University of Strathclyde

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Social Work and Social Policy

What We Do Together: Exploring Volunteering Using the Concept of Associational Life

David Bomark

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

2024

Declaration of authenticity and author's rights

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.

The copyright of this thesis belongs to the author under the terms of the United Kingdom Copyright Acts as qualified by University of Strathclyde Regulation 3.50. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this thesis.

Signed:

Date: 21/06/2024

Acknowledgements

First, I want to thank my supervisors, Prof. Daniela Sime, Prof. Bernard Harris, Mr. Matthew Linning, and Ms. Deborah Maltman. Your support and comments have been invaluable, and have enabled me to become a better researcher. I am also grateful for the comments my reviewers, Prof. Ian Greener, Dr. Louise Brangan, and Prof. Marion Henderson, have given me over the course of this journey.

I also want to thank Volunteer Scotland who created this PhD opportunity together with my supervisors. The resources and contact network you provided ensured the success of this thesis. My gratitude also extends to Volunteer Glasgow and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire, who helped me recruit participants for this study. And speaking of, I also want to thank all of the stakeholders from various organisations, clubs, and associations, the individuals who took the time to complete my survey, and the individuals interviewed for this thesis. Without you, there would be no thesis.

I also want to thank my fellow Social Work and Social Policy cohort of PhD students: Silvia Behrens, Sinenhlanhla Zondo, Karyn Mabon, and Natalie Dewison. Our online meetings during the early stages of the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, and later in person, has been an important source of encouragement, reassurance, and hope. I have also met other wonderful people on this journey: Mark Cassidy, Jushuai Song, Christine Sousa Marmoy, and Anya Kaufman. And of course, the community of PhD students in the Lord Hope building.

Also, thank you to Derek for putting up with me during this time.

Abstract

This thesis develops knowledge about volunteering as an associational activity and how it is different from other types of associational life. Associational life refers to the activities that people *do* together with others, including volunteering. In an increasingly individualised society, this thesis argues that volunteering cannot be studied in isolation, as the motivation to volunteer is part of a wider narrative. As such, volunteering practices need to be studied in relation to other associational activities that individuals take part in, like sports, civil society, and hobbies. The thesis takes a holistic, comprehensive approach to associational life to understand the extent to which volunteering differs from other associational activities in contemporary society. The thesis used relational sociology as its central theoretical framework to explore volunteering as a form of associational life, also drawing on concepts of social capital and habitus, thick and thin communities, and weak and strong ties. The empirical study used a mixed methods design, including a survey with 294 respondents from two local authorities in Scotland, one urban and one rural, and 24 interviews with stakeholders from associations and individuals about their participation in different activities.

The key findings emerging from the study are that volunteering was less affected by geography and the presence of dependent children in the household than participation in other types of associational life. It also shows that volunteering was less reliant on friends than other types of associational activities, and that unlike many other types of associational life, volunteering can offer stability and continuity over time, which benefits organisations that offer opportunities both for volunteering and participation.

This thesis shows that volunteering differs from other types of associational activities people engage in and proposes a more holistic approach to future research, using associational life in order to fully understand volunteering in contemporary society.

Contents

List of figures

List of tables

1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to further understand how people engage in volunteering by comparing it to how people engage in other types of associational activities. Due to the societal shift towards a more individualised and informalised society, the motivation to volunteer is increasingly linked to the wider narrative of a person's life. Because of this shift, to fully understand how people engage in volunteering there is a need for a more holistic approach to also understand how people engage in other types of associational activities. Researching volunteering in a wider societal context enables a deeper understanding of the role that volunteering has in people's lives and how this might differ from other types of associational life that people do in association with others. It is hoped this work will benefit voluntary sector organisations by providing a better understanding of how people volunteer in a more individualised and informalised social context.

To undertake this research, the concept of associational life is applied in this thesis to mean any formal and informal activity that people *do* together with other people that have some level of continuity and are discretionary in nature. This introductory chapter provides background information to the study and sets out why it is important to study volunteering in this way. It starts by situating the study in its societal context, providing a rationale for the research. It then describes the theoretical approach that was used to study volunteering and other types of activities people engage in, and the methods that were used. The chapter ends with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Rationale for study

This study aims to advance the knowledge on how people engage in volunteering in a contemporary societal context by taking into account that the ways people engage with others have changed. Due to these changes, understanding volunteering in contemporary society needs to take a holistic approach as the motivation to volunteer, or to be part of any other activity, is not an isolated decision but part of the wider narrative a person creates about

their life. This section will situate this study in a contemporary societal context, describe how things have changed during the last fifty years or so, and outline why this research is needed.

The ever-changing state of society has been the focus of many scholars. It was observed by de Condorcet in the eighteenth century as he said that every generation see the previous as more civic minded than themselves (Stolle and Hooghe, 2005). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries both Simmel (1950) and Tönnies (1974) saw industrialisation and people moving to the cities as detrimental to society and communities. More recently, Putnam (2000) viewed the decline in formal membership based groups as a sign of societal decline. While these changes are often presented as negative and framed as if the sense of community is lost, they ought to be viewed as neutral and instead try to understand them without preconceived notions on what is good or bad for society. By taking on a neutral perspective, this offers an opportunity to *understand* these changes, rather than working against it and keep hold of what *used* to be.

The changes we are currently experiencing reflect the individualisation of society, which is also known as the atomisation of society. How people see themselves has shifted from the collective to the individual, where people now "stage and cobble together their biographies themselves" (Becker, 1994, p. 13) rather than receiving, or being 'given', an identity by their community (Bauman, 2000). One effect of this shift from the collective to the individual is that friendships have increased in importance as these are 'chosen' relationships, rather than family which is structural (Spencer and Pahl, 2006; Delanty, 2013), and that people are socialising with others in more informal ways than before (van Ingen and Dekker, 2011).

This individualisation process has also had an impact on volunteering, which has become more episodic, and a new type of volunteering has emerged which is more reflexive and is about flexibility and the volunteer's individual needs rather than to be part of a collective (Hustinx *et al.*, 2016). The professionalisation of the voluntary sector might also be a successful adaptation to counteract these changes, by giving a person a wage for something that previously was done by volunteers. This could also explain the increased interest in understanding how to successfully recruit and retain volunteers (Ringuet-Riot *et al.*, 2014; Studer, 2016; Alfes, Antunes and Shantz, 2017).

The societal shift described above towards a more individualised society requires an approach that situates volunteering as just one of many aspects of a person's life. To understand volunteering is to also understand how volunteering is similar or different from other associational activities, and why these differences might exist. This shift towards a more individualised society also means that relationships play a key role to understand why and how people engage in volunteering and other activities. The two research questions that have guided this research are:

1. In what ways does volunteering differ from other types of associational life?
2. What role do relationships play in volunteering and other types of associational life?

To do this, this study has reassessed how research on volunteering ought to be done by introducing a conceptual tool developed for this thesis, associational life, and to apply relational sociology as the theoretical framework. The original contribution to knowledge this thesis provides is researching volunteering by taking into account these societal changes, using the concept of associational life, and applying a framework of relational sociology. The following sections provide an overview of the concept of associational life, the theoretical framework which is based on relational sociology, and the methodology that was used to undertake this research.

1.2 Associational life

To be able to study volunteering in the holistic manner that the previous section identified, there was a need to find a framework to understand people's social life that can include volunteering and all activities that are both formal and informal. A conceptualization of the term 'associational life' was made to encompass this. The term 'associational life' is not new, but it has previously been used inconsistently to mean engagement in organised groups and societies (e.g. Schofer and Longhofer, 2011; van Ingen and Dekker, 2011; Chan, 2014), as a synonym for the third sector or civil society (Andrews, Cowell and Downe, 2008; Jailobaeva, 2008; Evers, 2013; Bunyan, 2014), or as a way to describe democratisation processes in an African context (Tostensen, Tvedten and Vaa, 2001; Meagher, 2010).

The conceptualization of 'associational life' used here focuses on people *doing* an activity *together* with others that has some semblance of continuity to it and is discretionary. While your everyday cooking with your family is not

associational life, a group of friends getting together on a regular basis to cook *is* associational life. Every activity that people engage in that meets these criteria (*doing together*, some level of *continuity*, *discretionary*) is a type of associational life. This means that a wide variety of activities can be included under the wider umbrella term of 'associational life', such as formal clubs and associations such as sports organisations and political parties, volunteering, but also informal groups like board games clubs or people playing football with their friends on a regular basis. By being able to include both formal and informal activities, and whether an activity takes place often or seldom, the concept of associational life is able to holistically capture what people *do together with others*. The inclusion of both the formal and informal is needed to be able to accommodate the societal shift towards a more informal and individualised way of engaging with others.

By comparing volunteering, which in most cases is a type of associational life, to other types of associational life, this study can highlight in what ways volunteering is different from other types of activities, which in turn provides an opportunity to understand the role that volunteering holds in contemporary society. Previous studies on volunteering in comparison to other activities have been focused on specific perspectives, such as the study by Brodie *et al.* (2011) which considered how engagement in non-voluntary activities relate to the third sector. By adopting the concept of associational life, a broader understanding of the role that volunteering plays in people's lives can be obtained by comparing it to other activities, which also takes into account the social shift towards a more individualised and informal society.

1.3 Theoretical approach

Relationships are at the core of this study, as associational life *is* people's relationships with others, which inform their involvement in volunteering and other types of associational life. As such, the overarching theoretical framework that has been utilised for this thesis is Donati and Archer's relational sociology (2015). This approach is able to account for both structure and agency, as it situates relationships in the (social) world: 'the decisions, choices, and actions of each of us are not purely individual acts, but are arrived at in relation to and with others' (Donati and Archer, 2015, p. 15). Hence, the world around us informs the choices that we make, or are able to make, the people around us also influence these decisions, so the agency people have in their life is *in relation to* the world around them.

Within this greater framework of relational sociology, a toolbox consisting of additional social research concepts is used to further explore the relationships that makes up associational life. The main concept is social capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Putnam, 2000), which aids in understanding the relationships between people and the different activities. Bourdieu's concept of habitus, which is the social setting we reside within that informs our choices and way of living, is key as it is also about relationships between people: it is through distinguishing yourself, and who else is in your group, from others that the habitus comes into existence. Related to the concept social capital are the concepts of 'weak' and 'strong' ties (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Considering the people that function as connections between networks of people can aid further understanding of how relationships pan out in different circumstances or locations. These connections are weak ties, signifying connections between groups, and strong ties, connections between people within groups. Networks are therefore also made up of different combinations of these ties. The concepts of thick and thin communities (Dotson, 2017) are similar to the weak and strong ties, but instead of looking at the connection points between networks of people, it is person-centred and is concerned with how embedded a person is within a network of people. A thick community means that a person does most activities with the same constellation of people, while a thin community means that people have different groups of people that they do different things with. Neither weak or strong ties or thick and thin communities are value-based concepts, as they are used to describe relationships. Both concepts will aid in further our understanding of volunteering and other types of associational life.

1.4 Methodological approach

This study is a mixed methods study, employing both a survey and interviews to facilitate an understanding of what people's engagement in associational life looks like and also how people understand their own involvement in associational life. The research included two local authority areas in Scotland to explore if there are any differences between urban and rural locations: Glasgow City Council and South Ayrshire Council respectively. As this study is using a novel conceptualisation of associational life to understand how people engage in social life, no previous data on this exists, it was decided to utilise an exploratory survey to enable an understanding of what participation in associational life looks like. In total, 294 survey responses were collected. The aim of the survey was to understand what participation looks like, which then could be explored in the qualitative interviews. The survey was designed to

explore what type of activities people engage in, such as sports, hobbies, religious groups, and activism, as well as *how* they engage in these activities and with *whom*. To collect this data, the survey addressed the types of activities the respondents took part in, what type of location it took place in, who introduced them to the different activities, and who they engaged with. This data was then analysed using mainly descriptive statistics, which then informed the interviews with individuals about their associational life.

The qualitative data collection consisted of 24 interviews. Initially, 14 interviews were carried out with people from a range of organisations and clubs to understand who engages with the organisation, club, or group they were involved with, how their participants or members found their way to the activity, and if they could see any patterns to the engagement. These participants were for the most part recruited through Volunteer Glasgow and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire and were done simultaneously as the survey and served the same purpose of exploring what participation in associational life looks like. Ten further interviews were carried out online with volunteers from the survey, as data collection took place during the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions were in place. These semi-structured interviews also used Miro-boards to visualise the different associations and group activities that the individuals participated in and their reflections on these.

1.5 Structure of thesis

This thesis has seven chapters. The second chapter, *Literature Review,* reviews existing evidence on volunteering and other types of associational life and critically analyses how society has changed to become more individualised and informalised, and how this has affected volunteering. This chapter also introduces the concept of associational life and outlines how it has been used in the thesis. This chapter reviews what previous research tells us about participation in associational life and volunteering. It also identifies the existing gaps in relation to the links between volunteering and other types of associational life and formulate the two research questions that guided this research: 'In what ways does volunteering differ from other types of associational life?' and 'What roles do relationships play in volunteering and other types of associational life?'

The third chapter describes the theoretical framework that has been used in this thesis to understand volunteering and other types of associational life. It starts by presenting relational sociology as the overarching framework that has

guided this thesis, and continues to discuss how theoretical concepts like social capital, 'thick' and 'thin' communities, 'weak' and 'strong' ties, and 'third places' are relevant to understanding individuals' social connections, and how these have been used within the framework of relational sociology.

Chapter four describes the methodology that was used for this study. It starts by outlining the philosophical paradigm that this thesis has made use of, to then give a rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach. This chapter describes in detail how the data collection was completed and the approach to data analysis. The last section of this chapter outlines the ethical principles followed throughout the study.

Chapter five is the first of two data chapters. This chapter directly answers the first research question. This chapter illustrates how volunteering is different from other types of associational life and considers how geography and socioeconomic status affect participation. The chapter shows that volunteering is less affected by location and family life, especially the effect the presence of children in a household has on participation in volunteering and associational life, suggesting that volunteering is more stable than other types of associational life. It also describes what the transition between different activities can be like, and that certain groups benefit from there being opportunities to engage in an organisation both as a volunteer and participant, as this enables transition between the two. The chapter also highlights the benefits and skills individuals develop when they engage in volunteering and other forms of associational life.

While chapter five explores the societal structure in which people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, chapter six is concerned with people's reflections on their own participation in volunteering and other types of associational lives, their relationships, and their agency. This chapter starts by discussing how individuals' upbringing might affect how people engage in different activities, but also their reflexivity on why people choose to engage in associational life. It also analyses the different paths that participants said they followed to become involved with volunteering and other types of associational life, and the role that friends, and sociability in general, played in the participants' social lives. This chapter highlights the differences between generations, specifically how they reflect upon their participation in associational life, where the younger generation is showing evidence of increased individualisation by reflecting on their participation choices in more

depth than the older generation. Also, the younger generation have more separation between the different groups of people they engage with, while for the older generation there is less separation. This chapter also discusses these differences from the perspective of them being generational or life course differences.

The seventh chapter is a discussion chapter and summarises the key findings and highlights the contribution to knowledge that this thesis is providing, both in terms of findings and conceptual tools. This chapter ends with some recommendations for practice and policy that would support individuals' participation in volunteering and other types of associational lives and volunteering in Scotland and beyond. The last chapter is the conclusion, and revisits the rationale for undertaking the research and highlights the limitations of this research and identifies areas that would benefit from future research.

2 Literature review

This chapter reviews the current state of knowledge about how volunteering relates to other types of activities. It starts by situating the research in a wider societal context, where the ways people engage with others have become more informal due to the individualisation of society. This section also outlines the gap in knowledge that this thesis is addressing. The second section defines the concept of *associational life*, which is used in this thesis to link volunteering to other types of activities people do with others. The third section reviews the literature on participation in volunteering and associational life and provides a rationale for what this research has focused on and how it contributes to knowledge about the voluntary sector. This section is divided into four parts, each taking a closer look at what is known about how geographic location, socio-economic status, family life, and age influence a person's participation in associational life and volunteering. The fourth section emphasises the need to understand participation beyond organised clubs and associations and looks at the relationships that constitute these clubs and associations. The last section summarises the chapter and highlights the identified gaps in knowledge. This section also presents the research questions that guided the empirical work of this thesis.

2.1 Conditions for volunteering have changed

To understand volunteering in contemporary society, this first section contextualises people's engagement in group activities and volunteering in a wider societal context and explores how the ways people engage in activities with others have changed over time. It also accounts for how sociology has framed this engagement over time, including a discussion of the 'loss of community' claim, and what the empirical evidence can tell us about these changes. It concludes with a discussion on how these societal changes form the basis of how *engagement* is conceptualised in this thesis.

Early twentieth century sociologists attributed changes in social life to urbanisation, as an effect of industrialisation, and were concerned with how

urban and rural life affected people's lives. For Tönnies (1974), rural life was characterised by traditional bonds such as kinship and family that were personal, while urban life was seen as informal and impersonal, although he did not explicitly see rural life as necessarily better. Simmel (1950) was more pessimistic, as he argued that urban life inhibited people from building long-term, sustainable relationships with others because people in cities tended to rely on temporary bonds, which he thought was not the case in rural locations. Nostalgia also plays a role in this, where people think community is declining, where, as far back as the late 18th century, the French philosopher and mathematician de Condorcet argued that society is becoming less civic minded with every new generation (Stolle and Hooghe, 2005). More recent evidence showed that 63% of the British population believe that 'life was better' when they were younger (Gaston and Hilhorst, 2018). However, people's memories idealise the past and do not necessarily reflect the reality of community life (Bourke, 1994) and need to be critically examined, as these nostalgic views of the past 'favor deterministic models over a nuanced understanding' (Hampton and Wellman, 2018, p. 643) of what community life was like.

