terms of their cost to an individual, such time and commitment. Some are low-intensity activities that require much less time and involvement, while others are high-intensity activities, requiring greater investment. Given these differences, potentially different middle childhood characteristics may operate differently depending on the intensity of the political activity.

To examine this question, we generate two new measures. The first is a measure of whether a young person undertook any *low-intensity* political activity in the previous 12 months, including: 'signed a petition (paper, email, online) about a political or social issue'; 'boycotted certain products for political, social or environmental reasons'; 'contacted a politician or councillor'; and 'posted or shared anything about politics online, for example, on blogs, via email or on social media such as Facebook or Twitter'. The second is a measure of whether a young person undertook any *high-intensity* political activity in the previous 12 months, including: took 'part in a public demonstration'; 'worked (on a voluntary basis or otherwise) in a political party'; and 'worked (on a voluntary basis or otherwise)

with an environmental group'. Logistic regression models are applied where coefficients show the marginal effects (probabilities). The full model results can be found in Appendix Table 3.2.

Engaging in low-intensity political activities is far more common than high-intensity activities, with 57 per cent of young people undertaking the former at age 20 and 18 per cent undertaking the latter. Young people who grew up in urban areas are more likely to engage in both low- and high-intensity political activities than those who grew up in rural areas (Models 1 and 4). Both high- and low-intensity activities are more common for women, those from more highly educated families and those with higher levels of religious attendance. Participating in cultural clubs at age 13 is positively linked to both high- and low-intensity political activities and participating in sports club/teams is negatively linked to both (Models 3 and 6).

Some factors affect high-intensity political involvement only; these include being from a lone-parent household; access to local facilities for children; living in a less disadvantaged area; being more positive about school; and attending a primary school that places greater importance on sports, arts, and drama and speech as extracurricular activities. Having a chronic illness at age 9 only predicts less high-intensity engagement. In contrast, low-intensity activities are more common for those from higher-income households and those in areas with facilities for teenagers.

Young people who grew up in rural areas are less politically active at age 20 than those who grew up in urban areas. Only part of the difference is accounted for by the variables considered and a significant urban–rural gap in both low- and high-intensity activities remains.

### **3.2.2 Middle childhood predictors of political interest and voter registration at age 20**

This section explores characteristics during a young person's middle childhood (ages 9 and 13) that shape two other dimensions of political engagement: their level of political interest and their probability of being registered to vote. To investigate political interest – coded from zero for 'not at all interested' to ten for 'very interested' – we apply ordinary least squares regression where the coefficients are marginal effects (Table 3.2). These represent the size of the predicted difference in political interest between groups. For example, a marginal effect (coefficient) for women of -0.629 tells us that women have a political interest score that is 0.629 points lower than that for men (the excluded baseline category). Model 1 solely includes the urban–rural indicator. Model 2 includes all middle childhood domain characteristics, with extracurricular activities added in Model 3.

Unlike for political activities, there is no significant raw difference in political interest between urban and rural young people (Model 1, Table 3.2). Women report being less interested in politics at age 20 despite being more politically active than men (Model 2, Table 3.2). Those with more highly educated mothers have higher levels of political interest while young people with migrant backgrounds and those growing up in social housing report less interest. Parental and peer social capital characteristics at ages 9 and 13 are largely unrelated to political interest in early adulthood. Among local area characteristics, only living in a more disadvantaged neighbourhood at age 9 is associated with lower political interest in adulthood. One of the strongest predictors, alongside mother's education, is how much a young person enjoyed school at age 13. Participation in cultural groups at age 13 predicts greater interest, while participating in sports clubs predicts less (Model 3, Table 3.2).

Models 4 to 6 (Table 3.2) examine the factors associated with whether a young person is registered to vote. As with political interest, there is no raw urban–rural gap in the voter registration (Model 4). Women are more likely to be registered to vote (Model 5). Those with more highly educated mothers are more likely to be registered to vote, with lower rates among young people with migrant backgrounds and those living in private rented accommodation. Again, parent and peer social capital in middle childhood matter little for whether a young person is registered to vote at age 20.

**TABLE 3.2 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL INTEREST AND BEING REGISTERED TO VOTE AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Political interest			Voter registration		
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.058	-0.245+	-0.263*	-0.024	-0.057**	-0.057**
Female (cf. Male)		-0.629***	-0.792***		0.106***	0.102***
<b>Baseline – PCG education: &lt;Upper secondary</b>						
Upper secondary		0.442*	0.447**		0.113***	0.111***
Non-degree		0.748***	0.786***		0.086**	0.082**
Primary degree/Postgrad.		1.016***	1.069***		0.133***	0.126***
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>						
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.430+	-0.451*		-0.144**	-0.141**
<b>Baseline – Family's tenancy: Homeowner</b>						
Rent Social housing		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.
Rent – Private		-0.539*	-0.542*		-0.043	-0.045
Rent – Private		-0.013	-0.013		-0.119*	-0.115*
Lives with parents/missing		-1.289*	-1.300*		-0.036	-0.021
Mother volunteers locally (cf. Does not)		0.076	0.098		0.043*	0.039*
N of friends YP normally hangs around with		-0.116	-0.065		-0.003	-0.006
How many YP's friends that parents have met		0.008	0.031		-0.002	-0.008
Frequency of YP attending church		0.035	0.043		0.014+	0.013+
Mother's spirituality/religiousness		-0.015	-0.020		-0.013	-0.012
Yes, access to public transport to school		0.068	0.064		-0.009	-0.012
Yes, local rec. facilities for 9 y/o present		-0.164	-0.152		0.015	0.015



**TABLE 3.2 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL INTEREST AND BEING REGISTERED TO VOTE AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
% aged 65+ in electoral district		0.010	0.012		0.004*	0.004*
District socio-economic disadvantage (index)		-0.169*	-0.184*		-0.002	-0.001
PCG perception of local social/physical disorder		0.002	-0.003		-0.006	-0.006
Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.
Disagree		-0.062	-0.044		0.010	0.009
Agree		0.134	0.163		0.027	0.026
Strongly agree		0.099	0.155		0.025	0.023
PCG sense of local security/stability (index)		-0.017	-0.031		-0.004	-0.004
Baseline – Low school importance of sports/arts activities		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.116	0.109		0.045+	0.044+
High importance		0.225	0.202		0.032	0.032
Base – Low school importance of science/social justice activities		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.063	0.078		0.012	0.010
High importance		0.099	0.134		0.015	0.014
Baseline – YP hates/doesn't like school		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.
Likes school a bit		0.494*	0.512*		-0.013	-0.016
Likes school quite a bit		0.802***	0.811***		0.015	0.010
Likes school very much		0.729***	0.741***		0.032	0.025
<i>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</i>						
Cultural activities; e.g., drama or music			0.139*			0.017
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			-0.238***			0.005
Club/groups; e.g., guides/scouts, community			0.026			0.004
Yes, has a leadership role in activity			-0.136			0.019
Observations	4,533	4,533	4,533	4,520	4,520	4,520
Adjusted R-squared/Pseudo R-squared	0.000	0.060	0.068	0.001	0.065	0.067

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

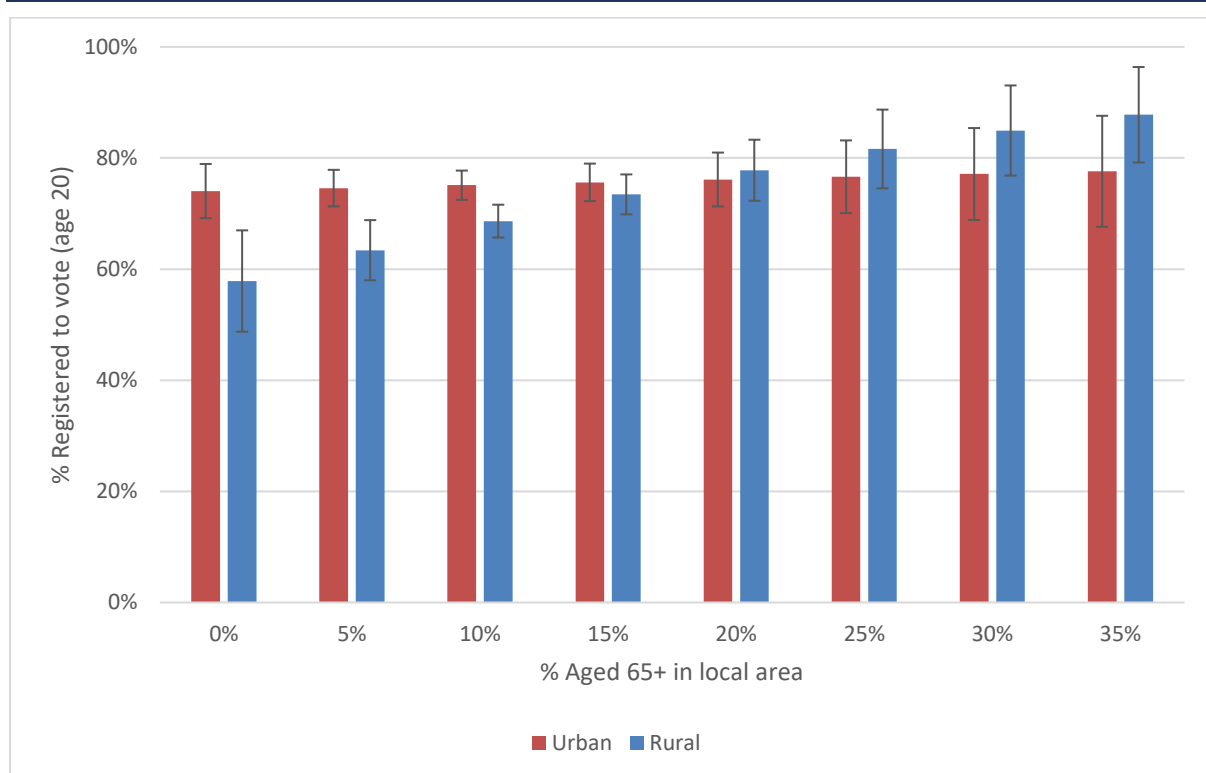
Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. Models control for YP chronic illness, mother's report of YP's health, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household and household income (not shown).

In the locality domain, only having lived in an area at age 9 with a higher share of residents aged 65 or more is significantly related to voter registration at age 20. This relationship applies only to rural youth; Figure 3.4 shows that the share of residents aged over 65 has no significant association with voter registration among urban youth. By contrast, among rural youth, living in an area with a higher share of residents aged 65 or more is associated with a higher likelihood of being registered to vote at age 20.<sup>47</sup> The rural–urban gap is found to be different in areas with a low proportion of older residents. Lastly, unlike political activities and

<sup>47</sup> This effect is significant at the p<.05 level.

political interest, involvement in extracurricular activities at age 13 is not linked with voter registration in adulthood.

**FIGURE 3.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCENTAGE AGED 65 OR OVER IN LOCAL AREA AND BEING REGISTERED TO VOTE (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 5, Table 3.2) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and % aged 65+ in local area; data weighted to be representative.

### 3.2.3 Summary of middle childhood predictors of political engagement at age 20

Table 3.3 summarises the associations between each middle childhood characteristics and number of political activities undertaken, political interest, and likelihood of being registered to vote at age 20.

Family background characteristics during middle childhood appear most important when it comes to political engagement in early adulthood. Young people whose mother had higher qualifications undertake more political activities, have higher levels of political interest and are more likely to be registered to vote at age 20. In contrast, those with migrant parents have lower voter registration, less political interest and undertake fewer activities (at least in urban areas). Gender plays a similarly important role, with women reporting higher rates of voter registration and also undertaking more political activities at age 20. This may reflect the fact that the survey of young people when they were 20 years old was collected between August 2018 and May 2019, which coincides with the referendum on repealing restrictions on women's right to an abortion in May 2018. During this

period, women were potentially more likely to be actively advocating for support of the amendment than men. Despite being more engaged, women report less political interest than men.

Young people's experience of school in middle childhood also appears important for early adulthood engagement. Those who were in a primary school that placed a higher importance on sports, arts, and drama and speech extracurricular activities undertake more political activities and have higher rates of voter registration, while those who enjoyed school more at age 13 have higher political interest.

On the whole, local area characteristics (at ages 9 and 13) matter little for political engagement in adulthood; only being in a more socio-economically disadvantaged area at age 9 negatively predicts political interest for all young people. However, neighbourhoods do appear to matter more for young people who grew up in rural areas. In particular, growing up in a neighbourhood with a larger share of older people (aged 65 and over) appears to depress later life political behaviours, while also increasing voter registration. Growing up in areas with a higher share of older people may socialise young people more into norms of traditional participation, such as voting (Sloam, 2016), while providing fewer early life opportunities to engage in the non-traditional forms of participation usually more common among youth (Pickard, 2019). These processes may be more salient for rural youth given rural social networks are generally more neighbourhood-centric (Guest and Wierzbicki, 1999).

Interestingly, church attendance at age 9 has a similar association with lower political activities in early adulthood and higher voter registration. Given that greater religiosity is generally associated with a higher likelihood of voting (Gerber et al., 2016) and lower participation in more non-traditional forms of political participation, early socialisation into these practices may have a lasting effect on the norms of engagement among young people. However, other middle childhood peer and parental social capital indicators matter little for political engagement.

Involvement in extracurricular activities in middle childhood also appears to shape political engagement into adulthood. Those involved in cultural activities are more politically active and have higher political interest at age 20 but those involved in sports teams/clubs are less involved or interested. It therefore appears that, even at 13 years of age, teenagers are beginning to form interests and identities which may have lasting impacts on their future political engagement. Additional analyses (not shown here) show no relationship between having a regular part-time, term-time job at age 13 and later life political engagement.

Young people who grew up in a rural area undertake fewer political activities at age 20 than urban youth and only part of this gap can be explained by differences in young people's characteristics. For political interest and voter registration, there is no urban–rural gap in raw levels of engagement. However, rural youth are significantly less likely to be registered to vote and have significantly less political interest than their urban peers than might be expected given their characteristics.

**TABLE 3.3 SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY ADULTHOOD**

		Age of measure	N of political activities	Political interest	Voter registration
<b>Urban–Rural</b>	Rural (cf. Urban)	9	–	–	–
<b>Family background</b>	Female (cf. Male)	9	+	–	+
	Chronic illness	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Mother’s education	9	+	+	+
	Lone parent (cf. Two parents)	9	+	n.d.	n.d.
	Two migrant parents (or migrant lone parent)	9	– (only in urban areas)	–	–
	Household Income	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Cf. Homeowner				
	Social renting	9	n.d.	–	n.d.
	Private renting	9	n.d.	n.d.	–
	Other	9	n.d.	–	n.d.
	Child’s health past year	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Parental/ Peer social capital</b>	Mother locally volunteers	9	n.d.	n.d.	+
	Number of friends	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Number of friends parents have met	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Church attendance	9	–	n.d.	+
	Child’s spirituality	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Locality</b>	Public transport to school	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Recreational facilities for 9 y/o	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	% aged 65+ in SAPS	9	– (only in rural areas)	n.d.	+ (only in rural areas)
	Local SAPS disadvantage	9	n.d.	–	n.d.
	Parent’s perception of disorder	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	‘Facilities such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs’	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Local family stability and security	13	– (only in rural areas)	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Education</b>	School importance on sports/arts extracurricular	9	+	n.d.	+
	School importance on social justice/politics extracurricular	9	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Child enjoyment of school	13	+ (high-intensity only)	+	n.d.

**TABLE 3.3 (CONTD.) SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY ADULTHOOD**

		Age of measure	N of political activities	Political interest	Voter registration
<b>Club involvement</b>	Cultural (dance, drama or music lessons)	13	+	+	n.d.
	Sports with coach/instructor/ organised team	13	-	-	n.d.
	Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, youth club, community groups	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Special responsibilities; e.g., team leader, captain	13	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.

Notes: N.d. = no significant difference; + = positive and significant effect; - = positive and significant effect. SAPS = Small Area Population Statistics.

### 3.3 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

As outlined in Chapter 2, as children age their social worlds can change radically, and different predictors of political engagement may emerge while others may become less salient (Janmaat and Hoskins, 2022). We therefore now turn to looking at the characteristics of young people's lives during late adolescence (age 17) and early adulthood (age 20) that drive their political engagement in early adulthood (age 20). We repeat the above analytical approach, but include factors that capture young people's characteristics and experiences over the transition to adulthood. The full results of all the models are available in the appendices. We again test whether young people's characteristics may have different associations with political engagement among those from urban or rural backgrounds and report significant differences within the text.<sup>48</sup>

#### 3.3.1 Late adolescence/early adulthood predictors of political activities at age 20

Table 3.4 shows the results of negative binomial analyses, testing how a young person's characteristics during their late adolescence/early adulthood predicts their number of political activities undertaken at age 20 (see Appendix Table 3.3 for full results). Model 1 (Table 3.4) shows again the urban–rural gap in political activities between urban and rural youth. Having a chronic illness (at age 20) and being in a lone-parent household are associated with more political activities (Model 2, Appendix Table 3.3). Reporting worse health (at age 20) and being in social housing (compared to an owner-occupied home) (at age 17) are both associated with fewer political activities at age 20.

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<sup>48</sup> We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

**TABLE 3.4 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.385***	-0.228**	-0.232**
Female (cf. Male)		0.536***	0.479***
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>			
Upper secondary		0.175+	0.167+
Non-degree		0.267**	0.288**
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.224*	0.251*
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>		ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.17	-0.215
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>		ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.08	-0.127
Rent – Private		0.226	0.196
Lives with parents/missing		-0.09	-0.119
<b>YP’s self-rated health</b>		-0.137**	-0.113**
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different ethnicity</b>		ref.	ref.
Some are a different ethnicity		0.198**	0.174*
Most or all are a different ethnicity		0.296	0.294
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different gender</b>		ref.	ref.
Some are a different gender		0.195+	0.198+
Most or all are a different gender		0.519**	0.414*
<b>No. of friends YP has</b>		0.115*	0.122**
<b>Frequency of YP attending church</b>		-0.275***	-0.307***
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>			
Disagree		-0.155	-0.133
Agree		-0.002	-0.006
Strongly agree		-0.033	-0.04
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure (index)</b>		-0.155***	-0.142***
<b>Neighbourhood safety</b>		-0.095	-0.085
<b>YP’s perception of local social/physical disorder</b>		0.189***	0.182***
<b>Baseline – bottom quartile of Junior Certificate grades</b>		ref.	ref.
2nd quartile		0.405***	0.393***
3rd quartile		0.360***	0.320**
Highest quartile		0.513***	0.421***
<b>Yes, took Transition Year</b>		0.210**	0.203**
<b>Baseline – 0 to 300 Leaving Certificate points</b>		ref.	ref.
301–400 Leaving Certificate points		0.219*	0.233*
401–500 Leaving Certificate points		0.356**	0.399***
501+ Leaving Certificate points		0.529***	0.595***
<b>Baseline – Difficulty repaying loans: no loans</b>		ref.	ref.
No difficulty		0.09	0.125
A little/A lot		0.159	0.226
<b>Ease of making ends meet financially</b>		-0.033	-0.041
<b>Time spent in caring role</b>		-0.013	-0.018
<b>Accommodation costs limit opportunities (index)</b>		0.117**	0.104**
<b>YP lives at home</b>		0.046	0.058
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>		ref.	ref.



**TABLE 3.4 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Higher Education pathway		0.519***	0.509***
Further Education pathway		0.229	0.222
<i>Extracurricular activities (age 17)</i>			
Cultural activities			0.111
Debate club			0.148
Religious groups or organisations			0.236*
Scouts or guides			-0.018
Sports clubs/teams			-0.178*
School/student councils			0.249***
Youth clubs			0.353***
Volunteered regularly in the past year (age 17)			
<i>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</i>			
Cultural activities ('dance, drama or music lessons')			0.024
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			-0.106**
Club/groups; e.g., guides/scouts, community groups			0.007
Yes, has a leadership role			0.007
Observations	4,496	4,496	4,496
Pseudo R-squared	0.003	0.063	0.071

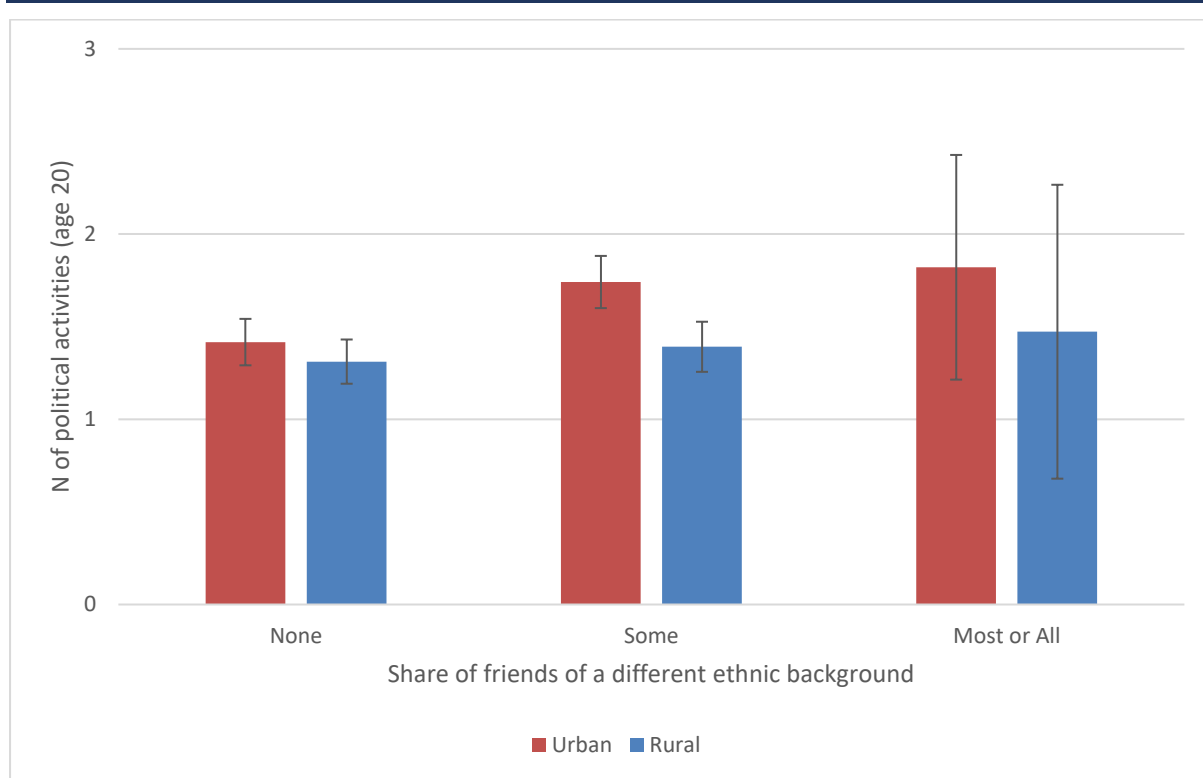
Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = primary caregiver; HH = household; YP = young person. Weighted data. N = Number of; F = Frequency of. Model 2 = Model 8 in appendix table. Model 3 = Model 10 in appendix table. Model 4 = Model 12 in appendix table. Models include background characteristics including whether YP has a chronic illness, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household and household income (not shown). Full models in appendix Table A3.3.

Parent and peer social capital characteristics in late adolescence/early adulthood are much more salient for political engagement than social capital in middle childhood (Model 3, Appendix Table 3.3). Attending church more frequently (at age 20) is associated with less political engagement. However, young people with more friends (age 20) and with more gender- and ethnically-diverse friendship groups (at age 17) undertake more political activities in early adulthood. Interestingly, these positive relationships for friendship diversity are much stronger among urban youth. In urban areas, young people with more gender/ethnic friendship diversity are more politically active at age 20 (Figures 3.5a and Figure 3.5b).<sup>49</sup> In rural areas, in contrast, greater gender/ethnic friendship diversity has no association with political activities.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The positive association of gender friendship diversity on political activities is concentrated among men. Women have high levels of engagement at age 20 regardless of how gender diverse their friendship group. The more women that men have in their social networks, the more politically active they are.

