Youth Civic and Political Engagement

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Chapter 3

Social And Demographic Factors Linked to Youth Civic and Political Engagement

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SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS LINKED TO YOUTH CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

This chapter focuses on the social and demographic factors that are linked to young people's civic and political engagement. The chapter begins by discussing the social factors that are the closest to the developing individual, including both the family and the peer group, then moves outwards towards intermediate level social factors such as the neighbourhood, the school and youth organisations, before discussing the most distal social factors such as popular music and the mass media. The chapter concludes by discussing the demographic factors of SES, gender and ethnic status.

Social factors

The family

The context that is provided by family life is linked in numerous ways to young people's civic and political engagement. Parental political interest, political knowledge, partisanship and civic and political practices, as well as family values and climate, have all been found to be related to young people's civic and political engagement and participation.

Starting with the links to parental political interest, the findings are consistent. For example, ICCS 2009 (Schulz et al., 2010; see Table 1.2 for a list of the 38 countries studied) found that 14-year-olds whose parents were interested in political and social issues had higher levels of political knowledge, as well as higher levels of political interest, in every country that was studied, compared to youth whose parents were not interested in such issues.

In addition, both parental political knowledge and parental political practices have been found to be important. For example, Jennings (1996, 2002) conducted a longitudinal three-wave national survey of American youth who were aged

17–18 years old at the first point of data collection in 1965, when data were also collected from the youths' parents; subsequent waves of data collection from both the youth and their parents took place in 1973 and 1982. The study revealed that parents' political knowledge predicted their offspring's political knowledge, even into the latter's midlife (Jennings, 1996); parents' engagement in protests predicted their offspring's engagement in protests (Jennings, 2002); and the best predictor of young people's political partisanship was the political partisanship of their parents (Jennings & Niemi, 1968; Niemi & Jennings, 1991).

General family values are also related to the development of civic and political attitudes. Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo and Sheblanova (1998) collected data from 12- to 18-year-old youth in seven countries (Australia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia, Sweden and the USA) and found that there was a consistent relationship between a family ethic of social responsibility (i.e., an ethic emphasising the need to be attentive to others, especially to less fortunate members of society) and the youths' civic and political commitment in all seven countries: those youths from families in which this ethic was maintained were the most likely to view helping their country and doing something to improve society as important life goals for themselves.

In terms of parental practices, ICCS 2009 (Schulz et al., 2010) found that students whose parents frequently discussed political and social issues with them had higher levels of political interest in political and social issues as well as higher levels of political knowledge. The link with youth interest in political and social issues was found in all 38 countries that were studied (see Table 1.2, Chapter 1), while the link with youth political knowledge was found in all but two countries (the Dominican Republic and Guatemala being the exceptions).

Parental practices were also examined in a study of 15- to 25-year-old American youth conducted by Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin and Keeter (2003; Zukin et al., 2006). They found that among youth who are eligible to vote, those who have grown up in families in which there are regular political discussions are more likely to vote compared to those who have grown up in families in which there are no political discussions. Andolina et al. also found that: youth who often hear family political discussions when growing up are more likely to volunteer compared to those who have not heard such discussions; those who grow up in families in which one or both parents volunteer are more likely to volunteer themselves, to join community groups and associations and to wear political buttons or display political bumper stickers; and those who have engaged role models in their families have higher levels of political attentiveness and are more likely to participate in consumer activism.

An alternative perspective on the role of parents is provided by adolescent political alienation. Political alienation involves feelings of political meaningless-ness and political powerlessness and the perception that political decisions are unpredictable and cannot be influenced by citizens. In a study of German youth aged 12 to 16 years old, Gniewosz, Noack and Buhl (2009) found that the more politically alienated these youths' parents were, the more alienated the youths

themselves were. They also discovered that the use of an authoritarian parenting style (i.e., a controlling, demanding and threatening style based on the assertion of parental power, with little expression of praise or pleasure in the young person's achievements) was also associated with young people's political alienation.

Family climate has also been linked to young people's development of political knowledge, interest and internal efficacy. Family climate can be operationalised as the degree of cohesion and expressivity between family members, the level of organisation and control of family activities, and the cultural or intellectual orientation that is adopted towards family activities. Using this concept, Azevedo and Menezes (2007) collected data from 14- to 23-year-old youth in Portugal. Their findings revealed the importance of gender, rule-following and family activities and routines. Among girls, an emphasis on rules and structured family routines was related to low levels of political knowledge and to poor ability to interpret political messages. However, having common family activities with an intellectual or cultural orientation (e.g., visiting museums, having discussions about political and social issues) was related to high levels of political knowledge and good abilities to interpret political messages among girls. By contrast, in boys, a high level of family cohesion and expressivity was related to political knowledge and the ability to interpret political messages. Finally, in both girls and boys, a high level of family cohesion and expressivity and having family activities with an intellectual or cultural orientation were both positively related to political interest and internal efficacy.

There is, therefore, clear evidence that numerous aspects of family life and parenting are related to various aspects of youth civic and political engagement. However, it is important not to oversimplify or overgeneralise in interpreting these findings. One of the factors that was measured in the PIDOP survey was parental norms for civic and political participation, that is, whether or not the youths' parents approved of their offspring engaging in political action, and whether parents themselves engaged in political action (Barrett & Zani, 2015b). The findings revealed that parental norms operated differently in different ethnic groups, even within the same country. For example, in the Czech Republic, Czech youth and Roma youth aged 16–26 years old whose parents held strong participatory norms were more likely to participate both offline and online; however, similarly aged Ukrainian youth who participated both offline and online were more likely to have parents who held weak participatory norms (Šerek, Petrovičová & Macek, 2015). Likewise, in Germany, where data were collected from both German and Turkish youth aged 16–26 years old, parental norms only predicted offline participation in Turkish youth, not in German youth, while parental norms did not predict online participation in either group (Noack & Jugert, 2015). In other words, the link to family factors varied from one country to another and from one ethnic group to another within individual countries.

Furthermore, it should not be assumed that causal influences within families necessarily flow only from parents to offspring. This is because offspring themselves are often able to transform patterns of family communication in ways that

benefit not only themselves but also their parents. This has been demonstrated by McDevitt and Chaffee (2002), who studied 11- to 18-year-old American students and their parents. They found that youth-initiated discussions in the family – which had been stimulated by a civics curriculum at school – prompted parents to increase their own civic competence through increased use of news media in order to acquire more knowledge so that they could develop their own opinions on the issues that their offspring were studying. These parental behaviours were a consequence of parents' desire to maintain their leadership role within the family. In other words, it is not only parents who can influence their offspring; offspring can also influence parents and affect the interpersonal dynamics of the family.

The peer group

There are also links between young people's experiences within their peer group and aspects of their civic and political engagement. Having positive peer group relationships, having friends who are politically engaged and having friends who provide social support all tend to be associated with higher levels of engagement.

For example, among 11- to 14-year-old American youth, having positive relationships with peers is related to levels of helping others in need (Wentzel & McNamara, 1999); American high school alumni who engage in voluntary service are more likely to have friends who also engage in voluntary service than those who do not volunteer (Yates & Youniss, 1998); and American youth whose peers offer social support for discussing personal issues and problems are more likely to engage in civic activism and to volunteer for community service in later adolescence (Zaff, Malanchuk & Eccles, 2008).

Similar findings have been obtained in other countries. For example, Silva, Sanson, Smart and Toumbourou (2004) collected data from Australian 15- to 17-year-olds, assessing various aspects of these youths' peer relationships as well as their levels of political activity and community civic activity. It was found that friendship quality, peer encouragement to participate in political or volunteering activities, and peer participation in these activities all predicted higher levels of political activity and community civic activity. Similar findings were obtained with Italian 11- to 15-year-olds by Rossi, Lenzi, Sharkey, Vieno and Santinello (2016), who likewise found that having friends who are involved in civic activities and are sensitive to civic issues predicts both civic responsibility and civic behaviours in these youth. Finally, in a study conducted in Belgium, Quintelier, Stolle and Harell (2012) found that having peer social networks that contain a diversity of political opinions and convictions at age 16 is linked to higher levels of political participation at age 18. Quintelier et al. argue that having contact with a range of diverse views generates heightened levels of political discussion and interest, which in turn lead to heightened levels of political action. Interestingly, this study also discovered that political participation at age 16 was associated with having more diverse social networks at the age of 18. This presumably occurs because many

political activities are social in character and therefore have the effect of bringing young people into contact with other people who have different beliefs from themselves. Hence, political participation and political diversity in social networks appear to mutually strengthen each other, creating a virtuous circle.