Putnam argues in his book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), that the reason for this alleged erosion of community life is because people are engaging less in organised clubs and associations. Although his argument is based on membership levels, which is not necessarily a precise measure for how people engage with others (Painter II and Paxton, 2014), he attributed this decline in social engagement to increased commuting distances, electronic entertainment like television and the Internet, time constraints and, more importantly, to a generational change where the younger generation was more private than the previous and tended to engage with others mainly in informal settings. This shift is referred to as the individualisation or atomisation of society in the literature (Taylor, 1985, pp. 187–210; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2011), which some would argue is a reflection of a postmodern society, with a shift in emphasis from the collective to the individual. This has led to the 'self' becoming a 'project' or 'task' people need to engage in *becoming* who they are, as opposed to being 'given' an identity by the collective or community (Bauman, 2000, p. 31). Becker (1994), in the same vein, wrote: 'the individual must produce, stage and cobble together their biographies themselves' (1994, p. 13). The effect of this is assumed to be an increased personal freedom to 'become' whoever individuals want to be, and life is perceived to have endless opportunities. Unfortunately, this also means that people can lose the security of being part of a collective, and instead have to

deal with issues alone (Dawson, 2012). This means that 'the individual is penalised harshly not only for personal failure, but also for sheer bad luck in a highly competitive and relentlessly harsh social environment' (McGuigan, 2014, p. 234). Social structures like class and racism may prevent people from having equal opportunities and individuals might blame themselves for this 'failure' instead of considering these failings as structural issues (Eppard, Schubert and Giroux, 2018). As such, the idea of there being personal freedom, in itself a modern concept, may be perceived as an essential trait of being human. Individualisation, though, is a Western ideal which is an impossible goal for people in other parts of the world (Calhoun, 2003). The links between an individualised society and neoliberalism have also been explored, where issues that rural communities face have been reformulated as failures of individuals, rather than societal issues created by neoliberal policies (Cheshire and Lawrence, 2005), similarly to the exploitation of workers in the gig economy (Montgomery and Baglioni, 2023).

In terms of how this shift from collective to individual affects people's social lives and who they interact with, the postmodern engagement is defined by elective relations rather than those predicated on proximity and kinship or obligation, which characterised pre-modern societies (Delanty, 2013). While Simmel described informal bonds as inferior to long-lasting relationships, a postmodern understanding instead embraces the informal, and focuses on people's choices of who they want to interact with; a relationship is an *experienced* kinship and is not characterised by a structural relationship, such as family or clan (Nancy, 1991). Pahl (2000) and Spencer and Pahl (2006) further claim that the importance of friendships has increased at the expense of family, kin and geographic location. Maffesoli (1996, 2016) instead describes this shift as 'neo-tribalist', as these relationships still provide emotional bonds, although they might be fleeting and irregular, instead of the solid and long-lasting relationships of pre-modern communities. While friendships can be more fleeting and less permanent than family bonds in everyday life, people are still attributing the same long-term commitment and permanency to friendships that people are associating with family (Tannen, 2016). However, the claim that friendships have taken over the role of the family in contemporary society should not be interpreted as a fact, but that other relationships can play the same role that family had in the past. In the LGBTQIA+ community, where the concept of the *chosen family* has long been a way to show the importance, or perhaps even necessity, of chosen family over biological family, friends are often a *complement* rather than a *replacement* of

biological family (Hull and Ortyl, 2019). What these studies suggest is that rather than replacing the family, the importance of friends has increased, and friends play a larger role in people's lives than before. This postmodern understanding of community and elective relations should not be understood as a decline or loss of relationships, but rather that there has been a *change* in how we engage with others.

Loneliness, and arguments about there being a 'loneliness epidemic' (e.g. Howe, 2019) are also related to these societal changes discussed above. The increase of single-person households has sometimes been given as 'proof' of an increase in loneliness. However, while there is an increase in single-person households, with the number of households increasing faster than population number in Scotland (National Records of Scotland, 2023), other research shows no correlation between single-person households and loneliness, as countries with high rates of single-person households also report low levels of loneliness (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019a). In fact, it has also been suggested that the rise of single-person households has a positive effect on people's social life (Klinenberg, 2013). The key here is to understand the difference between one being alone and feeling lonely, The Scottish Government (2018a) made the distinction between 'social isolation' and 'loneliness' in their *A Connected Scotland* strategy. Young people experience more loneliness, but this decreases with age and plateaus when people reach their 50s, to then increase again around the age of 75, often due to loss of a partner and ill health (Hawkley *et al.*, 2019; Volunteer Scotland, 2019). The evidence suggests that, while loneliness is a real issue, this is more related to socio-economic factors (Means and Evans, 2012; Victor and Pikhartova, 2020) rather than age (Trzesniewski and Donnellan, 2010; Clark, Loxton and Tobin, 2015; Hawkley *et al.*, 2019; Ortiz-Ospina, 2019b).

While loneliness is likely due to life course differences, there are generational differences stemming from these wider societal changes. The literature on generational differences depicts the younger generation as different from previous generations in relation to engagement in different activities. While there is no clear-cut definition of this younger generation, it usually refers to individuals born from the early 1980s to the late 1990s, which has been described as the 'Generation Me' as opposed to the earlier 'Generation We' (Twenge, Campbell and Freeman, 2012). This generation are also called 'millennials', a term coined by Strauss and Howe (1991), as they entered adulthood around the turn of the millennium, and have an increased focus on

relationships (Rainer and Rainer, 2011) and leisure (Winograd and Hais, 2014) compared to previous generations. While this description might be interpreted as the younger generation being self-centred, this should instead be interpreted through the lens of an individualised world view. This generation shows the same willingness to engage in civic society as previous generations (Kovic and Hänsli, 2018), but the way they do this is different, even when taking life course differences into account. While they do not engage in civic life to the same extent as their older colleagues, when they do, they are more likely to do so in a civic or health related organisation than religious organisations, while previous generations were more likely to be involved with these collective focused organisations (Ertas, 2016).

Further, looking at the empirical evidence of the changes in how people engage with each other, this must go beyond focusing on membership levels and engagement in formal associations. A membership of an organisation does not fully capture how people engage with others as the ways people socialise has changed. Instead of meeting with friends at organised gatherings, like clubs or societies, people are more likely to see their friends in informal settings and fewer people have active memberships in organisations (Painter II and Paxton, 2014). Individuals are still engaging with other people, but in informal settings (Halpern, 2005; van Ingen and Dekker, 2011), much like the bowling clubs in America that Putnam (2000) wrote about. Other studies have also found similar shifts and patterns, such as a decline in church attendance in 51 countries since the 1970s (van Ingen and Moor, 2015). Even the increase in running as a leisure activity might be linked to an individualised societal culture, as it lends itself well as a solitary activity (Llopis-Goig, 2014).

While Putnam saw this shift as a negative, van Ingen and Dekker (2011) offer a different perspective, suggesting that the consequences of decreased engagement in formalised associational life are not always detrimental – at least not for everyone. While they found that organised associational life is decreasing for all groups in the Dutch society, a trend that will continue with each generation, the informalisation of group activities correlated with education levels, meaning that well-educated individuals were more likely to engage in informal group activities. As education levels increase, the authors predicted that informalised leisure activities would increase as well. While their data was limited to data from the Netherlands, other studies have also reported that low education levels are correlated with solitary leisure activities (Roeters, 2018), meaning that those with less education might also be the most

isolated in society. Some also argue that this informalisation has led to people engaging less with people that are different from themselves and might have made our society more disconnected (Yates, 2021). This might change the 'map' of how engaging in a local community looks, as there might be groups of people that are more negatively affected than others that might benefit from the structure that formal engagement brings.

Volunteering has also been affected by this individualised and informal shift, where education levels played a part. In a Scotland based study, the participation rates for adults with a degree or professional qualification was at 38%, while the participation rates for adults with no qualifications were at 12% (Volunteer Scotland, 2021). While there has been a decline in people volunteering in Scotland, where 31% of the Scottish population over the age of 16 said they volunteered in 2008 and 26% said they volunteered in 2019, data on volunteering is more complex than volunteering rates reported. Data from the Scottish Household Survey show that 56% of all volunteers in Scotland are 'low-intensity' volunteers, meaning that they volunteer five hours or less per month, and deliver only 11% of all the volunteering hours. This means that more than half of the volunteers are volunteering either intermittently or in roles which do not take up much of their time. On the other hand, there are the high-intensity volunteers, which only make up 19% of volunteers, but they deliver 65% of all the volunteering hours in Scotland (Volunteer Scotland, 2018). When looking at the mean hours spent volunteering per four-week period by age, this goes up significantly for the age groups above 45 (Volunteer Scotland, 2021). While this could be explained by these groups having more time to volunteer due to their children being adults or retirement, we do not yet know if this is age related or if subsequent generations will engage in volunteering less, as the individualisation and informalisation process continues.

A shift to a more individualised and informal way of engaging in volunteering has been discussed in the literature on volunteering. Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) described this new way of engaging in volunteering as more reflexive and individualised. This has since been defined by Hustinx et al. (2016) as:

> A style of volunteering framed through the individual world of experience, in which the nature of involvement depends on individual preferences and needs. Reflexive volunteers conduct more specialized roles and activities, demand a high level of flexibility, and they have relatively weak feelings of

identification with the organization or belonging to a volunteer group. (p. 350)

This reflexive style follows the same lines as what Bauman (2000) and Becker (1994) described as part of the individual's self-made identity. This shift can also be seen in how volunteering organisations take into consideration their volunteers 'uniqueness' and their personal needs (Ringuet-Riot *et al.*, 2014; Studer, 2016; Alfes, Antunes and Shantz, 2017). Before, volunteering organisations had a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to what they could offer volunteers, whereas now organisations give more consideration to the volunteers' needs and preferences during recruitment. The potential problems that could arise from this are an instability within volunteering organisations, especially if they depend on volunteers to carry out some of their work, as these changes likely mean increased costs to accommodate volunteers' preferences and episodic involvement (Hustinx *et al.*, 2016). In addition to the volunteers changing, there has also been a professionalisation of the voluntary sector, where voluntary organisations are adopting management styles of the private sector (Maier, Meyer and Steinbereithner, 2016), which has led to concerns about members and volunteers becoming 'clients' and increasing challenges around finding funds for organisations to function (Skocpol, 2003; Hwang and Powell, 2009). However, these concerns seem to be unfounded, as membership influence does not diminish when professionals are hired (Heylen, Willems and Beyers, 2020), and might instead be a successful adaptation by the voluntary sector to an individualised and informalised society.

To date, there is little research on volunteering in relation to other types of activities that people might engage with. The need for this type of research has been previously identified (Paxton and Rap, 2016; Smith *et al.*, 2016), with some suggestions made on how to account for more informal associations in future surveys (Fischer and Durham, 2022). Currently, there are no suitable datasets on people's social lives that can be used for this in a Scottish context. For example, the Scotland's People Annual Report 2019 (Scottish Government, 2020a) provide information saying that 80% of all adults take part in sports or physical activities, with 50% on a regular basis (more than 14 times in the last month), and 90% of all adults participated in or visited a cultural activity. However, this data does not provide information on what types of sports and what types of cultural activities respondents took part in. While it would be possible to gather data from different sources, such as specific datasets on sports participation (e.g. Rowe, 2019) or people's

participation in cultural events (e.g. Creative Scotland, 2023), which are more detailed, two issues arise. The first is the difficulty of harmonizing the data from different sources to make them comparable to one another, and the second issue is that the data would be separated by activity with no information on how individuals might participate in different datasets. The English Community Life 2018/2019 survey (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2023) and the Taking Part survey (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2019) both have data on what activities people engage in but are limited to England only. The Scottish Household Survey (Scottish Government and Ipsos MORI, 2020a) is even more limited in this regard and cannot be used to explore this further in a Scottish context. These issues prevent the use of existing datasets to create a full picture of what individuals' participation in associational life is like.

There are some studies that look at how specific factors influence people's participation in different activities, like family life (Ravanera, Beaujot and Fernando, 2002; Chen, Li and Chen, 2013; Ellis Paine *et al.*, 2020), religion (von Essen *et al.*, 2015), or being part of a neighbourhood association (Taniguchi and Marshall, 2016), to name a few. Other research has focused on civil society specifically, like the *Pathways to Participation* project (Brodie *et al.*, 2011) which looked at participation in political or activist actions, campaigning and lobbying, fundraising, volunteering and ethical consumerism. While hobbies and sports were included in their study, these were never discussed unless it was in relation to public participation and civil society specifically. While their study lacked analysis on engagement outwith civil society and public participation, it provides a way of understanding different styles of engagement. They created three models to describe this, see Figure 2.1 below. In the first model of participatory activities, *the integrated model*, the different activities form a pattern where a person's activities are tightly bound together. In the second model, *the core-peripheral*, there is a core activity that defines who people are, with supporting or complementary activities around it. In the last model, *the unlinked model*, there are no links between a person's activities. In this last approach, the authors highlighted the importance of relationships for individuals in engaging in participatory activities, both existing relationships that lead to further engagement, but also how people used these activities as a conscious method to create new bonds with people they have yet to meet.

Model 1: Integrated involvement   Model 2: Core-peripheral involvement   Model 3: Unlinked multiple involvement
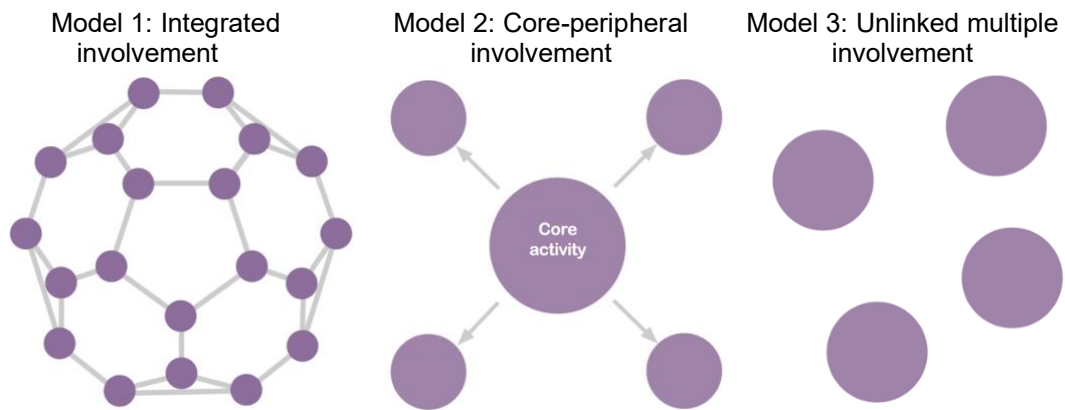
Figure 2.1 Involvement in multiple participatory activities (Source: Brodie et al., 2011, pp. 52–53)

In this section, the societal changes over the last few decades of how people engage with others have been described. It was established that the narrative depicting societal changes as negative goes a long way back. The evidence indicates that there has been a change towards a more individualised and informal way of engaging with others, but not necessarily that people engage *less* with others – although patterns of social interaction have changed. This has also affected how people engage in volunteering, which has become more focused on individual preferences rather than taking part in collective action. As such, to understand how people engage with others, this thesis needs to further explore the ways in which people engage with others, whether this is in a formal setting such as organisations, clubs, and associations, or informal settings. It also needs to consider short-term and episodic engagement to reflect the wide range of patterns of how people engage with others. To capture all this, the concept of *associational life* will be used, as it can encompass all the above-mentioned aspects of the ways we engage with others. The next section will introduce this concept and describe how it will be used in this thesis.

2.2 Understanding associational life

As described in the previous section, the way that people engage in different activities has changed in that it happens less through the medium of organised clubs and organisations and more in an informal manner. To facilitate a discussion that can easily include both formal and informal types of engagement, and a typology of what to include, a concept is needed that can capture both the organisational and relational aspects of doing an activity with others. This section will first discuss some concepts that could be used to understand how people engage with others, which will lead to a description of the concept of associational life which was used for this research.

One important aspect of activities people do together is the communities that form, all of which have their own attributes and characteristics. However, while it can include activities that are done in a formal and informal manner which is important for this research, there are too many different definitions of it, making it difficult to use as a conceptual framework in a research context (Hillery, 1955; Vaisey, 2007). The literature contains references to community of *place* (Wood, 2010), community of *interest* (Walker, 2013), and community of *practice* (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002), and the focus of this thesis could probably include all of these. There are also *imagined* communities (Anderson, 2016), which reflect a feeling or a sense of belonging to a group without there necessarily being any contact between members of the community. Another issue that might arise from using community to investigate what people do together with others is that community is also used outside of a research context. This means that it faces the same issue that Brubaker and Cooper (2000) described on using 'identity' in research – it is both a category of *analysis* and a category of *practice*. Perhaps community is 'best treated as an empirical matter, to be resolved case by case through investigation' (Braunholtz-Speight, 2015, p. 41) to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation. While people engaging in a hobby might consider themselves a community, a group of people meeting up to protest together might not.

Two other important concepts used to understand what people do together are social capital and leisure. Similarly to community, social capital focuses on the relationships between people, as it refers to the social networks people have access to. This would aid in understanding the nature of the networks people are part of and what types of bonds that exist in different activities. One issue with this focus on relationships is that it tends to focus on a transaction of social resources (e.g., Häuberer, 2014), which is well suited to describe a relationship between groups of people, but it does not provide a way to account for *what* people do together. As this research is about investigating how volunteering as an activity differs from other activities people do together, the concept of leisure has the benefit of referring to activities people do in their own time outside of their home or work life. However, this is still somewhat limiting in what it can include. While leisure can include many types of activities people do together, it carries connotations of relaxation and enjoying one's spare time outside of work and domestic life, which would then exclude activities like political activism and some types of volunteering, like manning a help line. While there are established concepts around leisure in the

literature, like 'serious leisure' (Stebbins, 2007), this definition excludes relaxation activities instead. Given the focus on understanding both formal and informal activities that people do together, a concept that can capture both formal and informal activities is needed, one that also captures the important elements that community, social capital, and leisure offer.

The framework required for this thesis needs to include elements of community, social capital, and leisure, without hindering the aim of this thesis: to understand what people do together. To accomplish this, *associational life* is used in this thesis to explore both formal and informal activities that individuals are involved in, as *associational* refers to both the noun *association* and the verb *associating*, and *life* indicating that this is part of people's everyday lives. Previous uses of associational life in the literature have not been consistent and have been used to describe a range of activities, from involvement in organised clubs and organisations only (e.g. Schofer and Longhofer, 2011; Chan, 2014; Reich, 2020), participation in third sector organisations (Andrews, Cowell and Downe, 2008; Jailobaeva, 2008; Evers, 2013; Bunyan, 2014) to democratisation processes in African contexts (Tostensen, Tvedten and Vaa, 2001; Meagher, 2010). Associational life has also been used to describe 'the web of social relationships through which we pursue joint endeavors—namely, our families, our communities, our workplaces, and our religious congregations' (Joint Economic Committee, 2017, p. 11). This definition, which focuses on the relational aspect, provides the basis of how associational life is used in this thesis, but with a focus on the activities that people take part in which are elective in their nature. Hence, it does not include work or everyday activities like cooking or cleaning, even when done with others. The definition adopted is as follows:

> *Associational life* refers to an individuals' participation in activities together with others that are organised through a club, organisation, or association, as well as activities that are informal in nature, that have some level of continuity and are discretionary in nature.