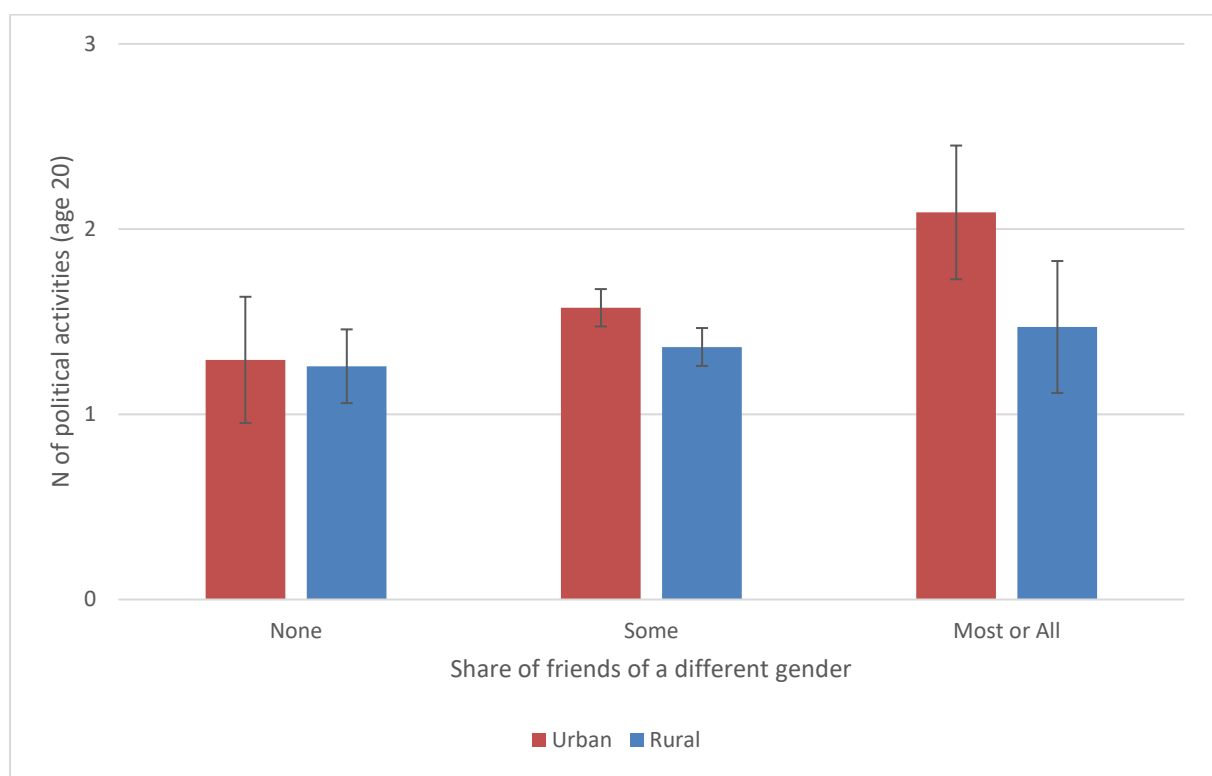
<sup>50</sup> These are predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 2, Table 3.4) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

**FIGURE 3.5A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRIENDS' ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.4) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and ethnic diversity of friends; data weighted to be representative.

Turning to young people's localities, better quality neighbourhoods actually appear to suppress political engagement. Young people are more likely to be politically active if they are living in areas with a weaker social infrastructure (e.g., fewer facilities for young adults, fewer friends/family), that they consider less safe, and that have higher indicators of disorder (Model 4, Appendix Table 3.3), even controlling for family background.

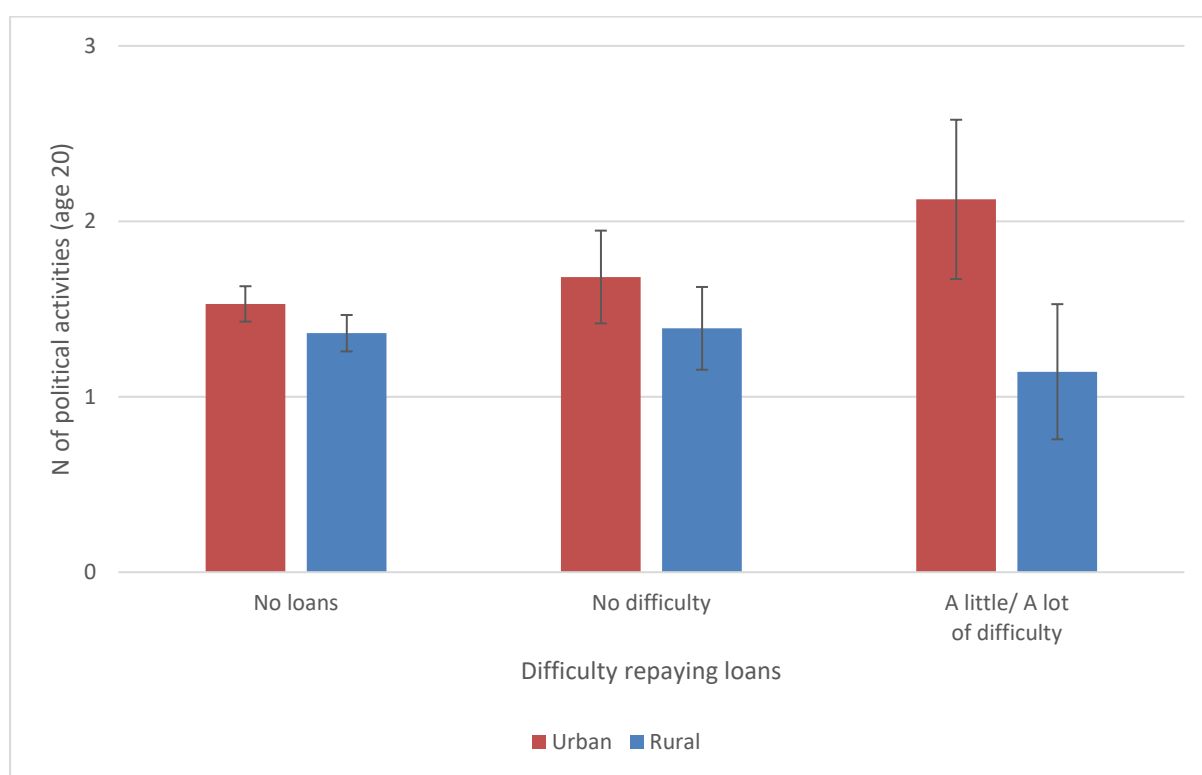
**FIGURE 3.5B RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FRIENDS' GENDER DIVERSITY AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.4) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and gender diversity of friends; data weighted to be representative.

Regarding young people's educational experience, exam performance is a key predictor of political activity (Model 6, Appendix Table 3.3). Young people who had higher scores in both their Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate exams undertake more political activities at age 20. Those who took Transition Year are also more politically active. Looking at the role of their socio-demographic characteristics (Model 7, Appendix Table 3.3), young people who took a higher education pathway are more politically active at age 20 than those in the labour market or in further education. In addition, those who believed difficulty in finding or affording accommodation limited their choices in work and education are also more politically active at age 20. Struggling to pay back loans (at age 20) affects political engagement but only among urban youth. As Figure 3.6 shows, among rural youth, there is no significant difference in rates of political activities regardless of their loan status.<sup>51</sup> However, urban youth who experience 'a little/a lot' of difficulty repaying loans are more politically active than those with 'no difficulty' or 'no loans'.

<sup>51</sup> Figure 3.6 shows predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 2, Table 3.4) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

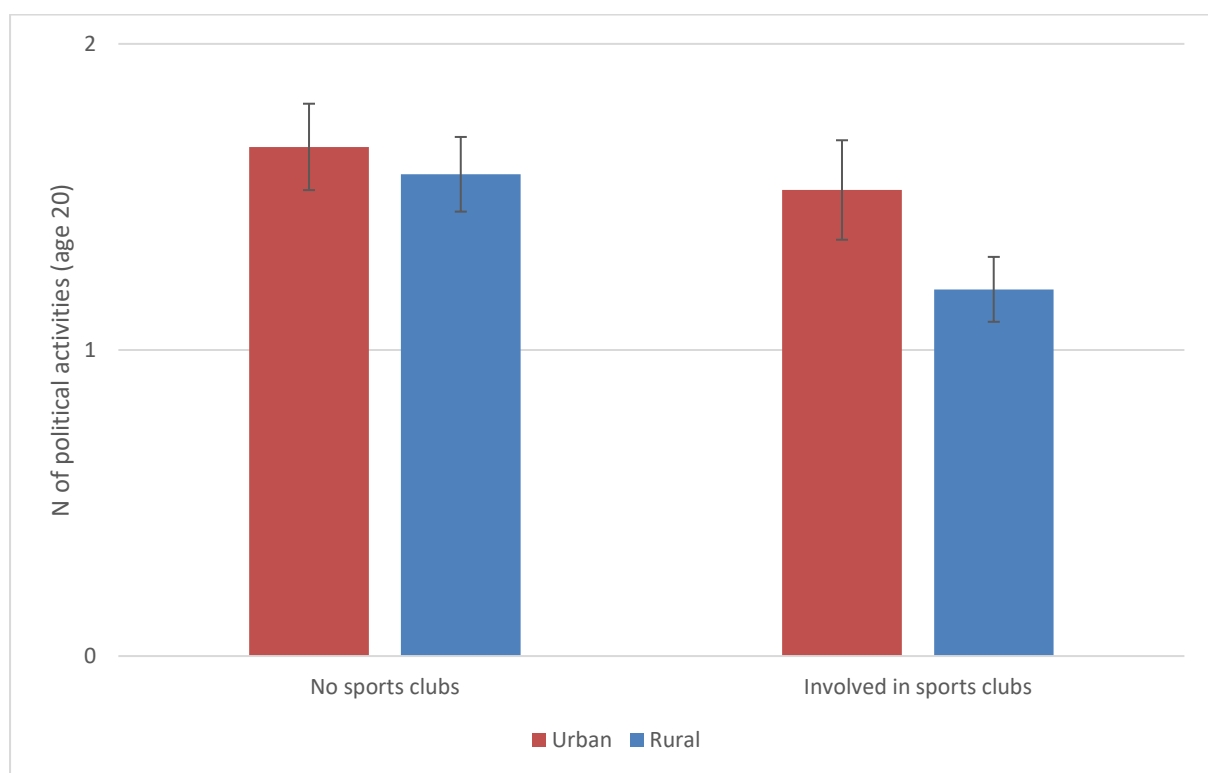
**FIGURE 3.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OF DIFFICULTY REPAYING LOANS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.4) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and whether a young person is having difficulty repaying loans; data weighted to be representative.

Model 3 (Table 3.4) examines the role of extracurricular activities at age 17. Young people who were involved in cultural clubs, school/student councils and youth clubs are all more politically active at age 20. However, young people involved in sports clubs/teams at age 17 are less likely to be politically active at age 20. This negative relationship is particularly pronounced in rural areas. As Figure 3.7 shows, political activity is only somewhat lower among urban youth who are involved in sports clubs/teams (and this difference is not significant).<sup>52</sup> Rural youth involved in sports clubs/teams, however, undertake 0.6 fewer political activities than those not involved. In addition, young people engaged in regular volunteering at age 17 are also more likely to be politically active at age 20.

<sup>52</sup> Figure 3.7 shows predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 3, Table 3.4) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

**FIGURE 3.7** RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INVOLVEMENT IN A SPORTS CLUB (AGE 17) AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.4) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and whether the young person is involved in a sports club at age 17; data weighted to be representative.

We next examine whether involvement in extracurricular activities during a young person's middle childhood (age 13) continues to shape their political engagement behaviours into early adulthood (age 20), even after accounting for their extracurricular activities in late adolescence (age 17). One possibility is that early involvement in clubs and organisations may have a long-term direct effect on political engagement into adulthood, through exposure to new ideas and information and opportunities to learn interpersonal, civic and leadership skills (Glanville, 1999). In doing so, it may socialise young people into norms of engagement that drive later life political engagement. The other possibility, as outlined in Chapter 4, is that early involvement in clubs may affect later life political engagement if it increases the chances of young people continuing to be involved in clubs and organisations into late adolescence, which, in turn, leads to more political engagement.

To test these ideas, Model 3 (Table 3.4) includes the measures of extracurricular involvement at age 13, alongside extracurricular involvement at age 17 (and the other characteristics). Young people involved in sports clubs/teams at age 13 undertake fewer political activities at age 20, even after accounting for sports involvement at age 17; evidence of a negative long-term effect on political

engagement in adulthood.<sup>53</sup> Involvement in cultural clubs (or youth club/groups) at age 13 does not directly predict political activities at age 20 but operates via continued cultural involvement at age 17. Unlike the pattern for volunteering, social inequalities in political activities are not explained by extracurricular involvement.

### 3.3.1.1 Differences between high- and low-intensity political activities

As previously discussed, different factors may drive involvement in high-intensity versus low-intensity political activities. We again apply logistic regression analysis to examine the relationships between late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics and whether a young person undertook low-intensity political activities (Models 1–3) and high-intensity political activities (Models 4–6) at age 20. Full model results can be found in Appendix Table 3.4.

A number of characteristics predict both high- and low-intensity political activities, including gender, self-rated health, gender/ethnic friendship diversity, religious attendance, neighbourhood disorder, Junior/Leaving Certificate grades, finding accommodation costs prohibitive and taking a higher education pathway (Models 2 and 5, Appendix Table 3.4). Maternal education and taking Transition Year impact on high-intensity activities via higher grades and going on to higher education, but these factors have a more direct influence on low-intensity activities. Coming from a lone-parent family, having a larger number of friends, and living in a safer neighbourhood only affect a young person's likelihood of engaging in high-intensity activities, while living in areas with a stronger social infrastructure only has a negative relationship with low-intensity activities. There are also differences in how extracurricular activities at age 17 are related to high- and low-intensity activities at 20. While involvement in sports clubs/teams and school/student councils are related to both high- and low-intensity activities, involvement in cultural clubs is only associated with low-intensity activities, while involvement in youth clubs and debating clubs is only associated with high-intensity activities.

Some of the difference in political activities between rural and urban youth is accounted for by the characteristics considered, especially parental and peer social capital characteristics. These results also show us that urban–rural differences in late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics are more important than those in middle childhood when it comes to understanding why political engagement is lower among rural youth. However, a significant urban–rural gap in political involvement remains, even taking account of a wide range of factors.

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<sup>53</sup> This result holds even after including all middle childhood (ages 9 and 13) domains as well.

### 3.3.2 Late adolescence/early adulthood predictors of political interest and voter registration at age 20

We next explore how young people's characteristics in late adolescence/early adulthood shape two other dimensions of political engagement: their level of political interest and their probability of being registered to vote. This analysis takes the same approach as above but tests the role of characteristics at age 17 and 20. Again, we first include the urban–rural indicator only, before adding all late adolescence/early adulthood domain characteristics, and then extracurricular activities.

Table 3.5 shows the results (marginal effects) of ordinary least squares modelling of a young person's political interest at age 20. Having a chronic illness at age 20 is associated with greater political interest at age 20 (Model 2, Table 3.5). Greater ethnic diversity in one's social network is also positively associated with interest in politics. However, this positive relationship is concentrated among urban youth; rural youth with and without an ethnically-diverse friendship group report similar levels of political interest as urban youth without ethnically diverse friends.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> These are predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 2, Table 3.5) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

**TABLE 3.5 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL INTEREST AND BEING REGISTERED TO VOTE AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	Political interest			Voter registration		
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.055	-0.155	-0.169	-0.015	-0.017	-0.018
Female (cf. Male)		-0.761***	-0.833***		0.093***	0.090***
<b>Baseline – PCG education: Below upper secondary</b>						
Upper secondary		0.146	0.159		0.070**	0.069**
Non-degree		0.357+	0.421*		0.04	0.038
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.29	0.368*		0.061*	0.060*
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>						
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.360+	-0.427*		-0.130**	-0.137***
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>						
Rent – Social housing		0.025	-0.029		0.037	0.03
Rent – Private		0.324	0.233		-0.059	-0.067
Lives with parents/missing		0.187	0.196		-0.007	-0.012
YP’s self-rated health		-0.093	-0.056		0.005	0.006
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different ethnicity</b>						
Some are different ethnicity		0.273*	0.222*		0.014	0.013
Most/all are different ethnicity		0.599+	0.547		-0.081	-0.086
<b>Baseline – No friends are a different gender</b>						
Some are a different gender		0.041	0.041		0.009	0.009
Most/all are different gender		-0.299	-0.445+		0.033	0.018
Number of friends YP has		0.095	0.12		0.014	0.014
Frequency of YP attending church		-0.099	-0.158*		0.018+	0.020+
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>						
Disagree		-0.351	-0.335		0.018	0.019
Agree		-0.341	-0.334		-0.005	-0.01
Strongly agree		-0.465+	-0.461+		0.009	0.005
Neighbourhood social infrastructure (index)		-0.093	-0.071		0.025*	0.026*
Neighbourhood safety		0.106	0.116		0.02	0.022
YP’s perception of local social/physical disorder		0.178*	0.163*		0.036**	0.036**
<b>Baseline – Bottom quartile of JCERT grades</b>						
2nd quartile		0.529**	0.474**		0.042	0.042
3rd quartile		0.764***	0.715***		0.062*	0.061*
Highest quartile		0.871***	0.745**		0.04	0.038
Yes, took Transition Year		0.043	0.052		0.029	0.026
<b>Baseline – 0–300 LCERT points</b>						
301–400 points		0.492*	0.543**		0.062+	0.062+
401–500 points		0.536*	0.622**		0.099**	0.106**
501 points		1.197***	1.304***		0.121**	0.127**
<b>Baseline – Difficulty repaying loans: no loans</b>						
No difficulty		-0.041	0.003		-0.005	-0.005
A little/A lot		-0.242	-0.187		-0.043	-0.042
Ease of making ends meet financially		0.094+	0.086		0.007	0.007
Time spent in caring role		0.079	0.078		0.004	0.003



**TABLE 3.5 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL INTEREST AND BEING REGISTERED TO VOTE AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
<b>Accommodation costs limit opportunities (index)</b>		0.258***	0.231**		0.012	0.013
YP lives at home		0.016	0.029		0.048*	0.050*
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.
Higher education pathway		0.867***	0.876***		0.134**	0.135***
Further education pathway		-0.171	-0.153		0.008	0.004
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 17)</b>						
Cultural activities			0.049			0.064**
Debate club			1.655**			-
Religious groups or organisations			0.671**			-0.078*
Scouts or guides			-0.465			0.002
Sports clubs/teams			-0.154			-0.032
School/student councils			0.478***			-0.005
Youth clubs			0.465*			0.064*
<b>Volunteered at age 17</b>						
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</b>						
Cultural activities (e.g., dance, music)			-0.018			-0.015
Sports with coach/instructor/ organised team			-0.281***			0.004
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community grps			0.018			0.011
Yes, has a leadership role			-0.054			0.014
<b>Observations</b>	4,501	4,501	4,501	4,492	4,492	4,477
<b>Adjusted R-squared/ Pseudo R-squared</b>	0	0.15	0.172	0	0.108	0.116

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

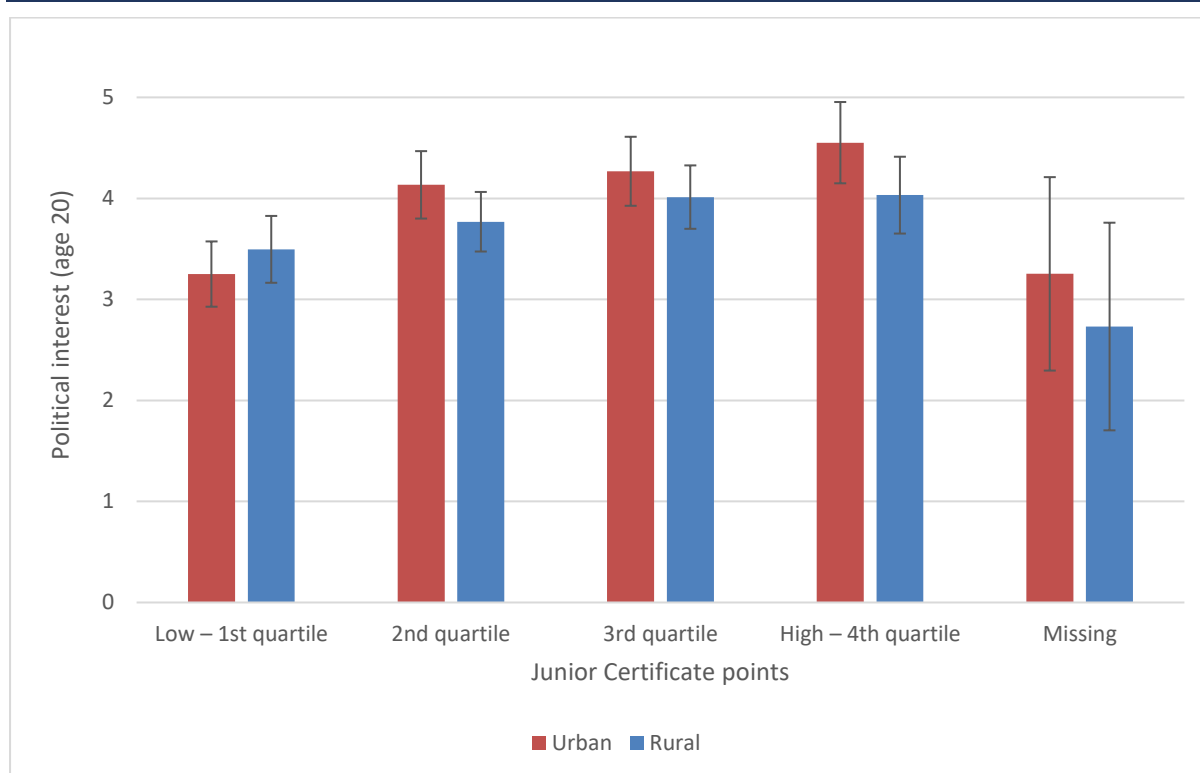
Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Longitudinal sample; PCG = Primary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Weighted data. N = Number of; F = Frequency of. Model 2 = Model 8 in appendix table. Model 3 = Model 10 in appendix table. Model 4 = Model 12 in appendix table. Models include background characteristics including whether YP has a chronic illness, whether YP grew up in a lone-parent household and household income (not shown).

Growing up in a neighbourhood (at age 17) with recreational facilities for teenagers is somewhat negatively associated with political interest, while living in a neighbourhood with higher disorder (at age 20) is associated with more political interest. Young people who find accommodation costs prohibitive (at age 20) are also more likely to be interested in politics. Higher Junior and Leaving Certificate scores independently predict higher political interest, while being in a higher education pathway predicts more political interest, even after accounting for exam performance and mother's education. However, higher Junior Certificate points appear to have a more positive relationship with political interest among urban youth. Figure 3.8 shows predicted political interest for urban and rural youth by their Junior Certificate scores.<sup>55</sup> While more points are associated with an increase

<sup>55</sup> These are predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 2, Table 3.5) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

in political interest among both groups, the positive relationship is stronger for urban youth.

**FIGURE 3.8 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JUNIOR CERTIFICATE GRADES AND POLITICAL INTEREST (AGE 20) AMONG URBAN AND RURAL YOUTH**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Derived from a full model (akin to Model 2, Table 3.5) and an interaction term between urban/rural environment and quartiles of Junior Certificate grades; data weighted to be representative.

Young people who were involved in debating clubs, religious groups or organisations, school/student councils or youth clubs at age 17 have more interest in politics (Model 3, Table 3.5). Similarly, young people who were regularly volunteering at 17 also have higher political interest at age 20. However, as found for political activities, involvement in sports clubs at age 17 is associated with less political interest.