In short, relationships between peer group experiences and youth civic and political engagement have now been documented in a number of countries. However, these relationships may not be present to the same extent in all countries. Evidence suggesting that it may not be possible to generalise from one country to another comes from the multinational study by Flanagan et al. (1998) in which data were collected from 12- to 18-year-old youth in seven countries (Australia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Russia, Sweden and the USA). They found that having a sense of peer solidarity at school was positively related to these individuals' political and civic commitments in several of the countries that were studied, but not in all countries. Furthermore, different findings were obtained for girls and for boys. Among the girls, the relationship between peer solidarity and political and civic commitments was present in Australia, Hungary, Sweden, Russia and the USA but not in Bulgaria or the Czech Republic, whereas among the boys, the relationship between peer solidarity and commitments was found in Australia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Russia, but not in the Czech Republic, Sweden or the USA.

Likewise, PIDOP found cross-national differences as well as ethnic group differences in the relationship between peer group norms (i.e., the extent to which peers approve of political action and the extent to which they engage in political action) and levels of online and offline political participation in 16- to 26-year-olds. For example, in the Czech Republic, peer group norms supporting political participation predicted both online and offline participation among Czech youth, but only predicted online participation among Roma and Ukrainian youth (Šerek et al., 2015). By contrast, in Germany, peer group norms only predicted the offline participation of Turkish youth, not of German youth, and these norms did not predict online participation among either Turkish or German youth (Noack & Jugert, 2015). Thus, one needs to be cautious about generalising about the effects of peer groups from one country to another and from one ethnic group to another.

Furthermore, it should not be assumed that peer group effects, where they occur, are always positive. For example, CIVED found that the amount of time that was spent in the evenings outside the home with friends was inversely related to political knowledge in those particular countries where peer group culture devalues education (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Once again, this finding indicates the need for caution in thinking about peer group influences.

The neighbourhood

Various characteristics of the neighbourhood in which youth live have also been found to be related to their civic and political engagement. One such characteristic

is whether the neighbourhood is urban, suburban or rural. Different features are associated with these three types of neighbourhood, and the consequence is that each offers different kinds of opportunities for the development of civic participation. Atkins and Hart (2003), in a study of American 11- to 18-year-olds, found that youth living in urban neighbourhoods were less likely than their suburban and rural peers to participate in community service. In addition, youth in poor neighbourhoods had lower levels of political knowledge than youth in affluent neighbourhoods.

The reasons for such outcomes are almost certainly numerous and complex. Poor communities tend to have fewer resources to invest in neighbourhood institutions, organisations and activities. This means that there are fewer opportunities for youth in poor communities to engage civically and politically and to acquire the skills that are needed to participate. Social trust is also lower in such communities (Hart & Atkins, 2002), which may weaken the sense of civic responsibility in youth still further. Furthermore, adults living in these communities may be less likely to possess the kinds of civic skills that are required for organising and participating in community meetings and activities (Brady, Verba & Schlozman, 1995), once again resulting in fewer opportunities for youth in such communities, as well as fewer adult role models being available for these youth.

The level of connectedness between youth and adults within the neighbourhood also appears to be important. In a study with Italian 11- to 15-year-olds, Lenzi, Vieno, Pastore and Santinello (2013) examined intergenerational social connectedness between young people and adults in the local community (i.e., the extent to which there are adults in the neighbourhood that young people look up to, and the extent to which parents in the neighbourhood know their offspring's friends), and explored whether there was a link between such connectedness and the sense of civic responsibility. They found that in neighbourhoods in which there was strong intergenerational connectedness, youth had a higher sense of civic responsibility toward their local community (i.e., they thought it was important to work for improving the neighbourhood and would work to improve it if there were opportunities to do so). A high sense of civic responsibility was in turn related to actual civic behaviours (such as volunteering or participating in the organization of local parties). Furthermore, youth who had stronger social relationships with peers and adults in the local community tended to have a stronger emotional bond to their neighbourhood, and this emotional bond, in turn, was also positively associated with having a higher sense of civic responsibility towards the local community. These results highlight the importance of emotions towards specific peers and adults in the proximal social environment, which appear to generalise to the community as a whole.

The school and education

A major factor linked to young people's civic and political engagement in all populations is formal education (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Emler & Frazer, 1999;

Nie, Junn & Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Verba et al., 1995; Zukin et al., 2006). Irrespective of whether formal education is measured in terms of level of attainment or years of education, the higher the level of education, the more likely it is that a person will have high scores on measures of civic and political engagement. This conclusion has repeatedly emerged from many studies.

For example, analysing data collected from American adults, Verba et al. (1995) found that educational level was related to a wide range of civic and political measures, including political knowledge, political interest, civic skills and civic and political activity – in all cases, those who had completed an under-graduate degree or higher showed the highest scores, whereas those who did not have a high school diploma showed the lowest scores. In the case of British 16- to 19-year-olds, both the level of educational attainment and the amount of post-16 education are related to political interest, political attentiveness, a lack of cyni-cism about politics and future expected voting (Emler & Frazer, 1999). Likewise, in Italy, 18-year-old students who are on an academic educational track rather than a technical or vocational track have higher levels of political interest, trust in institutions, intentions to vote in the future and both online and offline civic and political participation (Cicognani, Zani, Fournier, Gavray & Born, 2012).

Some of the links here are likely to stem from the enhancement of the specific knowledge, skills or behaviours that are directly targeted by the school cur-riculum. For example, in a study with American youth aged between 12 and 17 years, Chapman, Nolin and Kline (1997) found that civic education courses that required students to pay attention to national issues, government and politics did indeed increase students' attentiveness to national political news and also increased their interest in national issues and politics. Likewise, analysing data from 17-year-old American youth, Niemi and Junn (1998) found that the civics curriculum to which these youth had been exposed at school was related to how much they knew about American government and politics: the variety of topics studied and the amount of course work were both directly linked to the amount of knowledge acquired. However, Niemi and Junn also found that the method of teaching was important: higher levels of knowledge were acquired if students were allowed to discuss and analyse politics and political issues in relationship to contemporary events, rather than having to learn historical facts or facts about government organisation and processes by rote memorisation

However, the relationship between education and civic and political engage-ment is much more wide-ranging than just the specific behaviours or knowledge that are targeted explicitly by the curriculum. Educational effects generalise to a wide range of participatory behaviours and aspects of engagement. For example, Zukin et al. (2006; Andolina et al., 2003), in their study of American 15- to 25-year-old youth, found that students who attend schools that provide training in civic skills (e.g., letter writing and debating) are more likely to be involved in organisations outside school, to sign petitions, to participate in boycotts, to follow political news, to engage in charitable fundraising and to attend commu-nity meetings, and that students who participate in classroom discussions about

volunteering are more likely to volunteer regularly, to work on community problems, to participate in charity fundraising and to try and influence other people's voting. These findings fit with those of Feldman, Pasek, Romer and Jamieson (2007) and Pasek, Feldman, Romer and Jamieson (2008), who found that a civic education intervention with American high school students increased not only their knowledge of politics and current affairs but also their political efficacy, interest in politics, attention to politics and subsequent voting.

In addition, CIVED, ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 have all consistently shown that having an open classroom climate at school is one of the most important factors that can enhance students' civic and political engagement. An open classroom climate is characterised by students having the freedom to raise controversial social and political issues that are of interest to them within the classroom; encouraging them to discuss these issues, to listen to a range of different perspectives and opinions, and to make up their own minds about those issues; and allowing them to express opinions in class even when their opinions differ from those of other students. CIVED, ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 all revealed that having an open classroom climate at school is a major predictor of young people's levels of political knowledge, political interest and intentions to vote in the future (Schulz et al., 2010; Schulz et al., 2017; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). For example, ICCS 2016 found that in all 21 countries that were studied (see Table 1.2, Chapter 1), an open classroom climate was positively associated with students' interest in political and civic issues, and in 19 of the 21 countries, an open classroom climate was also related to levels of political knowledge (the exceptions being Lithuania and the Netherlands).

An open classroom climate has also been linked to political trust and levels of efficacy. For example, Hahn (1998), in a study of 15- to 19-year-olds in five countries (Britain, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA), found that the presence of an open classroom climate predicted levels of political interest, internal and external efficacy and trust in politicians and government officials. Ichilov (1991) also found, in a study of 14- to 18-year-old Israeli youth, that participation in class debates and discussions predicted internal and external efficacy and political involvement (a unitary measure that included media use, political interest, willingness to be actively involved and discussion of politics with others). Likewise, Azevedo and Menezes (2007), in their study of 14- to 23-year-old Portuguese youth, found that an open classroom climate predicted political knowledge, the interpretation of political messages, political interest, collective efficacy, political trust and dispositions for future political activity.

Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill and Gallay (2007) instead examined the effects of teachers practising a democratic ethos within the classroom – that is, whether teachers listen to students' ideas and opinions even when they are at odds with the teachers' ideas, insist that students respect one another, and actively intervene to stop acts of intolerance between students. Flanagan et al. (2007) examined the effects of teachers implementing a democratic ethos within the classroom amongst 11- to 18-year-old American students. It was found that the extent to

which teachers practised a democratic ethos in the classroom predicted the students' levels of civic commitment. Interestingly, in a study with Italian 11- to 15-year-old youth, Lenzi et al. (2014) discovered that a democratic ethos within the classroom was associated with higher levels of civic responsibility in students, but this association was fully mediated by open classroom discussions about civic and political issues (i.e., an open classroom climate) and by the perceived fairness of teachers. In addition, the students' levels of civic responsibility predicted their intentions for future civic and political engagement.

Schools can implement a democratic ethos not only within the classroom but also at school level by establishing school councils or parliaments. These councils and parliaments are important ways in which students can obtain first-hand practical experience of the democratic process, representing others, and expressing views and perspectives to people in positions of authority. CIVED found that participation in a school council was a significant predictor of political knowledge and of intentions to vote in national elections in adulthood (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). ICCS 2016 also found that participation in civic activities at school was positively associated with political knowledge and with future voting intentions in 16 of the 21 countries that were studied (Schulz et al., 2017).

ICCS 2016 additionally looked at students' perceptions of the value of student-based participation in civic-related activities at school by asking questions about, for example, whether student participation in the running of schools makes schools better, whether organising groups of students to express their opinions can help to solve problems in schools and whether voting in student elections can make a difference to what happens at schools. It was found that the more positively students viewed student-based participation, the higher their levels of interest in political and social issues and the higher their levels of political knowledge. These links to political interest and political knowledge were found to be present in all 21 countries.

That said, once again, some caution is required in interpreting these findings. This is because the effects of an open classroom climate and of opportunities to participate can differ among youth attending the same schools and following the same educational system, depending on their ethnic background. This conclusion emerges from a study conducted as part of PIDOP by Jugert, Eckstein and Noack (2016) with 16- to 25-year-old German and Turkish minority youth in Germany. They examined the relationship between open classroom climate and opportunities to participate in school decision-making and these youths' political attentiveness, collective efficacy and political trust. They found that links to classroom climate and opportunities to participate differed between the German majority and Turkish minority youth. Open classroom climate was only related to political attentiveness and political trust among Turkish, not German, youth, while opportunities to participate in school decision-making was only related to collective efficacy and political trust in German, not Turkish, youth. In other words, classroom climate had more impact among the minority Turkish youth, whereas opportunities to participate had more impact among the majority

German youth. Thus, findings do not always generalise across ethnic groups, and it cannot be assumed that actions that are effective in promoting engagement in one ethnic group will necessarily be effective for other ethnic groups.

Another action that schools can take to promote the civic and political engagement of youth is to provide institutionally organised opportunities for volunteer work and service learning. While some countries and institutions provide such opportunities for youth on a widespread basis, others do not do so. The benefits of these activities have been very well documented (Billig, 2000; Hatcher, Bringle & Hahn, 2017). For example, Astin, Sax and Avalos (1999) collected longitudinal data from American college students four years after college entry and nine years after college entry. They found that the amount of time the students had spent doing volunteer work in their final year at college predicted how much they helped others in difficulty, participated in community action programmes, participated in environmental clean-up programmes and promoted racial understanding, nine years after college entry. Likewise, Smith (1999) found that American students who participated in volunteer and community service activities in their final year of high school had higher levels of both voting and volunteering for a political organisation two years later, compared to peers who had not participated in service activities. In addition, Hart, Donnelly, Youniss and Atkins (2007) found that voluntary and school-required community service in the final year of American high school were both strong predictors of adult voting and volunteering eight years later.

A distinction may be drawn between volunteering and service learning. Volunteering involves giving time freely without financial reward to causes or to help other people, and it includes philanthropic or charitable activity (Cnaan, Handy & Wadsworth, 1996; Wilson, 2000). Service learning, by contrast, emphasises learning and reflection. It is an institutionally required, course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in service activities that benefit the community beyond the school, college or university; afterwards, students are required to reflect on their service activity to develop their academic learning and to gain further understanding of course content (Bringle, 2017; Hatcher, 2017; Rauschert & Byram, 2017). Service learning differs from volunteering in that it is a formal component of academic study, it is initiated by the educational institution and it explicitly requires learning in pursuit of educational goals.

As such, service learning is an experience that can be made mandatory by educational institutions as a method of promoting the civic and political engagement of students. A study by Haski-Leventhal et al. (2010), which was conducted in 14 countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, England, Finland, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, The Netherlands, New Zealand and the USA), examined both volunteering and service learning in 20- to 26-year-old university students. Rates of volunteering and service learning varied considerably across countries. However, it was found that, across the sample as a whole, participation in service learning programmes at high school was positively related to present

volunteering, especially so when service learning had been compulsory at high school. It was also found that service learning in university had an even greater impact on volunteering. That said, the strength of these relationships varied considerably from one country to another, and there appeared to be strong cultural differences within these findings. These can potentially be explained by the different macro factors and processes that operate within different countries. We will discuss macro factors in detail in Chapter 4.

In another study of American university undergraduates, Levesque-Bristol, Knapp and Fisher (2010) employed a broader range of outcomes. They found maximal effects occurred when service learning courses were well-designed and enhanced the positivity of the learning environment. Courses needed to support students in developing their autonomy, help them to build their confidence in achieving the course objectives, provide them with opportunities for in-class discussion and provide them with opportunities for reflection. Courses with these characteristics led to higher levels of future intended civic action, more positive attitudes to cultural diversity and greater confidence in solving problems. However, service learning courses which did not have these characteristics did not produce these beneficial changes.

Morgan and Streb (2001) likewise found that service learning programmes had much greater effects on the civic and political outcomes achieved by American 14- to 18-year-old students if the service learning was made authentic and significant for the students. When students had real responsibilities, challenging tasks, helped to plan their own service learning, and made important decisions, involvement in service learning projects had significant and substantive impacts on students' political interest and attentiveness and commitment to undertake social action. It also led to more positive attitudes towards the elderly and people with disabilities.

Service learning therefore represents a further action that can be taken by schools, colleges and universities to promote the civic and political engagement of young people. However, in order to achieve this goal, service learning activities need to be well-designed. They need to support the development of autonomy, responsibility and confidence in young people, and offer ample opportunities for in-class discussion and reflection.

The implications of these numerous studies into the effects of education on young people's civic and political engagement are clear. Engagement is promoted when teachers and educational institutions:

- provide citizenship education courses that require students to discuss and analyse politics and political issues in relationship to contemporary events
- provide training in civic skills such as letter writing and debating
- ensure that teachers treat all students in a fair and just manner
- allow students to raise controversial issues that are of interest to them in the classroom
- encourage students to discuss social and political issues
- enable students to hear a wide range of views about these issues

- allow students to express their own opinions even when their opinions differ from those of other students and from those of the teacher
- ensure that students respect one another and are not intolerant towards one another
- support students in formulating their own views about social and political issues after considering a diversity of perspectives and opinions on those issues
- operate school councils or parliaments that enable students to acquire first-hand practical experience of democratic processes and to feel that participation in these councils or parliaments is a valuable and worthwhile activity
- provide high-quality service learning opportunities for students, that is, service learning that supports the development of autonomy, responsibility, confidence, decision-making and planning skills in young people, and provides plentiful opportunities for in-class discussion and reflection

Youth, community and religious organisations and associations

The organisations and associations to which young people have access are a further important factor that can influence their civic and political engagement. Many different types of organisations may be available to youth, including youth clubs, sports clubs, hobby clubs, music clubs, debating groups, charities, religious or ethnic associations, advocacy groups, youth political organisations and so on. Albanesi, Cicognani and Zani (2007) examined the sense of community that is generated by membership of and participation in such organisations, focusing on Italian youth aged 14–19 years old. They defined sense of community as the extent to which the community provides youth with a sense of belonging, a feeling of support and emotional connection with peers, a feeling of support and emotional connection with the community more generally and satisfies their needs, and provides opportunities for involvement and influence. They found that belonging to formal organisations was associated with an increased sense of community, and that sense of community itself was linked to levels of both prosocial-oriented civic engagement (e.g., charity purchasing and participating in cultural events and festivals) and protest-oriented civic engagement (e.g., occupation of schools, signing petitions and participating in strikes).