This definition of associational life includes any activity that people are engaged in when doing an activity with others, whether these take place in a formal organisation or informally, and whether they take place on a regular basis or some type of continuity. Associational life can include, for example, sports activities, being politically active, or a hobby related activity. This definition of associational life also highlights that there is some semblance of

continuity. It should be noted that this definition of associational life does not include activities that are done episodically, such as one-off activities. While this is one feature of contemporary engagement, as described in the previous section, the focus of this research is to understand activities that have a level of continuity, like volunteering has in most cases. However, a strict definition of continuity would potentially exclude many types of activities people do with others, which is why there need only be some level of continuity for it to be associational life. One-off occurrences, or activities that take place very far in between, are unlikely to offer the continuity that studying what people do together requires. It should be noted that short-term commitments, like attending a course or a programme of activities, are also examples of associational life, as long as these are undertaken with other people, as they require commitment and have an element of continuity, albeit for a shorter amount of time.

This definition of associational life is wide-ranging enough to capture the individualised and informal ways people engage with others, without encountering the issues that 'community', 'social capital' or 'leisure' have, as it offers a clear definition, focuses on what people do together with others, and can include a wide range of activities. This definition narrows the scope of what this study is interested in without losing the ability to account for the individualised and informalised ways that people engage with each other. Also, as associational life is not a term that is used widely in everyday life, and, despite the previously mentioned disparate uses in academia, it does not face the issue of being both a category of analysis and a category of practice, like 'community' and 'leisure'. This definition does not take away from the emotive elements of engaging with others, as similarly to how communities have been defined, associational life has 'a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion, and continuity in time' (Nisbet, 1993, p. 47). Associational life can also be a place of belonging, as highlighted by Jackson's four propositions: 'as a practice that embeds people in place; as a relational practice experienced across time and place; as a performance that acts on the sense of self and the body; and as a theatrical performance that enriches and resonates through a scene' (Jackson, 2020, p. 518). This aspect makes associational life an important concept to consider as it can have a real impact on people's lives.

This section has defined associational life, considering the needs of this thesis and so it can reflect how people interact with others. A focus on *doing*

associational life makes the distinction between whether this takes place in an organisation or not less important, and associational life having some level of continuity offers a clear definition of activities people are doing together in an individualised and informal social fabric.

2.2.1 Volunteering and other types of associational life

In the previous section, associational life was defined as participation in an activity that has some level of continuity, which would include most types of volunteering. As volunteering is the focus of this thesis, this section will outline what volunteering is and how it relates to the concept of associational life.

Most definitions of volunteering are around helping others or offering an unpaid service; here the definition given in *The Palgrave handbook of volunteering, civic participation, and nonprofit associations* is used, which expands the definition to cover two other elements as well:

> Valuable [or useful] activity by an individual that is (i) not remunerated (or at least not fully remunerated, given its market value), (ii) not coerced by biology, force, authority, or law, and (iii) is aimed at helping (a) the welfare/satisfactions of one or more other persons outside one's immediate family and household or (b) the welfare of the larger society, the environment, or the whole of human society globally (Smith, Stebbins and Grotz, 2016, pp. 1411–12)

The above definition captures the element of helping others, that it is an unpaid activity, and that is taking place outwith one's own immediate family or household. This definition seems to also imply that volunteering can be, at least partially, remunerated, which is more likely to involve covering expenses for the volunteer – otherwise it would be paid employment and not volunteering.

Most literature on volunteering is about *formal* volunteering, which is volunteering that is organised through an organisation or charity. *Informal* volunteering, which is not organised through an organisation or charity, has not been researched to the same extent as formal volunteering and has not been included as a distinct category in most studies on volunteering (Paxton and Rap, 2016). The Scottish Household Survey included it for the first time in 2018. For formal volunteering, they asked: 'Thinking back over the last 12 months, have you given up any time to help any groups, clubs or organisations in an unpaid capacity?' (Scottish Government and Ipsos MORI, 2020b, p. 227), and they defined informal volunteering as 'any unpaid help an individual may

have given to other people or to improve their local environment, that is apart from any help given through a group, club or organisation (this does not include help given to a relative)' (Scottish Government, 2019a, p. 220). Burr, Mutchler, and Caro (2007) further iterate the point that informal volunteering takes place outside of the family and household by defining it as 'providing informal help to strangers, neighbours, and friends' (p. 268). The Scottish Household Survey 2018 (Scottish Government, 2019a) found that the four most common types of informal volunteering were about keeping in touch with someone who is at risk of being lonely, doing shopping for someone, doing routine household chores for someone, or babysitting. Given the nature of these activities, informal volunteering is governed by everyday norms and practices rather than a conscious decision to take part in a volunteering activity, as with formal volunteering. This could mean that the name informal *volunteering* might be confusing for people outside of the voluntary research sector, as people engaging in informal volunteering might just see this as helping someone or being neighbourly. As most informal volunteering refers to helping someone else, and often not *with* them but *for* them and without it necessarily being counted as an 'activity', it is unlikely be considered a type of associational life, despite there being a level of continuity.

In the case of formal volunteering, this is in most cases a type of associational life as it takes place within a formal structure and the volunteer is part of a group of volunteers. The most common types of volunteering reported in Scotland are adults volunteering for children's activities in and outside of school, local community groups, hobbies, and sports (Volunteer Scotland, 2018), all of which are characterised by engaging with other people. However, there are volunteering activities that are solitary activities, like bird counting or litter picking, which are still associational life, as these activities are done with others but in a more intangible collective sense, with varying degrees of contact with others. For example, someone volunteering at a reception desk or as a greeter at a hospital does this through a formal organisation, but the people they interact with are not other volunteers, but visitors to the organisation or people they will not have an enduring relationship with. The activity that they engage in is not done 'together' with the people they greet or help, as they are alone in their role, but they are still part of a wider collective of people *doing* something together, albeit apart. This person is part of a greater endeavour to give a service or make the hospital a more welcoming place. Similarly, a volunteer in the back-office doing the administration helps the organisation that they are volunteering with, but the task itself is not a task

done with others. Both the example of the greeter and the back-office volunteer are examples of volunteering being a type of associational life. Although this definition might come across as too lenient as to what can be associational life, this is necessary to be able to understand what people do together with others in an increasingly individualised and informalised social reality.

Another form of volunteering, which is related to informal volunteering, is the *mutual aid* that was revitalised at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mutual aid can refer to several things, such as trade unions, friendly societies or informal groups in a neighbourhood, with the key characteristic being that it is voluntarily helping others in the absence of state welfare (Harris, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, it referred to efforts in local communities to aid each other because of lockdowns and restrictions being in place. This form of mutual aid grew during the COVID-19 lockdown (Addley, 2020; Jones, 2020; Solnit, 2020) and has been estimated to engage 16% of the Scottish population, although this might be a significant underestimate (Maltman, Linning and Stevenson, 2020).

This section has defined associational life, which is any activity people do with others, regardless of whether it is in a formal setting or informally and has some level of continuity. This definition enables a focus on what people do together, as social life is increasingly individualised and informalised. To understand how volunteering differs from other types of associational life, the next section will take a closer look at what is currently known about volunteering and other types of associational life.

2.3 Participation in volunteering and other types of associational life

As set out in the previous section, there is little research on how volunteering relates to other types of associational life, which is key to understanding volunteering practices in an individualised and informalised society. This section will review what is currently known about participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. However, participation in volunteering is a well-researched area, while there is less research available for other types of associational life. What follows is a review of the literature on factors that influence participation in both volunteering and other types of associational life, which provides an understanding of what factors can, and might, influence participation in different types of activities and what the existing gaps are in the current literature. Research on volunteering will be focused on Scotland,

and the focus for the literature on other types of associational life is about participation in general, where available, with some examples from specific activities for illustration. This enables an overview of what is currently known about participation in volunteering and other types of associational life broadly, as reviewing of the literature on every possible type of activity would become unwieldy. The reviewed literature will be presented in four sections; geography and place, the impact that socioeconomic circumstances have, family life and children, and generational differences.

2.3.1 Geography and place

This section will present the available evidence on how geography and location impact people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. As mentioned previously, there is more data available on volunteering than other types of associational life. Data from Volunteer Scotland (2018), using Scottish Household Survey data, shows that rural areas have a higher percentage of the adult population volunteering than urban areas. However, rural areas in Scotland have also seen the biggest decrease in formal volunteering rates, moving from 39% to 31% between 2007 and 2017. In urban areas, formal volunteering has stayed roughly the same at between 28% and 29% over the same period. Looking at formal and informal volunteering separately shows that the participation rate was at 25% for formal volunteering in urban areas and at 33% in rural areas. For informal volunteering, the difference between urban and rural areas was smaller, with a 35% participation rate in urban areas and 38% in rural areas, with no discernible differences between urban and rural areas when looking at mean hours that people volunteer for (Volunteer Scotland, 2021). It should be noted that participation rates can be a difficult measure to use, as the survey question asked whether a person had volunteered in the last 12 months, even if only once; when looking at volunteering frequency, 57% said they volunteered 'less than once a month' or 'less than once a week but at least once a month' for formal volunteering, and 40% for informal volunteering (Volunteer Scotland, 2022). Also, comparing memberships in a variety of organisations and locations show little difference between urban and rural areas, apart from senior citizens associations and family associations, both of which had lower membership levels in urban settings (Hooghe and Botterman, 2012).

Comparing this to available research on other types of associational life, the urban and rural divide has mostly been related to older populations. Researchers have found that differences are minor in Quebec, Canada,

(Therrien and Desrosiers, 2010), while older adults living in rural Wisconsin, USA, are less socially active than elsewhere (Vogelsang, 2016). Looking at the wider population, participation rates in different types of activities tend to be higher in rural areas (Brown, O'Keefe and Stagnitti, 2011; Hoekman, Breedveld and Kraaykamp, 2017). However, understanding the divide between urban and rural areas is more complex, as availability of neighbourhood resources seem to be a more important indicator than whether an area is classified as urban or rural (Levasseur *et al.*, 2015). This does not mean that research comparing participation in urban and rural areas is in vain, but that the differences in participation in urban or rural places are complex and informed by factors other than location (Paarlberg *et al.*, 2022).

Considering place and proximity to the location of where people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, 81% of volunteers do so in their own neighbourhood (NCVO, 2019), while similar data is not available for other types of associational life. Even larger surveys, like the Community Life (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2023), only collect information on where people live and not where they take part in different activities in relation to their homes. Balderstone's (2014) study on engagement between 1950 and 2005 give some insights into distance between home and activity, which showed that people were willing to travel to the urban centres where most organised clubs' activities take place. However, she attributes this to a middle-class lifestyle, that people from this social milieu are those with the ability and resources to travel to their activities, including flexibility from their work and different lifestyle choices and social networks (Czepkiewicz, Heinonen and Ottelin, 2018). The lack of reliable public transport is also an issue that impacts people living in rural areas (Berg and Ihlström, 2019), which in turn can have an impact on whether people are even able to participate in associational life.

This subsection has showed that there is data on differences in volunteering between urban and rural areas, although the reasons why are not fully explored. The data available for other types of associational life is explored to an even lesser degree. Current literature suggests that while geography might play a role, it is likely that a multitude of factors influence how people participate in both volunteering and other types of associational life. The next subsection will look at what is known about how socioeconomic status impacts on people's participation in different types of associational life.

2.3.2 The impact of socioeconomic status on participation

The impact that socio-economic situations can have on a person's participation in any type of associational life can be both material and cultural. It can be material in that people possess the financial resources required to participate, or cultural in that they come from a background that values, or does not value, participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. Discussing socioeconomic status links with the previous subsection on geographic location and place, as the literature on socioeconomic status often discusses this by comparing areas that are deprived or not. While this does not capture the full picture of how socioeconomic status affects people's participation in associational life, this type of data can highlight the broader implications of it.

When comparing participation in formal and informal volunteering, engagement differs significantly depending on the levels of deprivation, comparing different areas using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), which is a relative measure of deprivation between different areas of Scotland. In Figure 2.2 below, data on participation rates in Scotland show that, for formal volunteering, people in Q1 have the lowest levels of volunteering participation at 20%, while individuals living in more affluent areas, Q5, show the highest participation levels, at 31%. As for the mean numbers of hours that each volunteer spent on formal volunteering, these do not differ much between the different quintiles. Informal volunteering rates of participation followed the same curve as formal volunteering, where the lowest participation can be found in the Q1 areas and the highest in the Q5 areas. However, when it comes to mean volunteering hours per volunteer, volunteers in Q1 spend more time on informal volunteering, at 11.7 hours per four-week period, while people in Q5 spend 8.5 hours per four-week period (Volunteer Scotland, 2021). This is consistent with other research, showing that affluence has a positive impact on volunteering rates (Chambré, 2020) and that lower education levels are correlated with more solitary activities, while higher education levels are correlated with more engagement in formal associational life (van Ingen and Dekker, 2011; Roeters, 2018). The higher number of hours of informal volunteering reported for people in Q1 could be attributed to a few reasons. One is that there is greater need for informal help and a higher reliance on their networks, whereas people in more affluent areas have greater flexibility and material resources to not rely on others. This could also be due to socio-cultural differences, where there are practices within a community, which are not necessarily explicitly expressed, but that influence how people

engage in formal and informal volunteering. These differences in how people from deprived areas engage in formal and informal volunteering strengthens Dean's (2021) argument that a focus on informal volunteering is needed to avoid favouring formal volunteering, which by extension could mean that formal volunteering is considered predominantly a middle-class activity. This is an important issue to consider when researching both volunteering and other types of associational life; there is strong evidence to suggest that both the level of participation and how people participate differ between socio-economic groups.
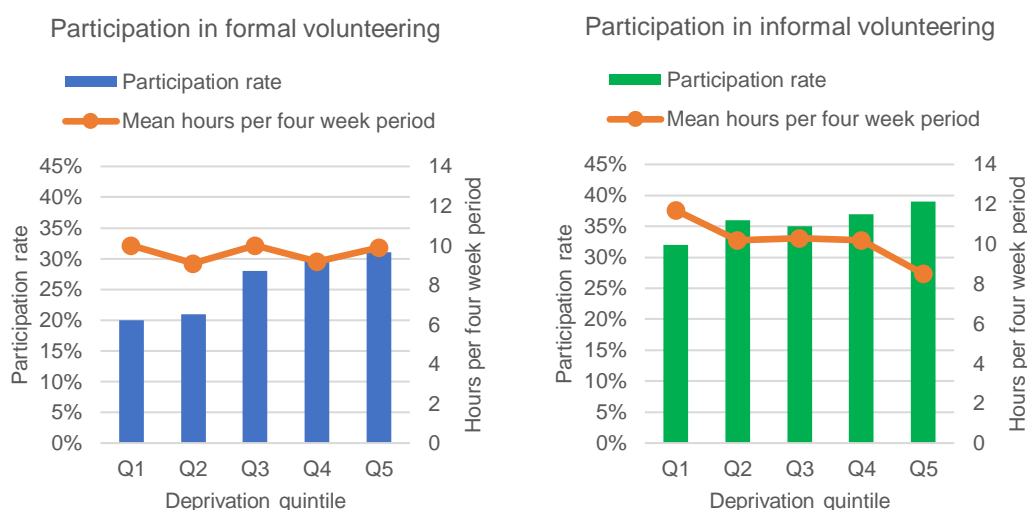
Figure 2.2 Volunteering rates and mean volunteering hours per SIMD quintile
(Source: Volunteer Scotland, 2021, pp. 20–1)

Socio-economic status also has an impact on how people are introduced to volunteering, especially for young people. In deprived areas, the participant-to-volunteer route is common (Davies, 2018), meaning that individuals start participating in activities run by volunteers before becoming volunteers themselves. This group may not have the disposition, or opportunities, to engage in volunteering without prior engagement with an organisation or programme, and this group can also be discriminated against because of their social background. Young people in deprived areas are unable to benefit from the usual volunteering recruitment drives (Dean, 2016), which can be attributed to less access to social and cultural capital, i.e., fewer social networks to introduce them and knowledge on how to seek volunteering opportunities or act as a volunteer. This could result in young people from lower-income backgrounds not engaging in group sports, because they do not feel that they belong or are perceived to lack the right disposition for it, which higher-income families may have because of more financial resources. One specific example

of this is described in Storr and Spaaij's (2016) study on engaging in Sports Clubs, where they found that young people from middle-class backgrounds were both more likely to engage in these activities, but also that they were more likely to be chosen to engage in extra-curricular activities within sports organisations. This weighting towards a middle-class engagement also exists in informal volunteering, where young people from higher income households are more likely to be recruited into this type of volunteering (Sarre and Tarling, 2010).

In relation to other types of associational life, there is less quantitative data to rely on, but there seems to be a similar pattern as for volunteering, where people from deprived areas, or from a lower social class, are engaging in less associational life. There are many studies about sports confirming this. For example, Stuij (2015) found that participation was often facilitated by pre-existing financial and cultural resources within the family, and thus engagement in sports was often more likely to take place in families who have access to high financial resources. When comparing different sports activities, a German study found that, of participants, individuals not taking part in a sport activity are to a great degree from a lower social class (Mutz and Müller, 2021). Studies on other activities have also found that class is linked to participation, such as sailing (O'Connor, 2024), activities that go under the umbrella term serious leisure (Stebbins, 2020), and that general social participation for older people is impacted by their social background (Geithner and Wagner, 2022). As such, it seems likely that other types of associational life follow the same pattern as volunteering when it comes to social background.

This subsection has discussed how people's socio-economic status can affect their engagement in associational life, and how the intersections between these factors needs to be considered in understanding people's associations. It has also highlighted that this has been explored to a greater extent for volunteering in general, and less so for other types of associational life, but the evidence does not show whether socio-economic status has the same impact on volunteering as it does with other types of associational life.

2.3.3 Family life and gender's impact on participation

This subsection will explore what is known about the impact of having a family and a person's gender on associational life, including volunteering. Regarding volunteering, having children sometimes works as a facilitator for

volunteering, as children's activities can be the entry point to volunteering (Ellis Paine *et al.*, 2020), and parent's volunteering practices can also influence their children's involvement in volunteering (White, 2021). However, distinguishing between parental and family volunteering, as in volunteering for activities that children participate in, or volunteering as a family unit, and the subsequent impact having a family has on a person's own volunteering practices, is needed. The literature on volunteering rarely makes a distinction between these (e.g., Gray, Khoo and Reimondos, 2012; Haski-Leventhal *et al.*, 2016), and the literature looking at parents' non-family related volunteering is either very dated (Sundeen, 1990) or somewhat dated and in a different context than Scotland (Nesbit, 2012). Looking at other types of associational life, an older Canadian study found that having children had a negative correlation to membership in associations, but a positive correlation to volunteering in general, and further, that full-time work had a negative impact on women's volunteering, but a positive impact on their membership in associations (Ravanera, Beaujot and Fernando, 2002). Although using membership as a proxy for participation is flawed, as one can be a member without actually participating (Painter II and Paxton, 2014), this could suggest that family life and having children affects volunteering differently from other types of associational life.