Turning to voter registration, Models 4–6 (Table 3.5) show the results (marginal effects) of logistic regressions predicting whether a young person is registered to vote at age 20. No family background characteristics measured at ages 17 and 20 are related to voter registration, although gender, mother's education and having a migration background continue to have an influence (Model 5).<sup>56</sup> Regarding young people's parent and peer social capital, only religious attendance (at age 20) is weakly ( $p < .1$ ) and positively related to being registered to vote at age 20. Young people who live (at age 20) in areas with a stronger social infrastructure but also

<sup>56</sup> We also find young people who were living in homes with a higher household income at age 17 are more likely to be registered to vote, although this is mediated through higher Junior/Leaving Certificate grades.

areas with higher disorder are more likely to be registered to vote. Higher Junior Certificate, but especially Leaving Certificate, grades are positively associated with likelihood of being registered to vote. Being on a higher education pathway is positively related to voter registration, even after accounting for exam performance.<sup>57</sup> In addition, young people living at home at age 20 are more likely to be registered to vote, a pattern that only holds for urban youth.<sup>58</sup>

Young people involved in cultural clubs and youth clubs at age 17 are more likely to be registered to vote, while those involved in religious groups/organisations are less likely (Model 6). However, this positive relationship for youth group involvement is only present among those who grew up in a rural area.<sup>59</sup>

We next test for any long-term effects of middle childhood extracurricular involvement for early adulthood political interest and voter registration. Participation in sports clubs/teams at age 13 is associated with less political interest at age 20, even after accounting for sports club involvement at age 17 (Model 3, Table 3.5). However, there appears to be no evidence that cultural or youth group involvement at age 13 shapes political interest into adulthood or voter registration (Models 3 and 6, Table 3.5).<sup>60</sup>

No rural–urban gap in political interest or voter registration is evident when we take account of early adulthood characteristics. Previously, we found that rural youth were significantly less likely to be registered to vote and had significantly less political interest, given their characteristics in middle childhood. We find that the difference relates to lower Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate points among rural youth. Not accounting for this yields a significant urban–rural gap.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> We find no difference in political engagement outcomes between those on a third-level pathway who live at home and those who do not.

<sup>58</sup> These are predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 6, Table 3.5) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

<sup>59</sup> These are predicted outcome scores based on a full model (Model 7, Table 3.5) containing interaction terms. We do not report the interaction terms between any given characteristic and a young person's urban/rural identifier in the models themselves, given the marginal effects for interaction terms cannot be readily calculated. These model results are available on request.

<sup>60</sup> If we run a model containing all late adolescence/early adulthood domains (excluding extracurricular involvement at age 17) but add extracurricular involvement at age 13, we find it does not predict political interest or likelihood of being registered to vote.

<sup>61</sup> If we run a full model predicting voter registration or political interest which contains all middle childhood *and* late adolescence/early adulthood domains *but excludes* Junior and Leaving Certificate points, then a significant rural–urban gap emerges in voter registration or political interest.

### 3.3.3 Summary of late adolescence/early adulthood predictors of political engagement at age 20

Table 3.6 summarises the associations between each late adolescence/early adulthood characteristic and number of political activities undertaken, political interest and likelihood of being registered to vote at age 20. Only effects which are significant after accounting for family background characteristics are included in the table.

Overall, the number of political activities young people are involved in is far more sensitive to their late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics than their political interest and, especially, their voter registration. Young people's educational outcomes are perhaps the most important predictor of political engagement. Higher scores on both their Junior and Leaving Certificate exams positively predict all forms of engagement. Furthermore, even after accounting for this, young people on a higher education pathway are also more engaged across all three indicators, while those who took Transition Year undertake more political activities. These characteristics also account for part of why young people with more educated mothers engage more, though maternal education continues to be important.

Late adolescence/early adulthood peer social capital is also an important domain for political engagement, especially in urban areas. As at age 9, church attendance at age 20 predicts fewer political activities (and less political interest) but also higher voter registration. Larger friendship groups positively predict all forms of engagement. In addition, the diversity of friendship groups also matters, particularly in urban areas, where having a more ethnically diverse friendship group (at age 17) is associated with more political activities and interest, while having more gender diverse friends (at age 17) is associated with more activities.<sup>62</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4, social network size and diversity may increase young people's exposure to new information, different ideas and perspectives, facilitate greater political discussion, and provide more opportunities for engagement, all of which are important for political engagement (Glanville, 2016). The stronger relationship among urban youth may reflect the greater baseline levels of political engagement in urban areas, which means exposure to political issues is more likely in those young people's lives.

Interestingly, several characteristics usually associated with risks of social exclusion appear to predict more political participation, including: growing up in a lone-parent family; having a chronic illness (at age 20); living in neighbourhoods with

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<sup>62</sup> As reported, this positive effect of gender diversity is concentrated among men. Men who had more women in their social networks were more likely to be politically active, while women had higher levels of political activity regardless of the gender diversity of their social networks. This may reflect a recruitment effect among men of involvement in activities related to the abortion referendum in 2008 from their female friends.

higher perceived disorder, a weaker social infrastructure and fewer youth facilities; and regarding accommodation costs as a barrier or, among urban youth, having difficulty in repaying loans. It may be that experiences of personal and environmental disadvantage and curtailed opportunities have a mobilising effect on young people, especially in terms of their political activism, which leads to greater engagement in adulthood, as other studies have found (Burden and Wichowsky, 2014; Bonomi et al., 2023).

Involvement in non-sports extracurricular activities at age 17, such as cultural activities, student/school councils or youth clubs, is also an important predictor of more political engagement in early adulthood, along with volunteering regularly at age 17. In addition, participating in cultural activities during middle childhood has a positive, long-term association with later life political engagement. Involvement in sports clubs at age 17, however, is negatively associated with political engagement in early adulthood, particularly among rural youth. Further, involvement in sports clubs at age 13 has a negative long-term relationship, depressing political engagement in adulthood even after accounting for young people's involvement in sports clubs at age 17. In other words, early interest and involvement in sports activities appears to steer young people away from political engagement in adulthood. Further analysis of involvement in sports at age 17 suggests it is involvement in team sports that is negatively associated with political engagement, while greater involvement in individual sports (such as cycling or horse riding) has no association with political engagement.<sup>63</sup> Additional analyses (not shown here) indicate that a regular part-time, term-time job is associated with more political engagement.<sup>64</sup>

Chapter 1 showed that 20 year olds varied in their concern with different global and national issues. Such concern is also associated with different forms of political engagement at age 20 (results available on request). Controlling for other factors, young people who are more concerned with climate change, gender inequality, and access to housing and poverty in Ireland undertake more political activities, while those more concerned with terrorism undertake fewer. Young people who are more concerned about climate change, gender inequality, access to housing, the global poverty gap and poverty in Ireland have higher political *interest*, while those more concerned with terrorism and animal rights have lower political interest. In addition, young people who have greater confidence in politicians are also more likely to be politically active, registered to vote and interested in politics. Concern with access to housing is also associated with being registered to vote.

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<sup>63</sup> Young people were asked, 'Which of these other activities do you regularly do for fun or to relax? For each that you do, please indicate how often you do that type of activity'. We compared 'playing sports (with others)' with 'playing individual sport (e.g., horse riding, cycling, etc)'. (Results available on request.)

<sup>64</sup> In a model controlling for all domains, respondents who had a regular part-time, term-time job at age 17 or at age 20 were more likely to undertake political activities at age 20. However, being employed compared to being on a further/higher education pathway is not associated with more political engagement. (Results available on request.)

However, given political engagement may itself shape young people's concern, these findings need to be treated with greater caution.

Some of the urban–rural gap in political activities can be accounted for by young people's late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics, with religious attendance and ethnic/gender diversity of friendship networks accounting for the largest share of the difference. Yet, young people who grew up in rural areas continue to undertake fewer activities in early adulthood even after accounting for these differences. No significant difference exists between urban or rural youth in their levels of political interest or likelihood of being registered to vote.

**TABLE 3.6 SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN A YOUNG PERSON'S LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULthood CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY ADULthood**

		Age of measure	N of political activities	Political interest	Voter registration
<b>Urban/Rural</b>	Rural (cf. Urban)	9	–	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Family background</b>	Female (cf. Male)	9	+	–	+
	Chronic illness	20	+	+	n.d.
	Mother's education	9	+	+	+
	Lone parent (cf. Two parents)	17	+	n.d.	n.d.
	Two migrant parents (or migrant lone parent)	9	n.d.	n.d.	–
	HH income	9	n.d.	+	+
	Cf. Homeowner				
	Social renting	17	–	n.d.	n.d.
	Private renting	17	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Other	17	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Child's health past year*	20	–	n.d.	n.d.
<b>Parental/ Peer social capital</b>	Gender diversity of friends	17	+ (only in urban areas)	–	n.d.
	Ethnic/racial diversity of friends	17	+ (only in urban areas)	+ (only in urban areas)	n.d.
	Number of friends	20	+	+	+
	Church attendance	20	–	–	+
<b>Locality</b>	'Facilities such as youth clubs, swimming clubs, sports clubs' (YP)	17	n.d.	–	n.d.
	Neighbourhood social infrastructure (YP)	20	–	n.d.	+
	Neighbourhood safety	20	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Perceived disorder* (YP)	20	+	n.d.	+
<b>Education</b>	Junior Certificate exam grades	17	+	+ (stronger in urban areas)	+
	Leaving Certificate exam points	20	+	+	+
	Transition Year	17	+	n.d.	n.d.

**TABLE 3.6 (CONTD.) SUMMARY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN A YOUNG PERSON'S LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY ADULTHOOD**

		Age of measure	N of political activities	Political interest	Voter registration
<b>Young person's</b>	Difficulties repaying loans	20	+ (only in urban areas)	n.d.	n.d.
<b>socio-demographics</b>	Ease of making ends meet financially	20	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Time spent in caring role	20	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Feel accommodation costs limit opportunities	20	+	+	n.d.
	Lives at home	20	n.d.	n.d.	+ (only in urban areas)
	Further/Higher education pathway	20	+	+	+
<b>Club involvement</b>	Cultural activities	17	+	n.d.	+
	Debate club	17	n.d.	+	n.d.
	Religious groups or organisations	17	+	+	-
	Scouts or guides	17	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
	Sports clubs/teams	17	- (only in rural areas)	-	n.d.
	School/student councils	17	+	+	n.d.
	Youth clubs where can hang out with people	17	+	+	+ (only in rural areas)
	Regularly volunteered	17	+	+	n.d.

Notes: N.d. = no significant difference; + = positive and significant effect; - = positive and significant effect.



### 3.4 TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

It seems reasonable to assume that young people, due to time and resource constraints, might be obliged to choose between volunteering and political activity. However, young people who are involved in non-sports volunteering at age 20 actually undertake more political activities, have higher political interest and are more likely to be registered to vote than those who are not.<sup>65</sup> There is no difference in the political engagement of young people who are and are not involved in sports volunteering at age 20. Therefore, there is no evidence of trade offs between political engagement and volunteering at age 20; if anything, volunteering for non-sport organisations and undertaking political engagement appear to be complementary.

### 3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has shown that, across both their middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood, education plays a key role in young people's political participation in adulthood. Maternal education, the young person's Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate scores, whether they are on a higher education pathway, whether they took Transition Year, how much they enjoyed school and how much importance their primary school placed on sports/arts extracurricular activities during middle childhood all appear important for greater political engagement. In addition, peer social capital during late adolescence/early adulthood also plays a key role, especially among urban youth.

Young people's involvement in extracurricular activities across middle childhood into late adolescence is another key driver of political engagement in adulthood. In this regard, it is specifically involvement in non-sports activities that appears to channel young people into more political engagement; involvement in sports activities channels them away from it.

Overall, young people's characteristics in late adolescence/early adulthood appear to play a more important role for their political engagement in adulthood, especially the number of political activities they undertake, than their social worlds in middle childhood.<sup>66</sup> Although, interestingly, the size of the difference, in

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<sup>65</sup> These relationships are based on a model controlling for all late adolescence/early adulthood domains.

<sup>66</sup> Comparing the (pseudo) R-squared scores within indicators of engagement, the scores are higher using late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics for political activities (0.07 compared to 0.026 for middle childhood indicators), political interest (0.18 compared to 0.08) and likelihood of being registered to vote (0.11 compared to 0.07). Given different modelling approaches were used for each indicator (negative binomial, ordinary least squares regression and logistic regression), we cannot compare the (pseudo) R-squared values *between* types of political engagement.

(pseudo) R-squared values for middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood, is smallest for voter registration, which suggests that earlier life factors may be more important for explaining this type of engagement than others.

This chapter also shows that young people who grew up in rural areas are less politically active than their urban peers, even after accounting for differences between them (although both share a similar level of interest in politics and are just as likely to be registered to vote). In other words, some facet of growing up in a rural area continues to lead to fewer political activities, both high- and low-intensity. What can explain this persistent gap in political activity between urban and rural youth in early adulthood? One possibility is that, even after accounting for middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics,<sup>67</sup> there is a more politicised ambient culture in urban areas, which socialises young people into greater activism. Indeed, there is a well-documented urban–rural divide in many countries, where urban residents hold more socially progressive and politically liberal attitudes (Parker et al., 2018; Maxwell, 2019). Potentially, urban youth may come into more contact with social problems in their environments, may be exposed to more political ideas within their peer networks and communities, may have greater opportunities to become politically engaged, or may have more politically-active parents. Together, such factors might engender attitudes associated with more political activism. Rural youth, by contrast, may instead be socialised in contexts where there is less focus on political protest, and feel politics is not something they can change or affect, a feeling that may depress their activism.

We do observe, in fact, that even after accounting for urban–rural differences in young people’s late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics, young people who grew up in rural areas are 7.4 percentage points more likely to agree/agree strongly that, ‘[i]t doesn’t really matter which political party is in power, in the end things go on much the same’ at age 20, compared to their urban peers. They are also 4 percentage points more likely to say that, ‘[t]he ordinary person has no influence on politics’.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, rural youth have lower levels of concern with issues such as housing or gender inequality.<sup>69</sup> Lower concern and less political efficacy are associated with less involvement in political activities. If we control for these urban–rural differences in attitudes, the urban–rural gap in political activities is reduced and is now only significant at a  $p < .1$  level.<sup>70</sup> In other words, there is a

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<sup>67</sup> If we model both middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics together, the urban–rural gap in political activity remains present and significant.

<sup>68</sup> These are predicted scores based on models that contain all late adolescence/early adulthood domains (including extracurricular activities).

<sup>69</sup> These urban–rural differences are significant after accounting for all other late adolescence/early adulthood domains (including extracurricular activities).

<sup>70</sup> Comparing the urban–rural indicator marginal effect from the model with full late adolescence/early adulthood domains, including extracurricular activities (*coef.*: -0.277\*\*), to the urban–rural marginal effect in a model containing all these domains *and* the aforementioned political attitudes (*coef.*: -0.122+).

sharp urban–rural divide in political efficacy and, to a lesser extent, concern for certain social problems that cannot entirely be explained by other social, economic and demographic differences between urban and rural youth. This divide accounts for a core part of their remaining differences in political activism in early adulthood.

## CHAPTER 4

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### Volunteering, political engagement and young adult outcomes

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

##### 4.1.1 Civic engagement and young people's life outcomes

Both volunteering and political engagement are 'social goods' in themselves (Wilson, 2000; World Bank, 2016; John et al., 2020). Volunteering for organisations benefits the communities in which young people are involved, and society more widely, providing help and support for residents, filling important gaps in resources, helping to build social connections among residents, and contributing to community development. Political engagement – on an individual and collective level – can also have wider community and societal benefits, improving policy outcomes, increasing representation and diversity, advocating for marginalised groups, and increasing engagement of local and national government agencies with social and economic problems. Civic engagement, however, may also benefit participants themselves. It has been linked to improvements in mental wellbeing, developmental outcomes and broader integration in society (Laurence, 2021).

This chapter will therefore examine the relationship between civic engagement and young people's life outcomes. To do so, we look at three sets of outcomes: mental health and wellbeing (life satisfaction and depression symptomology score); development outcomes, in particular, the sense of how quickly young people transition to adulthood and their adult identity; and trust and confidence in society and its institutions (generalised trust and confidence in societal institutions; e.g., the State, healthcare, the Church). It is important to keep in mind that young people's political engagement at age 20 was captured in 2018, when the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution (which had banned abortion in Ireland) was repealed in May 2018, a contextual factor that may have played a role in young people's political engagement at that time.

We test the relationships between volunteering and political engagement and each life outcome separately.<sup>71</sup> Since we have measures of volunteering at two time points (ages 17 and 20), we can explore whether the impact of volunteering in late adolescence and early adulthood has different associations with young people's life outcomes. We therefore test the associations between volunteering at age 20 and life outcomes at age 20 (Section 4.3.1) and volunteering at age 17 with life outcomes at age 17 (Section 4.3.2), alongside the associations between political engagement at age 20 and life outcomes at age 20 (Section 4.4).

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<sup>71</sup> Modelling these together does not yield additional insights.

### 4.1.2 Civic engagement as a buffer

Another way in which civic engagement may benefit young people's life outcomes is by acting as a buffer, protecting them from the adverse effect that living in areas with weaker social infrastructure can have on their life outcomes. One key pathway through which civic engagement is believed to improve people's life outcomes is via building social resources, enlarging social networks, providing access to social support, fostering social trust and reciprocity, and fomenting a greater sense of community and belonging (Kawachi and Berkman, 2001; Morgan and Haglund, 2009; Laurence, 2019). Communities rich in social capital are thought to be a key source of such social resources. Neighbourhoods where residents know one another, are involved in their local communities, and have spaces to come together to engage – that is, have a strong social infrastructure – act as an important source of social ties, in which social resources are embedded (Pearce et al., 2007; Borkowska and Laurence, 2020). Living in such communities can, in turn, improve people's wellbeing, developmental outcomes and wider social trust (Putnam, 2000; Zambon et al., 2010; Laurence, 2019). Potentially, where young people are living in areas with weaker social infrastructure (such as fewer family/friends in the community, or fewer facilities or spaces to meet other people), participating in civic engagement may act as an alternative pathway to accessing social resources. In effect, civic engagement may buffer young people from the negative impact that weaker community social infrastructure can have on their life outcomes.

## 4.2 ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

Different modelling approaches are applied depending on how an outcome is measured, while marginal effects are reported in the results tables. When modelling adult identity outcomes, we apply ordered logistic regressions. The marginal effects for these models represent the probability: that a young person responded that 'in terms of taking on adult responsibilities' they 'grew up faster'; or, when asked whether they consider themselves to be an adult, they responded this was 'entirely true'. When modelling life satisfaction, generalised trust and young people's confidence in societal institutions, we apply ordinary least squares regression. The marginal effects for these models represent the difference in points on the outcomes between groups – from zero to ten for life satisfaction and trust and zero to three for confidence in institutions. The exception to this is 'confidence in state institutions' (an index of confidence in the courts, education system, police and welfare state), where the marginal effects represent the difference in the standard deviation between groups.

It is important to keep in mind that the analysis that follows explores associations between civic engagement and life outcomes, both measured at the same point in time. As such, the direction of causality cannot be firmly established. For example, a positive association between volunteering at age 20 and life satisfaction at the

same age could suggest volunteering builds life satisfaction (Laurence, 2021); it could also be a consequence of people who are more satisfied with their lives being more likely to participate in volunteering activities (Headey and Muffels, 2016); i.e., reverse causality. Of course, both effects could be operating.

We can go some way towards mitigating reverse causality in our modelling by using a lagged dependent variable approach. Where available, models testing the association between civic engagement and life outcomes when a young person was 20 years old also include a lagged measure of the life outcome (captured at age 17). For example, when testing how volunteering at age 20 is associated with life satisfaction at age 20, we include a measure of life satisfaction at age 17 as well. This aims to go some way towards strengthening our confidence that any association between civic engagement and young people's life outcomes is not solely driven by better life outcomes driving people's higher participation in civic engagement.<sup>72</sup> To test whether civic engagement may protect people from the adverse effects of living in a low social capital neighbourhood, we include interaction terms between neighbourhood social infrastructure and civic engagement.

### 4.3 THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES

#### 4.3.1 Volunteering (at age 20) and young adult life outcomes

Table 4.1 shows the results from regression analyses testing the association between a young person's volunteering behaviours in early adulthood (both sports and non-sports volunteering combined) and their life outcomes (at age 20), controlling for a range of relevant characteristics. This includes: personal and familial background measures, including mother's education; household income; parental migrant status; gender; growing up in an urban or rural area, captured at age 9; whether they grew up in a lone-parent family; their type of tenancy at age 17; and whether the young person has a chronic illness (at age 20). It also includes a host of relevant socio-demographic characteristics at age 20, including: whether the young person lives at home; whether they are religious and how often they attend church; their perceptions of social disorder, safety and level of social infrastructure in their neighbourhoods; their subjective financial situation; whether they live with a partner; their post-school pathway and their Leaving Certificate points; and how much time they spend in a carer role. We only report the coefficients for volunteering, urban–rural indicator, neighbourhood social

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<sup>72</sup> As a note, modelling with and without the lagged dependent variable does not shift our substantive understanding of the effects of civic engagement. Where we have measures of volunteering and life outcomes at both ages 17 and 20, we can also apply two-wave fixed-effects analysis (exploring how a change in volunteering is associated with a change in life outcomes). This can help further address endogeneity in our models; for example, if some shared, latent characteristic of young people, such as their pro-sociality or extroversion, might predict both their volunteering behaviours and life outcomes simultaneously.

infrastructure, and the lagged outcome variables (full model results can be found in Appendix Table 4.1).

Regarding young people's mental health and wellbeing, those who volunteered report significantly higher life satisfaction than non-volunteers (Model 1).<sup>73</sup> This difference is sizeable, being slightly larger than the effect of financial strain. However, they do not report a significant difference in their depression symptomology score (Model 2).<sup>74</sup> Turning to their adult identity outcomes, we find those who volunteer are somewhat more likely to report that it is 'entirely true' that they consider themselves an adult (significant at the  $p < .1$  level) (Model 3) and are also more likely to say that they 'grew up faster' than 'other people their age' (Model 4). However, in terms of their trust and confidence in society, young people who volunteered report no difference in how far they believe 'that most people can be trusted' (Model 5). They are somewhat more likely to report confidence in the Church ( $p < .1$ ), even after accounting for religious attendance (Model 7). They report no difference in their confidence in state institutions (such as the education system, courts or welfare system) (Model 6) or in the media (Model 9). They also have somewhat less confidence in the healthcare system (Model 8). This latter finding might reflect how volunteers may be more likely to be involved with people who need help with social care or with disabilities.

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<sup>73</sup> This finding is also significant in a two-wave change score testing changes in volunteering and life satisfaction between the ages of 17 and 20.

<sup>74</sup> We do not have an identical measure of a young person's depression at 17 so include an identical lagged measure of parental depression when the young person was aged 17. This approach is justified on the basis that mental health among parents and children are highly correlated. We also tested a lagged measure of a young person's wellbeing (short moods and feelings measure), which yielded similar results.

**TABLE 4.1 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULthood (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Outcome</b>	Life sat.	Depression	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Conf. State	Conf. Church	Conf. health	Conf. media
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>Yes, volunteered</b>	0.214**	-0.274	0.029+	0.048*	-0.084	-0.026	0.052+	-0.080*	0.045
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	0.002	-0.392	0.003	-0.046*	0.164	0.000	-0.016	0.026	0.013
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.113*	-0.356*	0.029**	-0.016	0.270***	0.087***	0.027	0.072***	0.057*
<b>Life satisfaction (age 17)</b>	0.239***								
<b>Parental depression symptomology (age 20)</b>		0.146***							
<b>Adult identity (age 17)</b>			0.105***						
<b>Social trust (age 17)</b>					0.181***				
<b>Confidence in the State (Index) (age 17)</b>						0.305***			
<b>Confidence in the Church (age 17)</b>							0.299***		
<b>Confidence in the healthcare system (age 17)</b>								0.261***	
<b>Observations</b>	4,548	4,248	4,575	4,576	4,573	4,577	4,543	4,507	4,565
<b>Adjusted R-squared</b>	0.156	0.196			0.132	0.235	0.376	0.092	0.037
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>			0.058	0.028					

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household. See Appendix Table 4.1 for full model results; data weighted to be representative. OLS = Ordinary least squares regression; NBREG = Negative binomial regression; OLOGIT = Ordered logistic regression.



### 4.3.2 Volunteering (at age 17) and late adolescent life outcomes

We turn next to examining whether volunteering in late adolescence (age 17) is associated with life satisfaction and generalised trust at age 17,<sup>75</sup> while controlling for a range of relevant socio-demographic controls (captured at age 17) (Table 4.2). (We only report the coefficients for volunteering at 17 and urban–rural indicator; full model results can be found in Appendix Table 4.2.) As seen for volunteering at age 20, young people who were regularly volunteering at age 17 had higher life satisfaction at age 17, after controlling for a host of social and economic characteristics. However, again, volunteering had no significant association with generalised trust at age 17.<sup>76</sup>

**TABLE 4.2 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN LATE ADOLESCENCE (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2
<b>Outcome</b>	Life sat	Social trust
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	OLS
<b>Volunteered regularly</b>	0.149+	0.128
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	-0.069	-0.242*
<b>Observations</b>	4,617	4,643
<b>Adjusted R-squared</b>	0.076	0.044

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household. See Appendix Table 4.2 for full model results; data weighted to be representative. OLS = Ordinary least squares regression.