In another study involving Belgian youth, Quintelier (2008) differentiated between six kinds of organisations, according to their goals:

- Sports and hobby groups
- Youth clubs and youth groups such as the Scouts and Girl Guides
- Cultural groups that focus on music, dance or theatre
- Organisations that have the goal of helping disadvantaged people or places, such as anti-racist, human rights, peace and environmental organisations
- Deliberative organisations that provide a forum for debating current issues
- Religious-ethnic organisations based on a particular faith or ethnic community

In order to examine the relationship between the young people's membership of these organisations and their civic and political participation, Quintelier drew on data from the Belgian Youth Survey 2006. This was a large-scale survey of over 6,000 16-year-olds in both French-speaking and Flemish-speaking schools in Belgium. Her analyses differentiated between three forms of participation: political participation (e.g., wearing a badge, illegal protesting, forwarding political emails, drawing political messages, contacting politicians, being a member of a political party); civic participation (e.g., donating/collecting money, signing petitions, protesting, attending a show with political content); and political consumerism (e.g., boycotting and preferentially buying particular products). The findings revealed that the number of memberships was more strongly associated with participation than the difference between membership and non-membership, with those who were involved in multiple organisations being more likely to participate in political and civic activities. It was also found that both political and civic participation, but not political consumerism, were related to whether individuals had played a leadership role within organisations and had helped to organise activities; however, participation was not linked to involvement in decision-making within organisations. Political participation was most strongly related to membership of deliberative, cultural and helping organisations, whereas civic participation was most strongly related to membership of helping and religious-ethnic organisations. Political consumerism, by contrast, was not strongly related to the characteristics of the organisations to which individuals belonged.

These findings are echoed in other studies conducted with other populations. For example, McFarland and Thomas (2006) analysed longitudinal data that had been collected from large samples of American youth aged between 14 and 26 years old. They found that involvement in what they termed 'politically salient' youth organisations had significant positive returns on political participation seven to 12 years later – 'politically salient' organisations were defined as organisations that entail activities of public speaking, debate, community service, communal representation and communal rituals, all of which help to develop the kinds of relations, skills, knowledge, identities and interest in political systems that are relevant to political participation. The politically salient organisations were: helping organisations; student councils; drama clubs; musical groups; and religious organisations. Membership of other kinds of organisations, such as sports and hobby groups, did not have any positive relationship to long-term political involvement (with cheerleading actually having a negative relationship).

The findings of Quintelier (2008) and McFarland and Thomas (2006) suggest that it is not organisational membership or participation through organisational channels *per se* that is critical for young people's future civic and political engagement, but rather the type and quality of the participation experiences that young people obtain through organisations and the opportunities for developing participatory skills that this experience affords. Indeed, Ferreira, Azevedo and Menezes (2012) have suggested that poor quality participation experience

may sometimes even have detrimental effects, such that youth who do not have any participation experiences at all may develop more positive political attitudes than those who have low-quality experiences. Studying a group of Portuguese youth aged 15 years and older, they measured the quality of their most important organisation-based participatory action by asking them about the extent of their involvement in the action, how frequently they had searched for information about the issues, whether they had participated in organising the activities, whether they had been involved in group decision-making, whether a variety of points of view had been discussed, and whether they had encountered new ways of perceiving the issues in question. It was found that only participatory actions that provided high-quality participatory experience on these various dimensions predicted the youths' dispositions to undertake political action in the future.

In a follow-up study conducted as part of PIDOP, Fernandes-Jesus, Malafaia, Ferreira, Cicognani and Menezes (2012) collected similar data from Portuguese, Angolan origin and Brazilian origin youth aged 15 to 29 years old who were growing up in Portugal. The Portuguese and Brazilian youth exhibited a similar pattern, with low-quality participation experiences being equivalent to having no experiences at all in terms of impact on dispositions to undertake political action in the future – only high-quality experiences had a beneficial effect. However, in the case of the Angolan youth, even low-quality participation experiences had a positive impact on their dispositions towards future action. Fernandes-Jesus et al. speculate that this may have been the case because these youth experience racism and discrimination more frequently and are less engaged in all forms of participation than members of the other two groups. Because of this lower baseline, participation in any form of activity may have a positive effect. Whatever the explanation, the similarities between the Brazilian and Portuguese youth, and the differences between the Angolan and Brazilian youth, show that one needs to be cautious about assuming that effects that are found with some subgroups of youth will generalise to all youth irrespective of their specific cultural positioning. The study also confirms that the quality of participation experiences does need to be ensured because participation itself does not always have a beneficial effect.

Other studies into the role of youth organisations in fostering youth engagement have revealed that young people who have high levels of religious commitment, attendance and activity through religious organisations are more likely to become civically and politically engaged (Crystal & DeBell, 2002; Youniss, McClellan, Su & Yates, 1999; Zaff et al., 2008; Zukin et al., 2006). This effect of membership of religious organisations has been examined in both youth and adults. Djupe and Grant (2001) found that, in the case of American adults attending Christian churches, the churches generated political participation through a number of routes: through co-religionists recruiting other church members into political activities, through holding political meetings in the church, and through members following the perceived political norms and expectations of their church. Brady, Verba and Schlozman (1995) also found that, in the USA,

religious institutions assist their members in developing the civic skills that are needed to participate in political activities.

In the case of youth, Kerestes, Youniss and Metz (2004) conducted a longitudinal study of the relationship between religious commitments and political and civic activity in American students who were aged 14–18 years old. They found that participation in political activities (e.g., working on a political campaign, demonstrating for a cause) and intentions to perform community service in the future were highest among those who started the study at the age of 14 with a strong religious commitment and maintained that strong commitment through to the age of 18. In addition, those who had a weak religious commitment at the age of 14 but then strengthened their commitment over the course of the study showed the highest increases over time in intentions to perform community service in the future. Kerestes et al. suggest that attending religious education programmes and participating in community outreach groups organised by the church which integrate youth into the community are the most likely factors responsible for these effects.

Affiliation with religious institutions may be of particular importance in the case of ethnic minority and immigrant youth. Involvement with a church or a mosque is an act of civic engagement for such youth and is, in many instances, the only context in which they engage civically (Pachi & Barrett, 2011a; Stepick & Stepick, 2002). Involvement with a religious institution can be for religious (spiritual) reasons, but it can also be for community, family or humanitarian reasons. In their research with 16- to 26-year-old British Congolese youth in London that was conducted as part of PIDOP, Pachi and Barrett (2011b) found that church attendance was an integral part of these young people's lives, and the church constituted the main provider of direction and opportunities for civic and political participation. Religious sermons did not only involve messages about religious texts and doctrines but also offered advice about social and political endeavours. The Congolese youth who were more religious exhibited a more conservative view of how society and the political system should function, as well as higher levels of civic and political participation. These young people tended to follow the encouragement of their religious leaders to engage in civic and political activities both in relationship to Britain and in relationship to the Congo, with a range of different forms of participation being undertaken, including voting in national/local elections, participating in demonstrations for religious or other reasons related to the Congo, and participating in voluntary and other organisations for humanitarian reasons.

In short, membership of youth, community and religious organisations and associations can promote young people's civic and political engagement. That said, these organisations and associations vary considerably in terms of how much encouragement and opportunity they actually offer to young people to develop and exercise civic skills and to participate civically and politically. The research suggests that organisations that allow youth to acquire high-quality participation experience and to practise their participatory skills are the most effective

for boosting their civic and political engagement (Fernandes–Jesus et al., 2012; Ferreira et al., 2012; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Quintelier, 2008). In practice, this means that the organisations that are most effective in promoting young people's engagement are those that enable or encourage youth to:

- search for information about the issues involved
- participate in group decision-making
- explore a variety of points of view about the issues
- encounter new ways of perceiving the issues in question
- develop communication, public speaking and debating skills
- take on leadership, organisational and representative roles
- engage in community service

Youth sections of political parties

Youth sections of political parties provide a further specialised organisational channel that can be used to promote the political engagement of youth. Youth sections are typically run by the youth members themselves but sometimes with funding provided by the political party and with administrative support from the party as well. In some cases, if an individual who joins a political party is at an age that falls within the age range stipulated for membership of the party's youth section, they automatically become a member of that section.

One of the primary functions of youth sections is to attract younger members into a political party: Hooghe, Stolle and Stouthuysen (2004) report that over 40% of councillors in Belgium began their political careers in the youth section of a political party. That said, the members of youth sections often want to be autonomous of the parent political party. For example, in one study of youth sections within five countries (Russia, Finland, Denmark, Spain and Slovakia), it was found that the members wanted to be independent and free in making their own decisions, developing policy and organising their own activities (Hashem–Wangler, Busse, Tholen & Wolnik, 2015).