An important aspect of family life is gender. The impact of having children on participation is greater for women. While society has changed in the last century so that women can take part in the labour market to a greater extent, women are still doing more of the labour related to the household (Allen and Stevenson, 2023). The data on volunteering and gender is well documented and shows that participation rates and the number of hours men and women spend on formal volunteering is roughly similar, but when it comes to informal volunteering, the difference is marked. In data from Scotland, the mean hours women spend on informal volunteering per four-week period was 12.9 hours in 2021, compared to men at 8.8 hours. When comparing by total hours spent per annum, women spent 135 million hours on informal volunteering and men 76 million hours (Volunteer Scotland, 2021), showing the scope of how much more informal volunteering women do compared to men. Looking at what type of activities were included in informal volunteering, examples mentioned were: keeping in touch with someone living alone, helping with shopping and errands, routine household chores and looking after children. Women seemed to do the majority of these tasks, where men only do more when it comes to car

or home maintenance, helping in improving the local environment, and helping someone improve a skill (Scottish Government, 2019a, p. 235).

When it comes to leisure activities, it is argued that women and men engage with leisure activities differently. The argument is based on gender roles, as leisure is often 'defined by traditional masculine values of action, challenge, and mastery' (Dilley and Scraton, 2010, p. 127), while women are said to engage in leisure activities in groups from the perspective of creating and maintaining relationships for social support and empowerment (Doran, 2016; Choi *et al.*, 2018). It is hard to know if these sources show a genuine difference in how men and women engage in leisure activities, or if these studies only reiterate gender stereotypes by how they define leisure and activities included in their studies. For example, research on Men's Sheds, a place where older men can engage with other men over different kinds of activities (often woodworking), has shown that relationships and support from others are just as important for men, both for their physical and mental wellbeing (Kelly *et al.*, 2020). Countries with more gender egalitarian attitudes and childcare provisions show less of a difference in leisure practices between the genders (Yerkes, Roeters and Baxter, 2020), further highlighting any differences between the genders are systemic and not inherent traits of the sexes.

The difference the presence of children in the household and gender makes on participation in volunteering and other types of associational life is not fully understood. One reason for this is the wide variety of activities that are included under the umbrella of associational life, and that there has not been previous research on understanding these in relation to each other. The research presented seems to indicate that volunteering is affected by family life and gender differently compared to other types of associational life and is an area that needs to be explored further. The next subsection will examine how age can be a factor in shaping people's participation and how different generations engage with associational life, including volunteering.

2.3.4 Generational differences

This subsection will take a closer look at what is known about the role that age plays in individuals' participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. This needs to be examined as two distinct aspects: how age impacts participation and how participation might look different because of generational differences. The later issue relates to the earlier section on the

societal changes brought about by the individualisation and informalisation of social life, as the way people engage in associational life has changed over time.

Looking at how different age groups engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, as with the previous sections, there is more data available for volunteering than for other activities that people take part in. Comparing participation rates and mean hours per four-week period in Scotland provides interesting data on how different age groups engage in volunteering. The highest participation rates appeared in the 35 to 44 age group, at 33% for formal volunteering and 42% for informal volunteering. However, in terms of mean hours, this age group and the age group 25 to 34 are volunteering for the least number of hours of all groups (see Figure 2.3 Formal and informal volunteering mean hours by age groups (Source: Volunteer Scotland, 2021, pp. 17–18).). This disconnect is probably due to the fact that the survey these results are based on asked if people had volunteered *sometime* during the last 12 months, which in some cases might mean only one occasion.
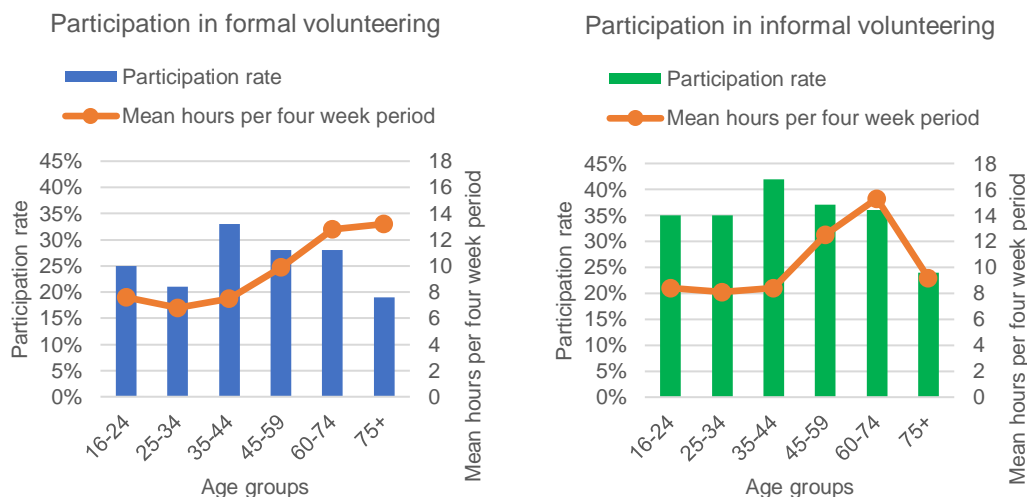
Figure 2.3 Formal and informal volunteering mean hours by age groups
(Source: Volunteer Scotland, 2021, pp. 17–18)

The group that volunteered for the highest number of hours in Scotland were those aged 60 and older (Volunteer Scotland, 2021). This dips in the oldest age group (75+) for informal volunteering, but not for formal volunteering. This might be because those over 60 are less likely to be involved in paid work and have more time available to engage in volunteering, and those who are still able to volunteer in a formal manner will continue to do so. The reason why informal volunteering is lower for those aged 75 and above remains less clear, but as informal volunteering is mostly helping people around you, this group

might be the recipient of informal volunteering rather than giving this help. Another argument for this dip would be in connection to social background. Informal volunteering is more common in lower income areas, as reported earlier, in combination with lower life expectancy and more ill-health in these areas (Mullahy, Robert and Wolfe, 2018), this affects how many people can engage in informal volunteering in later life. This data shows that while there are differences between age groups, this is accounted for when considering life course differences. People have more time to volunteer when their children are older or they retire, resulting in an increase of mean hours for the older age groups, especially since volunteering practices are relatively stable throughout people's lives and do not change much (Lancee and Radl, 2014).

Looking beyond volunteering to other types of associational life, a scoping review by Serrat *et al.* (2019) which focused on older people's civic participation noted that formal volunteering dominates this field of research, and ought to include a wider set of activities. They identified a critical gap in the literature where more types of activities need to be included to understand participation in civil society. They argued that individual action needs to be considered, and to also consider the context in which people's participation takes place. While this scoping review was about civic participation specifically, it resonates with the need for expanding the research on how associational life is understood in this thesis. As of now, a comprehensive understanding of how engagement in associational life looks like by age does not exist, but there are resources that look at specific examples, such as why engaging in sports decreases with age (Rowe, 2019, p. 34) as does attendance in arts and culture activities (Scottish Government, 2020b). Also, the evidence for differences in participation due to age or generational differences is limited, with a study by van Ingen and Dekker's (2011), which is somewhat dated now, showing that participation in different activities increasingly becoming more and more individualised and informalised, which was discussed earlier in this chapter.

This section has examined the evidence of factors that affect people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. Currently, there is more research available on volunteering than there is on other types of associational life. The urban and rural divide has also been explored in the context of volunteering but less so for associational life, and the same thing applies to socioeconomic status and associational life.

2.4 Relationships, volunteering, and associational life

The previous section looked at how geography, socio-economic factors, family life, gender, and age can impact on people's volunteering and other types of associational life. This section will look at people's relationships and how they relate to volunteering and other types of associational life. As was described in Section 2.1 on the changed conditions for volunteering, relationships have gained in importance. As people are becoming, or perhaps are forced to, write their own biographies rather than rely on their community for this, the relational aspects of participating in volunteering and other types of associational life are just as important as the factors described above. Also, as these informal bonds between people are less based on social background and other structural reasons, and more on what their social networks look like (Warde, Tampubolon and Savage, 2005), relationships are important to understand *how* people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life.

Where the previous section described the structures that impact on volunteering and other types of associational life, this section will describe the agency aspect, which is largely influenced by past, current, or future relationships. O'Toole and Grey (2016, p. 85) wrote that 'volunteering exists within a dense web of social relations, especially familial and communal relations, so that volunteering is recursively constituted by structure and agency', this also applies to other types of associational life. This means that people's upbringing, current friendships, and efforts to form new relationships all contribute to how people engage in associational life. In fact, it could also be argued that the very basic building blocks that constitute volunteering and other types of associational life are relationships between people. When people engage with others, in a variety of different relationships, it is within that relationship that volunteering and other types of associational life come into existence. It is also possible to take this argument a step further by saying that organisations, clubs, and other associations are either created by relationships, or that they *are* relationships. This in turn means there is an interplay between structure and agency that needs to be explored in order to understand how people engage in associational life.

One type of relationship that demonstrates this duality between structure and agency is the family and the way people learn to engage with associational life. The family unit is an environment with shared culture and norms which can influence how people behave and relate to the world. From a participation

perspective, having parents or other family members that, for example, are volunteering, politically engaged, or have a rich social life, might make people more likely to choose to engage in associational life and volunteer (Chen, Li and Chen, 2013; Bomark, 2017). This can be passive, as people replicate what they have seen growing up or what people in their social network do, or active in that parents make a conscious decision to demonstrate a favoured behaviour. An NCVO report on family volunteering (Ellis Paine *et al.*, 2020) showed that some parents actively use volunteering to attempt to instil a set of (pro-social) values in their children, so they volunteer themselves to be good role models for their children. What is being described here is similar to what was discussed in subsection 2.3.3 on how family life impacts people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. However, a benefit of focusing on the relational aspects is that it does not see the individual as being *subjected* to societal structures, but instead that they *interact* with both societal structures *and* people. In this way, a relational perspective can bridge the divide between structure and agency. This will be described in more detail in the next chapter, which is on the theoretical framework used for this thesis.

Other relationships outside the family also matter for people's participation in associational life. In Scotland, almost half of the volunteers under the age of 18 were introduced to volunteering by their parents or guardians, one in five were introduced to volunteering opportunities by a teacher, and one in ten started on their own initiative, making personal relations the most common way to enter volunteering amongst young people (Volunteer Scotland, 2020). Worth noting is that young people are more inclined to volunteer for social reasons, such as wanting to volunteer with their friends (Law, Shek and Ma, 2013; Harper and Jackson, 2015). There have not been previous attempts to understand how a wide variety of activities impact on each other, there is only data on this for some associational life activities. Where there is more research available, family relations and friendships are the most common ways to become involved in sports (Bailey, Cope and Pearce, 2013; Fletcher, 2021). This is likely due to 'acculturation', as defined by Morgan et al. (2021), where people are socialised into engaging in associational life, either through family or professional relations, or through educational or social interventions.

In terms of motivations to engage in different types of activities, this is an area that is well-researched in relation to volunteering, where it has been narrowed down to a combination of altruism, social reasons and egoistic reasons (Cnaan

and Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Dolnicar and Randle, 2007; Treuren, 2014). Individuals' motivations to engage in associational life have been less explored in the literature, but tend to be more intrinsic overall. There is an unequal distribution of coverage of different types of associational life, with more research available on sports and 'serious leisure'. These are activities that are at the intersection of leisure and professional activities (Stebbins, 2007), where intrinsic motivation is recognised as a recurring characteristic of associational life. These intrinsic reasons are highly associated with self-determination (Lee and Ewert, 2019), such as finding life balance, fitness, body image, being in contact with others, and 'having fun' when it comes to sports (Diehl *et al.*, 2018) or to find a place of belonging and identity (Bronstein and Lidor, 2020). People's motivations for engaging in leisure activities have also become more driven by personal interests and hobbies (Webb and Karlis, 2017), which is consistent with the societal changes that were outlined earlier in this chapter, with an increased focus on the self. Although there is a gap in understanding the motivations for engaging in associational life, the literature seems to suggest that people's motivations to volunteer differ from those to engage in other forms of associational life, where volunteering is more about the social and giving help aspects.

The workplace is also a place where volunteering and participation in associational life takes place. Employer supported volunteering schemes are available, where employees are volunteering through a work scheme, but this is only a small percentage of all the volunteering that takes place (Maltman and Linning, 2021), and has also been critiqued for using employees' agency as a neoliberal resource of governmentality (Shachar and Hustinx, 2019). In an individualised society, where people's employment and their volunteering are part of their identity, this can further increase the pressure on volunteering organisations to provide the right kind of tasks and roles for people's individual needs and wants (van Schie *et al.*, 2019). One type of associational life that is tied to work is trade union involvement. However, this specific kind of associational life is declining: in the United Kingdom, trade union membership has gone down from a peak in 1979 with 13.2 million members in trade unions to 6.25 million in 2022 (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2023). A contributing reason for this is the increased precarity of work in general, with zero-hour contracts and the gig economy on the increase and an unstable economy, which means that people might not count on the support from the trade unions (Joint Economic Committee, 2017; Khan, 2018), but also the ongoing individualisation of society, where collectivist

concepts are less favoured, or not considered an option for people. While the scope of examining how work impacts on volunteering and other types of associational life seems limited, work should not be discounted as a space where individuals find others to engage with, be this through volunteering or other types of associational life.

The few studies that have used a relational perspective have focused on specific activities, and mainly sports, like the social movement around a sport (Turner, 2024), volunteers in a children's football club (Kassman and Kneck, 2022), and Millward's (2023) study on LGBT+ football supporters' networks. As personal relationships influence choices and decisions to engage in both volunteering and other types of associational life, there is a need to understand the ways people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life from the perspective of people's relationships, together with the societal structures described in the previous section, also looking at relationships enables the gap between structure and agency.

2.5   Summary and direction of research

This chapter has given an overview of the wider societal changes seen in how people engage with each other, using theories of individualisation and informalisation. These theories describe a move from a collectivist understanding of the self to one that is self-made, which has affected the way people engage with others. While this change has previously been described in negative terms as a 'loss of community', these changes are in this thesis understood as neutral and is descriptive only. The research reviewed shows that engagement in different activities has not lessened nor declined, but the *way* people do this has changed. For volunteering specifically, volunteers are looking for volunteering opportunities that align with their values, circumstances, and preferences, which have changed the conditions for volunteering. These changes also affect other types of activities, where research on participation in social life needs to also consider informal and episodic engagement, as this is increasingly how people engage with others. To account for these changes, and to be able to research both volunteering and other types of activities people do with others, 'associational life' as a conceptual tool was described. Associational life refers to the activities that people *do* together with others in both formal and informal manners, and have some level of continuity, which can include many types of activities to take into account the societal shift towards a more informal and individualised social climate.

Previous research on how volunteering relates to other types of activities has tended to focus on the connections with civil society, and even so, leisure activities have received little interest. There has been some research on specific activities such as leisure, but no study to date has taken a wider approach to understanding people's participation in different activities, which is needed as the motivations to volunteer are increasingly part of a larger narrative in people's lives. The review on what is known about participation in volunteering and other types of associational life showed that there is more research done on volunteering than on other associational activities. There is research on how geography and place impact on volunteering practices, but less research on the impact of these on other types of associational life. The impact of where people live is also influenced by socioeconomic factors, relating to people's ability to travel to and from their activities. Socioeconomic status also impacts people's values and what activities they choose to take part in. Individuals from less affluent areas might see formal volunteering as a less desirable activity for cultural reasons, while they may spend more time carrying out informal volunteering. For other types of associational life, education levels have been shown to impact participation, where lower education levels mean lower engagement in associational life, volunteering included. In terms of gender, formal volunteering sees small differences between gender groups, but when comparing data for informal volunteering, women report higher rates than men. There is a social component at play here, where women do more of the emotional and familial labour than men, but apart from volunteering, there is little evidence available on how gender and children in the household impact on participation in associational life. Also, in relation to the individualisation and informalisation of social life, existing research shows differences between age groups, but it is unclear whether these could be attributed to life course differences or a wider generational shift related to the individualisation and informalisation of society.

Because of these changes to how people engage with others, which is about how people understand themselves in relation to others, people's agency also needs to be taken into consideration. By studying relationships, the gap between structure and agency can be bridged, as groups and associations are constituted of relationships. There are two ways in which relationships inform behaviour towards associational life: the first is how relationships to other people inform and make certain behaviours possible. The family is a set of relationships, although not a formal association per se, but it informs behaviours, both intentionally and unintentionally, as parents might want to

instil certain values in their children or just do activities their children observe and follow. While people do have the agency to choose what activities they take part in, and how they want to do this, the structures around them, like the family unit, school, or work, inform these decisions. The second way in which relationships inform associational life is that relationships can bridge the divide between structure and agency as all types of associational life are built by, and are constituted by, relationships. Organisations, groups, and associations all promote relationships between people and, without the relationships, these structures would not exist. By studying relationships to understand associational life, this study will provide insights into the impact that relationships in general can have on participation in all types of associational life. It will also explore what is at the core of all types of organisations, associations, and groups – i.e. individuals' relationships as they engage in these activities.

This review of the literature on participation in volunteering and other types of associational life identified that there is no previous work that has aimed to fully understand how volunteering relates to other types of activities, and not only how volunteering relates to civil society. The overarching question this thesis aims to answer is what can be learnt about volunteering by comparing it to other types of associational life. More specifically, the two questions that this thesis is addressing aim to bridge the gap between structure and agency, and are as follows:

In what ways does volunteering differ from other types of associational life?

This question addresses the first part of the structure and agency duality. As described above, the body of research on volunteering is larger than types of associational life, and there has been little research to try to bridge this gap. By using the concept of associational life, comparisons can be made between volunteering and other types of activities people do together, and by understanding them in tandem, more can be known about routes and motivations to volunteer. This can draw attention to the distinct features that volunteering has in terms of how people get involved, the benefits and skills people get from volunteering, and how factors like geography, age or gender can affect people's participation. Another reason for this focus is to examine how participation in volunteering might affect participation in other types of associational life, and vice versa, as there is little research on how volunteering

relates to other types of activities people do with others. This leads to the second question that guided this thesis:

What role do relationships play in volunteering and other types of associational life?