## 4.4 THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND LIFE OUTCOMES

This section examines the relationships between two dimensions of young people’s political engagement – their number of political activities undertaken and interest in politics – and their life outcomes. We do not examine how voter registration is related to life outcomes, given simply being registered itself is unlikely to be linked to life outcomes.

Table 4.3 models the associations between number of political activities undertaken at age 20 and life outcomes in young adulthood. We only report the

<sup>75</sup> Measures of how fast a young person felt they grew up and confidence in the media were not available at age 17. Given the timeframe, we do not test whether volunteering affects the extent to which a young person perceives themselves to be an adult. None of the effects for volunteering or confidence in state institutions, the Church or the healthcare system are significant.

<sup>76</sup> We also tested whether volunteering at age 17 predicted outcomes at age 20. Volunteering at age 17 is positively associated with feeling that, at age 20, the young person grew up faster and with lower confidence in healthcare. However, none of the other associations are significant.

coefficients for political activities, urban–rural indicator, neighbourhood social infrastructure and the lagged outcome variables (full model results can be found in Appendix Table 4.3).

Young people who are more politically active report higher depression symptomology scores (Model 2), and less confidence in state institutions (Model 6), the Church (Model 7) and the healthcare system (Model 8). One possibility is that being more politically active can increase stress and anxiety, especially when political relations are fraught, while also increasing awareness of problems in the world, which could lead to increases in depression symptomology. Greater political involvement and contact with societal institutions may also undermine confidence in the functioning of the State, especially if action fails to lead to change. However, it may also be that low confidence in institutions and even depression may mobilise young people into greater political action (although we do account for lagged measures of confidence in several institutions as well as parental depression in an attempt to mitigate this).

More detailed analysis of the *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) data reveals that risk of depression varies by type of political activity. Higher risk of depression is mainly related to participation in more individualised, unconventional political activities (Ardèvol-Abreu et al., 2020). This includes ‘wearing/displaying a campaign badge/sticker’, ‘signing a petition (paper, email, online) about a political or social issue’, ‘boycotting certain products for political, social or environmental reasons’ and ‘posting or sharing anything about politics online’.<sup>77</sup> More collective forms of participation, such as ‘taking part in a public demonstration’ or ‘working (on a voluntary basis or otherwise) with an environmental group’ have no significant association with depression. ‘Working (on a voluntary basis or otherwise) in a political party’ is negatively related to depression (although this is only significant at the  $p < .1$  level and only 2 per cent of young adults are engaged in this activity).

No association is observed between being politically active and generalised trust (Model 5) or whether a young person considers themselves an adult (Model 3). However, more politically active young people are more likely to say that they ‘grew up faster’ than ‘other people their age’ (Model 4).

Table 4.4 explores how young people’s life outcomes are related to how interested they are in politics. We only report the coefficients for political interest, urban–rural indicator, neighbourhood social infrastructure and the lagged outcome variables (full model results can be found in Appendix Table 4.4).

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<sup>77</sup> These findings emerge from replicating Model 2, Table 4.3, but substituting the measure of number of political activities with the separate measures of whether a young person undertook each type of activity in the previous 12 months.

Young people who are more interested in politics exhibit no difference in life satisfaction (Model 1) or depression (Model 2). They are also no more likely to strongly believe that they 'consider themselves an adult' compared to less politically interested young people (Model 3), although they are, like those who are more politically active, more likely to say they 'grew up faster than other people their age' (Model 4). Political interest is, unlike political activity, (weakly) positively related to confidence in state institutions ( $p < .1$ ) (Model 6). However, it is negatively related to trust in the healthcare system (Model 8) and positively related to trust in the media (Model 9), in line with the effects of political activity. We also see that young people who are more interested in politics tend to have higher social trust (Model 7). On the whole, higher political interest therefore seems (excluding attitudes towards the healthcare system) to be associated with more positive views of society (its institutions) and the people in it (that 'most people can be trusted'). One possibility is that politically interested young people are less politically passive, feel they greater have political efficacy, and, as such, have more confidence in societal institutions (Bäck and Kestilä, 2009). This kind of institutional trust – trust in the fairness of society's organisation – can lay a strong foundation for the formation of social trust – belief in the fairness of others (Sønderskov and Dinesen, 2016).

**TABLE 4.3 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Outcome	Life satisfaction	Depression	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Conf. State	Confidence in Church	Confidence in health	Confidence in media
Model type	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>N of political activities</b>	-0.004	0.383***	-0.006	0.029***	0.013	-0.016+	-0.034***	-0.057***	0.020+
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	0.008	-0.276	0.002	-0.036	0.165	-0.005	-0.024	0.006	0.02
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.117*	-0.310*	0.029*	-0.012	0.269***	0.084***	0.024	0.063**	0.061**
<b>Life satisfaction (age 17)</b>	0.238***								
<b>Parental depression symptomology (age 20)</b>		0.146***							
<b>Adult identity (age 17)</b>			0.106***						
<b>Social trust (age 17)</b>					0.182***				
<b>Confidence in the Church (age 17)</b>						0.304***			
<b>Confidence in the State (Index) (age 17)</b>							0.296***		
<b>Confidence in the healthcare system (age 17)</b>								0.249***	
<b>Observations</b>	4,548	4,248	4,575	4,576	4,573	4,577	4,543	4,507	4,565
<b>Adjusted R-squared</b>	0.153	0.21			0.132	0.38	0.235	0.038	0.102
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>			0.058	0.031					

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household. See Appendix Table 4.3 for full model results; data weighted to be representative. OLS = Ordinary least squares regression; NBREG = Negative binomial regression; OLOGIT = Ordered logistic regression.

**TABLE 4.4 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL INTEREST AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Outcome</b>	Life satisfaction	Depression	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Confidence in State	Confidence in Church	Confidence in health	Confidence in media
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>Political interest</b>	0.016	0.022	0.000	0.012***	0.056***	0.011+	-0.008	-0.020**	0.020***
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	0.013	-0.394	0.005	-0.042+	0.172+	0.001	-0.015	0.019	0.018
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.119*	-0.358*	0.030**	-0.013	0.277***	0.090***	0.027	0.067**	0.061**
<b>Life satisfaction (age 17)</b>	0.239***								
<b>Parental depression symptomology (age 20)</b>		0.147***							
<b>Adult identity (age 17)</b>			0.105***						
<b>Social trust (age 17)</b>					0.183***				
<b>Confidence in the Church (age 17)</b>						0.303***			
<b>Confidence in the State (Index) (age 17)</b>							0.299***		
<b>Confidence in the healthcare system (age 17)</b>								0.253***	
<b>Observations</b>	4,548	4,248	4,575	4,576	4,573	4,577	4,543	4,507	4,565
<b>Adjusted R-squared</b>	0.154	0.195			0.137	0.376	0.238	0.041	0.095
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>			0.057	0.029					

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household. See Appendix Table 4.4 for full model results; data weighted to be representative. OLS = Ordinary least squares regression; NBREG = Negative binomial regression; OLOGIT = Ordered logistic regression.

## 4.5 THE CUSHIONING ROLE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

One key finding emerging from the above analyses (Tables 4.1, 4.3 and 4.4) is that young people who live in areas with a stronger social infrastructure (with more friends and family in the area, leisure, and sports facilities suitable for young adults, and places to meet up with other people) have better life outcomes than their peers who do not. They report higher life satisfaction, lower depression, higher social trust, more confidence in the State, media and the healthcare system, and more strongly believe they are an adult. Living in areas with a weaker social infrastructure is therefore potentially a key risk factor for young people's life outcomes.<sup>78</sup>

As discussed, civic engagement might cushion the life outcomes of those young people whose local area offers a weaker social infrastructure. To test for this possibility, we look at the relationships between young people's life outcomes (at age 20) and their volunteering (Table 4.5) and political activity (Table 4.6) at age 20. In doing so, we include an interaction term between their type of civic engagement and the level of social infrastructure in their local area (at age 20). This interaction term will test whether a previous finding – that life outcomes are somewhat worse in areas with weaker social infrastructure – still holds for young people who are civically engaged.

### 4.5.1 The cushioning role of volunteering

The findings show that volunteering significantly moderates the relationship between neighbourhood social infrastructure and life satisfaction (Model 1), depression symptomology (Model 2), how far a young person considers themselves an adult (Model 3) and social trust (Model 5).<sup>79</sup> To understand these significant relationships, we generated predicted scores for each life outcome and plotted them across levels of neighbourhood social infrastructure, looking at these relationships separately for young people who are volunteering versus those who are not.

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<sup>78</sup> At least some of these relationships may also operate in the other direction; for example, more depressed individuals may have fewer friends in their local area because they are more likely to withdraw from their communities. However, studies that have sought to apply more causally robust methods suggest at least part of the link between social infrastructure (e.g., associational involvement) and better life outcomes is causal (Laurence, 2019; Downward et al., 2020).

<sup>79</sup> Determined by looking at the coefficients for the interaction term between volunteering and neighbourhood social infrastructure in Table 4.5, where control variables are present in the model but excluded from the table of results.

**TABLE 4.5 CUSHIONING ROLE OF VOLUNTEERING BETWEEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

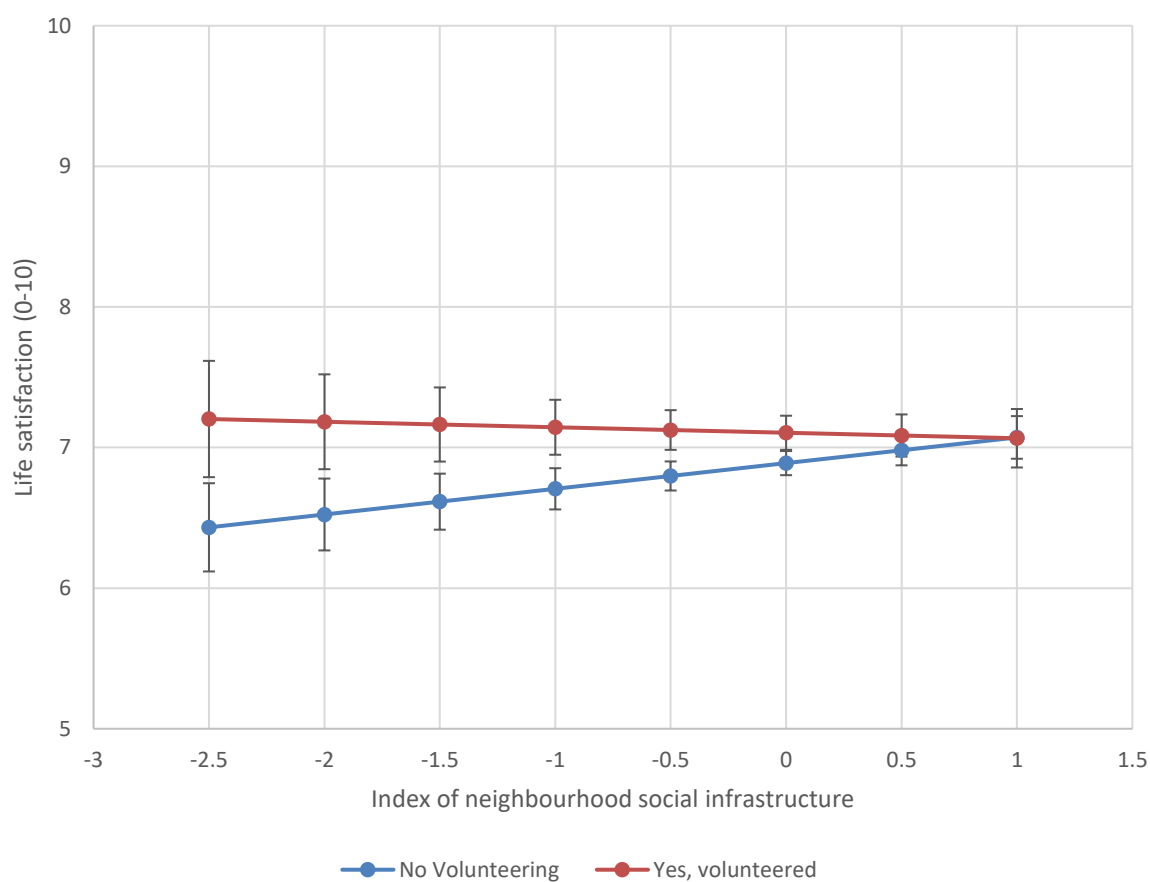
Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Life sat.	Depress.	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Conf. State	Conf. Church	Conf. health.	Conf. media
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>Yes, volunteered</b>	0.216**	-0.300	0.160+	0.211*	-0.081	-0.026	0.181+	-0.214*	0.102
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.183**	-0.530**	0.265***	-0.031	0.357***	0.093***	0.070	0.214**	0.133+
<b>Volunteered * Local social infrastructure</b>	-0.222*	0.586*	-0.327**	-0.123	-0.280*	-0.019	-0.009	-0.037	0.058
<b>Observations</b>	4,548	4,242	4,575	4,576	4,573	4,577	4,543	4,507	4565

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household. All control variables (as applied above) were included in the model but are excluded from the results table; data weighted to be representative. OLS = Ordinary least squares regression; NBREG = Negative binomial regression; OLOGIT = Ordered logistic regression.

Figure 4.1 demonstrates that, among young people who do not volunteer, those who live in areas with a weaker social infrastructure report lower life satisfaction than those who live in areas with a stronger social infrastructure. Young people who volunteer report similar levels of life satisfaction to non-volunteers in communities with high social infrastructure. However, young people who volunteer do not report lower levels of life satisfaction in areas with a weak social infrastructure; in fact, they report higher levels of life satisfaction in these areas compared to non-volunteers. In other words, there is some evidence that volunteering could protect young people from an adverse impact that living in areas with a weak social infrastructure can have on their life satisfaction (although we cannot demonstrate causality here).<sup>80</sup>

**FIGURE 4.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG VOLUNTEERS AND NON-VOLUNTEERS**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

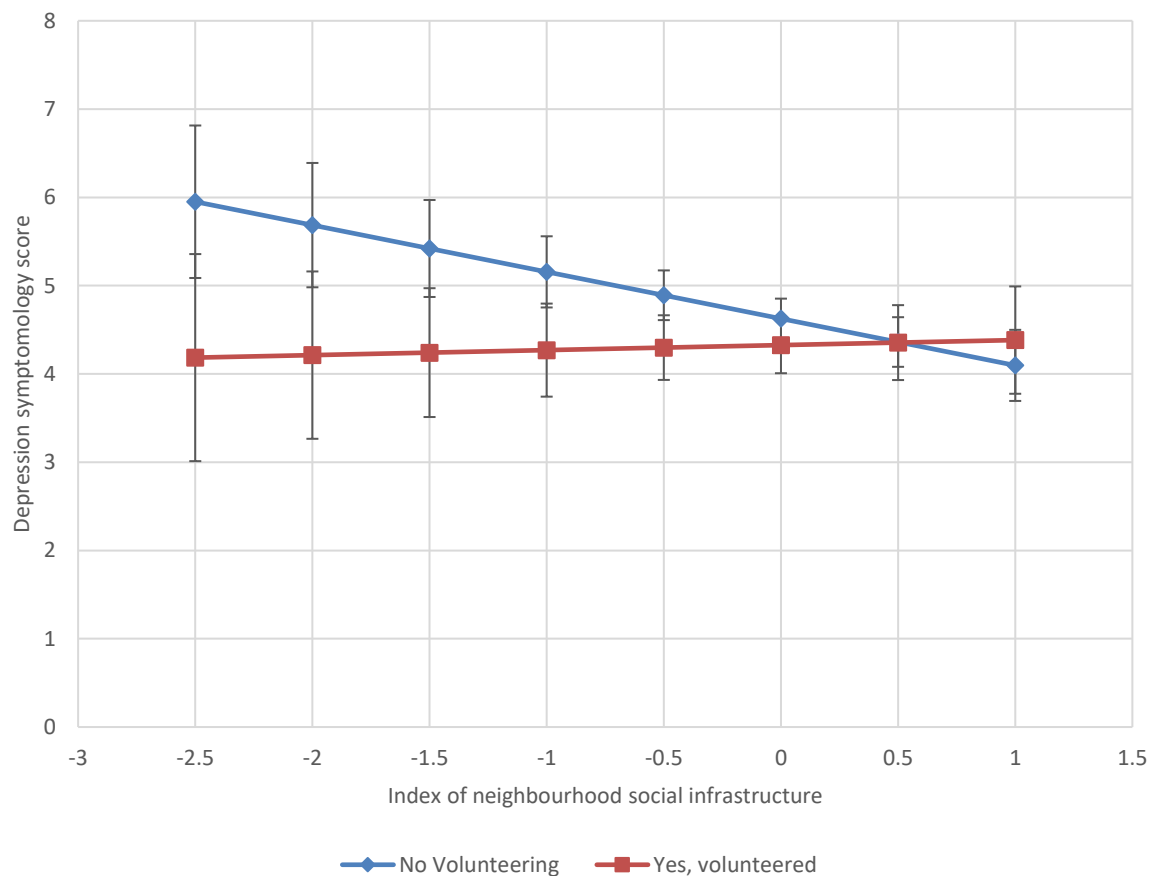
Notes: Neighbourhood social infrastructure is an index composed of three variables capturing how far young people agree/disagree that their local area has: 'leisure and sports facilities suitable for young adults'; 'lots of family/friends living in the area'; and 'places to meet up with other people'. Predicted scores derived from Model 1, Table 4.5; data weighted to be representative.

<sup>80</sup> Testing shows the levels of life satisfaction are significantly different between volunteers/non-volunteers in low social infrastructure (-2.5) areas.



Figure 4.2 reveals a similar pattern emerging for young people's depression symptomology (although here, higher scores equate to more depressive symptoms). Living in an area with a weaker social infrastructure is only associated with more depressive symptoms among non-volunteers and has no association with depressive symptoms among volunteers. Accordingly, there is some evidence to suggest volunteering may also protect young people from the adverse effects of weak neighbourhood social infrastructures on their mental health (although we cannot demonstrate causality here).<sup>81</sup>

**FIGURE 4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEPRESSION SYMPTOMOLOGY AMONG VOLUNTEERS AND NON-VOLUNTEERS**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

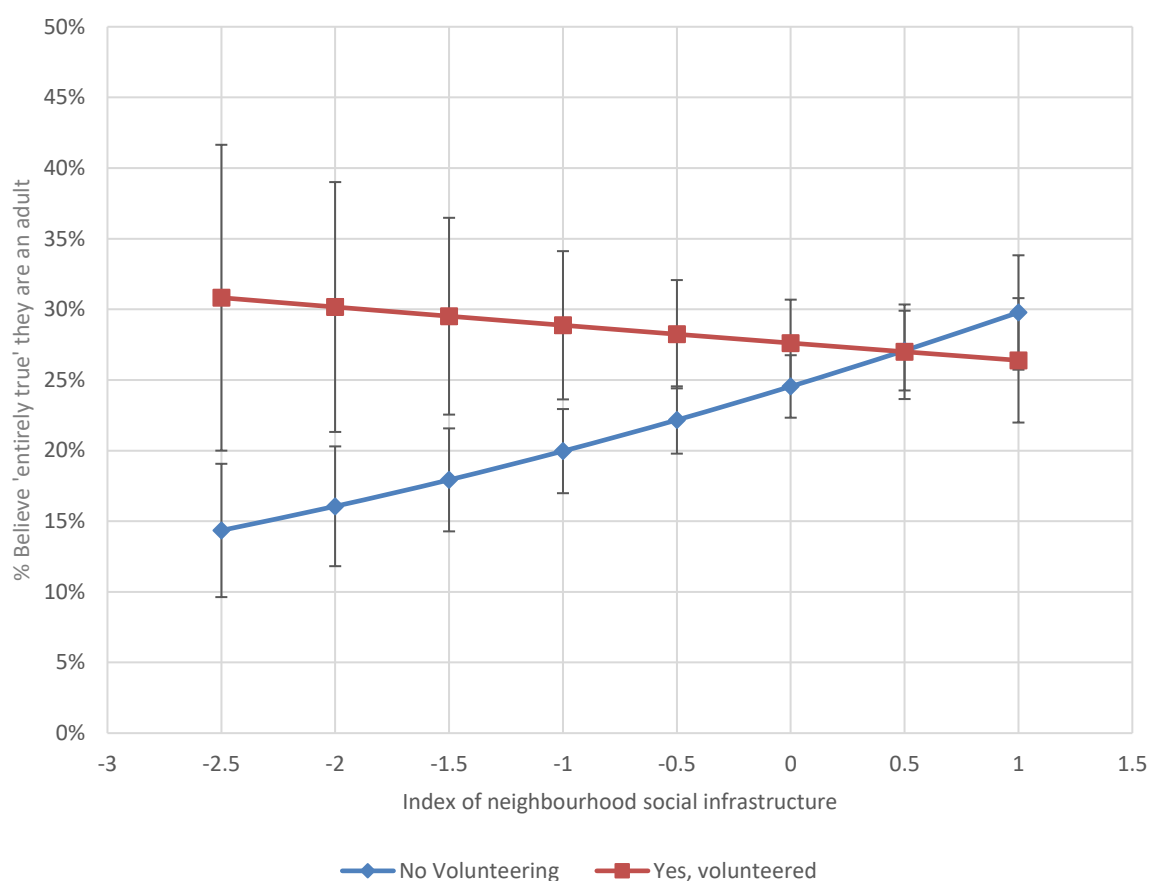
Notes: Neighbourhood social infrastructure is an index composed of three variables capturing how far young people agree/disagree that their local area has: 'leisure and sports facilities suitably for young adults', 'lots of family/friends living in the area', and 'places to meet up with other people'. Predicted scores derived from Model 2, Table 4.5; data weighted to be representative.

There is also evidence that volunteering may support young people's transition to adulthood when faced with weaker social infrastructure in their local areas. Figure

<sup>81</sup> Testing shows the levels of depression symptomology are significantly different between volunteers/non-volunteers in low social infrastructure (-2.5) areas.

4.3 looks at the proportion of young people who believe, when asked if they consider themselves to be an adult, that this is 'entirely true', i.e., their adult identity. Among non-volunteers, the strength of neighbourhood social infrastructure is positively associated with their adult identity, with those in areas with the weakest social infrastructure being 15 percentage points less likely to strongly believe they are an adult. Young people who volunteer, however, report strong adult identities irrespective of the social infrastructure in their local areas. The result being that volunteering may facilitate young people's transition to adulthood even in communities where a weaker social infrastructure may curtail this transition.<sup>82</sup>

**FIGURE 4.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADULT IDENTITY AMONG VOLUNTEERS AND NON-VOLUNTEERS**



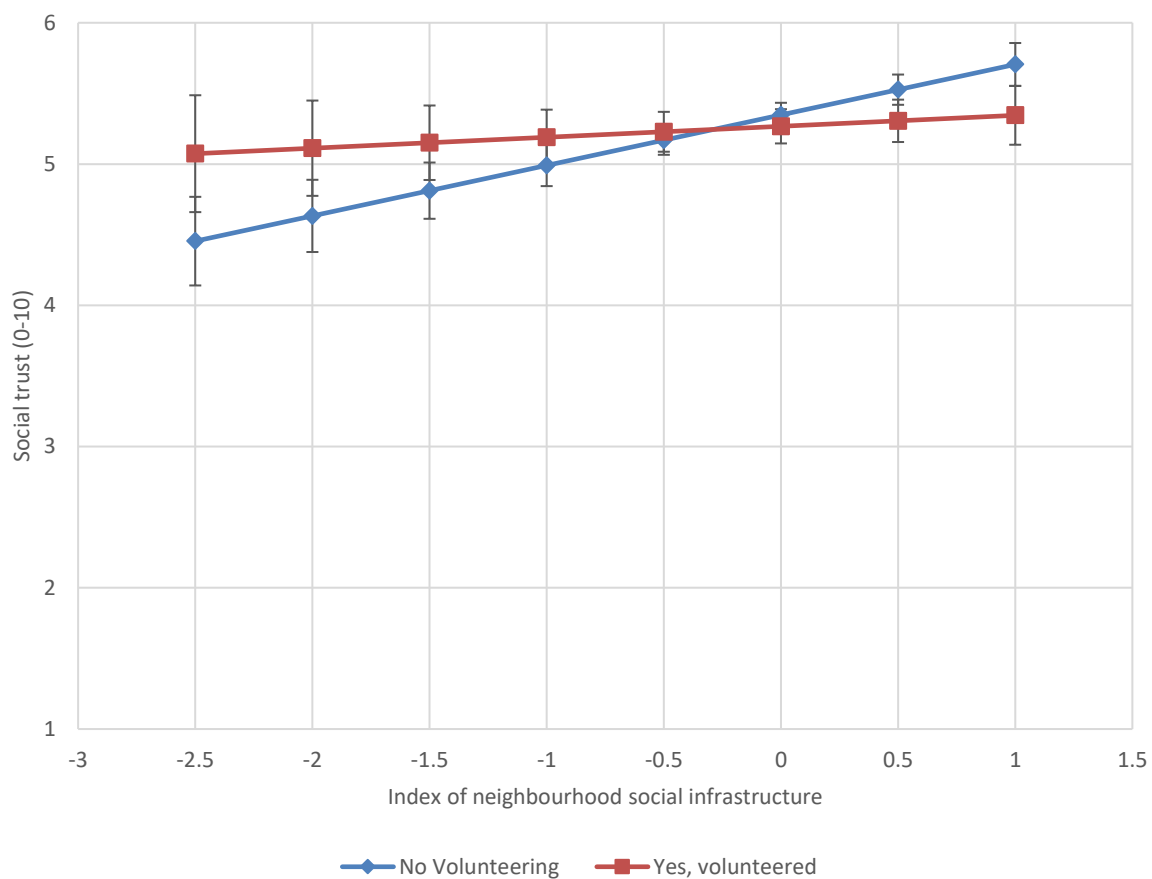
Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Neighbourhood social infrastructure is an index composed of three variables capturing how far young people agree/disagree that their local area has: 'leisure and sports facilities suitably for young adults', 'lots of family/friends living in the area', and 'places to meet up with other people'. Predicted scores derived from Model 2, Table 4.5; data weighted to be representative.