It has been argued that youth sections are typically viewed by older party members as being marginal to the party, with some parties being reluctant to allow youth sections to have too great an input to party policies because of the worry that policy proposals that are too radical might alienate older voters (Mycock & Tonge, 2012). However, Bennie and Russell (2012), in a study into youth sections within UK political parties, found that these parties made significant efforts to include their youth sections in the development of party policies. The youth members who were studied were not especially radical in the policies they advocated, and the parties made efforts to give them a vocal role in the internal and external running of the party organisations. It was also found that the youth members were generally supportive of the party structures and leaders. Bennie and Russell argue that youth members are a vital resource for the future life of political parties: they tend to be active and enthusiastic party members,

they hold moderate policy positions and they are generally supportive of party structures and leaders.

It is, however, notable that the membership of youth sections is very small compared with the size of the general youth population. In order to investigate why some youth choose to join political parties, Bruter and Harrison (2009) conducted a survey of young members (aged between 18 and 25 years old) of 15 political parties in six European countries (France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Spain and the UK). They found that these individuals had joined the political party for one of three reasons: moral (i.e., for altruistic or ideological reasons), social (i.e., for the social aspects and for the enjoyment which they derived from being a member) and professional (i.e., to build their own knowledge and skills in order to advance their future careers in politics). These three groups were characterised by different attitudes, activities, hopes and expectations about their own future. Most young people joined because of a sense of moral duty. These youth were the most radical activists, and they were the most likely to engage in non-conventional forms of participation such as demonstrations. They did not consider politics to be a profession, and they saw their future as activists, not as politicians. The socially-minded members instead joined to fulfil their social needs, to meet like-minded people and to engage in interesting discussions. They were the least active members and the least likely to devote time to the political cause of the party. They were also the most critical towards the party, which made them doubt their own long-term commitment to the party. Finally, the professionally-minded party members joined in order to pursue a future career in politics. They wanted to become politicians, run for election and access positions of responsibility. They cared about their party's ability to win votes and were highly involved in the electoral activities of the party, but they avoided more radical forms of participation.

In the case of professionally-minded youth, becoming a member of the youth section of a political party clearly provides a unique opportunity to enter the world of politics, and several studies have now revealed that an important function of youth sections is indeed the political socialisation and training of their members in readiness for future political activities (e.g., Hashem–Wangler et al., 2015; Hooghe et al., 2004). This is achieved by equipping them with knowledge about public and political affairs and by training them in the strategies that can be used to achieve political goals and the skills that are needed for a political career (e.g., public-speaking, debating and group leadership skills). In a study of the youth section of a Portuguese political party, Malafaia, Menezes and Neves (2018) found that the section did indeed provide high-quality political participation experiences for its members who, through their activities in the section, had acquired high levels of internal efficacy and critical thinking. Hashem–Wangler et al. (2015) and Rainsford (2017) (the latter of whom studied the youth sections of UK political parties) likewise found that the members of youth sections generally display high levels of internal efficacy and feel politically empowered, although Rainsford additionally found that these youth can have

a lower sense of the organisational efficacy of the youth section to which they belong. Furthermore, the participants in Hashem-Wangler et al.'s study drew a distinction between the impact that their activities had on political life in general, which they estimated to be low, and the impact that their activities had on their local communities, which they estimated to be much higher.

The available research therefore reveals that youth sections of political parties can play an important role both in recruiting party members for the future and in socialising and training young people for political activity in the future. If political parties are genuinely concerned to promote young people's levels of engagement with conventional politics, they should support their youth sections by providing them with adequate financial and administrative resources, and they should try to broaden the appeal of these sections to much wider swathes of the youth population.

The mass media

A further significant influence on youth civic and political engagement is the mass media. As we saw in Chapter 2, ICCS 2016 revealed that, on average, 66% of 14-year-olds watch television at least once a week to obtain information about political and social issues, 31% use the Internet at least once a week to obtain information about such issues, while 27% read newspapers at least once a week (Schulz et al., 2017). In other words, despite the widespread use of social media by 14-year-olds, they are twice as likely to use television rather than social media for obtaining information about political or social issues.

These findings are important because there are links between the extent to which individuals attend to news on television and political knowledge, political interest and intentions for future political participation. For example, CIVED found that, among 14-year-old youth, the frequency of watching television news was associated with political knowledge in about half of the 28 countries that were studied and also with future intentions to vote in all but two of the countries (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Likewise, ICCS 2009 found that students who used television to inform themselves about national and international news on a weekly basis, or who read newspapers to inform themselves about national and international news on a weekly basis, had higher levels of political knowledge than those who did not use these sources of information so frequently (Schulz et al., 2010).

Linnenbrink and Anderman (1995) also found that 13- to 18-year-old American adolescents who frequently watched news on television and frequently read newspapers had the highest levels of knowledge about current events. In addition, they discovered that those students who took the time to read newspapers tended to think about the news the most deeply and the most critically. Likewise, Hahn (1998), in her study of 15- to 19-year-olds in five countries (Britain, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the USA), found that students in all countries reported that they had obtained much of their political

information from the mass media. In this case, however, the students also reported that they had gained their negative views about politics and politicians from precisely these same sources as well. The most cynical students in Hahn's study said that they obtained their information from tabloid rather than from serious newspapers because they found them more interesting and because they were not so full of 'the boring stuff'.

Hahn's findings suggest that exposure to information about politics in the mass media may sometimes actually lead to disaffection with politics among young people and reduce rather than enhance their levels of political engagement. The term 'media malaise' has been coined to denote this phenomenon, in which the mass media generate political cynicism, distrust, disillusionment, disaffection and alienation from politics among citizens as a consequence of their superficial focus on political conflict, scandal, corruption and failure (Capella & Jamieson, 1997; De Vreese & Semetko, 2002). The suggestion is that this type of negative news content produces cynicism among citizens about politicians' competence and morals. Political advertising may further exacerbate this trend because it involves relentlessly attacking opponents in a negative way (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995). In addition, both entertainment media and commercial advertising may reinforce the effect, the former by inducing passivity, the latter by generating a self-centred and individualistic consumerist materialism that is opposed to civic and social responsibility and interest in the common good (Putnam, 2000).

An alternative view that is sometimes pitted against the concept of media malaise draws on the idea that political engagement and media usage form a virtuous circle: those who are more politically engaged are more likely to watch or read political news, which means that they acquire more knowledge about politics, which in turn enhances their political engagement and trust still further (Norris, 2000).

A third approach emphasises that different types of content in mass media news produce the different effects: sustained exposure to news outlets that have high levels of political content (such as public service television news and broadsheet newspapers) contribute to knowledge gains and engagement, while sustained exposure to mass media that have a lower proportion of political content and a higher proportion of entertainment content (such as commercial television and tabloid newspapers) has negative effects on engagement and trust (Aarts & Semetko, 2003). In other words, in-depth and serious news coverage on television and newspapers may inform and engage citizens, whereas superficial and sensationalist coverage may induce cynicism.

The evidence that is available from adults tends to support the third approach, namely that there are mixed effects depending on the specific type of content that is viewed or read (Curran, Coen, Soroka, Aalberg, Hayashi et al., 2014; Newton, 1999). However, a recent longitudinal study of Swedish youth provides some support for the notion of a virtuous circle rather than for media malaise in the case of young people (Kruikemeier & Shehata, 2017). The youth

in this study were aged between 13 and 17 years old at the first wave of data collection, with subsequent waves of data being collected from the same youth one and two years later. It was found that there were no negative effects of reading newspapers, watching television news, listening to radio news or reading news on the Internet on either future political interest or future intended political participation. Instead, the frequency of using all four media for accessing news predicted future levels of intended political participation, and the frequency of reading newspapers predicted future levels of political interest. In addition, levels of political interest and levels of intended political participation independently predicted levels of accessing news through all four media. In other words, the more politically engaged and interested these youth were, the more they accessed the mass media for news; and the more they accessed the mass media for news, the more likely they were to participate politically in the future. Hence, the evidence was consistent with the notion of a virtuous circle rather than media malaise.

Unfortunately, Kruikemeier and Shehata did not measure media use more generally; the focus of their study was only on the use of media for obtaining news. It remains for future studies to explore whether similar results are obtained from youth when the measures of media use are broader than this and also include their consumption of entertainment and advertising. That said, it is clear from the body of existing research that the mass media are a significant factor that can impact on levels of political knowledge, political interest and future intended political participation in youth. Additional findings on how the Internet and social media are related to youth civic and political engagement are reviewed later on in this book, in Chapter 4.