This second question examines individuals' agency and looks specifically at how people's relationships affect their participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. This is key to understanding how people engage in different activities because of the societal changes described earlier in this chapter. Where the previous question is concerned with describing participation in associational life, this question is about understanding the roles different types of relationships play in individuals' participation, and how people *experience* volunteering and other types of associational life.

How these questions have influenced the research design of this thesis is described in Chapter 4. The next chapter will set out the theoretical framework developed in order to understand people's volunteering and participation in other types of associational life, as this framework needs to account for both how structure and people's own agency impact on this. Part of this agency is understanding how people view themselves in relation to others, and a focus on what these relationships to others look like. Relationships are also what constitutes any organisation, club, or association, as these would not exist without the people in them. The next chapter will outline a framework for how to understand how relationships between people are what constitute organisations, clubs, and associations, but also how these in turn can influence the relationships that exist between people.

3 Theoretical framework

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework that was used to design the methodology and interpret the data collected to be able to answer the research questions identified at the end of the previous chapter. As described in the previous chapter, an important aspect in understanding how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life is to explore the relationships between people in these activities. To do this, this thesis makes use of relational sociology as an overarching theoretical framework with other theoretical concepts to support it. The chapter consists of two sections. The first section introduces relational sociology as a theoretical framework, drawing on literature from Donati and Archer (2015) and their concept of the 'relational subject'. This section also argues that social capital is relational, and introduces relevant concepts by Bourdieu, such as distinction and habitus. The second section discusses a selection of theoretical concepts used to facilitate understandings about people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. The concepts discussed in this last section are Dotson's (2017) thick and thin communities, Granovetter's (1973, 1983) weak and strong ties, and Oldenburg's (1999, 2001) third places.

3.1   Relational sociology and the relational subject

In relational sociology, relationships are the very unit of analysis. While relational sociology as a distinct field has been around for approximately 40 years, with Donati (2002) first publishing his idea on a relational sociology in 1983, the relational aspect has been a fundamental part of understanding social life for a long time. This includes the works of Simmel (Cantó-Milà, 2019), Weber, Becker (Dépelteau, 2018), and, as will be discussed later in this chapter, Bourdieu. It has received renewed interest in the last two to three decades, with Donati (2010) going as far as describing relational sociology as a paradigm shift in the social sciences – although it is probably more accurate to view it as another tool in the sociological toolbox to be used when appropriate (Dépelteau, 2018). An important aspect of relational sociology is how it bridges the gap between structure and agency, which was outlined in

the previous chapter as necessary for this thesis. The way relational sociology does this is through its analysis of societal structures: non-relational sociology might treat gender or class as either an attribute or an identity, whereas in relational sociology, gender and class only receive their meaning in *relation* to others, as these have no meaning unless there is a recognition of difference or sameness to someone else (Crossley, 2011). However, within relational sociology, what constitutes the relational is not agreed upon. Donati argues that there is a distinction to be made between relational sociology that sees relations as a unit of analysis, and those he chooses to call 'relation*ism*, because they consider the relation as a product of a mixing of individual actions and social structures, without seeing that the relation is a *sui generis* reality' (Donati, 2015, p. 88, italics in original). This relates to the ontological position the researcher takes, where relational sociology ought to transcend the agency and structure dichotomy and create a 'third' way (Donati, 2021), which is in opposition to studying relationships as a mere product of social structures or relationships as a transactional product of people's agency.

The relational sociology adopted for this thesis is Donati and Archer's version, which they outlined in their book *The Relational Subject* (2015). To them, people are 'enmeshed in relations with significant others and with the non-social world' and people are not self-sufficient entities but instead '*subject[s]-in-relation*' (2015, p. 15, italics in original). Here, what they point to is that it is not only relations to other people that influence people's lives, but also the non-social, such as the physical world around us. They continue: 'the decisions, choices, and actions of each of us are not purely individual acts, but are arrived at in relation to and with others' (2015, p. 15). They explain this by using 'we' as a unit of analysis, where this 'we' is created in any type of group activity, whether this is associational life, volunteering, or an informal group situation. Their argument is that the singular person comes into existence in the interaction with the world around them, and that social life is always a relational affair and 'it is in relationships that new social properties and powers are generated' (2015, p. 50). Hence, a loop has been created where people are *in* relation to other people and the non-social world, and in turn, it is within these relationships that the world can change. This is Donati's 'third way', circumventing the structural way of thinking that views people as objects and society as based on a transactional agency-only approach.

The divide between structure and individual is bridged by the collective 'we', which exists because the individual is always in relation to other people and

this is how we understand ourselves, even in everyday language (Donati and Archer, 2015, p. 60). They call this *relational reflexivity*, which enables people to 'consider themselves in relation to their social circumstances, to their social relations themselves, and to review their future courses of action in the light if reflexivity itself' (2015, p. 52). This enables people to make conscious choices of what they want the relation (the 'we') to be, and can act accordingly. Donati and Archer describe this as 'relational goods', which exist in the relation and cannot be taken out of it: if the relationship ends, these goods are lost. These goods are also reflexive, and 'have causal properties and powers that *internally* influence their own makers', but because they are reflexive, they also influence people to '*reflexively orienting* their own actions *towards* relational goods' (Donati and Archer, 2015, p. 66, italics in original). People can choose to act in certain ways to get the results they want from the relation, but also that the relation itself exerts power on the individual. This further reiterate the point that everything we do is in relation to others.

The benefit of using relational sociology is that it can aid in understanding complex issues that involve subjectivity and social settings. For example, it has been used to understand community wellbeing (Atkinson *et al.*, 2020), and to understand the dynamics in groups of young offenders holistically (Weaver and Fraser, 2022). Other studies have also showed the importance of studying relationships, without naming relational sociology. Herzog and Yang's (2018) study on the role of social networks in giving financial aid to charitable organisations found that if a person had a relationship with a giver, they were also more likely to give than if they were directly asked by the organisation themselves to give. Thus, from a relational point of view, the relationship to the person who already gives financial aid informed the person's choice to also give. The choice to give was still the person's choice, but was informed by, *not* directed by, their environment.

The aim of this thesis is to understand how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life in a society which is increasingly individualistic and informal. Using Donati and Archer's relational subject creates an opportunity to both understand the reality in which people engage with other people through associational life and how they understand their own engagement. Where this section set the premises of how the data was analysed for this thesis by using relational sociology, the next subsection will describe how social capital offers a way to analyse these relations within a relational approach.

3.1.1 Bourdieu's concepts of social capital and habitus

This section will outline how Bourdieu's concepts of social capital and in particular habitus were used in this thesis to understand participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. While Bourdieu has been credited with developing the concept of social capital as it is used today, the term has been used since beginning of the twentieth century (Hanifan, 1916). Bourdieu saw social capital as similar to economic capital, but with the currency being relationships, and defined it as 'the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). This relational aspect was further reiterated in the preface to his book *Practical Reason: On the theory of action*, where he wrote: '[my work] is a philosophy of science that one could call *relational* in that it accords primacy to relations' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. vii, italics in original). As seen in this definition, people's *relationships* are central to the notion of social capital, as they are a resource that they can benefit from. Power is an important dimension in Bourdieu's work, given the struggle over power in who has access to these relational resources (Bourdieu, 1989). In other words, the more people you know, the more relationships you can draw from in everyday life, which ultimately means you are more likely to have access to more power. He explains this by using the example of private golf clubs as a place where businessmen can come together and help each other to 'oil the machinery', as this is where businesspeople can meet to enhance their goals (Bourdieu, 1984). There is also an element of 'inheritance', similar to financial wealth, where this type of capital can be 'transferred' to people's children. Bourdieu described this 'inheritance' as a 'domestic transmission of [...] capital' (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 107), which, like monetary forms of inheritance, will benefit those who are on the receiving end. Bourdieu also claimed that social capital is the most important type of capital in terms of an individual's success, as social capital can mobilise both cultural capital, which is accrued knowledge and skills (Bourdieu, 1997), and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1980 cited in Field, 2008, p. 19).

Key to understanding the relational aspect of Bourdieu's theories is what he calls *distinction*. Although his writing about this in *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (Bourdieu, 1984) is in regard to taste and lifestyles, and about the power relations within these, this too is relational. It is through *distinction* we 'identify, locate and situate social actors within

society; they influence the ways in which those actors behave and the ways in which they themselves will be perceived' (Papilloud and Schultze, 2018, p. 343). Based on this distinction of the self from others *habitus* emerges, which he describes as a person's 'feel for the social game' (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 27). This *feel* might not be fully reflected upon by the individual, as it is the way they engage with the world which is informed by their social background, their upbringing, and their values, and could even inform people's character and personalities (Sayer, 2020). However, these traits, behaviours, or character, can also be actively acquired by choice (Bourdieu, 1984), so there is room for reflexivity to take place in relation to the habitus. Hence, it is not solely a system that people are subjected to and exist within, but people have the agency to choose and shape the habitus they inhabit. This also goes beyond the habitus that oneself inhabits, as people can see what other groups of people do, see them as distinct from themselves and either make a choice of acknowledging the difference, or to emulate their behaviour.

This can be analysed in relation to volunteering and other types of associational life. People's background and upbringing will situate them in a certain habitus which will inform if, and how, they engage in associations and what their social life looks like. For example, habitus can be intrinsic like in Davies' (2018) study which found that young people from deprived areas of Scotland do not see volunteering as common behaviour in their peer groups. It can also be extrinsic, where those in power might favour volunteers that exhibit the 'right' kind of social and cultural norms, leading to the exclusion of people from certain backgrounds (Stuij, 2015). Their involvement could also be seen to devalue the symbolic value of these activities for the other young people who come from a higher-income background, which adds another dimension to how some young people are excluded from experiences that can lead to new relationships (Storr and Spaaij, 2016).

This highlights the neutrality of social capital; it does not value one kind over the other, it describes relations. Engagement in most groups is advantageous. For example, youth sports organisations can help to instil a set of values and 'correct' behaviours towards teammates, which also affect young people's relationships outside of the club (Ashraf, 2019). Similarly, while volunteering might be perceived as a good way to meet new people, as it might bring a diverse group of people together, this is not necessarily the case as middle-class volunteers are favoured (Dean, 2016), leading to a socially homogenous group

of volunteers. As such, 'knowing someone is insufficient; the relationship must be supportive and positive to have beneficial impacts' (Glover, 2018, p. 30).

This last quote highlights the need to understand what a relationship means to a person and how it affects them, rather than focusing on the existence of a relationship. As organisations, associations, clubs, and informal groups of people are, at their core, relationships between people, relationships are what this thesis investigates. This section has outlined relational sociology, using Bourdieu's concept of social capital; the next section will provide complementary concepts used in this thesis to understand how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life.

3.2 Complementary relational concepts

The previous sections in this chapter described relational sociology and Bourdieu's concepts of social capital and habitus, which are the underlying analytical framework for this thesis. This section introduces complementary conceptual tools used to understand people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. It starts with an account of critiques and alternative conceptualisations of social capital to Bourdieu's and a justification as to why Bourdieu's work is still relevant for the purposes of this thesis. It then describes the concepts of bonding and bridging social capital and adjacent concepts to social capital: thick and thin communities, weak and strong ties, and third places.

One critique of social capital is the use of economic terms to describe an aspect of human life that is not neither purely economic nor transactional, but much more complex (Robison, Schmid and Siles, 2002). Another critique of Bourdieu's social capital is his focus on the individual's accruement of social resources cannot account for how social capital affects groups or communities. Coleman (1988) aimed to rectify this by viewing social capital as a shared resource between members of a community and thus an aspect of community. This conceptualisation included reciprocity rather than only being concerned with who has access to social capital and how this relates to power as is the case with Bourdieu's work. Coleman's understanding of social capital is heavily influenced by rational choice sociology (Becker, 1994), which postulates that people are more likely to make choices that will benefit them and views social relations as an exchange between members of society. In Coleman's version, where social capital is a factor of the community or the group that people take part in, it is the answer to *why* people choose to cooperate. He exemplifies this

in his study on school performance in Catholic schools, where he found it was not necessarily the socio-economic background that determined students' performance, but instead, the obligations and expectations that exist within a person's community (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987). His explanation of this was that a homogenous group of people are better equipped to create positive outcomes for the group than a diverse group of people, because there is an accountability structure in place for the whole group. While Coleman's communitarian perspective on social capital is justifiable, Bourdieu's concept of habitus can accomplish what Coleman and Hoffer's study found, too, because a community have a *shared* a habitus. A community has a set of expectations and norms of how people ought to behave, and this community might have different levels of cohesion. As Bourdieu's conceptualisation of social capital can also account for both group behaviour and an individual's agency, whereas Coleman's social capital is about group behaviour, better suited for the purposes of this thesis.

The ensuing subsections will describe the concepts of *bonding* and *bridging social capital*, *thick* and *thin* communities, *weak* and *strong ties*, and *third places*, and how these will be used in this thesis to understand how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life.

3.2.1 Bonding and bridging social capital

Another important author for the development of social capital is Putnam, who explored social capital from the perspective of individuals' networks and individuals' ability to acquire social capital. According to Putnam, social capital is accumulated through social networks, particularly *formal* social networks. Putnam saw social capital as a public good that can ensure that an individual is connected with their community. His argument was that 'a well-connected individual in a poorly connected society is not as productive as a well-connected individual in a well-connected society' (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). Further, a well-connected community is a place of reciprocity, where there is an expectation that if a person helps another community member out, that person *or someone else* in that community will return the favour at some point in time, which in turn promotes cooperation.

In his book, *Bowling Alone* (2000), Putnam describes how people are less involved in organised associational life, such as bowling clubs, and to him, this lack of engagement in (formal) associational life leads to less trust in society. To better understand what fosters trust and community, he created a

typification of two different types of social capital: bonding and bridging social capital. While this thesis does not see the atomisation of society as an issue that needs to be corrected, but understood, these two types of social capital provide a useful framework to understand social relations.

Bonding social capital is 'the glue' that keeps a group together, like a family or a group of friends. As Putnam's focus was on the fostering of a sense of community, his seminal book promoting the bridging social capital also claims that bonding social capital does not have the same positive societal impact as the bridging kind, as it prevents people from engaging with people outside of their own networks. To him, bridging social capital is the remedy to the social 'decline' and is better than bonding social capital as 'bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves' (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). This conceptualisation is useful as it further delineates social capital into having two forces: one to include more people and one to make a group more tightly knit. However, it is not as clear-cut as Putnam presents it, and his work has been criticised for being too dichotomous. Groups characterised by bonding social capital are generally better at obtaining *new* social resources, both material and symbolic (Bekkers, Völker and van der Gaag, 2008). However, while the access to social capital is greater in these groups, these resources also tend to be more homogenous. While bridging social capital on the other hand is bringing people from a wide range of settings and backgrounds together, the group find it more difficult to mobilise this capital (Häuberer, 2014). Instead, bonding and bridging social capital should be seen as two endpoints on a spectrum, as there might be groups of people that exhibit elements of both bonding and bridging social capital (Agnitsch, Flora and Ryan, 2006).

As mentioned earlier, social capital is neutral and only describes relationships. While increasing social capital in, for example, a local community could benefit all the residents, social capital is also the driving force behind most organised crime (Graeff, 2009). In extreme cases, it can even be deadly, like in Bosnia and Rwanda where collective action through bonding social capital ended with genocide (Levi, 1996). Portes (1998) elaborated on this point and suggested that there are four ways in which social capital could be negative. The first is that bonding social capital can be used to exclude 'unwanted' people from their territory. The second way social capital can be negative is when social ties can weigh a person down through expectations of support, or 'free-riding'. The third way is that social capital and social bonds might require conformity

within the group. In a close-knit community, social control might be high and restrict personal freedom. The last example that Portes gives is about how a marginalised group might find their identity and solidarity in opposition to mainstream society. As such, if someone from this group is finding success in mainstream society, this individual is looked down upon and seen as a 'traitor', which might make some choose not to pursue another life trajectory because of the norms in their social grouping, which Poata-Smith (2013) also have described in relation to the indigenous identities. Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi (2017) have completed a systematic review of the literature on social capital in relation to health and wellbeing. They argue that negative behaviours can also spread through social groups, which is detrimental to everyone in the group. This relates to Bourdieu's concept of habitus where the individual is socialised into a way of thinking, being and reacting to the outside world.

Despite these critiques, the concepts of bonding and bridging social capital bring value to this thesis by offering a way of understanding the relationship between people. However, this is not the only way to understand the dynamics of different groups of people; the next subsection will present the concepts of *thick* and *thin communities* to understand different networks of people.

3.2.2 Thick and thin communities

One aspect of community life is how embedded someone is within a network of people around them. Dotson (2017) provides a typology to understand two types of communities, based on how embedded people are in their surroundings. The core idea is that the number of dimensions through which a person is connected to other community members creates a spectrum from 'very connected', or *thick* community, to a less connected, *thin* community. It is worth noting that this only describes people's embeddedness in a social setting and is not a value-based description. For the purposes of this thesis, this typology can aid in understanding how embedded people are in a community when they engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. It can also indicate whether they have a wide network of friends and acquaintances, or if they have a close-knit network with fewer people in it.

According to this model of thick and thin communities, there are seven dimensions that the embeddedness of people can be measured against: social ties, relational exchange, talk, symbolic sense, communal economics, communal justice, and moral order.

← Thin	Dimensions of community	Thick →
Diffuse, segmented, dyadic	**Social ties**	Dense, multiplex, systematic
Specific, contractual	**Relational exchange/support**	Mutual aid, reciprocity
Infrequent, info sharing	**Talk**	Frequent, bonding character
Intentional manipulation	**Symbolic/ psychological sense**	Relational interdependence
Cooperation agreements	**Communal economics**	Collective ownership
Shared legal/political framework	**Political community/ communal justice**	Participatory governance
Shared values of everyday life and identity formation	**Community as shared moral order**	Shared values framed around collective goods

Figure 3.1 Dimensions of community (adapted from Dotson, 2017, p. 60)

As can be seen in Figure 3.1, Dotson's model describes a similar pattern to how sociologists in the early twentieth century described rural and urban life, where thin communities would describe their understanding of urban life and thick communities describe rural life. However, as Dotson points out, the relationship between thick and thin communities and urban and rural life is not clear-cut. Thick communities do exist in urban geographies, and the fleeting and disengaged city dweller, which Dotson describe as 'the bohemian or well-to-do cosmopolite' (Dotson, 2017, p. 36), is not representative for the whole city-dwelling population. As such, when Pahl (2000) and Maffesoli (2016) state that friends are the source of community in contemporary society, we must exercise caution in not taking these statements as describing contemporary society as a whole but use it to describe aspects of society.