<sup>82</sup> Testing shows the levels of adult identity are significantly different between volunteers/non-volunteers in low social infrastructure (-2.5) areas.

Lastly, Figure 4.4 examines young people's social trust. For young people who do not volunteer, living in an area with weaker social infrastructure is a risk factor for lower social trust. However, this adverse association for weaker local social infrastructure is absent for young people who volunteer. Again, volunteering appears to protect young people from the negative potential impacts that living in an area with a weak social infrastructure can have on their life outcomes, although for social trust this protective role of volunteering in low social infrastructure areas may also somewhat inhibit the formation of social trust in areas with strong social infrastructure.<sup>83</sup>

**FIGURE 4.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL TRUST AMONG VOLUNTEERS AND NON-VOLUNTEERS**



Source: *Growing Up in Ireland* '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.

Notes: Neighbourhood social infrastructure is an index composed of three variables capturing how far young people agree/disagree that their local area has: 'leisure and sports facilities suitably for young adults', 'lots of family/friends living in the area', and 'places to meet up with other people'. Predicted scores derived from Model 2, Table 4.5; data weighted to be representative.

<sup>83</sup> Testing shows the levels of social trust are significantly different between volunteers/non-volunteers in low social infrastructure (-2.5) areas. However, levels of social trust are also significantly higher for non-volunteers in high social infrastructure (1) areas.

#### **4.5.2 The cushioning role of political engagement**

When it comes to any cushioning role of political engagement, there is little evidence that undertaking more political activities at age 20 moderates the association between a young person's life outcomes and the strength of social infrastructure in the areas in which they live (Table 4.6). Only for young people's depression symptomology do we find evidence of a significant interaction between political activities and neighbourhood social infrastructure.

**TABLE 4.6 CUSHIONING ROLE OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BETWEEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Outcome</b>	Life satisfact.	Depress.	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Conf. State	Conf. Church	Conf. Health	Conf. Media
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>N of political activities</b>	-0.003	0.371***	-0.036	0.133***	0.012	-0.015+	-0.034***	-0.057***	0.020+
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.088	-0.103	0.179*	-0.115	0.290***	0.065*	0.022	0.054+	0.056+
<b>N of political activities * Local social infrastructure</b>	0.019	-0.164*	-0.012	0.041	-0.014	0.013	0.001	0.006	0.003
<b>Observations</b>	4,548	4,570	4,575	4,576	4,573	4,577	4,543	4,507	4,565

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household. All control variables (as applied above) were included in the model but are excluded from the results table; data weighted to be representative. OLS = Ordinary least squares regression; NBREG = Negative binomial regression; OLOGIT = Ordered logistic regression.

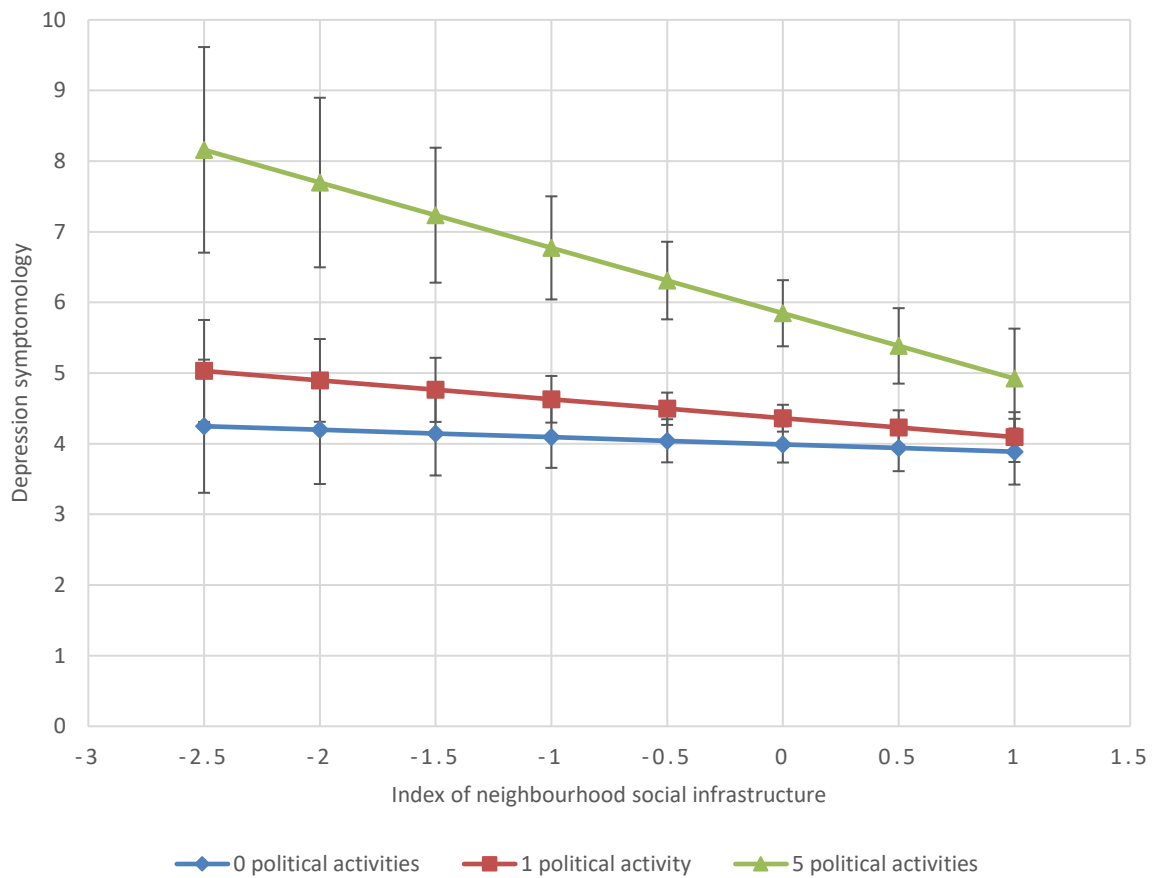
Figure 4.5 plots young people's depression symptomology scores across the strength of social infrastructure in their local areas, comparing no, one and five political activities over the past year. For political engagement, a different relationship unfolds than for volunteering. We previously observed that engaging in a higher number of political activities is associated with higher depression symptomology. Figure 4.5 demonstrates that this association is stronger when young people are living in neighbourhoods with weak social infrastructure. In fact, when they live in areas with a strong social infrastructure, there is little difference in terms of levels of depression between those who are and are not politically active. One possible interpretation of these findings is that living in an area with a stronger neighbourhood infrastructure could protect young people from a potentially adverse effect of high political engagement on their mental health. However, we cannot demonstrate causality here. In addition, it may be that some other characteristics of people who are politically engaged (e.g., some unmeasured component of their socio-economic status) are driving these relationships.<sup>84</sup>

Further analysis shows that the positive association between political activity and higher depression symptomology is driven by participation in more individual, unconventional forms of engagement, such as 'signing a petition' or 'sharing/posting online on social and political issues'. A similar pattern emerges for the relationship between political activities, neighbourhood social infrastructure and depression symptomology. It is only 'signing a petition', 'posting or sharing anything about politics online' and 'boycotting certain products for political, social or environmental reasons' that are more strongly related to depression in areas of weak social infrastructure. This provides some evidence that living in communities with a strong neighbourhood infrastructure could cushion harm that these more individualised, unconventional forms of political activity might have on mental health (although these cannot be taken as causal relationships). At the same time, there is little evidence that young people's political interest moderates the association between neighbourhood social infrastructure and young people's life outcomes.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> The models do control for a range of socio-economic characteristics, and we also tested whether it is these characteristics (not political engagement) that could account for the significant interaction effect. We found no evidence that they did.

<sup>85</sup> All interaction terms were non-significant (results available on request).

**FIGURE 4.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEIGHBOURHOOD SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEPRESSION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort, Waves 1–4.*

Notes: Neighbourhood social infrastructure is an index composed of three variables capturing how far young people agree/disagree that their local area has: 'leisure and sports facilities suitably for young adults'; 'lots of family/friends living in the area'; and 'places to meet up with other people'. Predicted scores derived from Model 2, Table 4.5; data weighted to be representative.

## 4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter provides evidence that volunteering could have significant benefits for young people's life outcomes. Those who volunteer in late adolescence and early adulthood have higher life satisfaction at the time they are engaging in volunteering. Volunteers in early adulthood also have stronger adult identities, being more likely to consider themselves an adult and believing they grew up faster than their peers. Not only this; evidence suggests that volunteering may protect young people from the adverse impact that living in an area with a weaker social infrastructure can have on their life satisfaction, risk of depression, adult identity and social trust. We also previously observed that (sports) volunteering is lower in areas with a weaker social infrastructure. Weak neighbourhood infrastructure therefore not only increases the risks of poorer life outcomes but appears to reduce opportunities to counter these adverse effects by curtailing volunteering

opportunities. However, volunteering does not appear to matter as much when it comes to young people's institutional confidence.<sup>86</sup>

The relationship between political participation and young people's life outcomes is more complex and depends on the indicator of participation being examined. Those who are more politically active and more interested in politics do report feeling they grew up quicker than their peers, although they are not more likely to feel strongly that they are an adult. When it comes to their views on society, however, their associations with political activity and interest begin to diverge. Greater political activity and interest are associated with less confidence in the healthcare system and more confidence in the media (although only marginally so for more politically active young people). However, more politically active young people have less confidence in the Church, while political interest is unrelated to this. Furthermore, young people with higher political interest actually have somewhat greater confidence in state institutions, while more politically active young people have much less confidence in them. In addition, more politically interested young people tend to feel that 'on the whole, people can be trusted'.

Overall, political participation is more closely related to young people's connection to society, while volunteering is generally more related to young people's mental health and adult development. However, more politically active young people, in particular those participating in more individual, unconventional forms of engagement, do have higher depression scores, a pattern that depends on the strength of the social infrastructure in their local areas. These forms of individualised, unconventional political participation have a much weaker association with depression where young people are embedded in areas with strong social infrastructures.

It is important to keep in mind that these are associations between engagement and outcomes, and the causal direction of the relationship could run either way (or both ways). As mentioned, taking account of the same outcomes at age 17 goes some way towards providing evidence that the entire association between engagement and outcome is unlikely to be explained by reverse causality. However, further research is needed to strengthen the causal claims of these relationships.

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<sup>86</sup> We tested whether volunteering and political engagement may have different associations with outcomes for men and women. However, no significant differences were found.



## CHAPTER 5

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### Conclusions

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Civic participation is a key social good. Volunteering for organisations benefits the communities and society in which people are involved, such as providing help and support for residents, filling important gaps in resources, helping to build social connections among people, and contributing to community development (Putnam, 2000; Wilson, 2000; Hodgkinson, 2003). In fact, recent estimates put the value of volunteering to the Irish economy at over €5 billion per annum (Volunteer Ireland, 2022).

Political engagement is also critical for a healthy democracy. It can improve policy outcomes, increase representation and diversity, involve advocacy for marginalised groups, and increase engagement of local and national government agencies with social and economic problems (Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Burstein, 1998; Larcinese et al., 2013). However, civic engagement may also have important benefits for those who participate, improving health and wellbeing, increasing social capital and social integration, fostering positive developmental outcomes, and enhancing personal and political efficacy (Finkel, 1985; Eccles and Barber, 1999; Aminzadeh et al., 2013; Laurence, 2021).

A host of factors are believed to shape people's propensity to civically engage (Wilson, 2000; Koc-Michalska et al., 2016), which play out across people's life course (Oesterle et al., 2004; Janmaat and Hoskins, 2022). Among these, place is considered an important determinant of participation in various forms of civic engagement (Dang et al., 2022), and differences between urban and rural areas in particular may lead to persistent divides in different forms of civic engagement (Kenny and Luca, 2021; Paarlberg et al., 2022). In spite of this, there is relatively little research exploring the drivers of civic engagement, and the role of growing up in more urban or rural environments, in Ireland. This report aims to address this paucity of research, by building an evidence base of factors in young people's lives that shape their civic engagement behaviours, the role growing up in more urban and rural environments plays for their civic engagement, and how civic engagement shapes their life outcomes and attitudes towards society.

## 5.2 KEY FINDINGS

### 5.2.1 Key domains shaping young adults' civic and political engagement

Table 5.1 provides a summary of some of the key middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood characteristics associated with civic and political engagement in adulthood.

**TABLE 5.1 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS – POSITIVE DRIVERS OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN ADULTHOOD**

Domain	Sports and non-sports volunteering	Political engagement
	<b>Associations</b>	<b>Associations</b>
<b>Urban/Rural</b>	Sports volunteering higher in rural areas; no difference in non-sports volunteering.	Political activities higher in urban areas; no difference in political interest or voter registration.
<b>Family background</b>	Men more involved in sports and women more involved in non-sports. Social advantage – Maternal education, housing. Better health (sports volunteering).	Women report more activities and voter registration. Social advantage – Mother's education. Migrant YPs less politically engaged.
<b>Parental and peer social capital</b>	Larger and more diverse – gender/ethnicity – friendship group, especially non-sports. Religious attendance. Having parents who volunteer.	Larger and more diverse – gender/ethnicity – friendship group (political activities, especially urban areas). Religious attendance (less activities/interest but greater voter registration).
<b>Locality</b>	Access to public transport, youth recreational facilities – e.g., youth clubs, sports clubs – and stronger social infrastructure (especially sports volunteering).	Fewer political activities among rural youth in stable/safe areas. More activities if social infrastructure weaker and more disorder.
<b>Education</b>	YPs more positive about school, schools emphasising sports/arts extracurricular activities, taking Transition Year, achieving higher Leaving Certificate grades, and going on to higher education.	Higher Junior and Leaving Certificate grades and higher education (political activities, interest, and voter registration). Liking school (political activities and interest). Transition Year (political activities).
<b>Young person's socio-demographics</b>	Living at home (more sports and less non-sports). Debt (less non-sports, especially in urban areas).	Struggling with accommodation/finances (more political interest and activities, especially in urban areas).
<b>Extracurricular activities</b>	Sports activities beneficial for sports volunteering; non-sports activities beneficial for non-sports volunteering.	Higher for non-sports activities. Lower for sports activities.

Note: YP = Young person.

On the whole, rural youth are more likely to be involved in sports volunteering in adulthood than their urban peers, while both urban and rural youth are equally likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering. Part of this gap in sports volunteering between urban and rural youth can be explained by differences in

their characteristics, such as their levels of social capital. However, even after taking account of these differences, a significant urban–rural gap remains. This suggests some feature of growing up in a rural area, such as involvement in the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), continues to lead to volunteering for sports organisations beyond the social worlds measured in this study.

Urban youth undertake more political activities in adulthood than their rural peers (e.g., signing a petition, participating in demonstrations), although both groups are equally interested in politics and equally likely to be registered to vote. Part of this urban–rural gap can again be explained by differences in the social and demographic characteristics of urban and rural youth. However, again, even accounting for these differences, a significant gap in political participation remains. One possible explanation is that rural youth feel further removed from politics and the ‘political centre’ of urban areas than do urban youth. This may lead to lower levels of political efficacy among rural youth – that is, how far they feel they can influence politics. Indeed, we find that rural youth at age 20 are more likely than urban youth to agree that, ‘[i]t doesn’t really matter which political party is in power, in the end things go on much the same’ or to feel that, ‘[t]he ordinary person has no influence on politics’. We also find that rural youth have lower levels of concern about certain political issues, such as housing or gender inequality, which are closely tied to political participation. Urban and rural youth are equally concerned with the environment, though this was not among the highest priorities of either group. In other words, there is an urban–rural divide in political efficacy and, to a lesser extent, concern for certain social problems, which is linked to lower political participation among rural youth.

Turning to the predictors of engagement, education and schooling play a key role in young people’s civic engagement (especially for non-sports volunteering/political engagement). These factors are all positively associated with civic engagement: mother’s education, Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate scores, being on a higher education pathway, taking Transition Year, and how much young people enjoyed school, or how much importance their primary school placed on sports/arts extracurricular activities during middle childhood. Given the central role extracurricular activities play for civic engagement, and that at least some of these are organised through schools, young people’s education domain takes on even greater importance. For example, the importance that a school places on cultural extracurricular activities when a young person is aged 13 continues to shape their civic engagement into adulthood partly because young people from these schools are more involved in non-sport activities at ages 13 and 17.<sup>87</sup> Interestingly, attending university itself does not appear to increase

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<sup>87</sup> This long-term positive effect of school extracurricular importance can be seen in a model containing all middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood domains. However, on controlling for extracurricular involvement at ages 13 and 17, this long-term effect is substantially reduced.

volunteering after accounting for things like Leaving Certificate scores.<sup>88</sup> However, a higher education pathway is independently related to political engagement, suggesting its institutional environment may socialise young people into, or provide greater opportunities for, political activities.

In line with much of the previous literature (Wilson, 2000), young people's peer networks are important for shaping their civic behaviours, although some of these effects are stronger among youth who grew up in urban areas. Having a greater number of friends, a more diverse friendship group in terms of ethnicity and gender (the latter especially for men) and having friends who are personally known by one's parents all predict higher levels of civic engagement.

Civic engagement behaviours are also differentiated by gender. While women are more likely to be involved in non-sports volunteering, to undertake more political activities, and be registered to vote, they are less likely to be involved in sports volunteering (especially women who grew up in urban areas) and report less interest in politics. This gender gap in volunteering type is partly driven by differences in extracurricular activities (women are more involved in cultural activities and less involved in sports) and Leaving Certificate scores. However, differences between men and women in their characteristics explain little of the gender differences in political engagement. As suggested, one reason women are more politically active may be that they were turning 20 at the time of the referendum on repealing restrictions on women's right to an abortion in Ireland, in May 2018. During that period, women may have been more actively advocating than men for the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution to be repealed.

Interestingly, household economic resources when a young person was growing up – income, parental employment status, or living in a household that struggled to make ends meet or afford essentials – seem to matter less for young people's civic engagement in adulthood.<sup>89</sup> In addition, many economic factors in early adulthood, such as whether a young person is struggling to make ends meet financially, has difficulty in repaying loans (at least in rural areas), perceives accommodation costs as prohibitive of opportunities for work or study, or lives in areas with higher levels of perceived disorder, also have little relationship with volunteering behaviours. In fact, weaker economic situations may act as a catalyst for greater political participation. For example, we find that those who find accommodation costs prohibitive are more politically active, and that those who have difficulty repaying loans are also more politically active (urban youth). This is

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<sup>88</sup> In practice, in Ireland it can be difficult to disentangle the two factors due to near-universal higher education participation among those with higher Leaving Certificate grades.

<sup>89</sup> Our family background domain did not include employment status, a household's ability to afford essentials, or whether a family feels they are able to 'make ends meet' easily or with difficulty. These were all tested separately but were not significant and did not add additional explanatory power to the models, after controlling for other family background characteristics.

not to say socio-economic characteristics do not matter. Education, as discussed, is a key driver of civic engagement, as well as being structured by families' economic situations. Being in rented accommodation when growing up can depress later life participation. Similarly, extracurricular activities in youth are often paid for privately; a family's inability to pay for them may widen disparities in a young person's later life civic engagement.

Another key point that the report reveals is that it is not a 'one size fits all' case when it comes to drivers of civic engagement. Some characteristics, such as young people's education or (to a large extent) their extracurricular involvement, positively predict most forms of civic engagement. However, some characteristics are more important for some forms of civic engagement than others. For example, characteristics of the local area in which a young person lives, especially access to leisure facilities and social infrastructure, play a more important role for their sports volunteering and are less important for non-sports volunteering. In some instances, characteristics that are beneficial for some dimensions of engagement appear to depress others. Religious attendance is a good example of this. Attending church more frequently, especially in young adulthood, is associated, as might be expected, with volunteering for more religious organisations, but it is also associated with more sports *and* non-sports volunteering as well. At the same time, frequent church attenders undertake fewer political activities and are less interested in politics (although they are marginally more likely to be registered to vote).

Overall, the characteristics of young people examined here explain more of people's sports volunteering behaviours compared to their non-sports volunteering.<sup>90</sup> In addition, the drivers of engagement in political activities share greater similarity to those of non-sports volunteering than sports volunteering. Sports volunteering could therefore be driven by more tangible characteristics of young people, such as their social resources or access to facilities. Non-sports volunteering may be more sensitive to latent pro-social values, which may motivate young people into both political activities and volunteering in non-sports organisations such as social justice related groups. Young people engaged in non-sports volunteering are also more likely to undertake political activities and be more interested in politics. This association is not found for young people engaged in sports volunteering. Taken together, non-sports volunteering and political engagement form a similar cluster of activities, while sports volunteering remains relatively independent of other forms of participation.

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<sup>90</sup> If we model our civic engagement outcomes and control for all middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood domains (including extracurricular activities), the pseudo R-squared values are: sports volunteering (0.23); non-sports volunteering (0.09); a yes/no measure of whether a young person did *any* political activities (0.14); and voter registration (0.13).

### 5.2.2 The role of extracurricular activities

Throughout the report, involvement in extracurricular activities over the life course is one of the strongest predictors of young people's civic engagement in adulthood. Extracurricular activities in middle childhood could also have a lasting impact on civic engagement into adulthood. Extracurricular involvement at 13 years of age can continue into late adolescence and thus influence adult volunteering.

In fact, we find that some forms of early-life extracurricular involvement (at age 13) have a lasting relationship with young people's civic engagement into adulthood, even after accounting for their extracurricular involvement at age 17 – a positive. In addition, the roles young people perform in their extracurricular activities also have an added positive impact (Quintelier, 2008). For example, taking on a leadership role or one with responsibilities at age 13 has a lasting positive relationship with young people's sports volunteering into adulthood. Young people's involvement in extracurricular activities can also explain a significant portion of why other characteristics (especially maternal education) are associated with civic engagement.

Different types of extracurricular activities also appear to shape the types of civic engagement undertaken in adulthood. For example, young people involved in non-sports activities, particularly cultural activities, often go on to be involved in non-sports volunteering, as well as being more politically engaged. Such activities have no effect on sports volunteering. Involvement in sports-related extracurricular activities is a strong predictor of sports volunteering, though it has no relationship with non-sports volunteering engagement and is actually negatively associated with political activities and interest, especially among rural youth.<sup>91</sup> In fact, while engagement in sports activities at age 13 has a positive, long-term effect on sports volunteering in adulthood, it has a negative, long-term effect on political engagement in adulthood.