Popular music

Another source of social influence is artistic communications, especially those that emanate from popular music (Pachi, 2018), which may serve either to mobilise or to discourage youth from engaging with and participating in civic and political life. Popular music plays an extremely important role in the lives of young people: they spend a significant amount of time on a daily basis listening to music, sharing information about music and artists with their friends, and following their favourite artists through social media (Bennett, 2000; Brown & Bobkowski, 2011; Miranda, 2013; Pachi, 2018; Roberts, Henriksen & Foehr, 2009; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2000). In addition, many artists share information about their professional and personal life on a daily basis with their fans and maintain an open channel of communication, which creates a virtual relationship between fans and their 'favourite' artists.

Young people use their musical preferences for a variety of purposes, including managing their own identities; for self-presentational purposes; to differentiate themselves from their parents and from younger children; to evaluate the similarities between others and the self; to make judgements about the personalities,

characteristics and values of other people; and to establish ingroups and out-groups among their peers (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006; Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006; Rentfrow, McDonald & Oldmeadow, 2009).

In addition, Street (2003, 2012; Street, Hague & Savigny, 2008) has argued that popular music often embodies political values and experiences, and that it can help to structure and organise young people's responses to societal issues. As such, music can contribute to young people's civic and political development and it can also serve as a medium for their own civic and political expression and participation. Furthermore, Street notes that, because of music's aesthetic properties, it has considerable power to evoke communal or collective values and to provoke political responses. This power of music to move people emotionally and to make them believe and feel differently about civic or political issues means that music does not only give formal expression to existing political beliefs and feelings; it can also create or contribute to the formation of new beliefs and feelings. For this reason, music can be used for propaganda purposes to promote and advance specific causes and interests and also to enact opposition, resistance and defiance to existing norms and values. This means that music often plays a central role in social movements. Street supports his argument through detailed analyses of how music was used in the civil rights movement in the USA, in Rock Against Racism (an anti-racist movement in the UK) and in the Jubilee 2000 movement and Live 8 event which aimed to persuade the leaders of the world's richest countries to change their policies on debt relief for developing countries.

Another example of the power of music to influence young people's engagement is reported by Pachi and Barrett (2011b, 2015; Pachi, Garbin & Barrett, 2011), who conducted focus groups with 16- to 26-year-old British Bangladeshi, Congolese and English youth in London. They found that some of these youth had been influenced in their thinking about civic and political issues by political messages and conspiracy theories that had been communicated to them by popular musicians. Conspiracy theories about the Freemasons and the Illuminati were prevalent in both Islamic and Christian fundamentalism at the time that the study was conducted and were found to be particularly prevalent among the Bangladeshi and Congolese youth. These theories encouraged them to distrust and disengage from official political and social actors, and created a feeling of powerlessness in the face of the existing political and social order. The youth had been introduced to these theories through the lyrics of international hip-hop artists, which intrigued them and stimulated them into searching for further information about the Freemasons and the Illuminati.

Because hip-hop was the most important music genre for these youth, Pachi and Barrett (2015) analysed the lyrics of a number of songs by Jay-Z and Tupac. These two artists were chosen because they had been cited by the youth in the focus groups as being especially influential on their thinking. It was found that there were neither implicit nor explicit expressions of expectations of political or civic action in the lyrics, although both artists referred to religion as a way of enduring the cruelty of society (discrimination, social injustice, poverty, etc.).

The most prevalent expectation expressed by both artists in response to a discriminatory and unjust social and political system was individual empowerment through accruing personal wealth. In their lyrics, they described both their own earlier experiences of socio-economic difficulties and their more recent experiences of economic affluence, which they displayed as an example for other people to follow through their own individual agency (rather than through, for example, collective action or political-representative channels). Jay-Z also called on young people to follow him in his new discovery, which was Masonry; this was portrayed as a form of religion with the God of Peace as a central figure.

It was particularly notable that neither artist held high expectations of youth in regard to either political or civic participation. The lyrics conveyed a bleak and negative image of a society in which it is difficult to effect any change through action. The evidence from the accompanying focus groups suggested that messages from these hip-hop artists about social deprivation, unemployment and unfair treatment by the police were indeed taken up by some of the youth as a justification for their own political and civic disengagement and non-participation. Thus, these artists, instead of mobilising youth, appeared to be encouraging and reinforcing a passive stance towards society, the state and its institutions.

Social factors: Conclusions

It is clear from this review that there are many social factors that can influence young people's civic and political engagement. These include: the family; the peer group; the neighbourhood; education; youth, community and religious organisations and associations; youth sections of political parties; the mass media; and popular music. All of these sources of social influence can help to either promote or hinder youth engagement. However, caution is required in interpreting the direction of the causality that operates between these factors and the engagement of the developing individual, insofar as youth themselves, through their own discourse and behaviour, can have reciprocal effects on some of these sources of influence. In addition, care needs to be taken in generalising from the results of studies that are conducted in particular countries with particular groups of youth. Findings from CIVED, ICCS 2009, ICCS 2016 and PIDOP show that patterns of social influence can vary significantly from one country to another and from one demographic group to another within a country. We now turn to further consideration of the role that demographic factors play in this domain.

Demographic factors

Socio-economic status

The links between SES and civic and political engagement in adults have been extensively researched. Most often, a positive relationship has been found, with those who have a higher SES displaying higher levels of engagement

(Brady et al., 1995; Henn, Weinstein & Forrest, 2005; Nie et al., 1996; Verba et al., 1995). However, occasionally a negative relationship has been found (Simon & Grabow, 2010), and there is also evidence that SES is related differently to different types of civic and political participation. For example, Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley (2003) found that, among British adults, social class is positively linked to both individualistic activism and contacting officials but not to collective activism.

The SES of adults has traditionally been measured in terms of their employment, income and education. Of these, education is usually the most powerful predictor of many forms of political and civic participation, including voting, interest in politics, membership of civic associations and volunteering (Putnam, 2000). Brady et al. (1995) argue that formal education is so crucial because it helps to equip people with the skills that are needed to participate civically and politically. These include the abilities to speak and write well and to organise and take part in meetings.

In the case of youth, SES is usually measured in terms of parental employment, parental income or parental educational achievement. There is considerable evidence from studies conducted in the USA that youth who come from families with higher SES have more civic and political knowledge (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Niemi & Junn, 1998) as well as higher levels of participation (Hart, Atkins & Ford, 1998; Zukin et al., 2006). That said, Hart and Gullan (2010) found that education and social class were more strongly related to political activism in the USA in 1974 than in 1994. They also report that family income was related to political participation in 1974 but not in 1994. American society was very different at these two points in time in terms of its racial heterogeneity, poverty levels and political climate regarding activism, and these findings provide an important reminder of the possible historical specificity of the relationships between variables in this domain.

Additional, and more geographically extensive, evidence about the relationship between SES and civic and political engagement in youth was collected in CIVED, ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016, all of which collected their data from 14-year-old school students in a large number of countries (see Table 1.2, Chapter 1). All three studies used the number of books in the family home as reported by students in order to index their SES. This index has been found to correlate well with educational achievement (Beaton et al., 1996), and it is commonly interpreted as a proxy for the emphasis which a family places on education, the resources to which the young person has access for acquiring and supporting literacy, and the academic support which the family offers to the young person. (Note however that, with the increasing use of information technology instead of books as an educational resource, this measure may now be losing its usefulness as an index of SES.)

CIVED found that home literacy resources were correlated with political knowledge scores in all but one of the 28 countries that were studied (with Hong Kong being the exception) – the more books the 14-year-olds reported in their

homes, the better they performed on the test of political knowledge (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). ICCS 2009 and ICCS 2016 also used this same measure of home literacy resources to index SES but in addition used two further measures of SES, namely parental occupational status and parental educational attainment. Both studies likewise found broad and consistent evidence of a strong relationship between students' political knowledge and SES (with Indonesia and the Dominican Republic being the only exceptions where no relationship was found in ICCS 2009 – no exceptions were found in ICCS 2016) (Schulz et al., 2010, 2017).

These studies also looked at whether SES was related to future expected voting. All three studies found that there was cross-country variability: in some countries, there was a positive (but often a relatively weak) relationship, while in other countries there was no relationship at all. The ICCS studies also examined the relationship between SES and future expected active political participation more broadly (e.g., working on a political campaign or running for office). Here, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, a negative (but again, a relatively weak) relationship was found in some countries, while in other countries there was no relationship. As a general rule, the psychological factors (such as internal efficacy and political interest) had a far larger association with future expected activity than SES. In other words, the findings from these three studies suggest that, in 14-year-old youth, SES is fairly consistently related to political knowledge but is only sometimes (and weakly and inconsistently) related to future expected political participation.