While Dotson's concepts of thick and thin communities have mostly been used in studies related to loneliness and online communities (e.g., Osler, 2020; Candiotto, 2022), these concepts are also useful in understanding networks of people engaging in volunteering and other types of associational life, and what these networks might look like in different locations. The dimension that is most relevant for this thesis is the first one, on social ties. This dimension enables an understanding of what types of communities a person takes part in, and if this differs between activities. For example, it might be that one's

volunteering group is a thick community, where they do several volunteering roles with the same group of people, while the two sports activities they do might both be in thin communities.

In summary, thick and thin communities are both conceptual tools that take entire networks of people into consideration to understand how embedded people are in these networks. The next subsection on weak and strong ties provides further analytical tools to understand how the relationships between people, depending on how well embedded they are in a community, can impact on how open and closed people's networks are.

3.2.3 Weak and strong ties

Complementing thin and thick communities are Granovetter's (1973, 1983) concepts of *strong* and *weak ties*. These refer to the strength of the bond between people in a network and focus on dyadic relationships. His social network theory posits that our social world consists of these two types of ties. Strong ties often include family members, close friends and other relationships that are important for individuals, relationships they depend on. Weak ties, on the other hand, are acquaintances and people with whom one may have some connection, but these are not present in one's daily life. While the strong ties might at a first glance be of more importance, Granovetter's focus is on the weak ties, as they are conduits for bringing disparate groups together. Weak ties show some similarities to bridging social capital mentioned earlier in this chapter, but instead of focusing on group resources, weak ties are about relationships. Strong ties are also similar to bonding social capital in this way, but from a relational perspective.

The diagram below in figure 3.2 describes how weak ties function to bring two groups of people together. Weak ties are represented by dotted lines and strong ties by filled lines, to show how people are connected to each other and how different group configurations work. In (a) there are two groups of people that are well connected through strong ties amongst each other, and only two weak ties, and (b) shows a network of people that is more dispersed, but the links are also generally shorter between people, signifying people are not as socially distant from each other compared to (a). Granovetter uses the example of information transfer to illustrate how these ties function. Weak ties can be likened to bridges, so if information has a shorter way to travel and there are routes information can travel, this is advantageous for people to receive new information. In (a), if one 'bridge' is taken out, there is only one route

information can go through, so this model is more susceptible to isolation, and describes groups with strong bonding social capital, and also thick communities. In (b) on the other hand, if one 'bridge' is taken out, there are still other pathways for information to pass through, which is more akin to how bridging social capital have been described, and thin communities.
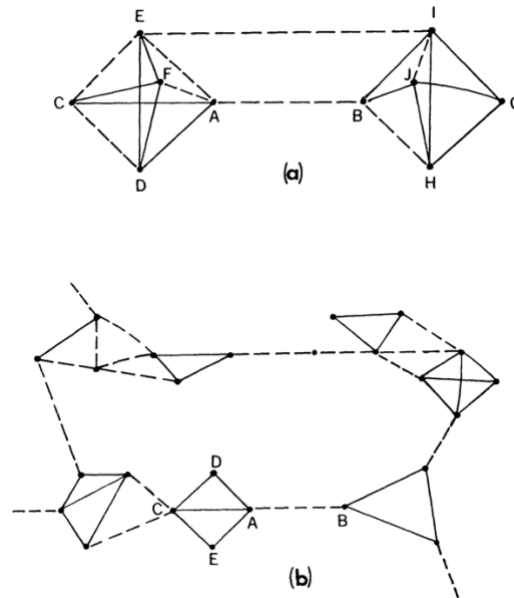
Figure 3.2 Weak and strong ties (from Granovetter, 1973, p. 1365)

Therefore, a lack of weak ties constrains a person's access to information from a wider group of people, and the information that exists in a network with strong ties stays within this network. This becomes clearer when he uses the example of innovations: if early adopters of an innovation are those in the periphery with not so many ties with others, be those strong or weak, the adoption rates of the innovation will be likely low. An early adopter with many strong ties might spread this in their network, but not necessarily beyond this, depending on whether there are any weak ties, but the length of these might also impede on the transference. So if a person with many weak ties is an early adopter, this innovation will diffuse to a greater number of people. Thus, individuals who are part of a larger number of groups function as a bridge between these groups and can enable new connections between groups.

Although Granovetter (1974) and other studies have primarily focused on the importance of weak ties in relation to finding a job (e.g., Lin and Dumin, 1986; Gee *et al.*, 2017), the concept can also be applied to participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. In this setting, the concepts of strong and weak ties can improve understanding of how individuals might

act as bridges between groups of people, or even between different associational groups or activities. In this study, this can be explored both from the perspective of how people get involved in other activities through a specific individual or if they themselves are the person that brings new people to an activity. Or alternatively, they could be in a network of strong ties that might enable a 'clique' to form and be homogenous in terms of members. For example, a knitting group characterised by strong ties is more likely to have the same members over time and become more closed, while a knitting group with more weak ties can potentially widen people's social circles and introduce new people or activities.

Similarly to the previous subsection on thin and thick communities, the characterisation of the type of ties should not be compared against each other but understood in terms of how they work differently. These can be used as theoretical tools to understand people's social lives and provide an opportunity to describe and analyse how different types of groups interact with each other, and with others. The next subsection will depart from concepts used to understand how relationships function and instead will focus on *where* relationships might be enacted.

3.2.4 Third places

The previous subsections discussed ways of understanding relationships between people; this subsection explores places where relationships are formed and are enacted. The focus will be on public spaces, such as libraries, parks, community halls, playgrounds, and even commercial public spaces like pubs, shopping centres or coffee shops (Lin, 2012) where associations tend to develop. Oldenburg (1999, 2001) called these places *third places*, as the first place is the domestic space and the second place is one's workplace. These are spaces where social life is enacted, outside of people's homes. Oldenburg writes about 'true' third places that share certain characteristics, which other scholars have later added to. Some of these characteristics include that they provide a neutral ground open for everyone, where one's social background does not matter, they have a mix of 'regulars' and new people joining, and they can function as 'a second home' (Quandt and Kröger, 2013). Oldenburg also said that the 'consequence of technological advancement is that [people] will grow ever more apart from one another' (1999, p. XXVIII). However, since his conceptualisation of third places, the prevalence and importance of technology has changed, including the way technology and communities can be linked. As technology has become intricately embedded with society (Delanty, 2013, pp.

135–6), this will have both positive and negative consequences in relation to engaging in volunteering and other types of associational life, making it possible for individuals to engage in activities online.

This does not mean that all restaurants, community centres, and libraries are actually functioning as a third place in the way Oldenburg described. For example, a pub can be an important 'third place' to create a sense of belonging to the local area (Baker, Tolley and Hill, 2016), especially in rural areas (Cabras and Mount, 2017), but they are not always a 'levelling place' where socio-economic background does not matter. In urban areas, pubs as a 'home outside the home' can be segregated based on class. One participant in Jensen and Gidley's (2016, p. 29) study on two London neighbourhoods said: 'they've got their wine bars – we've got our pubs', highlighting a divide between groups. Even within a public social space, there are assumed, or imposed, notions of who is allowed to participate (Glover, 2004; Johnson and Samdahl, 2005). As such, the alleged universality and community-building function of third places should be critically examined, in addition to how they function in relation to urban and rural areas. Yuen and Johnson (2017) call for research on third places and places of community to include a greater understanding of *who* is excluded and not just of those who are included in these spaces. For Yuen and Johnson, diversity ought to play a greater role in understanding the meaning and importance of public social spaces.

With this in mind, the concept of *third places* provides a means to describe places where relationships are enacted outside of people's homes. This is especially important in the contemporary society, where social life is increasingly taking place outside of formal organisations or associations. As friendships have increased in importance, as outlined in section 2.1, these might be enacted in people's homes, but equally, in third places like restaurants and cafes. For volunteering and other types of associational life, it is important to know if these spaces are used, or not used at all.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how a framework based around relational sociology, complemented by concepts of social capital and weak and strong ties, will aid in understanding how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. Relational sociology provides a theoretical framework where relations between people are at the centre, which is needed to understand how people engage in volunteering and other types of

associational life in the contemporary society which has become more individualised and informalised. This means that people are engaging in these activities because it is part of their biographical story, rather than it being part of their collective identity, which previously was the dominant form of identity formation, according to theories of individualisation. As friendships have an increased importance and people's lives might be more fragmented, an understanding of how people's relationships are enacted is needed. Specifically, Donati and Archer's (2015) concept of the relational subject provides a framework that encompasses both the structures of organisations and associations people engage in, as well as including people's agency to volunteer and engage in other types of associational life. They describe a relational reflexivity where people see themselves in relation to others as 'we' and because of this they can make choices of what form their relations take, or what they *want* them to look like, and act accordingly.

Within this framework of relational sociology, Bourdieu's concepts of social capital and habitus aid in understanding how people's social background and the circles they move in affect the ways in which they volunteer and participate in other aspects of associational life. Social capital at its core *is* about relationships, as it is through the *distinction* between the self and others where the *habitus* emerges, which refers to the social setting people are situated in. This impacts on people's upbringing, social networks, and influences how how they engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. While this might seem prescriptive, there is leeway for people to have agency and make active decisions to behave or take part in activities outside their usual habitus. This is similar to the relational reflexivity that Donati and Archer describe and considered through the habitus; this reflexivity is influenced by people's backgrounds and networks.

Four additional concepts were also discussed that aid in the understanding of relationships between people and where relationships take place. Putnam's iteration of social capital with the concepts of *bridging* and *bonding* social capital was discussed, which describes how groups can be inclusive or exclusive depending on the type of social capital that exists within them. Bonding social capital keeps a group tightly knit, while bridging social capital makes for mixed groups; both types have their advantages and drawbacks. These concepts aid in making comparisons between different groups or between different types of activities in terms of the relationships that exist within them.

The other complementary concepts are *thick* and *thin communities, weak* and *strong ties,* and *third places.* Thick and thin communities describe how embedded people are within their social networks. For this thesis, thick and thin communities provide a better way to understand what impact different levels of embeddedness play on people's participation in both associational life and volunteering. Weak and strong ties are concerned with the connection between people, and how weak ties can function to connect different groups of people, while strong ties keep a group tightly knit together. These two concepts are similar, as both describe the connections between people, but thick and thin communities are concerned with the level of embeddedness of a person in a network of people, while weak and strong ties describe the strengths of the ties between individuals. The last complementary concept is a so-called *third place*, which refers to places where community life takes place. This adds a spatial component to understanding where relationships between people are enacted.

This chapter has described the theoretical framework used in this study to understand and analyse people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. The next chapter will describe how the research questions were operationalised and how these theories guided the methodology of the thesis.

4 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used to investigate how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. The literature review chapter described the societal shift towards a more individualised and informal way of engaging with other people, and it introduced the concept of associational life used for this thesis. The same chapter also highlighted that there is more research available on volunteering than other types of associational life, and no research that compares them to each other on a more systematic level. It was also highlighted that relationships play a crucial part in people's participation in associational life. In the third chapter, relational sociology was introduced as a framework to understand people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life, to account for both structure and agency. In addition, Bourdieu's concept of social capital and habitus was introduced, and some complementary concepts. These two chapters have informed the way the research was carried out for this thesis, where a mixed methods approach was deemed necessary to both understand the bigger picture and how individuals engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. A survey was used, and interviews with stakeholders from organisations, clubs, and associations were carried out, as well as interviews with some survey respondents, to provide breadth and depth to understanding how people engage with others. This chapter describes this process in detail, outlining the research paradigm used, a rationale for using a mixed methods approach, detailed information on how the data was collected, and how the data was analysed. This chapter also considers the ethical considerations undertaking this research.

4.1 Research paradigm

This section discusses the research paradigm that this thesis employed to be able to answer the research questions identified in section 2.5. It provides a discussion of what a research paradigm is, and why this discussion is important, and outlines how the ontology and epistemology employed align with the theoretical framework described in the previous chapter.

The importance of outlining the research paradigm used is to describe the relationship between theory and practice. The paradigm determines and informs the researcher's view of reality and what knowledge can be produced, which also informs the methods that can be used to generate new knowledge (Crotty, 1998). This multi-levelled approach to knowledge starts with the ontological assumption on what constitutes the social world of what is studied. While ontology is often described in the literature as 'the issue of what exists, or the fundamental nature of reality' (Neuman, 2015, p. 94), or something similar, it is not the metaphysical question of what is real or what reality is made of that ontology is concerned with. Rather, it is about how to best understand the phenomenon or the social world that the research is about. Although there are many ontological positions (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018), the two most prevalent positions, which reflect the different ways of conceptualising reality between the natural sciences and the social sciences, are about whether reality is experienced or whether it exists independently from people's views and experiences of it. In the natural sciences, reality is assumed to exist regardless of whether people observe it, experience it and think about it, which also assumes that reality can be discovered and tested. This view is referred to as a (naïve) realist ontology (Moon and Blackman, 2014). The other major ontological position is that there is not only one reality, but multiple realities, and that they will always be filtered through people's experiences, cultures and social contexts. This position is referred to as relativist ontology (Braun and Clarke, 2013). There is also a position which falls between these two, which focuses on exploring reality as *mediated* by human experience. This third perspective, *critical realism*, was instigated by Bhaskar (2008). With a critical realist point of view, the researcher can focus on 'deeper level[s] in the "real" domain, not readily observable and consisting of structures and mechanisms that produce what is observed in the "empirical" domain' (Blaikie and Priest, 2017, p. 41). This position is useful for this thesis as it enables an understanding that people's engagement in volunteering and other types of associational life takes place in the empirical world, but this alone would not aid in understanding *how*, and *why*, engagement in different activities might look different.

The ontological position then informs the *epistemology* of the study, which is concerned with 'what kinds of knowledge are legitimate and adequate' (Gray, 2004, p. 35). This is ultimately about the knowledge that is created and where it originates from, which is closely aligned with the ontological position. How the world can be uncovered through scientific methods depends on what

position is taken by the researcher. An objectivist epistemology assumes that meaning can be found and extracted and that it exists whether or not the researcher uncovers it, while a subjectivist epistemology assumes that meaning comes from subjective accounts of the world, which means that there is not just one 'truth' to be found. A constructionist epistemology, which falls somewhere between objectivism and subjectivism, assumes that meaning 'comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world; no real world preexists that is independent of human activity or symbolic language' (Moon and Blackman, 2014, p. 1172). This also affects the researcher's position in relation to the research and the research participants, as the researcher is either 'detached' from the reality that is studied or is an 'empathetic observer', where knowledge is created *with* the participants, and the researcher is part of unravelling social life (Blaikie and Priest, 2017, p. 42). As a researcher, I am an empathetic observer, as my choice of methods, questions asked, *how* I ask them, and how I will interpret them in relation to other research will be influenced by my background and positionality.

In a practical sense, this involves choosing appropriate methodologies and theories that are used together to answer the research questions suitably. As described in the previous chapter, I have adopted a specific critical realist theoretical framework called relational sociology, and more specifically, Donati and Archer's (2015) take on it, which was discussed in the previous chapter. Their relational sociology enables me to understand how structure informs people's relations, but also how people understand their relations and the relational constellations that they are part of. While their version of relational sociology goes under the umbrella of critical realism, there is a difference in how they view relations and structure. Critical realists aim to find a link between structure and agency, which might prevent them from fully describing the characteristics of a group of people, as their focus is on what *influences* the group rather than the group itself. Relational sociology on the other hand is concerned with the relations between people, as they see relations as what constitutes our social reality, rather than treating relations as something that is influenced by structure. Thus, 'social reality *is* social relationality' (Donati, 2010, p. 123, italics in original). With this understanding of social life, the way in which relations are viewed also radically changes how sociology is done: 'the subject matter of sociology is not "social facts" but, rather, "social facts" as social relations' (Archer, 2010, p. 201).

Implementing a relational sociology paradigm to explore what people do together means that the focus is not on people as objects. Instead, it is the action of taking part in volunteering and other types of associational life *with* others that is the focus of this thesis, and the 'we' that is created by taking part in these activities. While using a critical realist ontology and epistemology aids in understanding why certain structures impact on people's participation, a relational sociological perspective investigates the '*process* arising *between* social actors' (Crossley, 2011, p. 21, italics in original), enabling an understanding of not only *why* and *how* engagement in different types of activities might be distinct from each other, but also how people understand this 'we' they are part of.

4.2 Methodological approach

To understand what engagement in volunteering and other types of associational life looks like, this study utilised a mixed methods approach. This was also done iteratively, with a first set of interviews with stakeholders and a survey to understand the context in which people engage with others, which, together, informed the last set of interviews with individuals about their participation in associational life. This process can be seen in Figure 4.1. The first set of interviews included stakeholders from voluntary organisations and other clubs and associations, and the survey responses provided an overview of what engagement in volunteering and other types of associational life looks like. This section provides rationales of using a mixed methods approach, and why semi-structured interviews and a survey were used.
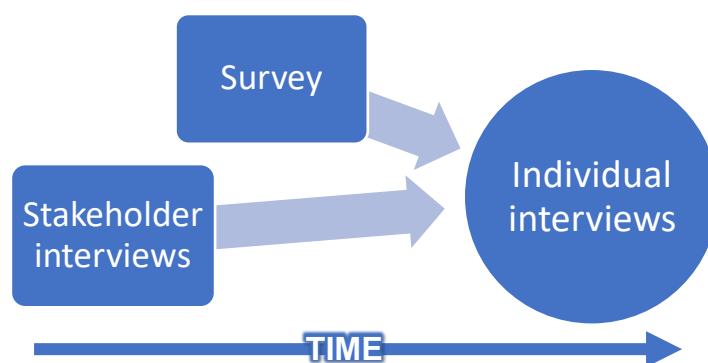
Figure 4.1 Data collection process

4.2.1 Mixed methods research design

To understand what engagement in volunteering and other types of associational life looks like, a mixed methods approach was used. This

combines the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide both greater generalisability and depth, as a mixed methods approach fills the gap in knowledge left by using only qualitative or quantitative methods (Bryman, 2012, p. 637). While a quantitative study has the advantage describing the bigger picture and generalising over a larger population, it has limited space to provide a nuanced answer as to *why* or *how* what the data show. A qualitative method, on the other hand, provides nuance and depth, though is limited in its ability to describe the world beyond the participants' subjective lived experiences. For this thesis, which is concerned with people's relationships in associations, a mixed methods approach can account for a fuller 'representation of relationships at a moment in time that can help to both express those relationships and to open new questions that can be explored using other methods' (Marshall and Staeheli, 2015, p. 56). However, when using such an approach, it is important to make an informed decision on the type of data the methods chosen can gather and how they can be used together, as they are 'ineluctably rooted in epistemological and ontological commitments' (Bryman, 2012, p. 629). This means that there is a risk that the two ontologies cannot be used in conjunction with each other, but there are ways to mitigate this. One such way is to let the data fuse to varying degrees, from total fusion with an iterative process of analysis, which was the case for this thesis, to keep them separate for triangulation of the findings (Yousefi Nooraie *et al.*, 2020). While reliability and validity measures are not the same for qualitative and quantitative methods, where quantitative methods need to be replicable and generalizable, qualitative research can be evaluated using measures like trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). Qualitative research is also generalisable to *theory* rather than to *a population* (Yin, 2009), and, while mainly concerned with people's views and experiences, 'knowledge of the social world beyond the interaction can still be obtained' (Miller and Glassner, 2016, p. 53).