Several processes could explain how early involvement is linked to differentiated types of engagement. It may simply reflect the interests of young people that are already present in childhood. For example, those interested in sports are more likely to be involved in sports teams in youth and this naturally leads to volunteering in this field, when people are recruited to volunteer from within the extracurricular groups they are involved in, either for the same organisation if it also requires volunteers, or for other organisations informally by fellow participants.

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<sup>91</sup> Rotolo et al. (2019) found in the US that once young people's background characteristics had been taken into account, early participation in sports activities no longer predicted later life civic engagement. However, in our study, we find involvement in sports extracurricular activities does predict later life sports volunteering in particular, even after accounting for background characteristics.

It may also be that the kinds of activities and skills young people learn in their extracurricular activities steer them towards different forms of civic participation; that is, they differentially socialise them into undertaking different types of participation. For example, the kinds of activities undertaken in non-sports activities, such as cultural groups, organised clubs or student/school councils can foster more externally/community-focused goals and build civic and social skills focused on co-operative behaviours (Frisco et al., 2004; McFarland and Thomas, 2006; Quintelier, 2008). Such skills/experiences may subsequently, as observed in the report, steer people into greater involvement in non-sports, socially-orientated volunteering, as well as political engagement and interest.

In contrast, involvement in extracurricular sporting activities may cultivate skills and identities less salient for political or more societally orientated civic engagement in adulthood (Frisco et al., 2004; McFarland and Thomas, 2006; Quintelier, 2008). For example, sports activities can be geared towards more personal goals or more in-group/competitive goals (Quintelier, 2008), or be primarily pursued as an opportunity for sociability (Glanville 2004). Sporting organisations may tend to be more socially homogeneous, and their members may therefore experience fewer opportunities to engage with other social or cultural groups (Glanville, 2004; McFarland and Thomas, 2006). Accordingly, while sporting activities may shape interests/identities conducive to sports volunteering in adulthood, this appears not to spill over into others forms of civic engagement, and could lead to less interest in political issues or in being involved in politics (McFarland and Thomas, 2006; Quintelier, 2008; Barrett and Pachi, 2019).

### **5.2.3 The importance of life course stage**

Not surprisingly, young people's social worlds in late adolescence/early adulthood, on the whole, better explain their civic behaviours than characteristics of their middle childhood. However, early experiences (from age 9 onwards), especially extracurricular involvement, have longer-term influences on involvement in volunteering.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, some factors influencing volunteering at age 20 are not evident for predicting volunteering at the age of 17. Potentially, being in school (especially being in the Leaving Certificate year) may suppress the impact of other characteristics of their lives, after which personal agency becomes more important for engagement.

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<sup>92</sup> These persistent middle childhood effects can be observed if we model all middle childhood and late adolescence/early adulthood domains together.

### 5.2.4 Civic and political engagement, and life outcomes

Table 5.2 summarises the relationships between civic and political engagement and young people’s life outcomes.

**TABLE 5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS – LIFE OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN ADULTHOOD**

Outcome	Volunteering	Political activities	
	All volunteering	Political activity	Interest in politics
Life satisfaction	Positive	No association	No association
Lower depression	No association	Negative	No association
Adult identity	Positive	No association	No association
Grew up faster	Positive	Positive	Positive
Trust in other people	No association	No association	Positive
Confidence in state institutions	No association	Negative	Positive
Confidence in the Church	Positive	Negative	No association
Confidence in the healthcare system	Negative	Negative	Negative
Confidence in the media	No association	Positive	Positive

Civic engagement is also positively associated with young people’s life outcomes. Volunteering is associated with greater life satisfaction and young people’s transition to adulthood. It also appears to protect young people from the adverse effects that living in communities with a weaker social infrastructure can have on their social trust, mental health and wellbeing, and transition to an adult identity. Greater interest in politics may, in addition, support transitions to adulthood and build wider social trust/confidence in societal institutions. Participating in more political activities, however, is associated with less confidence in societal institutions, and could lead to more depression among young people, in particular, regarding more individualised, unconventional forms of political activities (such as posting online or boycotting). Political participation is more closely related to young people’s connection to society, while volunteering is generally more related to young people’s mental health and adult development.

This report reveals the importance of a strong neighbourhood infrastructure for young people’s life outcomes. Where young people live in areas with fewer family/friends in the community, or with fewer facilities or spaces to meet other people, they report lower life satisfaction, higher depression symptomology and less social trust. They are less likely to feel strongly they are an adult, and have lower confidence in state institutions, the healthcare system and the media. They are less likely to volunteer for sports organisations or be registered to vote (although they do undertake more *low-intensity* political activities, such as ‘boycotting’ or ‘posting online’).



### 5.3 LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations to this study. One potential issue is that the *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) data do not measure whether a young person lives in an urban or rural area in every wave; only whether they were living in an urban or rural area at age 9 (Wave 1) and whether their primary caregiver was living in an urban or rural area when they were 20 years old (Wave 4). One potential issue with this is that young people may have lived in an urban area at age 9 and moved to a rural area afterwards (or vice versa). Ten per cent of families who were living in an urban area when the young person was age 9 are found in a rural area when the child was 20. Similarly, 10 per cent who were in rural areas were subsequently found living in urban areas. Testing did not reveal significant differences in participation among these groups, likely given the relatively small number who moved. A second issue is that we do not know whether a young person has moved out of a rural (or urban) area and into an urban (or rural) area at age 20; for example, moving to attend university or for work. The models do explore whether a young person still lives in the parental home, which goes some way to addressing this. At its heart, however, the indicator of urban/rural location captures the effect of *growing up* in more urban or rural environments.

Another limitation is that there are other domains that previous studies have shown to be important for civic engagement that were not looked at here (Wilson, 2000). This includes young people's motives, values and beliefs, such as prosocial values and a desire to help others, which are key drivers of engagement. Neither could the study directly capture the drivers of people's recruitment into volunteering (the pathway through which they joined), with one of the main determinants being whether someone was asked or not (Putnam and Campbell, 2012). In addition, and perhaps most crucially, the report could not investigate the availability of *opportunities* to get involved. One reason, for example, why sports volunteering may be higher among rural youth, and political engagement higher among urban youth, is that opportunities for these are higher in young people's immediate social environments. Indeed, we see some evidence of this in finding that the availability of local leisure facilities predicts greater sports volunteering. Future research could go some way towards capturing the role of local opportunities by, for example, matching the GUI data against that on density of sports, non-sports and political organisations in young people's communities.

A further, related limitation is the lack of area-based indicators in GUI Cohort '98 data (apart from in the first wave). International research shows the importance of contextual characteristics in shaping young people's civic engagement. However, this report had to rely on self-reported indicators of neighbourhood characteristics in adolescence and early adulthood, which may be biased by other factors in people's lives. At the same time, the subjective reports may capture what families consider as their neighbourhood more closely than administrative boundaries.

Matching administrative data on the characteristics of young people's areas over the life course would greatly enhance possibilities for investigating neighbourhood effects on young people's civic engagement over time (Laurence et al., 2023). The addition of an area identifier to current and future waves of GUI is therefore strongly recommended.

One advantage to the GUI data is that because that study follows the same people over time, we can explore how characteristics in the past are related to civic and life outcomes in the present. However, another limitation of the study concerns how the relationship between early adulthood characteristics and early adulthood engagement is tested. As both are measured at the same point in time, any relationship could be (at least partly) operating in the opposite direction. For example, finding that one's number of friends at age 20 predicts civic engagement at age 20 could be a result of civic activities increasing people's social networks, and network size fostering engagement. Similarly, when testing the effect of civic engagement at age 20 on life outcomes at age 20, a similar risk emerges (although we mitigate this to some extent by including lagged outcome measures in the model where possible).<sup>93</sup> More caution in interpretation should thus be taken under these circumstances, and more robust tests will be possible with further waves of GUI data.

In addition, there is the possibility that the relationship between participation and adult outcomes is spurious, and that both are in fact driven by some unmeasured characteristic of young people. One example could be some latent pro-sociality among young people. More prosocial young people be more likely to be civically engaged but also more likely to have, say, higher life satisfaction. It could therefore be pro-sociality, not participation, that affects life satisfaction.

Lastly, the report focused on looking at behavioural and socio-demographic predictors of engagement, rather than attitudinal predictors, given similar issues of causality outlined above. However, attitudes are also likely to drive engagement (e.g., confidence in politicians may shape political engagement). Longitudinal data with repeated measures of both civic participation and attitudes are required to disentangle any bi-directional effects.

#### **5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY**

This section discusses the implications of the study findings for policy development, focusing on more potentially malleable domains, in particular education and structured out-of-school activities, as well as issues for rural development.

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<sup>93</sup> In addition, we apply two-wave fixed effects models to strengthen confidence where possible.

### 5.4.1 Education

International research has highlighted the important role of schools in shaping civic and political engagement among young people through the formal curriculum (especially subjects like citizenship education), opportunities for involvement in decision making (such as through student councils) and the informal classroom climate (especially the encouragement of open discussion by teachers) (Hoskins and Janmaat, 2016, 2019; Hoskins et al., 2012). School-based provision is found to play a particularly strong role in influencing civic engagement among young people from more socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Hoskins et al., 2017). Young adults from Cohort '98 all studied civic, social and political education (CSPE) at junior cycle, with the subject assessed at common level as part of the Junior Certificate. The curriculum emphasised active citizenship at local, national, European and global levels (Bryan, 2019). However, research highlighted the often-marginalised nature of CSPE, with schools typically devoting just one class period a week to the subject and teachers often assigned to the subject to make up timetable hours (Bryan, 2019). Furthermore, significant variation was found between schools in the use of active learning methods to teach CSPE (Nugent, 2006).

The new wellbeing programme at junior cycle incorporates CSPE along with social, personal and health education (SPHE), physical education (PE) and guidance. Schools can choose to offer 70 hours of CSPE over the three-year period or to provide the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's (NCCA) short course on CSPE, which runs to 100 hours. The goal of CSPE is 'to inform, inspire, empower and enable young people to participate as active citizens in contemporary society at local, national and global levels, based on an understanding of human rights and social responsibilities' (NCCA, 2016, p. 5). It is too early to determine the potential impact on students. However, there is a risk that the subject may continue to be seen as marginal, given the lack of time for deep engagement with concepts of citizenship (Bryan, 2019; O'Brien, 2023). Continuous professional development for teachers is crucial in providing an engaging experience of the subject.

As yet, the wellbeing programme is not being offered to senior cycle students. Politics and society was introduced as an optional Leaving Certificate course in 2018 and 'aims to develop the learner's capacity to engage in reflective and active citizenship, informed by the insights and skills of social and political sciences' (Department of Education, 2019). However, by 2022 it was not available in most schools and had been taken by only 4 per cent of the cohort. The aims of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme also include the promotion of active citizenship, though the programme is only taken by around 6 per cent of the cohort (Department of Education, 2023). Lack of preparation for adult life (along with lack of preparation for the world of work) has been identified as a key lacuna by students, their parents and teachers in reflecting on second-level education (GUI

Study Team, 2019; Smyth et al., 2011).). Given the strong gradient found in civic and political engagement by social background, school would appear to provide an important arena for exposing all young people to civic and political knowledge, especially those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, throughout the course of their second-level education.

Transition Year is a distinctive feature of the Irish educational system, offering students the chance to take subjects not included in the junior or senior cycle curriculum, to take part in work experience and career guidance activities, and to become involved in a range of activities in the local community. Previous research has found that Transition Year participation is associated with higher Leaving Certificate grades and enhanced progression to higher education as well as greater involvement in cultural activities within and outside school (Smyth et al., 2005; Smyth, 2016). The study findings point to a clear role for Transition Year in shaping the civic and political engagement of young adults, with participants later more involved in volunteering (non-sports and sports) and in low-intensity political activities. Participation rates in the programme are now high – 74 per cent of the cohort – but young people who are less engaged in school and who come from more disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to take Transition Year (Clerkin, 2016; McNamara et al., 2020), possibly further reinforcing their lower levels of civic engagement. There are potentially lessons to be learned for the rest of senior cycle from the success of Transition Year in the sphere of civic learning.

Educational experiences, particularly attitudes to school and exam performance, are found to be strongly predictive of later civic and political engagement. Thus, school disengagement and underperformance are associated with less involvement in (non-sports) volunteering, less engagement in political activities, less interest in politics and a lower likelihood of being registered to vote. These findings highlight the importance of broader efforts to promote school engagement and educational achievement through curriculum reform and promotion of a more positive school climate, since they affect not only education and employment outcomes but a broader sense of being involved as a citizen. Perhaps not surprisingly, going on to higher education facilitates greater involvement in political activities among young adults. However, despite relatively high levels of higher education participation in Ireland, a marked social gradient remains (O'Mahony et al., 2022). Thus, policy efforts to further enhance equity of access to higher education are likely to have positive spillover effects on civic engagement.

#### **5.4.2 Out-of-school activities**

The study findings highlight the clear role of early involvement in structured out-of-school activities in channelling young people towards different types of civic and political engagement. Previous research has indicated that gender and social background differences in the type of out-of-school activity emerge early and are

persistent (Smyth, 2016), highlighting the importance of providing young people with access to a range of activities from a young age. Most of the structured cultural activities in which children engage outside school require payment, indicating the importance of providing subsidies to disadvantaged families to ensure more inclusive arts engagement (Smyth, 2016, 2020).<sup>94</sup> There is concerning evidence that cultural participation rates among nine year olds have declined over the decade between Cohort '98 and Cohort '08 (Smyth, 2022), pointing to the importance of redoubling efforts to promote access to these activities to all groups of young people.

The finding on sports participation is puzzling as there is no obvious explanation for why involvement would channel young adults away from political engagement (although it may simply be that sports participation simply attracts people with less interest in non-sporting activities). As discussed above, previous research has suggested that sports activities cultivate a different set of skills, are less pro-socially focused in outcomes, and may instil activity-based identities that steer young people away from political engagement (Frisco et al., 2004; McFarland and Thomas, 2006; Quintelier, 2008). Further research could yield insights into whether the time involved in sports volunteering (such as coaching a team) reduces the time available for other activities. There do appear to be trade offs in terms of outcomes for young adults, given the obvious benefits of involvement for physical health but also for other outcomes such as academic performance (Pfeifer and Cornelissen, 2010) and the transition to higher education (Lunn and Kelly, 2015).

Schools can play an important role in encouraging extracurricular participation, with the findings indicating that primary schools that emphasise sports, arts, drama and music enhance later civic engagement. However, smaller schools, disproportionately located in rural areas, face greater challenges in providing an array of extracurricular activities, suggesting the potential for inter-school collaboration and/or a greater role of community-based provision in these areas (see Nolan and Smyth, 2020; Smyth, 2016).

Ultimately, given the strong link between extracurricular involvement and civic engagement, and that differences in extracurricular involvement when growing up can explain part of the social gradient in engagement in adulthood, such activities could be leveraged as a key mode of encouraging greater civic participation as well as reducing disparities between social groups. Coupling such an approach with efforts to strengthen neighbourhood social infrastructure would pay dividends for both civic engagement and young people's life outcomes.

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<sup>94</sup> This study finds no direct effect of household income on civic and political engagement but involvement in cultural activities at ages 9 and 13 is greater for those in the top two income quintiles (see Smyth, 2016).

### 5.4.3 Rural–urban differences

This study provides the first systematic evidence on civic and political engagement among young adults who grew up in rural and urban areas in Ireland. At age 17, rural youth are more likely to be volunteering regularly compared to their urban peers. At age 20, rural–urban differences are found to vary by the type of civic and political engagement considered. While there is a similar prevalence of non-sports volunteering, level of interest in politics and voter registration among urban and rural youth, two clear differences are evident. Firstly, at age 20 rural youth have greater involvement in sports volunteering, even taking account of a wide range of factors, including the socio-economic profile of families, social capital, characteristics of the neighbourhood (including access to facilities), educational experiences and extracurricular activities. This may be related to the greater prominence of GAA clubs as a centre for socialising in rural areas, but this cannot be established with available data. Nonetheless, involvement levels are relatively low, even in rural areas, and much lower than for non-sports-related volunteering.

Secondly, urban youth are more likely to be involved in political activities (at age 20), both low and high intensity. Again, this difference persists even taking account of a range of other factors. This could be seen as consistent with the mobilisation model, whereby those closer to the political ‘centre’ will be more involved in political activities (Milbrath, 1972). Indeed, we find in urban youth a more positive sense of their own political efficacy while rural youth feel more disenfranchised, even after accounting for all other factors. This difference in political efficacy also helps further explain the urban–rural divide in political activity. Alternatively, the backdrop of the repeal the Eighth Amendment campaign may have mobilised more engagement in urban areas. Research indicates that the Yes vote was lower in rural areas among the adult population, controlling for socio-demographic factors, but the vast majority (87%) of those under 25 years of age voted yes, leaving less room for urban–rural variation among this group (Elkink et al., 2020).

The study findings therefore provide quite a nuanced picture of urban–rural differences in volunteering and political engagement. Urban young people do indeed have greater access to leisure and other facilities, but this does not directly translate into disparities in all aspects of engagement, though facilities do matter. Overall, an urban–rural divide in sports volunteering and political activities does exist among young people. Some of this gap is explained by other factors, suggesting the importance of focusing on groups of young people in both rural and urban areas who are at risk of being marginalised from involvement in the civic and political sphere (see the *National Volunteering Strategy* on the need to increase the diversity of groups involved in volunteering). However, the fact that a significant gap remains, even after accounting a wide range of characteristics, suggests something about place continues to matter. In addition, the differences between urban and rural youth which themselves account for part of the urban–rural gap may have their roots in distinct features of urban and rural Ireland, such

as the higher levels of religiosity among rural young people, their greater involvement in sporting activities, or parental involvement in local volunteering. Seen this way, place matters, both in and of itself and in how it shapes social worlds.

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**APPENDIX TABLE 2.1 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (Volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.048***	0.040**	0.033*	0.043**	0.038**	0.037**	0.028*	0.031*	0.029*
Female (cf. Male)		-0.061***	-0.068***		-0.059***	-0.063***	-0.067***	-0.047**	-0.040**
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		-0.039*	-0.036*		-0.038*	-0.039*	-0.035*	-0.031+	-0.029
Mother's report of child's health (at age 9)		0.009	0.008		0.008	0.006	0.006	0.001	0.001
Baseline – Mother's education: None/primary/lower secondary		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Upper secondary		0.019	0.009		0.015	0.019	0.007	0.007	0.007
Non-degree		0.035+	0.022		0.031	0.035+	0.021	0.014	0.012
Primary Degree/Postgrad.		0.048*	0.033		0.040*	0.047*	0.028	0.015	0.015
Baseline – One/both parents Irish born		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.053*	-0.044		-0.056*	-0.054*	-0.048+	-0.045+	-0.042
SCG present – no completion		-0.047*	-0.052*		-0.048*	-0.041+	-0.048*	-0.041+	-0.035
Lone-parent family (cf. Two-parent family)		0.015	0.02		0.023	0.019	0.028	0.036	0.03
Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2nd		-0.001	0		0.001	0	0.001	-0.003	-0.004
3rd		0	0		0.003	0.002	0.001	-0.003	-0.004
4th		0.024	0.025		0.028	0.025	0.027	0.026	0.025
Highest		0.003	0.003		0.005	0.006	0.007	0.001	-0.001
Baseline – Family's tenancy: Homeowner		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.023	-0.01		-0.011	-0.023	-0.003	0	-0.003
Rent – Private		-0.090***	-0.086***		-0.088***	-0.089***	-0.084***	-0.083***	-0.084***
Lives with parents/missing		-0.022	-0.013		-0.02	-0.016	-0.008	-0.004	-0.001
Mother volunteers locally (cf. Does not)			0.021				0.02	0.015	0.015
No. of friends YP normally hangs around with			0.008				0.006	-0.003	-0.006
How many YP's friends that parents have met			0.038**				0.036**	0.029*	0.025*
Frequency of YP attending church			0.016**				0.015**	0.012*	0.012*
Mother's spirituality/religiousness			0.003				0.003	0.004	0.004



**APPENDIX TABLE 2.1 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (Volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Observations</b>	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.009	0.047	0.062	0.024	0.058	0.054	0.077	0.104	0.114

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Categories for missing variables are excluded from the table where present; data weighted to be representative.

**APPENDIX TABLE 2.2 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.004	0.007	0.010	-0.008	0.002	0.007	0.005	0.001	0.001
Female (cf. Male)		0.030+	0.030		0.037*	0.028	0.036*	0.018	0.021
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		-0.012	-0.011		-0.011	-0.012	-0.012	-0.009	-0.009
Mother's report of child's health (at age 9)		-0.006	-0.006		-0.005	-0.009	-0.007	-0.006	-0.007
Baseline – Mother's education: none/primary/lower secondary									
Upper secondary		0.018	0.017		0.017	0.012	0.012	0.008	0.008
Non-degree		0.051+	0.048+		0.050+	0.044	0.042	0.038	0.037
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.104***	0.102***		0.096**	0.094**	0.086**	0.079*	0.079*
Baseline – One/both parents Irish born		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.012	-0.012		-0.006	-0.013	-0.009	-0.010	-0.010
SCG present – No completion		-0.055	-0.055		-0.053	-0.057	-0.053	-0.046	-0.044
Lone-parent family (cf. Two-parent family)		0.039	0.039		0.038	0.042	0.041	0.045	0.044
Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2nd		-0.002	-0.001		-0.000	-0.001	0.002	0.007	0.007
3rd		-0.003	-0.003		0.002	-0.006	-0.000	0.002	0.001
4th		0.015	0.016		0.018	0.013	0.018	0.019	0.019
Highest		0.010	0.010		0.011	0.006	0.009	0.010	0.009
Baseline – family's tenancy: Homeowner		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.058+	-0.061+		-0.048	-0.057+	-0.053	-0.059+	-0.060+
Rent – Private		0.087	0.087		0.090+	0.089+	0.088+	0.096+	0.095+
Lives with parents/missing		0.157	0.161		0.146	0.176	0.168	0.182+	0.185+
Mother volunteers locally (cf. Does not)			0.018				0.014	0.009	0.010
N of friends YP normally hangs around with			-0.010				-0.013	-0.012	-0.014
How many YP's friends that parents' have met			0.014				0.011	0.005	0.004
Frequency of YP attending church			-0.008				-0.011	-0.012	-0.012
Mother's spirituality/religiousness			0.003				0.005	0.004	0.004



**APPENDIX TABLE 2.2 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Observations</b>	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536	4,536
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.000	0.016	0.017	0.009	0.024	0.021	0.030	0.036	0.036

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*.

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Categories for missing variables are excluded from the table where present; data weighted to be representative.