Finally, it should be recalled from Chapter 2 that SES has also been found to be linked in at least some populations of youth to political interest (Bynner & Ashford, 1994), internal efficacy (Schulz, 2005; Schulz et al., 2017) and external efficacy (Flanagan et al., 2003; Soss, 1999; Wu, 2003). The links to interest and internal efficacy are especially noteworthy, given the important role that these two factors play as direct predictors of all forms of civic and political participation (Brunton-Smith, 2011).

Gender

Research into political participation among adults has revealed gender differences in both political interest and political engagement, with women tending to be less interested and less engaged than men (Burns, Schlozman & Verba, 2001; Karp & Banducci, 2008). These differences probably arise because women are constrained by psychological, familial and societal restraints (cf. Verba, Nie & Kim, 1978). Psychological restraints stem from women's internalisation of traditional gender roles which commonly restrict them to the domestic sphere, while familial restraints stem from the power dynamics and division of labour in the household which can hinder women from accessing opportunities for participation in the public sphere. Societal restraints stem from countries' policies on women's rights and gender equality and from structural gender inequalities

in pay, workforce participation, managerial and boardroom positions and the amount of unpaid care work undertaken by women (European Commission, 2016; OECD, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018), all of which can limit women's opportunities for developing the civic and political dispositions and skills that are required to participate civically and politically.

In the case of youth, as we saw in Chapter 2, gender differences exist in political knowledge, but these differences are variable in their direction. Males have higher levels of knowledge than females in the USA, especially knowledge about political parties, elections and protest activities (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Wolak & McDevitt, 2011). However, in other countries, females sometimes have higher levels of knowledge than males (Schulz et al., 2017). Wolak and McDevitt (2011) explored the various sources of knowledge and the characteristics of the environments which facilitate political knowledge for male vs. female youth in the USA. They found that while males tend to be motivated to learn more in a context of debate and conflict, females tend to be motivated to learn in more peaceful, less competitive (less partisan) environments, trends which are consistent with established gender roles in American society.

As we also saw in Chapter 2, there are inconsistent gender differences in levels of political interest as well, which sometimes show a male advantage (Bennett & Bennett, 1989; Dassonneville et al., 2012) and sometimes a female advantage (Haste & Hogan, 2006). In the case of internal efficacy, females sometimes have lower levels than males (Lyons & Menezes, 2012), although some studies have failed to find a gender difference (e.g., Vecchione & Caprara, 2009; Wu, 2003). It is possible that we are at the beginning of a change in the political socialisation of females and males in some countries, which has not yet generalised to other countries or cohorts. It remains to be seen whether these differences will lead to different participation levels during adulthood in the future.

There are also gender differences in the specific forms of participation that are undertaken by female and male youth. For example, in Australia, Vromen (2003) found that, among 18- to 34-year-olds, women are more likely to engage with 'activist' and 'communitarian' activities than men, while in the USA, Hooghe and Stolle (2004) found that, among 14-year-olds, girls are drawn towards social movement activities more than boys, while boys are drawn towards confrontational and radical activities more than girls.

PIDOP likewise found gender differences in the forms of participation used by males and females. The same measures of participation were used in all nine participating countries (for details of these countries, see Table 1.2, Chapter 1). These revealed that gendered patterns of participation varied across countries. For example, in Belgium, where data were collected from 16- to 26-year-old Belgian, Moroccan and Turkish youth, males engaged in non-conventional political actions (e.g., demonstrating) more frequently than females. However, females were just as politically interested as the males but, because they were confined to the domestic sphere more than the males, the females used the Internet for accessing news about the world more frequently than the males. They were also more likely to wear

protest bracelets and to engage in consumer activism than the males (Gavray, Born & Fournier, 2015). In England, where data were collected from 16- to 26-year-old English, Bangladeshi and Congolese youth, it was found that females exhibited higher levels of volunteering and non-conventional forms of participation (e.g., demonstrating and consumer activism), while younger males in particular exhibited higher levels of illegal forms of participation (e.g., throwing stones) than girls (Pachi & Barrett, 2012a). In Portugal, where Fernandes-Jesus et al. (2015) studied 15- to 29-year-old Portuguese, Angolan and Brazilian youth, the Angolan and Brazilian females were found to have higher levels of volunteering, consumer activism and donating money to social or political causes than the Angolan and Brazilian males, whereas this pattern was reversed among the Portuguese youth where males had higher levels of these three forms of activity than females. Thus, there were varying patterns of gender differences across the countries that were studied. These varying patterns presumably arose because the specific meanings that are attached to gender, and expectations of women's vs. men's rights, duties and behaviour, as well as policies to promote female participation, vary from one country to another, and sometimes from one ethnic group to another (Stockard & Johnson, 1992; Dion & Dion, 2001).

A gender-based finding that sometimes emerges is that females tend to have higher levels of civic than political participation, especially involvement through volunteering (Pachi & Barrett, 2011b; Stepick & Stepick, 2002). This is likely to be a consequence of the roles, values and duties that are traditionally ascribed to women. Cooperative and nurturing roles linked to care and responsibility for the well-being of others are often associated with females from an early age, based on societal gender stereotypes in which women are viewed as being warmer, more supportive, kinder and gentler than men (Beutel & Marini, 1995; Diekman & Eagly, 2000).

Ethnic minority status and migrant generational status

Research has also revealed widespread differences between ethnic majority and minority groups in patterns of civic and political engagement in most continents and countries (Stepick & Stepick, 2002; Torney-Purta, Barber & Wilkenfeld, 2007; Barrett & Zani, 2015b). For example, minority youth in America are less likely than majority youth to express their political opinions (e.g., by contacting officials, expressing opinions to the media and taking part in protests and petitions) (Zukin et al., 2006), and are also more likely to have lower levels of political knowledge (Hart & Atkins, 2002; Levinson, 2010, 2012; cf. the discussion of political knowledge in Chapter 2). In addition, American ethnic minority and majority youth participate in different kinds of volunteer activities, with the former participating more in activities relating to their own ethnic community and to other minorities (Stepick, Stepick & Labissiere, 2008).

PIDOP also found numerous differences between ethnic groups within all nine countries that were studied, not just in the patterns of civic and political participation

that were displayed by the youth, but also in the psychological and social factors that predicted the different forms of participation. It was also clear that this variability could not be reduced to broad majority vs. minority group differences within individual countries, as there were also significant differences between the two minority groups within each country (Barrett, 2012; Barrett & Zani, 2015b). Turkey provides a clear example. The data were collected from Turkish and Roma youth and from immigrant Turks who had resettled in Turkey from Bulgaria (to which earlier generations of Turks had migrated during the period of the Ottoman Empire). The youth were aged 16–26 years old. Significant differences in levels of civic and political participation were found between the three groups, with the resettler youth from Bulgaria showing the highest levels of participation, the Roma youth showing intermediate levels, and the native Turkish youth showing the lowest levels. In addition, levels of participation were predicted by different factors in the three groups: by institutional trust in the resettler youth, by the strength of negative emotions (such as anger about social problems) in the Roma youth, and by external efficacy in the Turkish youth such that the less responsive the government was perceived as being towards the views of citizens, the higher the levels of participation (Şener, 2015). At the same time, however, the quality of previous participation experiences significantly predicted levels of participation in all three groups (consistent with the arguments of Ferreira et al., 2012).

Levels of participation have also been found to vary according to migrant generational status. For example, first generation migrants in the USA (who were born and educated in another country prior to migrating) are less likely to be registered to vote than members of later generations (Stepick et al., 2008), and are also less participative in terms of actual voting, volunteering and boycotting products when compared with majority group individuals (Lopez & Marcelo, 2008). By contrast, second generation individuals (who were born and educated within the USA) tend to be more civically and politically participative than the first generation (Lopez & Marcelo, 2008; Stepick & Stepick, 2002).

A distinct generational grouping consists of youth who were born in another country but arrived in their country of residence at an early age, and so have grown up and received most or all of their education within that country. These individuals are sometimes referred to as the 1.5 generation. In cases where they lack formal citizenship of their country of residence because they entered the country with their parents illegally, these individuals can show a distinct pattern of engagement. This is because they do not have legal citizenship in that country and so have a distinctive orientation towards that country; however, they are educated to the same level as their native peers and they also have native proficiency in the national language (unlike the first generation). These youth often have a good understanding of the society in which they live and of its institutional structures. It has been found that, in the USA, due to their knowledge and skills, 1.5 generation youth tend to act on behalf of other, less well-positioned, minority and migrant individuals, and undertake voluntary and community service and engage in political leadership (Seif, 2010).