By using Donati and Archer's (2015) approach to relational sociology in this thesis, a blend of facts and experiences is possible as a relational approach allows a real understanding of what people do together *and* how people understand themselves in relation to these activities. This was achieved through the iterative process described above, where the stakeholder interviews and survey together provided information on developing the structure of the final set of interviews. Together, the two methods provided both *breadth* and *depth*. The two methods will be discussed in more detail below.

4.2.2 Interviews

Two sets of interviews were undertaken for this research: one set with 14 stakeholders from a variety of clubs and associations in Glasgow and South Ayrshire, and 10 interviews with survey respondents who were willing to take part in a follow-up interview. The selection of these areas and recruitment will be discussed later. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to understand the context, together with the survey, to what types of associational life people engage in and how they engage in these activities. This also had the benefit of asking the stakeholders to share the survey in their networks if they found it appropriate, potentially enabling more respondents to the survey.

These qualitative interviews did not aim to produce a comprehensive depiction of the engagement in the organisation, club, or association, but they did provide an account of, from their point of view, who engaged with the organisations and how stakeholders understood this engagement. To do this, I used semi-structured interviews, as this style 'facilitates a strong element of discovery, while its structured focus allows an analysis in terms of commonalities' (Gillham, 2007, p. 72). The interviews were used to enable me to focus on certain areas, like who engages in their activities and if the stakeholders interviewed could see any differences in how different groups of people engaged with them, while still giving room for the specifics of the interviewee's views on the group they were involved with. This flexibility to discuss a range of issues is seen as one of the strengths of using interviewing as a method in the social sciences (Packer, 2018, p. 56). Using semi-structured interviews also meant that the interviewees might talk about aspects of people's engagement which I might have not anticipated or thought to be of interest. This loose format of the interviews gave me an opportunity to inductively understand people's engagement through the course of the interviews and to ask follow-up questions. These interviews provided information about how people engage in the interviewees' activities and the experiences of transition between volunteering and other types of associational life. This first set of interviews with stakeholders was meant to elicit information on engagement in general, but also to inform the second set of interviews with survey respondents which were also informed by the survey, which is described in more detail below. The interview schedule for the first and second set of interviews can be found in Appendix 3.

The second set of interviews with survey respondents also used Miro boards where the participants and I together created a 'map' of their social life, where

they were able to show me their social networks, how different activities were connected, or not connected at all, and how things had changed over time for them. This additional layer to the final set of interviews provided a means to analyse both structure and the processes around volunteering and other types of associational life (Tubaro, Ryan and D'angelo, 2016).

4.2.3 Survey

The survey used was part of the first phase of the research and provided the quantitative element in the mixed methods research design. The survey served the dual purpose of understanding how people engage in associational life and providing *some* insight as to what this means to them, which fed into the second set of qualitative interviews with some of the survey respondents. However, the main reason to include a survey in the research design was to explore how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life and what connections could be found between the activities participants were involved in and factors that informed their participation.

While traditionally seen as mainly quantitative, surveys can technically be fully qualitative, using open-ended questions (Braun *et al.*, 2020), or collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. However, the qualitative data that a survey can collect is limited to the choices people make or free-text responses, without the researcher being able to ask follow-up questions. In the survey designed for this thesis, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in the form of categorical data, where the respondents were asked to describe their relationships and whether they feel that they belonged in their neighbourhood (see Appendix 4 for the full survey). However, these survey results do not offer the opportunity to explore matters further with follow-up questions, which is another reason for this iterative process of it informing the last set of interviews.

As the survey was part of the first step in an iterative process, it did not test a hypothesis, which is a more common deductive process for surveys (Stockemer, 2019). Instead, the survey utilised an inductive approach to *generate* theory, which Bryman (1988) calls 'reverse operationism'. This approach is often used to understand perceptions and practices in health care and emergency services (Young, Simpson and Warren, 2017; e.g. Fleischmann *et al.*, 2018; Olin *et al.*, 2020; Zisman-Ilani *et al.*, 2020), and works well for the type of exploratory work around how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. The exploratory nature of this type of survey can

provide an understanding of what engagement in associational life looks like, and how activities, different characteristics, and other variables might be connected, which can then be investigated more thoroughly using qualitative methods.

Using a survey together with qualitative interviews in a mixed methods approach provided an opportunity to understand both breadth and depth about how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. The survey enabled me to describe what engagement in these activities looks like, and the qualitative interviews provided insights into the *why* and *how* engagement might look different for different people or locations. The next section will describe in more detail how the data was collected.

4.3 Data collection

This section describes the data collection process, starting with a description of the interviews with the stakeholders, the survey, and the individual interviews, to then describe the locations where the data collection took place, and the recruitment process, and how the interviews and survey were administered.

4.3.1 Stakeholder interviews

In the interviews with the stakeholders, which took place between May and June of 2021, I was interested in gaining contextual information about how people engage with others. This was to develop an understanding of how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life that informed the survey and the second set of interviews. This enabled a more complete picture of how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, how people join these activities, and how this might differ depending on, for example, factors such as age, gender, access to transport or individuals' social and cultural backgrounds.

The interview guide emerged from the research questions and reading of the literature (see Appendix 3). I made sure that the interview schedule was broad enough and allowed for an inductive approach to not let my own values guide the data collection process too much. However, knowing what previous literature had found made it possible for me to explore themes that came up in individual interviews. For example, in one stakeholder interview, the ways that different generations engage with them came up, which sparked a discussion around the societal shift towards a more individualised society, and I shared an overview of the individualisation theory to contextualise their experiences.

All 10 interviews were conducted through Zoom, as the rules around social interaction during the Covid-19 pandemic when the study took place prevented me from meeting people face-to-face. Although there are methods that could have been used to mitigate this, like walking interviews (King and Woodroffe, 2017), conducting the interviews through Zoom was not deemed to negatively impact on the data collection, apart from one interview where there were some initial problems with connecting to the Zoom platform.

The interviews that I did with people from informal groups, such as the members from board games club, were slightly different from the others that were with people within a formal organisation. Because they were directly involved with the activity as a participant, they could use personal anecdotes about how it made *them* feel, rather than a more detached point of view which the co-ordinators and coaches offered. As such, the rapport building was more important in these interviews, as they were more intimate and personal.

4.3.2 Survey design

The survey platform used was Qualtrics, which the University of Strathclyde has a license for. This had the added benefit of having the university logotype and colours pre-loaded, which made the survey look professional and legitimate. A pilot was undertaken, where 10 people tried it before it was officially launched. The first few stakeholders I interviewed were asked if they wanted to take part in this, which was to include them in the research design process as well as interviewee. Only two of the stakeholders agreed to this, while the other eight volunteers to pilot the survey were staff from both VASA and Volunteer Glasgow. After the completion of the pilot, which resulted in changes in wording only, the survey was open between June and September of 2021.

The survey was divided into sections. The first section aimed to obtain key information about the respondents, including their age, where they lived, and the first part of their postcode. The second section was on the participants' neighbourhood, both how long they have lived in their current neighbourhood and what their views were on living there. The third section asked about people's participation in associational life, although the term 'associational life' was not used, as this is not a concept that I felt was used in everyday life and might have confused the respondents. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows what the text the respondents said and the shorthand used when presenting the data in this thesis. These descriptions of activities came

from the 2019/2020 England-only Community Life survey (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2023). The fourth and fifth sections asked about respondents' friendships and formal and informal volunteering, and the last section asked more detailed demographic questions about them and their households. These questions were the same questions as the ones found in the Scottish Household Survey (Scottish Government and Ipsos MORI, 2020b). See Appendix 4 for the full survey.

Text in survey	Shorthand
Sports Clubs and organisations	Sports
Informal group sports or exercising activities	Informal sports
Hobby related activities with other people (not sports related)	Hobbies
Arts based or other cultural group activities	Arts and culture
Youth groups	Youth groups
Clubs for retired or semi-retired people	Clubs for retired people
Religious or spiritual groups	Religious groups
Vocational or learning-based clubs or organisations	Vocational/educational
Activist groups (for example: political, rights groups, environmental, trade unions)	Activist groups
Local community groups	Local community groups
Other	Other
None	None

Table 4.1 Full name of activities in survey and shorthand name

The third section on the different activities people take part in contained a battery of questions that were repeated for each activity mentioned. This included an auto-generated line at the top of the page indicating which activity the questions were about: 'The questions on this page are about the [activity] you take part in'. The questions were about how many groups of this type individuals engaged in, how many hours they engaged in this activity, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were also questions on where the spaces in which the activities were taking place in relation to the respondent's home. This information was asked to compare with Balderstone's (2014) research on where people engage with other people in terms of distance from their home and how this might differ between different demographic groups. This battery of questions also included questions on the role of relationships, both in terms of who introduced them to these activities, but also who they engaged with, to explore the relational aspect of associational life. This also included a question on whether there was any perceived overlap between who engages in these activities and other groups, which could be an indication of whether the respondents are part of 'thick' or 'thin' communities (Dotson, 2017), i.e., whether they had multiple links to people in these

activities or if they only connected with participants through one-off activities. The last question of this section was whether engaging in group activities had led respondents to also volunteer, either in the same organisation or with other organisations.

As this section was repeated for every activity, this section of the survey did pose some difficulties initially in terms of user-friendliness which were highlighted in the pilot. If a respondent engaged in many different types of group activities, this part would be repeated several times, which might lead to them exiting the survey without completing it as the responses became repetitive. To avoid this, the repetition of this battery of questions was limited to only four times, randomly selecting which four activities to be explored in depth, if the respondent chose more than four. While this would result in not collecting detailed data on some of the activities, it still generated data on what types of activities respondents engaged in. In total, only ten respondents chose more than four activities.

To capture the informal group activities that people engage in, the third section asked questions about respondents' friendship groups. This section followed the same structure as the previous section and asked questions on what kind of spaces they would access to engage with their friends, where in relation to their home they did this, whether there was any overlap between friendship groups and the activities from the previous section, and where they met their friends. This section was to account for the societal shift towards a more informal society, where friendships might be more important than other types of relationships, like those to other people in an organisation or association of some sort.

The second to last section on volunteering also followed the same structure as the previous sections, and asked what types of volunteering participants took part in and what kind of tasks they did volunteering. The categories of types of volunteering and roles were taken from the Scottish Household Survey 2019 (Scottish Government, 2019b), which at the time was the latest household survey. This survey also provided the basis for many of the demographic questions, such as education level, to make my survey responses easily comparable to previous research. This section also included a short sub-section on volunteering during the Covid-19 pandemic. The last part of the survey was on demographic information, which included questions on gender, the number of adults and children in the household, ethnicity, education levels,

employment status and household income. The survey provided the basis for the second set of interviews, with survey respondents who were willing to take part.

4.3.3 Individual interviews

These interviews were undertaken in a similar fashion to the stakeholder interviews, as in they were semi-structured interviews done over Zoom. However, as these interviews were about the different activities the participants take part in, the focus was on their own participation. While there was an interview schedule (see Appendix 3), these interviews also made use of Miro boards, which is an online collaborative platform where the user can create Post-it notes to share ideas, use arrows and connectors between posts, and move posts on the display to develop an ideas board. Before the interviews, I prepared a Miro board for each participant with information from their survey answers where I created Post-it notes with the types of activities they take part in, and more if they said they did several of that particular type of activity.

The interview started with a warm-up question where I asked them to tell me about where they grew up, and what their relationship was to engaging in group activities. This was to explore the relationship between structure and agency, as the participants' backgrounds inform their choices, while the next stage of these interviews was about their adult participation in associational life. This is where I introduced the Miro board to the participant explaining how to use this and shared with them the link to the board via the chat facility in Zoom. This meant that the participant and I both left the Zoom window and looked at the Miro board and together created the board. The participants were asked to give more descriptive names to each activity so they were easier to distinguish from each other. Throughout this process, I asked them about each activity, so I understood the different characteristics of each, such as how they got involved in each activity or who they used to do this with. After this, the participants were asked to group the different activities together and connected these activities within the constraints of the Miro board tool, to show me what their engagement in group activities looked like. This was a collaborative process, where both me as researcher and the participants co-created the boards. Some participants used a tablet, which made it harder for them to interact with the Miro board, so I was doing all the typing and moving objects around in these cases, following instructions from the participants. This served the purpose of creating a visual representation of what the

participant's social life was like, which together with the qualitative interview, created a rich dataset that can show how things may have changed over time and the relationships to both people and different activities they took part in.

Interestingly, while the project did not focus on trauma, all interviewees shared deeply personal stories, ranging from suicidal thoughts to estrangement from family, from traumatic and life changing injuries to reflections on how to be a better parent to their children than their own parents were. These stories were important to explain why they engaged in associational life in the way they did, as a result of trauma and feelings that they had previously dealt with. As a researcher, I never had to end the interview for the wellbeing of the participant, and they were never asked to share anything they did not want to share. The risk assessment stated that if the interviews triggered a negative reaction, the researcher's supervisor would be contacted. This was never needed. While there is an element of self-selection to contribute to research, where people who know they have a story to tell, volunteer to take part, the method used is likely to have also contributed to this. While in-person interviews are regarded as better than online interviews, research during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic has showed that online interviews are as effective as a research tool as in-person interviews (Engward *et al.*, 2022; Żadkowska *et al.*, 2022). The fact that the interview started with the participant seeing me on camera and being in a safe space (often in their home) and then progressing to the Miro board where we could only hear each other's voices likely contributed to an ease of sharing these stories with me.

4.3.4 Locations

In both the literature review and the theory chapter of this thesis, the differences in engagement between urban and rural places was discussed, and while there are differences, this has not been studied in depth. The theory chapter also discussed group engagement in relation to urban and rural locations, but in an abstract sense, and not as facts. Two areas of Scotland were chosen as places for data to be collected to account for the urban/rural divide: Glasgow City (an urban area) and South Ayrshire (a rural area), both of which have significant areas of deprivation. The choice of the two areas considered the balance between *ideographic* and *nomothetic* cases (Collier and Collier, 2002; Gerring, 2004), i.e., that the areas were not too similar to each other, and that they were not too dissimilar that a comparison would not be able to give any useful data.

Glasgow City had a population of 635,130 in 2021 (National Records of Scotland, 2022a) and the city of Glasgow is the most ethnically diverse city in Scotland (Walsh, 2017). In total, 44% of the population in Glasgow lives in areas that are in the bottom quintile of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, placing it in the top three most deprived places in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2020c). Glasgow is a post-industrial city, situated in the Central Belt of Scotland, which has undergone a change towards a service economy and re-generation, but is still facing issues like sub-standard housing and transport links (see Kintrea and Madgin, 2019 for an overview). Glasgow also continues to see the highest rates of drug related deaths in Scotland, which is increasing throughout Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021b). South Ayrshire Council is situated in the West of Scotland and had a population of 112,450 in 2021 (National Records of Scotland, 2022b). Demographically, South Ayrshire is characterised by an ageing population and a small ethnic minority population at 1.4% compared with the Scottish average at 4.1%, and less people have a qualification or a degree when compared to the Scottish average (South Ayrshire Council, 2017). 18% of the population live in areas in in the bottom quintile in terms of deprivation, which makes it the twelfth most deprived council in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2020c). South Ayrshire also has large areas that the Scottish Government has designated as 'Remote Rural' and 'Very Remote Rural' (Scottish Government, 2018b), the two most rural classifications out of eight, making it a good candidate to understand engagement in rural communities. While other areas in Scotland have a higher number of rural areas, like the Scottish Highlands, they also have a lower population number which means fewer potential survey respondents. For this reason, South Ayrshire was considered a suitable area given it is still in the central belt of Scotland, which is the most densely populated area of Scotland (National Records of Scotland, 2020), and it is far enough from Glasgow, which offers more activities to take part in due to its size, so a comparison can be made between an urban and rural area.

An additional benefit of choosing two local council areas was that they are administratively separate from each other and have organisational structures in place that benefited the project, like Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs), which are charities that support the third sector throughout the country. The TSIs in Glasgow and South Ayrshire supported this research by connecting me to their members and networks. This is described in detail below.

4.3.5 Recruitment and sampling

For the first set of interviews with stakeholders, two Third Sector Interfaces helped in reaching out to organisations and clubs that they had pre-existing relationships with. The initial aim was to interview ten practitioners in each area. I felt that with ten different organisations I could ensure a good spread over different types of organisations. As these interviews were qualitative, having a spread of organisations was more important than settling on an actual number, as the size of the sample is less important in qualitative research (Dworkin, 2012). In the end, seven stakeholders from South Ayrshire Council and seven from Glasgow City Council were interviewed.

Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) assisted with participant recruitment for South Ayrshire, with Volunteer Scotland making the initial contact with them on my behalf. They were keen to assist, as it also coincided with them working on a volunteering strategy, of which a first draft would be finished by September 2021. Because of this, I was also invited to attend an online focus group that VASA facilitated with voluntary organisations in South Ayrshire on 'Volunteering and community well-being'. This provided an opportunity for me to learn more about South Ayrshire and the volunteering activities available in the area at the time. It was also an opportunity for me to make myself and my research known to potential stakeholder participants. Through them, five stakeholders were recruited. Additionally, one organisation was contacted through a fellow PhD student who knew the organiser of the Family Support Charity, and the games club organisation was recruited through me contacting a boardgames shop in Ayr, as I was keen to also include an informal hobby organisation from there.