**APPENDIX TABLE 2.3 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.054***	0.041**	0.030*	0.057***	0.047***	0.034**	0.048***	0.041**	0.034*	0.033*	0.036**	0.036**
Female (cf. Male)		-0.060***	-0.065***		-0.055***	-0.051***	-0.059***	-0.052***	-0.016	-0.015	-0.01	-0.007
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		-0.050***	-0.045**		-0.049***	-0.045**	-0.051***	-0.043**	-0.029+	-0.031+	-0.027	-0.025
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education:</b>												
<b>none/primary/lower secondary</b>												
Upper secondary		0.021	0.018		0.018	0.018	0.019	0.016	0.013	0.011	0.014	0.014
Non-degree		0.034+	0.03		0.032+	0.029	0.033+	0.028	0.026	0.028	0.023	0.023
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.045*	0.041*		0.042*	0.041*	0.044*	0.039*	0.031	0.032+	0.024	0.024
<b>Baseline – One/both parents</b>												
<b>Irish born</b>												
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
SCG present – No completion		-0.042	-0.044		-0.041	-0.042	-0.044+	-0.043	-0.031	-0.029	-0.032	-0.03
Lone-parent family (cf. Two-parent family)		0.003	0.007		0.007	0.006	0.006	0.015	0.022	0.02	0.026	0.024
<b>Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile</b>												
2nd		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
3rd		-0.022	-0.021		-0.02	-0.024	-0.024	-0.023	-0.017	-0.012	-0.016	-0.016
4th		-0.019	-0.016		-0.016	-0.025	-0.022	-0.023	-0.015	-0.011	-0.015	-0.016
Highest		0.005	0.006		0.008	-0.003	-0.001	-0.003	0.008	0.014	0.009	0.007
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy:</b>												
<b>Homeowner</b>												
Rent – Social housing		-0.015	-0.009		-0.013	-0.022	-0.019	-0.017	-0.012	-0.009	-0.014	-0.015
Rent – Private		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Lives with parents/missing		-0.033	-0.027		-0.032	-0.029	-0.027	-0.021	-0.019	-0.015	-0.016	-0.018
YP’s self-rated health		-0.085***	-0.084***		-0.082***	-0.085***	-0.085***	-0.084***	-0.076***	-0.073***	-0.073***	-0.074***
		-0.064*	-0.059+		-0.059+	-0.070*	-0.061*	-0.060+	-0.042	-0.051	-0.048	-0.052
		0.045***	0.041***		0.042***	0.043***	0.044***	0.038***	0.031***	0.030***	0.029***	0.028***

APPENDIX TABLE 2.3 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
<b>Baseline – Friends all the same ethnicity</b>			ref.					ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Some different ethnicity</b>			-0.011					-0.007	-0.005	-0.006	-0.003	-0.003
<b>Most different ethnicity</b>			0.016					0.024	0.017	0.018	0.016	0.016
<b>Baseline – Friends all the same gender</b>			ref.					ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Some different gender</b>			0.038*					0.033*	0.019	0.016	0.019	0.016
<b>Most different gender</b>			0.045					0.035	0.048	0.043	0.047	0.042
<b>N of friends YP has</b>			0.009					0.007	0.002	0.003	-0.001	-0.002
<b>F of YP attending church</b>			0.032***					0.030***	0.026***	0.025***	0.026***	0.026***
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>												
<b>Disagree</b>				0.027	0.03			0.028	0.031	0.026	0.031	0.031
<b>Agree</b>				0.02	0.023			0.018	0.013	0.009	0.01	0.008
<b>Strongly agree</b>				0.036	0.032			0.023	0.012	0.006	0.008	0.008
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure (index)</b>				0.028***	0.017*			0.015+	0.007	0.009	0.008	0.008
<b>Neighbourhood safety</b>				0.043***	0.030**			0.028*	0.023*	0.022*	0.026*	0.025*
<b>YP's perception of local social/physical disorder</b>				0.01	0.017*			0.021*	0.019*	0.018*	0.021**	0.021**
<b>Baseline – Bottom quartile of JCERT grades</b>						ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>2nd quartile</b>						-0.029		-0.021	-0.018	-0.016	-0.019	-0.017
<b>3rd quartile</b>						-0.047*		-0.034	-0.031	-0.031	-0.033+	-0.032
<b>Highest quartile</b>						-0.075***		-0.062**	-0.051*	-0.049*	-0.051*	-0.050*
<b>Yes, took Transition Year</b>						0.040**		0.037**	0.028*	0.024+	0.026+	0.026+
<b>Baseline – 0 to 300 LCERT points</b>						ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>301-400 LCERT points</b>						0.014		0.009	0.005	0.004	0.002	0.001
<b>401-500 LCERT points</b>						0.050*		0.042+	0.029	0.026	0.027	0.026



**APPENDIX TABLE 2.3 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
501+ LCERT points						0.049+		0.042	0.026	0.025	0.024	0.024
Baseline – Difficult repaying loans: no loans							ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
No difficulty							0.009	0.013	0.005	0.006	0.005	0.003
A little/A lot							0.015	0.007	0.008	0.006	0.007	0.008
Ease of making ends meet financially							0.006	0.003	0.003	0.004		0.004
Time spent in caring role							0.025**	0.019*	0.016*	0.014+	0.016*	0.014+
Accommodation costs limit opportunities (index)							-0.013	-0.01	-0.01	-0.012	-0.008	-0.008
YP lives at home							0.026*	0.037**	0.033**	0.036**	0.032**	0.031*
Baseline – Labour market/inactive							ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Higher education							0.052**	0.035	0.037	0.032	0.039+	0.039+
Further education							0.028	0.025	0.029	0.025	0.029	0.028
<i>Extracurricular (age 17)</i>												
Cultural activities									-0.016	-0.022	-0.011	-0.011
Debate club									-0.105	-0.111	-0.101	-0.099
Religious groups									-0.01	-0.02	-0.008	-0.006
Scouts or guides									0.065	0.051	0.07	0.068
Sports clubs/teams									0.210***	0.203***	0.192***	0.187***
School/student councils									-0.007	-0.012	-0.005	-0.009
Youth clubs									-0.004	-0.013	0.001	-0.002
Volunteered at age 17												0.054***
<i>Extracurricular (age 13)</i>												
Cultural activities											-0.006	-0.006
Organised sports											0.027***	0.023**
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community groups											0.000	-0.002

**APPENDIX TABLE 2.3 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
<b>Yes, has a leadership role</b>												0.033**
<b>Observations</b>	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.011	0.072	0.09	0.031	0.082	0.086	0.086	0.122	0.198	0.207	0.206	0.21

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Categories for missing variables are excluded from the table where present; data weighted to be representative; N = Number of; F = Frequency of.

**APPENDIX TABLE 2.4 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Rural (cf. Urban)	0.005	0.004	-0.001	0.010	0.010	0.001	-0.007	-0.002	-0.002	-0.006	-0.003	-0.004
Female (cf. Male)		0.037*	0.040*		0.038*	0.031+	0.031+	0.028	0.027	0.027	0.024	0.025
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		0.042	0.048+		0.041	0.054+	0.046+	0.053+	0.045+	0.043+	0.044+	0.045+
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education:</b>												
<b>none/primary/lower secondary</b>												
Upper secondary		0.017	0.013		0.016	-0.001	0.004	-0.006	-0.008	-0.007	-0.008	-0.009
Non-degree		0.056+	0.047+		0.055+	0.026	0.038	0.016	0.015	0.020	0.015	0.014
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.093**	0.084**		0.093**	0.045	0.067*	0.035	0.027	0.029	0.027	0.027
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>												
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
SCG present – No completion		0.059	0.063		0.060	0.065	0.047	0.060	0.057	0.061	0.057	0.057
Lone-parent family (cf. Two-parent family)		-0.049	-0.047		-0.049	-0.039	-0.050	-0.043	-0.039	-0.037	-0.039	-0.037
Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile		-0.003	0.000		-0.004	0.013	0.007	0.018	0.019	0.017	0.019	0.018
2nd		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
3rd		-0.010	-0.008		-0.011	-0.019	-0.015	-0.018	-0.018	-0.016	-0.017	-0.017
4th		-0.000	0.005		-0.000	-0.015	-0.006	-0.011	-0.014	-0.010	-0.014	-0.014
Highest		0.000	0.004		0.000	-0.022	-0.006	-0.018	-0.016	-0.009	-0.017	-0.017
Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner		0.011	0.015		0.012	-0.018	0.004	-0.012	-0.008	-0.003	-0.008	-0.009
Rent – Social housing		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Rent – Private		-0.084**	-0.081*		-0.087**	-0.065+	-0.069*	-0.065+	-0.072*	-0.069*	-0.072*	-0.074*
Lives with parents/missing		-0.006	-0.003		-0.006	0.002	-0.006	0.002	0.006	0.007	0.007	0.005
YP’s self-rated health		0.121	0.142		0.126	0.091	0.131	0.124	0.135	0.141	0.135	0.136
Baseline – No friends are a different ethnicity		-0.010	-0.013		-0.010	-0.016	-0.014	-0.018	-0.017	-0.018+	-0.018	-0.018
Some are a different ethnicity			ref.					ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Most or all are a different ethnicity			0.046*					0.047*	0.043*	0.041*	0.043*	0.042*
			-0.013					-0.021	-0.028	-0.028	-0.028	-0.028





**APPENDIX TABLE 2.4 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF NON-SPORTS VOLUNTEERING AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome (volunteering)	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Yes, has a leadership role in extracurricular activity												0.022
Observations	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502
Pseudo R-squared	0.000	0.017	0.025	0.001	0.017	0.034	0.026	0.046	0.075	0.085	0.075	0.075

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Categories for missing variables are excluded from the table where present; data weighted to be representative.

**APPENDIX TABLE 3.1 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.384***	-0.368***	-0.323***	-0.383***	-0.336***	-0.372***	-0.303***	-0.321***	-0.325***
Female (cf. Male)		0.582***	0.589***		0.586***	0.589***	0.597***	0.510***	0.512***
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		-0.066	-0.065		-0.058	-0.070	-0.063	-0.062	-0.055
Mother's report of child's health (at age 9)		-0.021	-0.021		-0.022	-0.026	-0.026	-0.017	-0.016
Baseline – Mother's education: none/primary/lower secondary		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Upper secondary		0.334***	0.361***		0.332***	0.324***	0.349***	0.347***	0.350***
Non-degree		0.493***	0.508***		0.490***	0.476***	0.492***	0.509***	0.520***
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.585***	0.612***		0.575***	0.562***	0.574***	0.599***	0.600***
Baseline – One/both parents Irish born		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.264*	-0.285*		-0.260*	-0.268*	-0.286*	-0.306*	-0.301*
SCG present – No completion		0.152	0.182		0.153	0.156	0.191	0.199	0.204
Lone-parent family (cf. Two-parent family)		0.282*	0.272+		0.269+	0.285*	0.268+	0.265+	0.264+
Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2nd		0.122	0.124		0.128	0.123	0.132	0.130	0.132
3rd		0.015	0.020		0.023	0.001	0.016	0.023	0.038
4th		0.091	0.100		0.085	0.081	0.088	0.081	0.094
Highest		0.168	0.186		0.153	0.164	0.166	0.182	0.191
Baseline – Family's tenancy: Homeowner		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.177	-0.232		-0.173	-0.164	-0.208	-0.233	-0.228
Rent – Private		-0.003	-0.018		0.006	-0.016	-0.025	-0.014	-0.023
Lives with parents/missing		-0.330	-0.323		-0.323	-0.325	-0.312	-0.317	-0.319
Mother volunteers locally (cf. Does not)			0.058				0.053	0.060	0.059
N of friends YP normally hangs around with			-0.067				-0.069	-0.047	-0.047
How many YP's friends that parents' have met			0.008				-0.001	-0.001	-0.004
Frequency of YP attending church			-0.100***				-0.099***	-0.098***	-0.098***
Mother's spirituality/religiousness			-0.000				-0.003	-0.008	-0.006





**APPENDIX TABLE 3.1 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Observations</b>	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,528
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.003	0.018	0.020	0.005	0.019	0.020	0.023	0.025	0.026

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Notes: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Categories for missing variables are excluded from the table where present; data weighted to be representative.

APPENDIX TABLE 3.2 MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF LOW- AND HIGH-INTENSITY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
	Political activity low				Political activity high			
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.087***	-0.063**	-0.067**	-0.066**	-0.080***	-0.050**	-0.054**	-0.055**
Female (cf. Male)		0.144***	0.121***	0.120***		0.071***	0.050**	0.052**
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		-0.034	-0.034	-0.033		-0.051*	-0.050*	-0.049*
Mother's report of child's health (at age 9)		-0.014	-0.012	-0.012		-0.018	-0.016	-0.016
Baseline – Mother's education: none/primary/lower secondary		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Upper secondary		0.087**	0.085**	0.087**		0.039+	0.037+	0.037+
Non-degree		0.139***	0.139***	0.144***		0.068**	0.066*	0.067**
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.152***	0.153***	0.154***		0.065**	0.063*	0.063*
Baseline – One/both parents Irish born		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.058	-0.061	-0.058		-0.021	-0.024	-0.023
SCG present – No completion		0.074	0.079	0.080+		0.014	0.019	0.023
Baseline – Two-parent family		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Lone-parent family		0.011	0.009	0.007		0.079**	0.080**	0.078**
Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
2nd		0.063	0.067+	0.068+		0.013	0.016	0.017
3rd		0.039	0.041	0.044		0.003	0.006	0.008
4th		0.066+	0.066+	0.070+		-0.004	-0.003	-0.002
Highest		0.079*	0.083*	0.085*		0.035	0.037	0.038
Missing		0.039	0.039	0.044		0.012	0.011	0.013
Baseline – Family's tenancy: Homeowner		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.046	-0.051	-0.047		-0.044	-0.049+	-0.049+
Rent – Private		0.016	0.020	0.019		-0.040	-0.037	-0.039
Lives with parents/missing		-0.215*	-0.210*	-0.205*		-0.018	-0.014	-0.011
Mother volunteers locally		0.031	0.030	0.029		-0.007	-0.008	-0.009
No. of friends YP normally hangs around with		-0.014	-0.009	-0.008		-0.008	-0.006	-0.006
How many YP's friends that parents' have met		-0.012	-0.013	-0.014		0.009	0.006	0.005

**APPENDIX TABLE 3.2 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF LOW- AND HIGH-INTENSITY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Frequency of YP attending church		-0.026**	-0.026**	-0.026**		-0.027***	-0.028***	-0.028***
Mother’s spirituality/religiousness		-0.003	-0.004	-0.004		0.006	0.005	0.005
Yes, access to public transport to school		-0.010	-0.011	-0.013		-0.005	-0.007	-0.008
Local recreational facilities present		0.002	0.003	0.004		0.042**	0.042**	0.042**
% aged 65+ in electoral district		-0.001	-0.001	-0.001		0.000	0.001	0.001
Electoral District socio-economic disadvantage (index)		-0.019	-0.020	-0.020		-0.020+	-0.021*	-0.021*
Mother’s perception of local social/physical disorder		0.014	0.013	0.013		0.008	0.007	0.006
Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Disagree		0.068	0.069	0.073+		0.001	-0.002	-0.001
Agree		0.053	0.054	0.056		0.012	0.009	0.009
Strongly agree		0.081*	0.083*	0.085*		0.001	-0.000	0.000
Mother’s sense of local security and stability (index)		-0.017	-0.020	-0.019		-0.008	-0.009	-0.010
Baseline – Low school importance of sports/arts activities		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.025	0.024	0.024		0.033+	0.032+	0.031+
High importance		0.020	0.017	0.018		0.046*	0.043*	0.043*
Baseline – Low school importance of science/social justice activities		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Medium importance		0.009	0.010	0.010		0.019	0.019	0.019
High importance		0.008	0.011	0.010		-0.008	-0.004	-0.005
Baseline – YP hates/doesn’t like school		ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.
Likes school a bit		0.024	0.027	0.022		0.051*	0.056*	0.054*
Likes school quite a bit		0.068+	0.067+	0.064		0.097***	0.098***	0.096***
Likes school very much		0.013	0.011	0.008		0.066**	0.066**	0.065**
<i>Freq. of extracurricular activities (age 13)</i>								
Cultural activities (‘dance, drama or music lessons’)			0.030*	0.027*			0.028***	0.027***
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team			-0.023*	-0.028*			-0.016*	-0.019*
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community			0.014	0.012			0.016+	0.015+
Baseline – No leadership role in activities				ref.				ref.
Yes, has a leadership role				-0.016				0.008

**APPENDIX TABLE 3.2 (CONTD.) MIDDLE CHILDHOOD PREDICTORS OF LOW- AND HIGH-INTENSITY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Missing				-0.141*				-0.048
Observations	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,528	4,535	4,535	4,535	4,535

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*.

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person.

**APPENDIX TABLE 3.3 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.385***	-0.367***	-0.252***	-0.357***	-0.344***	-0.353***	-0.416***	-0.228**	-0.218**	-0.227**	-0.228**	-0.232**
Female (cf. Male)		0.559***	0.667***		0.555***	0.451***	0.530***	0.536***	0.487***	0.487***	0.477***	0.479***
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		0.535***	0.482***		0.468***	0.598***	0.559***	0.454***	0.422***	0.411***	0.414***	0.417***
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education:</b>												
<b>none/primary/lower secondary</b>												
Upper secondary		0.338***	0.316***		0.347***	0.178+	0.262**	0.175+	0.169+	0.169+	0.169+	0.167+
Non-degree		0.473***	0.428***		0.504***	0.251*	0.400***	0.267**	0.274**	0.283**	0.283**	0.288**
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.549***	0.504***		0.610***	0.208*	0.417***	0.224*	0.230*	0.233*	0.251*	0.251*
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>												
		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.157	-0.165		-0.141	-0.162	-0.190	-0.170	-0.211	-0.205	-0.214	-0.215
SCG present – No completion		0.139	0.135		0.090	0.265	0.216	0.218	0.236	0.241	0.228	0.232
Lone-parent (cf. Two-parent family)		0.219+	0.168		0.169	0.353**	0.306**	0.265*	0.254*	0.249*	0.243*	0.243*
<b>Baseline – Lowest HH income</b>												
		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2nd		0.046	0.051		0.040	-0.030	-0.008	-0.051	-0.053	-0.055	-0.063	-0.053
3rd		-0.009	-0.016		0.006	-0.099	-0.050	-0.096	-0.114	-0.107	-0.114	-0.098
4th		0.090	0.068		0.107	-0.058	0.041	-0.062	-0.069	-0.056	-0.077	-0.067
Highest Quintile		0.196	0.166		0.252+	-0.010	0.147	0.029	0.041	0.049	0.047	0.057
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: owner</b>												
		ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.293*	-0.279*		-0.354**	-0.058	-0.122	-0.080	-0.108	-0.095	-0.120	-0.127
Rent – Private		0.208	0.200		0.183	0.331	0.145	0.226	0.215	0.215	0.199	0.196
Lives with parents/missing		0.072	0.109		-0.043	-0.010	0.126	-0.090	-0.088	-0.066	-0.096	-0.119
YP’s self-rated health		-0.149***	-0.140**		-0.119**	-0.189***	-0.172***	-0.137**	-0.116**	-0.122**	-0.114**	-0.113**
<b>Baseline – No friends diff. ethnicity</b>												
			ref.					ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Some are a diff. ethnicity			0.230**					0.198**	0.185**	0.186**	0.177**	0.174*
Most/all different ethnicity			0.489					0.296	0.284	0.290	0.284	0.294

APPENDIX TABLE 3.3 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Baseline – No friends diff. gender			ref.					ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Some are a diff. gender			0.208+					0.195+	0.210+	0.198+	0.207+	0.198+
Most/all different gender			0.389*					0.519**	0.431**	0.405*	0.413*	0.414*
No. of friends YP has			0.187***					0.115*	0.115*	0.117*	0.122**	0.122**
Frequency of YP attending church			-0.312***					-0.275***	-0.307***	-0.310***	-0.307***	-0.307***
Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities				ref.	ref.			ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Disagree				-0.011	-0.122			-0.155	-0.140	-0.162	-0.135	-0.133
Agree				0.026	-0.018			-0.002	-0.004	-0.018	-0.003	-0.006
Strongly agree				-0.093	-0.057			-0.033	-0.036	-0.057	-0.036	-0.040
Neighbourhood social infrastructure				-0.145**	-0.155**			-0.155***	-0.144***	-0.139**	-0.142***	-0.142***
Neighbourhood safety				-0.121*	-0.096			-0.095	-0.079	-0.083	-0.081	-0.085
YP's perception of local social/physical disorder				0.146**	0.170***			0.189***	0.186***	0.178***	0.183***	0.182***
Baseline – Bottom JCERT grades						ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2nd quartile						0.466***		0.405***	0.387***	0.392***	0.389***	0.393***
3rd quartile						0.449***		0.360***	0.313**	0.315**	0.315**	0.320**
Highest quartile						0.646***		0.513***	0.428***	0.425***	0.416***	0.421***
Yes, took Transition Year						0.218**		0.210**	0.189*	0.172*	0.202**	0.203**
Baseline – 0 to 300 LCERT points						ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
301–400 LCERT points						0.378***		0.219*	0.233*	0.219*	0.236*	0.233*
401–500 LCERT points						0.430***		0.356**	0.393***	0.384***	0.405***	0.399***
501+ LCERT points						0.511***		0.529***	0.586***	0.577***	0.598***	0.595***
Baseline – Difficult repaying loans: no loans							ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
No difficulty							0.121	0.090	0.113	0.120	0.122	0.125
A little/A lot							0.192	0.159	0.214	0.229	0.226	0.226



**APPENDIX TABLE 3.3 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
<b>Observations</b>	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496
<b>Pseudo R-squared</b>	0.003	0.025	0.036	0.009	0.030	0.042	0.037	0.063	0.069	0.070	0.070	0.071

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*.

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person. Categories for missing variables are excluded from the table where present; data weighted to be representative.



**APPENDIX TABLE 3.4 LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF LOW-/HIGH-INTENSITY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
	Political activity low						Political activity high					
Rural (cf. Urban)	-0.089***	-0.051*	-0.049*	-0.051*	-0.051*	-0.051*	-0.078***	-0.042*	-0.039*	-0.041*	-0.042*	-0.043**
Female (cf. Male)		0.125***	0.108***	0.108***	0.103***	0.102***		0.060***	0.052***	0.052***	0.046**	0.047**
Yes, YP has a chronic illness		0.115***	0.108***	0.107***	0.106***	0.106***		0.021	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.016
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education: none/primary/lower secondary</b>												
Upper secondary		0.035	0.037	0.036	0.037	0.037		0.010	0.007	0.008	0.008	0.006
Non-degree		0.081**	0.083**	0.085**	0.084**	0.087**		0.030	0.029	0.032	0.030	0.029
Primary degree/Postgrad.		0.057+	0.057+	0.057+	0.060+	0.061*		0.011	0.010	0.012	0.011	0.010
<b>Baseline – Parents Irish born</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad		-0.026	-0.035	-0.034	-0.034	-0.034		0.014	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.009
SCG no completion		0.085+	0.087*	0.089*	0.087+	0.090*		0.033	0.031	0.033	0.031	0.033
<b>Lone-parent family (cf. Two- parent family)</b>		0.016	0.014	0.013	0.012	0.011		0.077***	0.076***	0.076***	0.075***	0.074***
<b>Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
2nd		0.012	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.015		-0.031	-0.030	-0.030	-0.031	-0.029
3rd		-0.005	-0.010	-0.009	-0.010	-0.006		-0.018	-0.018	-0.017	-0.019	-0.017
4th		0.016	0.013	0.017	0.012	0.015		-0.028	-0.026	-0.024	-0.028	-0.027
Highest		0.027	0.028	0.030	0.029	0.033		-0.001	0.003	0.005	0.003	0.004
Missing		0.005	0.010	0.012	0.009	0.014		-0.016	-0.007	-0.007	-0.010	-0.008
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Rent – Social housing		-0.044	-0.043	-0.041	-0.046	-0.046		0.000	-0.005	-0.003	-0.006	-0.008
Rent – Private		0.034	0.030	0.032	0.028	0.028		0.020	0.023	0.023	0.024	0.023
Lives with parents/missing		0.030	0.033	0.034	0.033	0.027		-0.054	-0.050	-0.047	-0.048	-0.050
<b>YP’s self-rated health</b>		-0.034**	-0.031*	-0.032*	-0.031*	-0.030*		-0.025**	-0.022*	-0.023**	-0.023**	-0.023**

**APPENDIX TABLE 3.4 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF LOW-/HIGH-INTENSITY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
<b>Baseline – No friends diff. ethnicity</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Some are a diff. ethnicity</b>		0.062**	0.059**	0.058**	0.057**	0.056**		0.038**	0.035*	0.034*	0.034*	0.034*
<b>Most/all different ethnicity</b>		0.089	0.081	0.081	0.082	0.085		0.039	0.037	0.037	0.040	0.041
<b>Baseline – No friends diff. gender</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Some are a diff. gender</b>		0.043	0.044	0.041	0.043	0.041		0.041*	0.044*	0.042*	0.042*	0.039+
<b>Most/all different gender</b>		0.107*	0.092*	0.085+	0.090+	0.089+		0.048	0.036	0.033	0.034	0.033
<b>No. of friends YP has</b>		0.020	0.018	0.018	0.020	0.020		0.031**	0.031**	0.031**	0.031**	0.030**
<b>Frequency of YP attending church</b>		-0.055***	-0.060***	-0.061***	-0.060***	-0.060***		-0.041***	-0.044***	-0.045***	-0.045***	-0.045***
<b>Baseline – Strongly disagree there are local youth facilities</b>												
<b>Disagree</b>		0.020	0.022	0.018	0.022	0.023		-0.012	-0.006	-0.008	-0.007	-0.007
<b>Agree</b>		0.036	0.037	0.034	0.038	0.036		0.015	0.017	0.016	0.015	0.014
<b>Strongly agree</b>		0.049	0.049	0.045	0.049	0.047		0.017	0.017	0.015	0.014	0.013
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure (index)</b>		-0.030*	-0.027*	-0.026+	-0.027*	-0.026+		-0.012	-0.012	-0.011	-0.011	-0.012
<b>Neighbourhood safety</b>		-0.008	-0.004	-0.004	-0.005	-0.007		-0.031*	-0.027*	-0.027*	-0.028*	-0.029*
<b>YP's perception of local social/physical disorder</b>		0.046***	0.045***	0.043***	0.044***	0.044***		0.019*	0.018*	0.017*	0.018*	0.017*
<b>Baseline – Bottom quartile of JCERT grades</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>2nd quartile</b>		0.094**	0.088**	0.089**	0.087**	0.087**		0.041+	0.036	0.037+	0.035	0.038+
<b>3rd quartile</b>		0.065*	0.055+	0.055+	0.054+	0.055+		0.065**	0.056*	0.056*	0.054*	0.056*
<b>Highest quartile</b>		0.072*	0.050	0.050	0.045	0.046		0.072**	0.056*	0.055*	0.049+	0.051+
<b>Missing</b>		-0.002	0.004	0.008	-0.002	-0.010		-0.028	-0.033	-0.033	-0.034	-0.035
<b>Yes, took Transition Year</b>		0.055*	0.049*	0.044+	0.051*	0.052*		0.028	0.024	0.021	0.026	0.026