Because ethnic minority individuals frequently have lower SES than members of the ethnic majority group within a country, it is arguable that at least some of the differences in levels of engagement between minority and majority youth stem from the reduced opportunities for participating and for acquiring civic skills that are associated with lower SES and lower educational attainment (Diemer & Li, 2011; Hart & Atkins, 2002; Levinson, 2012). Lower levels of participation among minority youth may also be due to institutional and social discrimination based on their ethnicity, which generates feelings of exclusion from the society in which they have been born and lived; minority youth may also internalise the negative stereotypes and prejudice against their ethnic group with the consequence that they feel they do not have the right or the ability to engage with official societal forms of participation (Pachi, 2015; Pachi et al., 2011). However, sometimes experiences of discrimination by members of the majority society and of economic disadvantage and deprivation may actually play a galvanising role – such experiences can stimulate minority youth into civic or political activity (Bedolla, 2000; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Rumbaut, 2008; Stepick et al., 2008; Wray-Lake et al., 2008).

The relationships between ethnicity and civic and political engagement are therefore complex and are the product of a large set of factors. In addition, the patterns of engagement that are displayed by any given individual are often linked not only to their ethnicity or gender, but to the intersection between their ethnicity and gender within a particular locale and country. For example, Bogard and Sherrod (2008) studied 13- to 20-year-old youth who attended high school in the USA. The sample included European American, African American, Hispanic, Asian and other or mixed ethnicity youth. Examining these youths' patterns of civic and political engagement, they found that these patterns were linked to complex multiple interactions between the specific ethnicity of the individual, their gender and their levels of community and school participation.

Similar findings concerning interactions between ethnicity and gender that are distinctive to particular locales and countries (and sometimes to particular age groups as well) also emerged from the quantitative research conducted by PIDOP (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2015; Gavray et al., 2015; Pachi & Barrett, 2012b, 2012c). The accompanying qualitative focus groups helped to throw light on these interactions. For example, the focus groups conducted with the English, Bangladeshi and Congolese youth in England (Pachi et al., 2011) revealed that gender differences in views about women's rights were much more pronounced among the female Bangladeshi participants than any other subgroup (see the discussion in Chapter 1). These young women deplored their parents' traditional cultural view that women should restrict themselves to the domestic sphere and not get involved with issues outside the home either civically or politically. However, only the Bangladeshi females expressed this point of view. The focus groups further revealed broader frustrations and tensions arising from the incongruence between the values of the home ethnic and religious culture and the values of wider British society; this broader issue was voiced by both

the Bangladeshi and Congolese females, but in different ways (Pachi & Barrett, 2014). In the case of the Bangladeshi females, they noted that female confinement to the home actually stood in contrast to the Muslim discourse of female empowerment, and to the putative equality of women and men privately, socially and politically espoused by Islam. By contrast, the Congolese young women also talked about the incongruence of female roles in Congolese and British cultures but did so in cultural rather than religious terms. They saw Congolese cultural prescriptions on gender roles as being inhibitory for any type of civic or political engagement. These findings align with the literature on ethnic minority women and the pressures and challenges they face (e.g., Dion & Dion, 2001; Maira, 2002; Stockard & Johnson, 1992) and underline the need for culturally specific research which allows for a deeper exploration and understanding of precisely how ethnicity and gender (and age) intersect in generating the concerns, interests and patterns of engagement of specific subgroups of minority youth in particular countries and locales.

Demographic factors: Conclusions

This review of demographic factors reveals that there are widespread differences in young people's civic and political engagement as a function of their SES, gender and ethnicity. However, the differences that have been found are by no means either universal or consistent. Furthermore, the differences that are linked to demographic categories are complex, with patterns of engagement sometimes being specific to particular subgroups defined in terms of the intersection between two or more demographic categories (e.g., specific to girls of a particular age with particular ethnic affiliations who are living in a particular locale in a particular country). The picture that emerges from this body of research is that the lives of young people show enormous heterogeneity as a function of SES, gender, ethnicity, locale and national context, and their civic and political interests and concerns inevitably vary accordingly. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that their patterns of civic and political engagement and participation vary as well and are often specific to the particular demographic niches which they occupy.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have reviewed the research literature on the social and demographic factors that are related to young people's civic and political engagement. As we have seen, there are many social factors linked to youth engagement and participation, as well as considerable demographic variation in patterns of youth engagement and participation. While the research that has been conducted to date has undoubtedly been extremely informative about both social and demographic factors, there are several issues that would benefit from further research.

For example, although there has been a great deal of research into the role of the family, the school and youth organisations, there has been far less research

into the role of the mass media. For example, little attention has been paid to the effects of young people's consumption of news and current affairs from different types of mass media outlets (e.g., broadsheet newspapers and public service television news vs. tabloid newspapers and commercial television news) or the effects of their consumption of entertainment, commercial advertising and political advertising on their civic and political engagement. The phenomenon of media malaise and the concept of a virtuous circle, as well as the possibility that different effects might arise from different types of media content, need much more extensive investigation in relationship to young people than has been undertaken to date.

Additional research is also required into the role of popular music. While the work of Street (2003, 2012) and Pachi and Barrett (2015) has made a useful start here, many more music genres need to be explored for the messages that they communicate either explicitly or implicitly to young people in relationship to the civic and political worlds. Young people's perception, reception and appropriation of these messages also need to be properly explored. Given the ubiquitous role that popular music plays in the lives of most young people today, this line of research would seem to be particularly important to pursue.

More generally, much greater attention also needs to be paid to the social and psychological *processes* that facilitate young people's adoption of the civic and political interests, values and practices that are modelled by their parents, teachers and peers. In addition to exploring how and why some young people adopt the orientations and practices of other people in their environments, this research also needs to explore how and why some young people fail to adopt, or even actively resist, the messages that are communicated to them by other people. And, in pursuing this line of research, caution will need to be exercised in interpreting the causality that operates between the sources of influence and the engagement of developing youth, insofar as young people themselves, through their own discourse and behaviour, can have reciprocal effects on other people. This means that the social and psychological processes underlying patterns of social influence will need to be explored using appropriate research methods that are able to identify the direction of causality (e.g., longitudinal panel designs).

Another phenomenon that still needs to be investigated is the process through which citizenship behaviours that are practised within small, intimate groups subsequently come to be extended to larger frames of reference such as the neighbourhood community, the wider locale in which they live and indeed the polity (if they are extended that far). Research needs to explore how this generalisation takes place and the role of emotional bonds, motivations and the available political opportunity structures in the process.

There has also been very little research into how young people in general perceive and feel about the youth sections of political parties. While some attention has been paid to the perceptions and feelings of those individuals who join these sections, little attention has been paid to the views of those who do not join them. Such research could be of considerable benefit to political parties seeking

to expand the membership of their youth sections, particularly if it uncovers negative perceptions of these youth sections and identifies the particular features of youth sections that are held in negative regard.

As far as demographic factors are concerned, the research has consistently identified SES as one of the most important factors that is related to variability in youth civic and political engagement, although this relationship has been found to vary depending on whether current engagement or future expected engagement is involved. The relationship may also vary depending on whether individual or collective activism is involved. There is clearly much more work that needs to be conducted to unpack why links between SES and engagement might differ according to time frame and type of activism.

Finally, it is worth reiterating here once again that the research into social and demographic factors that has been reviewed in this chapter leads to the same conclusion as the research on psychological factors that was reviewed in the previous chapter: namely, that patterns of youth engagement and participation, and the factors that predict these patterns, sometimes vary according to the intersections between multiple demographic factors, with these patterns sometimes being specific to particular subgroups that are defined through the intersection of nation, ethnicity, gender, age, SES and locale. Thus, future research, if it is to cast meaningful light on how youth civic and political engagement is generated, will need to pay much greater attention to the social processes that occur within highly specific subgroups in the youth population, rather than assuming that social processes that are found in one particular subgroup of youth will necessarily occur in other subgroups.

It will also be important for future research to bear in mind that the social and demographic niches that youth inhabit are themselves always situated within much broader macro contexts that are characterised by particular cultural, economic, political and institutional features. Importantly, youth civic and political engagement is related not only to social and demographic factors but also to the broader macro contexts within which young people live. In the next chapter, we turn to this body of research that has been conducted on the links between young people's civic and political engagement and their macro societal contexts.