**APPENDIX TABLE 3.4 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF LOW-/HIGH-INTENSITY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
<b>Baseline 0–300 LCERT points</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>301–400 LCERT points</b>		0.063+	0.067+	0.065+	0.069*	0.068*		0.035	0.037	0.035	0.038+	0.037
<b>401–500 LCERT points</b>		0.100**	0.109**	0.106**	0.112**	0.110**		0.063*	0.068**	0.067*	0.070**	0.069**
<b>501+ LCERT points</b>		0.160***	0.168***	0.166***	0.171***	0.170***		0.078*	0.084*	0.083*	0.086**	0.085**
<b>Not answered</b>		0.012	0.010	0.001	0.012	0.012		-0.024	-0.026	-0.029	-0.025	-0.025
<b>Baseline – Difficult repaying loans: no loans</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>No difficulty</b>		0.021	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026		-0.002	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.002
<b>A little/A lot</b>		0.060	0.065	0.064	0.064	0.063		-0.021	-0.013	-0.012	-0.013	-0.011
<b>Ease of making ends meet financially</b>		-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.010		-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009	-0.009
<b>Time spent in caring role</b>		0.007	0.006	0.005	0.007	0.008		-0.015	-0.016	-0.017+	-0.015	-0.015
<b>Accommodation costs limit opportunities (index)</b>		0.031*	0.031*	0.030*	0.030*	0.030*		0.025**	0.025**	0.024**	0.024**	0.024**
<b>YP lives at home</b>		0.015	0.019	0.020	0.019	0.021		0.029+	0.031*	0.032*	0.031*	0.031*
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.		ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Higher education pathway</b>		0.127**	0.125**	0.120**	0.124**	0.117**		0.108***	0.106***	0.105***	0.106***	0.107***
<b>Further education pathway</b>		0.070	0.066	0.064	0.067	0.059		0.027	0.025	0.024	0.025	0.026
<b>Extracurricular activities (age 17)</b>												
<b>Cultural activities</b>			0.064**	0.059*	0.057*	0.055*			0.024	0.021	0.014	0.014
<b>Debate club</b>			0.005	0.014	-0.007	-0.015			0.187**	0.195**	0.178**	0.175**
<b>Religious groups or organisations</b>			0.043	0.027	0.043	0.043			0.013	0.004	0.013	0.013

**APPENDIX TABLE 3.4 (CONTD.) LATE ADOLESCENCE/EARLY ADULTHOOD PREDICTORS OF LOW-/HIGH-INTENSITY POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AT AGE 20 (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Scouts or guides			0.048	0.027	0.041	0.039			0.041	0.029	0.035	0.028
Sports clubs/teams			-0.045*	-0.051*	-0.032	-0.032			-0.032*	-0.035*	-0.024	-0.027+
School/student councils			0.052*	0.047+	0.053*	0.055*			0.045**	0.040**	0.046**	0.044**
Youth clubs			0.039	0.029	0.036	0.036			0.064**	0.055**	0.059**	0.059**
Volunteered regularly in the past year (age 17)				0.057*						0.039*		
<i>Extracurricular activities (age 13)</i>												
Cultural activities ('dance, drama or music lessons')					0.011	0.009					0.015+	0.014
Sports with coach/instructor/organised team						-0.018+	-0.023*				-0.008	-0.012
Club/groups e.g., guides/scouts, community					0.004	0.003					0.006	0.004
Yes, has a leadership role							-0.013					0.022
Observations	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,496	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502	4,502

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*.

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person.

**APPENDIX TABLE 4.1 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Life sat.	Depression	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Conf. State	Conf. Church	Conf. health.	Conf. media
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>Yes, volunteered</b>	0.214**	-0.274	0.029+	0.048*	-0.084	-0.026	0.052+	-0.080*	0.045
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	0.002	-0.392	0.003	-0.046*	0.164	0.000	-0.016	0.026	0.013
<b>Female (cf. Male)</b>	-0.071	1.171***	-0.041**	0.033+	0.049	0.031	-0.092***	-0.064*	0.064*
<b>Yes, YP has a chronic illness</b>	-0.388**	3.397***	-0.025	0.033	-0.254+	-0.078+	-0.062	-0.021	-0.067
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education: none/primary/lower secondary</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Upper secondary</b>	-0.109	0.367	-0.004	0.015	-0.119	-0.035	0.009	-0.053	-0.032
<b>Non-degree</b>	0.005	0.103	-0.011	0.009	-0.086	-0.007	-0.018	0.007	-0.036
<b>Primary/Postgrad.</b>	0.024	0.390	-0.062*	0.031	0.054	-0.020	0.036	-0.012	-0.016
<b>Baseline – Two-parent family</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Lone-parent family</b>	0.033	0.112	0.019	0.077*	-0.228+	-0.036	0.033	-0.036	-0.030
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Both parents/lone parent born abroad</b>	-0.069	0.133	-0.040	-0.039	-0.403*	-0.116+	0.014	0.085	0.044
<b>SCG present – No completion</b>	-0.095	-0.056	-0.038	-0.016	-0.241	0.002	0.025	-0.187*	0.076
<b>Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>2nd</b>	-0.112	-0.232	0.018	-0.037	0.311+	-0.064	-0.008	0.044	-0.027
<b>3rd</b>	-0.036	-0.447	0.001	-0.006	0.417*	0.030	0.051	0.091	-0.001
<b>4th</b>	-0.076	-0.186	-0.020	-0.028	0.138	-0.073	0.018	0.077	0.127+
<b>Highest</b>	-0.097	0.216	-0.022	-0.059	0.202	-0.044	0.020	0.063	0.065
<b>Missing</b>	0.023	0.081	-0.026	-0.100*	0.313	-0.053	0.007	0.071	-0.075
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Rent – Social housing</b>	0.113	-0.138	0.014	-0.018	0.407*	0.072	0.146**	0.180*	0.125+
<b>Rent – Private</b>	0.222	0.118	-0.018	0.050	-0.192	0.164+	0.141+	0.033	0.051
<b>Lives with parents/missing</b>	-0.702+	1.181	-0.139*	-0.142*	0.153	-0.000	-0.011	0.228	0.252
<b>Baseline – doesn’t live at home</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Yes, lives at home</b>	-0.121	-0.227	0.002	-0.092***	0.107	0.022	-0.025	0.022	0.072+

APPENDIX TABLE 4.1 (CONTD.) ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULthood (MARGINAL EFFECTS)

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Baseline – Does not belong to a religion</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Yes, belongs to a religion	0.195*	-1.157***	0.019	-0.032	0.136	0.042	0.104**	0.010	0.034
<b>Frequency of attending church</b>	0.045	-0.224*	0.004	-0.011	0.053	0.032	0.283***	0.026	0.041+
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.113*	-0.356*	0.029**	-0.016	0.270***	0.087***	0.027	0.072***	0.057*
<b>Feels neighbourhood is safe</b>	0.140*	-0.533**	0.017	-0.006	0.172*	0.035	-0.012	0.018	0.007
<b>Perceived neighbourhood disorder</b>	-0.040	0.072	-0.010	0.019	-0.184**	-0.031	-0.031	-0.015	-0.046*
<b>Ease of making ends meet financially</b>	0.173***	-0.549***	0.018*	-0.010	0.114**	0.047***	0.011	0.020	-0.003
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
HE	-0.052	-0.417	-0.070+	-0.096*	0.008	0.174*	-0.015	0.041	0.309***
FE	-0.022	0.314	-0.012	-0.118*	-0.341	0.026	0.043	0.046	0.181*
<b>Baseline – no partner in the household</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
Yes, a partner in the household	0.750*	-0.711	-0.007	0.167+	-0.744+	-0.271*	-0.069	-0.241	-0.014
<b>Baseline – LCERT 0 to 300 points</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
301–400	0.058	0.013	-0.044	0.037	0.225	0.139**	-0.030	-0.055	0.018
401–500	0.264*	-0.327	-0.046	0.006	0.316*	0.184**	-0.059	-0.067	-0.024
501+	0.295*	-0.516	-0.052	-0.039	0.582***	0.272***	-0.022	-0.051	-0.038
Not answered	-0.092	-1.139*	-0.028	0.011	-0.204	0.190*	-0.038	0.000	-0.030
<b>How much time spent in caring role</b>	0.066	0.171	-0.007	0.022	-0.049	-0.034	-0.001	-0.042	-0.041+
<b>Lagged outcome (measured at age 17)</b>									
Life satisfaction	0.239***								
Parental depression symptomology		0.146***							
Adult identity			0.105***						
Social trust					0.181***				
Confidence in the State (Index)						0.305***			
Confidence in the Church							0.299***		
Confidence in the healthcare system								0.261***	

**APPENDIX TABLE 4.1 (CONTD.) ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

Outcome	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Observations</b>	4,548	4,248	4,575	4,576	4,573	4,577	4,543	4,507	4,565

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person.

**APPENDIX TABLE 4.2 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN LATE ADOLESCENCE (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2
	Life sat.	Social trust
Model type	OLS	OLS
<b>Volunteered regularly</b>	0.149+	0.128
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	-0.069	-0.242*
<b>Female (cf. Male)</b>	-0.272**	-0.107
<b>Yes, YP has a chronic illness</b>	0.063	0.042
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education: none/primary/lower secondary</b>	ref.	ref.
Upper secondary	0.044	0.117
Non-degree	-0.088	0.038
Primary/Postgrad.	-0.050	0.135
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>	ref.	ref.
Both parents/lone parent born abroad	-0.149	0.069
SCG present – No completion	0.069	-0.299
<b>Baseline – Two-parent family</b>	ref.	ref.
Lone-parent family	-0.225	0.060
<b>Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile</b>	ref.	ref.
2nd	0.371*	-0.108
3rd	0.204	-0.056
4th	0.358+	0.044
Highest	0.312+	0.133
Missing	0.348	0.231
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>	ref.	ref.
Rent – Social	0.086	-0.224
Rent – Private	-0.183	0.029
Lives with parents/missing	0.496+	0.326
<b>Feels neighbourhood is safe</b>	0.268**	0.309***
<b>Local facilities such as youth clubs/swimming clubs/etc.</b>	0.105*	0.063
<b>Perceived neighbourhood disorder</b>	-0.176**	0.181**
<b>Baseline – Did not sit JCERT exams</b>	ref.	ref.
1 to 6 A, B, Cs in Higher Level JCERT exams	0.510	0.054
7 to 9 A, B, Cs in Higher Level JCERT exams	0.676	0.278
10 A, B, Cs in Higher Level JCERT exams	0.853+	0.594
11 to 13 A, B, Cs in Higher Level JCERT exams	0.914+	0.510
Missing	0.280	-0.184
<b>Baseline – Not in school</b>		
Fourth Year/Transition Year	1.127	0.655
Fifth Year/Pre-Leaving	0.145	0.271
Sixth Year/Leaving Cert.	0.166	0.088
Sixth Year/Leaving Cert (Repeat)	0.292	0.082
Other	-2.608	3.069*
<b>Yes, belongs to a religion</b>	0.415**	-0.231+
<b>Frequency of attending church</b>	0.065	0.188***
<b>Describe self as spiritual person</b>	-0.007	-0.100+
<b>Yes, took Transition Year</b>	0.006	-0.034



**APPENDIX TABLE 4.2 (CONTD.) ASSOCIATION BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN LATE ADOLESCENCE (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2
<b>Observations</b>	4,617	4,643

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person.

APPENDIX TABLE 4.3 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Life satisfaction	Depression	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Confidence in Church	Confidence in State	Confidence in media	Confidence in health s.
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>N of political activities</b>	-0.004	0.383***	-0.006	0.029***	0.013	-0.016+	-0.034***	-0.057***	0.020+
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	0.008	-0.276	0.002	-0.036	0.165	-0.005	-0.024	0.006	0.020
<b>Female (cf. Male)</b>	-0.076	0.972***	-0.038*	0.015	0.045	0.041	-0.076**	-0.030	0.051
<b>Baseline – No chronic illness</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Yes, YP has a chronic illness</b>	-0.381**	3.182***	-0.021	0.016	-0.263+	-0.070	-0.040	0.010	-0.077
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education: none/primary/lower secondary</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Upper secondary</b>	-0.107	0.316	-0.004	0.011	-0.121	-0.033	0.015	-0.046	-0.034
<b>Non-degree</b>	0.012	-0.015	-0.009	0.002	-0.091	-0.004	-0.008	0.020	-0.040
<b>Primary/Postgrad.</b>	0.038	0.283	-0.059*	0.027	0.047	-0.018	0.046	-0.003	-0.017
<b>Baseline – Two-parent family</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Lone-parent family</b>	0.039	-0.005	0.021	0.071*	-0.233+	-0.032	0.044	-0.025	-0.034
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Both parents/lone parent born abroad</b>	-0.069	0.245	-0.041	-0.030	-0.400*	-0.120+	0.003	0.070	0.049
<b>SCG present – No completion</b>	-0.109	-0.056	-0.040	-0.021	-0.236	0.006	0.024	-0.178*	0.071
<b>Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	-0.117	-0.186	0.017	-0.037	0.313+	-0.064	-0.010	0.041	-0.027
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	-0.040	-0.384	-0.000	-0.003	0.420*	0.028	0.046	0.084	0.000
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	-0.079	-0.135	-0.021	-0.025	0.140	-0.074	0.015	0.070	0.128*
<b>Highest</b>	-0.098	0.242	-0.022	-0.059	0.202	-0.045	0.018	0.059	0.065
<b>Missing</b>	0.011	0.128	-0.028	-0.103*	0.319	-0.052	0.002	0.071	-0.077
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Rent – Social housing</b>	0.099	-0.081	0.012	-0.017	0.414*	0.071	0.137*	0.176*	0.125+
<b>Rent – Private</b>	0.211	0.064	-0.019	0.044	-0.191	0.168+	0.148*	0.046	0.044

**APPENDIX TABLE 4.3 (CONTD.) ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULthood (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Lives with parents/missing</b>	-0.682+	1.231	-0.140*	-0.135*	0.147	-0.006	-0.012	0.208	0.260
<b>Baseline – Doesn't live at home</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Yes, lives at home</b>	-0.121	-0.245	0.003	-0.094***	0.107	0.023	-0.022	0.026	0.070+
<b>Baseline – Does not belong to a religion</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Yes, belongs to a religion</b>	0.184+	-0.914***	0.015	-0.017	0.147	0.035	0.084*	-0.016	0.042
<b>Frequency of attending church</b>	0.059	-0.196+	0.005	-0.003	0.049	0.028	0.284***	0.013	0.047*
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.117*	-0.310*	0.029*	-0.012	0.269***	0.084***	0.024	0.063**	0.061**
<b>Feels neighbourhood is safe</b>	0.145*	-0.511**	0.017	-0.002	0.171*	0.033	-0.014	0.011	0.010
<b>Perceived neighbourhood disorder</b>	-0.033	-0.002	-0.008	0.015	-0.188***	-0.030	-0.025	-0.007	-0.048*
<b>Ease of making ends meet financially</b>	0.174***	-0.529***	0.018*	-0.008	0.114**	0.046***	0.009	0.016	-0.002
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Higher education</b>	-0.041	-0.583	-0.065+	-0.106*	-0.001	0.180*	0.003	0.063	0.303***
<b>Further education</b>	-0.018	0.282	-0.010	-0.120*	-0.344	0.026	0.047	0.051	0.181*
<b>Baseline – No partner in the household</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Yes, a partner in the household</b>	0.720*	-0.613	-0.011	0.162+	-0.731+	-0.268*	-0.079	-0.232	-0.019
<b>Baseline – LCERT 0 to 300 points</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>301–400</b>	0.077	-0.159	-0.039	0.029	0.213	0.143**	-0.013	-0.040	0.014
<b>401–500</b>	0.292*	-0.581+	-0.039	-0.006	0.298*	0.190***	-0.033	-0.043	-0.030
<b>501+</b>	0.332*	-0.856*	-0.042	-0.055	0.558***	0.281***	0.013	-0.019	-0.046
<b>Not answered</b>	-0.080	-1.136*	-0.026	0.019	-0.209	0.187*	-0.037	-0.013	-0.025
<b>How much time spent in caring role</b>	0.074	0.163	-0.006	0.024+	-0.052	-0.035	0.001	-0.045+	-0.039+
<b>Lagged outcome (measured at age 17)</b>									
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	0.238***								
<b>Parental depression symptomology</b>		0.146***							
<b>Adult identity</b>			0.106***						
<b>Social trust</b>					0.182***				
<b>Confidence in the Church</b>						0.304***			
<b>Confidence in the State (Index)</b>							0.296***		

**APPENDIX TABLE 4.3 (CONTD.) ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULthood (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Confidence in the healthcare system</b>								0.249***	
<b>Observations</b>	4,548	4,248	4,575	4,576	4,573	4,577	4,543	4,507	4,565

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort*.

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in Waves 1–4; CG = Caregiver; PCG = Primary caregiver; SCG = Secondary caregiver; HH = Household; YP = Young person.

**APPENDIX TABLE 4.4 ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL INTEREST AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULthood (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Life sat	Depression	Adult identity	Grew up faster	Social trust	Conf. Church	Conf. State	Conf. media	Conf. health
<b>Model type</b>	OLS	NBREG	OLOGIT	OLOGIT	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
<b>Political interest</b>	0.016	0.022	-0.000	0.012***	0.056***	0.011+	-0.008	-0.020**	0.020***
<b>Rural (cf. Urban)</b>	0.013	-0.394	0.005	-0.042+	0.172+	0.001	-0.015	0.019	0.018
<b>Female (cf. Male)</b>	-0.067	1.195***	-0.042**	0.040*	0.089	0.038	-0.099***	-0.074*	0.075*
<b>Yes, YP has a chronic illness</b>	-0.392**	3.384***	-0.025	0.027	-0.281*	-0.083+	-0.057	-0.015	-0.074
<b>Baseline – Mother’s education: none/primary/lower secondary</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Upper secondary</b>	-0.110	0.365	-0.004	0.013	-0.130	-0.038	0.011	-0.050	-0.035
<b>Non-degree</b>	0.007	0.088	-0.010	0.006	-0.111	-0.015	-0.013	0.013	-0.043
<b>Primary/Postgrad.</b>	0.032	0.367	-0.060*	0.030	0.029	-0.026	0.042	-0.009	-0.020
<b>Baseline – Two-parent family</b>									
<b>Lone-parent family</b>	0.036	0.098	0.019	0.077*	-0.236+	-0.037	0.036	-0.037	-0.031
<b>Baseline – One/both parents Irish born</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Both parents/lone parent born abroad</b>	-0.060	0.142	-0.040	-0.033	-0.379*	-0.111+	0.010	0.077	0.052
<b>SCG present – No completion</b>	-0.112	-0.047	-0.041	-0.020	-0.241	0.004	0.022	-0.180*	0.071
<b>Baseline – Lowest HH income quintile</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>2nd</b>	-0.115	-0.219	0.017	-0.036	0.322+	-0.062	-0.010	0.042	-0.025
<b>3rd</b>	-0.040	-0.446	0.000	-0.008	0.411*	0.028	0.052	0.095	-0.005
<b>4th</b>	-0.077	-0.177	-0.021	-0.027	0.144	-0.071	0.017	0.075	0.128*
<b>Highest</b>	-0.099	0.217	-0.022	-0.061	0.199	-0.044	0.020	0.063	0.064
<b>Missing</b>	0.010	0.102	-0.028	-0.103*	0.317	-0.051	0.004	0.076	-0.079
<b>Baseline – Family’s tenancy: Homeowner</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Rent – Social housing</b>	0.098	-0.122	0.013	-0.021	0.413*	0.074	0.142*	0.186**	0.122+
<b>Rent – Private</b>	0.206	0.128	-0.020	0.046	-0.202	0.162+	0.142+	0.042	0.044
<b>Lives with parents/missing</b>	-0.684+	1.156	-0.137*	-0.141*	0.139	-0.003	-0.005	0.221	0.255

APPENDIX TABLE 4.4 (CONTD.) ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL INTEREST AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Yes, lives at home</b>	-0.121	-0.226	0.003	-0.092***	0.107	0.021	-0.025	0.023	0.071+
<b>Baseline – Does not belong to a religion</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Yes, belongs to a religion</b>	0.196*	-1.130***	0.018	-0.026	0.175	0.050	0.096**	0.003	0.044
<b>Frequency of attending church</b>	0.059	-0.242*	0.006	-0.008	0.045	0.030	0.288***	0.022	0.044+
<b>Neighbourhood social infrastructure</b>	0.119*	-0.358*	0.030**	-0.013	0.277***	0.090***	0.027	0.067**	0.061**
<b>Feels neighbourhood is safe</b>	0.143*	-0.544**	0.018	-0.006	0.161*	0.032	-0.009	0.019	0.005
<b>Perceived neighbourhood disorder</b>	-0.037	0.059	-0.009	0.017	-0.198***	-0.035+	-0.028	-0.012	-0.049*
<b>Ease of making ends meet financially</b>	0.173***	-0.552***	0.018*	-0.011	0.109*	0.046***	0.012	0.021	-0.004
<b>Baseline – Labour market/inactive</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>Higher education</b>	-0.059	-0.451	-0.068+	-0.107*	-0.053	0.162*	-0.004	0.059	0.291***
<b>Further education</b>	-0.013	0.316	-0.011	-0.116*	-0.332	0.025	0.043	0.041	0.186*
<b>Baseline – No partner in the household</b>									
<b>Yes, a partner in the household</b>	0.726*	-0.661	-0.011	0.164+	-0.716+	-0.264*	-0.078	-0.230	-0.015
<b>Baseline – LCERT 0 to 300 points</b>	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.	ref.
<b>301–400</b>	0.064	-0.026	-0.041	0.033	0.177	0.129*	-0.020	-0.049	0.008
<b>401–500</b>	0.274*	-0.382	-0.042	0.001	0.254+	0.171**	-0.045	-0.060	-0.037
<b>501+</b>	0.301*	-0.596+	-0.047	-0.051	0.476**	0.251***	-0.001	-0.033	-0.062
<b>Not answered</b>	-0.068	-1.153*	-0.025	0.021	-0.189	0.188*	-0.036	-0.015	-0.019
<b>How much time spent in caring role</b>	0.073	0.160	-0.006	0.024+	-0.054	-0.035	0.001	-0.045	-0.040+
<b>Lagged outcome (measured at age 17)</b>									
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	0.239***								
<b>Parental depression symptomology</b>		0.147***							
<b>Adult identity</b>			0.105***						
<b>Social trust</b>					0.183***				
<b>Confidence in the Church</b>						0.303***			
<b>Confidence in the State (Index)</b>							0.299***		
<b>Confidence in the healthcare system</b>								0.253***	

**APPENDIX TABLE 4.4 (CONTD.) ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL INTEREST AND LIFE OUTCOMES IN EARLY ADULTHOOD (MARGINAL EFFECTS)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
<b>Observations</b>	4,547	4,248	4,574	4,575	4,572	4,576	4,542	4,507	4,564

Source: *Growing Up in Ireland '98 Cohort.*

Note: \*\*\* p<.001, \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, + p<.10. Sample restricted to households who responded in waves 1, 2, 3 and 4; CG = caregiver; PCG = primary caregiver; SCG = secondary caregiver; HH = household; YP = Young person.

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