In Glasgow, Volunteer Glasgow, the local Third Sector Interface, helped with the initial contact with organisations, clubs, and associations in the council area. Contact with the stakeholders was facilitated through Volunteer Scotland, who had previously worked with them on a joint project. They were briefed on what my research was about and sent an invitation to organisations and people they thought may be interested in taking part. Five stakeholders were recruited through them, which I supplemented with two people from a Board Games Club, which was in order to compare two similar board games clubs in different locations, as I had already recruited one person from a board games club. For the first set of interviews with stakeholders, two Third Sector Interfaces helped in reaching out to organisations and clubs they had pre-existing relationships with. The initial aim was to interview ten practitioners

in each area. I felt that with ten different organisations I could ensure a good spread over different types of organisations. As these interviews were qualitative, having a spread of organisations was more important than settling on an actual number, as the size of the sample is less important in qualitative research (Dworkin, 2012). In the end, seven from South Ayrshire Council and seven from Glasgow City Council were interviewed. Table 4.2 shows the type of organisations the practitioners came from in each area.

The recruitment for the survey utilised a cross-sectional survey design, which enabled me to make some inferences about people's engagement in volunteering and other types of associational life. However, it is not possible or recommended to generalise over a whole population, as neither the intended nor the sample of completed surveys can represent the whole population in the two areas. Usually, a survey would need a very robust sample size to do this using probability sampling (Neuman, 2015). As the main objective of this survey was exploratory, *convenience sampling* was used. Although some might say this type of sampling 'is to be avoided *always*' (Hibberts, Burke Johnson and Hudson, 2012, p. 66, italics in original), this was appropriate for this thesis, as the purpose of the survey was to be used in an exploratory manner, in conjunction with interviews. This also meant that I did not need to ensure that I had a representative sample to use the data for my research (Jager, Putnick and Bornstein, 2017).

Table 4.2 Type of organisations included in first set of interviews

Organisation type and name	Role	Location
Board Games Club 1	Treasurer	Glasgow
Board Games Club 1	Club president	Glasgow
Board Games Club 2	Member	South Ayrshire
Carers Support Charity	Chairperson	South Ayrshire
Charity Shop	Charity administrator	South Ayrshire
Community Garden	Volunteer coordinator	Glasgow
Community Shop	Director	South Ayrshire
Environmental Charity	Volunteer coordinator	Glasgow
Family Support Charity	Volunteer coordinator	Glasgow
Mental Health Charity	Activity coordinator	South Ayrshire
Migrant Support Charity	Volunteer coordinator	Glasgow
Sports Club	Volunteer	South Ayrshire
Statutory Volunteering Organisation	Clerk	South Ayrshire
Tutoring Charity	Volunteer coordinator	Glasgow

A combination of recruitment strategies was needed to achieve a sufficient number of respondents. It was first circulated through the two Third Sector Interfaces, collaborators of Volunteer Scotland, and some of the stakeholders interviewed, who were invited to share a link to the survey with their networks and through mailings list. This posed two challenges. The first issue was that it

would not reach people who were not part of these organisations, clubs, and associations, and thus only reached people who were involved in formal associational life. As the literature review showed earlier, people are increasingly engaging in *informal* associational life, so this group of people were potentially not reached by circulating the information through organisations. Also, it was assumed that individuals who are part of clubs and organisations might also be more prone to take part in a survey about their associational life. In total, this led to 69 responses from the Third Sector Interfaces and Volunteer Scotland sharing the link, and 34 responses came through the interviewed stakeholders sharing the survey in their networks. To gain more survey responses, I contacted the administrator for local Facebook groups, meant for people to share news and information about the local area, around Glasgow and South Ayrshire, asking if I could share the survey in the groups. The rationale for this was that people who are not otherwise involved in associational life still join local Facebook groups to know what is going on around them. This was also partially informed by my own usage of Facebook, which I only use to sometimes check my local community group for news and notices about my neighbourhood. I searched for groups for certain areas of Glasgow and smaller towns and villages in South Ayrshire to get somewhat geographically varied responses, and contacted all groups I could find. This was the most successful method, with 191 responses coming from these posts. This resulted in 294 responses in total. Although an even greater number of responses had been preferable, this number of responses is satisfactory for descriptive statistical analysis tools to be used, considering that only two Scottish local authority areas were included.

For the last set of interviews, 10 survey respondents were recruited. The last part of the survey asked if survey respondents were willing to take part in a follow-up interview, and if so, were asked to leave their email address. After the survey had closed, those who had left their email were analysed together with their demographic information to select 10 respondents and to ensure a spread of different ages and gender, and an equal number of participants from Glasgow and South Ayrshire, as seen in Table 4.3. The most difficult group to recruit was the younger cohort, especially in South Ayrshire, which resulted in the local Third Sector Interface helping me to recruiting one of the younger participants.

Table 4.3 Overview of participants for individual interviews

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Location	Mini biography
Burt	Male	62	Glasgow	Civil servant who was involved in outdoor activities, and other formal arrangements. He was also heavily involved in youth entrepreneurship and youth mental health organisations.
Geoff	Male	69	Glasgow	He grew up in Glasgow area and did not volunteer until later in life as he had to start working early. His volunteering came from involvement in a walking group.
Alice	Female	51	Glasgow	She engaged mostly in informal activities, but was also volunteering for a youth mentorship organisation.
Laura	Female	28	Glasgow	She engaged in four different types of associational life, all with clear delineation and distinct from each other.
Anne	Female	60	Glasgow	She was active in many types of associational life, with her volunteering being about using professional skills and other associational life geared towards leisure like activities.
Max	Male	36	South Ayrshire	He had recently moved back to area after university studies to raise his two daughters together with his wife. He volunteered at his daughters' football club and was member of a cycling club.
Paul	Male	60	South Ayrshire	He was engaged in many types of activities, including political party, leisure activities, and martial arts. A serious injury led him to start volunteering for a charity.
Greig	Male	20	South Ayrshire	He came from a household heavily involved in sports, which had informed his participation in associational life. He had a serious injury in his teens, which impacted his participation in all types of associational life.
Mairi	Female	65	South Ayrshire	She was heavily involved in a political party, where she also met most of her friends. This led her to build skills recognised by others and led to further involvement in associational life.
Dita	Female	31	South Ayrshire	She got involved in volunteering during her teens, where volunteering has partly been about building skills and experience for her work life.

4.4   Data analysis

This section outlines how the data was analysed for both the qualitative interviews and the survey data.

4.4.1   Analysing interviews

As the interviews took place on Zoom, an initial unedited transcription was provided through the platform, together with the recorded interview. These needed to be edited, as the transcription software in Zoom was imperfect. The edited transcripts were then coded in NVivo (Lumivero, 2020), following a

thematic analysis approach. This approach was used as it allowed the researcher to understand the thoughts of the participants, and the themes can be both inductively and deductively made, as they are created by the researcher and are not only descriptive (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process to thematic analysis is widely used, and includes getting to know the data closely, generating tentative codes, looking for themes, then reviewing these themes and naming them, and lastly writing the report. I utilised their approach, adapted to deal with the two phases of the interviews. The initial reading of the first set of interviews generated codes that had the research questions in mind, which informed the themes that came from the coding exercise, which can be found in Appendix 6. While this approach might seem to lose the inductive element of 'letting the data speak for itself', like a grounded theory inspired approach would (Charmaz, 2006), the reviewing of the themes was able to rectify this. However, in this research I had specific research questions that I wanted to answer, so this research benefitted from me having some control over the themes that were established from coding the interviews. As these interviews with stakeholders informed the last set of interviews with participants, together with the survey results, only the first step was done at this stage. When I had coded the last set of interviews, I amended, or re-coded, all the interviews as the last set of interviews provided new contexts and material in which the first set of interview data with stakeholders could be related to.

As this stage, when I had both set of interviews, I implemented the remainder of Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis, with repeat readings, and re-repeated readings of the first set of interviews, of the transcripts to become familiar with the data. I then coded bits of text, sometimes several sentences in a row, and sometimes parts of sentences or just phrases, which sometimes occurred in the middle of another code. After having done this, I started to look for themes in the data, which also led me to revise the themes. After revising the themes, I applied Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network approach, meaning that these initial themes (basic themes) were organised into groups (organizing themes), which then were organised into a third level (global themes). These global themes were used to inform the different sections of the data chapters. The coding framework is available to view in Appendix 6.

4.4.2 Analysing survey data

Before the survey was distributed, I ensured that the data values were correctly ordered and that they were consistent throughout the survey, and that the

variable naming was short, concise, and descriptive to aid data analysis (Stopher, 2012), which was done in SPSS (IBM, 2021). After exporting the data from the Qualtrics platform, I removed respondents that did not consent to the conditions of the survey and those who did not live in South Ayrshire or Glasgow. Non-completed responses were not excluded as the data could still be used in certain cases and does not impact on the overall results, as the sample size was expressed in the analysis, showing how many respondents were included.

The data analysis was done using univariate, or descriptive, and bivariate statistics to understand how people engaged in volunteering and other types of associational life, and what factors might impact on this. By looking at frequencies, I was able to better understand the ways in which people engaged in different activities, and more in depth into different aspects of this, such as if different activities led them to also volunteer. This type of statistical analysis can also be used to look at means and median, but there were very few continuous scale data in this dataset, beyond the number of hours they estimated they spent on the different activities. Bivariate statistical analysis was also used to, for example, check if education levels corresponded with engagement in specific types of associational life. These types of analysis often included, for example, Chi-Square when working with categorical data, to see if there was statistical significance to differences between two variables (Stockemer, 2019). As most of the data is categorical, rather than on a continuous scale, Chi-square tests were the most common test utilised for the data. However, due to the relatively low number of respondents, Chi-square tests were often not able to be performed.

Due to the limited number of respondents, it was not possible to make more than two age categories and still be able to make relevant descriptive analyses. The two age groups are designated 'Younger age group', which is people below 41 at the time of taking the survey, and the 'Older age group' are respondents over 40. This was based on the discussion in section 2.1, which described the so called 'Millennial' generation, and those coming after, to exhibit the individualised and informalised ways of engaging in society. This division of age created an opportunity to compare between one group who is said to be more individualistic and informal than the other.

4.5   Ethical considerations

Before the commencement of the data collection, the study was approved by the Social Work and Social Policy Ethics Committee at the University of Strathclyde. A data management plan was also created and was updated when needed, alongside an electronic risk assessment form, which was approved by my primary supervisor. While it was a requirement to gain ethical approval before commencing data collection, this was not seen or treated as merely a tick-box exercise, but as an ongoing process, as 'it is important to remain open to these questions throughout a project rather than believing that ethical questions can be dealt with once and for all before a project is initiated' (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 52). As such, the issues described below were considered before, during, and after the data collection had taken place, this ensured the research was ethically conducted and reported.

Consent, a central tenet for ethically sound research, was a guiding factor throughout the data collection process. Before anyone was asked to share any information, my role as a researcher and what the research was about was clearly shared with the participants. This was done to ensure that the participants accepted the format and what was requested of them and that they were comfortable with these requirements for participation (Gillham, 2007, p. 12). As such, the initial contact with the participants always involved a short description of the study in an email and what would be expected from them. This was always accompanied by a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) that was tailored to their involvement, whether this was for an interview or as a survey respondent (see Appendix 1). For the interviews, they were also asked to sign a Consent Form (Appendix 2) which they signed and sent back to me via email. Both the PISs and the consent form stated that they were able to withdraw from the research at any point without any questions being asked. For the interviews, the participants were given a month before the anonymisation and amalgamation of the data was undertaken to consider their participation and ask to withdraw, if they wanted to. For the survey, it was not possible to withdraw once the survey was submitted, but the survey could also be done anonymously.

Another important ethical consideration was the anonymisation of the data. Resnik (2018, p. 149) makes an important distinction between people's privacy and confidentiality, where privacy refers to mitigating 'unwanted intrusion into one's private affairs' and confidentiality is 'protection of private information'. With this distinction, there was clarity that my research might

touch on participants' personal lives, which might be important to understand their associational life, but that my role as a researcher is to *protect* this private information, so it does not leave the researcher-participant realm. The consent form and the PIS explained that all data would be anonymised in the case of the interviews and pseudo-anonymised if they chose to leave their contact information in the survey, and that only my supervisors and I would have access to the raw data. In terms of breach of data, the risk of this was minimal. The video and audio files from the interviews were saved to my Strathclyde OneDrive for Business. The automatic transcription provided through Zoom was also saved on the OneDrive for Business and was anonymised to remove any identifying information, whether this was about the interviewee or people they talked about. When writing the data chapters, and subsequent publications and briefings, I have been careful to not disclose more information than needed, as even small pieces of information can be used to identify people (Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015).

The Social Work and Social Policy departmental Ethics committee concluded that my research was on a 'non-sensitive topic' and that the participants were not a vulnerable group. However, a participant might still disclose information that might cause upset, either for themselves or for me as a researcher. In interviews about people's lives, there is always the possibility that participants might disclose something sensitive. As this was deemed unlikely due to the topic of my research, no definitive plan was in place other than that I would contact my supervisors for advice if this were to happen.

At the end of the survey respondents were asked if they were interested in taking part in a follow-up interview. The PIS stated clearly that this would not make the survey answers visible to me, as I would have access to their answers and that I might follow up on their survey answers in the interview. When contacting volunteers for the interviews, when retrieving the data from the Qualtrics platform, I moved the contact information to another document stored in a different folder, so I could find them later using the unique ID number that the Qualtrics platform provided. This was clearly stated in the PIS (see Appendix 4). The PIS also included a link to the University of Strathclyde's Privacy Notice for Research Participants, which outlined how the university works with data protection and contact information to the Data Protection Officer.

4.6 Positionality and reflexivity

This section will discuss my positionality in relation to the participants, and my own reflexivity in regard to research on volunteering. Firstly, due to the nature of qualitative data, the findings are always interpreted and are social constructions (Blaikie and Priest, 2017). Hence, my own background and experiences undoubtedly affected how I designed this research project and how I interpreted the research findings. I am from Sweden, so I grew up in a society where the third sector and volunteering play a much smaller role (Henriksen, Strømsnes and Svedberg, 2019) than in Scotland, and I have never volunteered myself when living in Sweden. While I can mostly speak for myself, the ways that charities and fundraising are viewed in Sweden differs from the British way. In February of 2018, I read an article by Wiman (2018) in one of the major newspapers in Sweden, Aftonbladet, which highlighted this. The article was about how the costs of constructing a new hospital in Stockholm costing much more than initially planned so there was no money left for interiors and toys for the children's ward. The hospital staff started a campaign, asking companies in the Stockholm area to donate décor or money. In Scotland, this would not be out of the ordinary (Stewart and Dodworth, 2023), and has bene the case for a long time (Harris and Cresswell, 2024). However, this article quoted a man saying that the local health board should have the sole responsibility that the hospital can offer good care, which I believe is indicative of Sweden's relationship to charities and fundraising efforts for public services.

Considering associational life in general, Sweden is in the top three in Europe when it comes to sports participation (Eurostat, 2022), I did not take part in much other associational life, other than the occasional football tournament and some orienteering as a child, which has less to do with me being Swedish and more about personal preferences. It was not until I moved to Scotland in 2016 that I became interested in volunteering, the third sector, and in understanding why people choose to become involved in these types of activities, which was also the topic of my master's dissertation in sociology. This ultimately led me to apply for this supervisory led studentship, funded by the ESRC and Volunteer Scotland. While it is hard to gauge how much my background and past experiences have impacted on how this study was designed and interpreted, there is a possibility that I have missed opportunities to ask follow-up questions about certain things. However, this might have led me to ask questions that a British person's cultural background and

assumptions might have prevented them from asking, leading to new insights. By ensuring the literature review and methodology is robust and supported, and in dialogue with previous research, and being aware of my own positionality, this should not impact on the quality of the research coming from this thesis.

4.7 Summary of data collected

This section provides an overview of the data generated. A mixed methods approach was utilised, as this enabled an understanding of what participation in associational life looks like broadly, and also provide depth and nuance to understand how certain factors might influence people's participation. This was done by using a survey, which had 294 respondents. This survey provides an overview of how people engage in different associational activities, who they engage in, who introduced them to different activities, and how this might differ between age groups, locations, or socio-demographic backgrounds. To completement the survey, 24 interviews provided depth and nuance to what factors influence people's participation in associational life. These interviews included interviews with representatives from 14 organisations and clubs and was about how people engage in these organisations and clubs. These interviews, together with the survey, informed the last set of ten interviews which were conducted with some survey respondents about their participation in associational life. The analysis of the survey and the two sets of interviews is the data used for the two subsequent data chapters to answer the two research questions posed at the end of chapter 2.

5 Participation in volunteering and other types of associational life

The focus of this chapter is to explore differences between volunteering and other types of associational life. As discussed in the previous chapters, this holistic approach to what individuals do together with other people can provide insights into experiences and motivations for activities people do with others, taking individualisation and informalisation into account by using the concept of associational life. The chapter consists of eight sections. The first two sections explore how geography and socioeconomic factors affect volunteering and other types of associational life. The following section is about the effect children in the household have on participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. The fourth section discusses the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's volunteering and participation in associational life. The fifth and sixth sections discusses what can facilitate the transitions between different activities, and how other types of associational life can lead to volunteering specifically. The last section before the chapter conclusion is about the benefits and skills participants stated they acquire from volunteering and other types of associational life, and how the two differ.

5.1 Impact of geography and physical space on volunteering and other types of associational life

This section analyses how geographic location affected participation in volunteering and other types of associational life, and how the physicality of a space can affect participation. As highlighted in chapter 2, there is little research on how participation in associational life might differ between different geographical locations, such as urban and rural, whereas there is information available for volunteering specifically. What this section will show is that individuals' participation in different activities interacts in different ways with geography and the built environment, where volunteering is less

affected by distance and what the built environment looks like compared to other types of associational life, which is more dependent on these factors.

Starting by looking at where participants in the survey said they took part in volunteering and other forms of associational life, Figure 5.1 shows the places where the survey respondents said they were most often engaging in these activities. Some of the differences between volunteering and other types of associational life can be explained by associational life being a combination of many types of activities that can take place in a range of places. For example, 29% of the respondents said they were doing their associational life activities outside/in nature, which is probably due to sports, arts and culture activities, and hobbies being included here, which might have a higher chance of being done outside. This to be compared to only 14% of respondents reported volunteering was taking place outside. The difference between volunteering and other types of associational life taking place in the Workplace is at 5% and 1% respectively, which is likely due to corporate volunteering, showing that corporate volunteering is more common than people engaging in other types of associational like in the workplace. Volunteering and other types of associational life also had similar reported rates of taking place in public spaces and community halls, which indicates that there is no difference in terms of whether they are accessible to the general public or not.
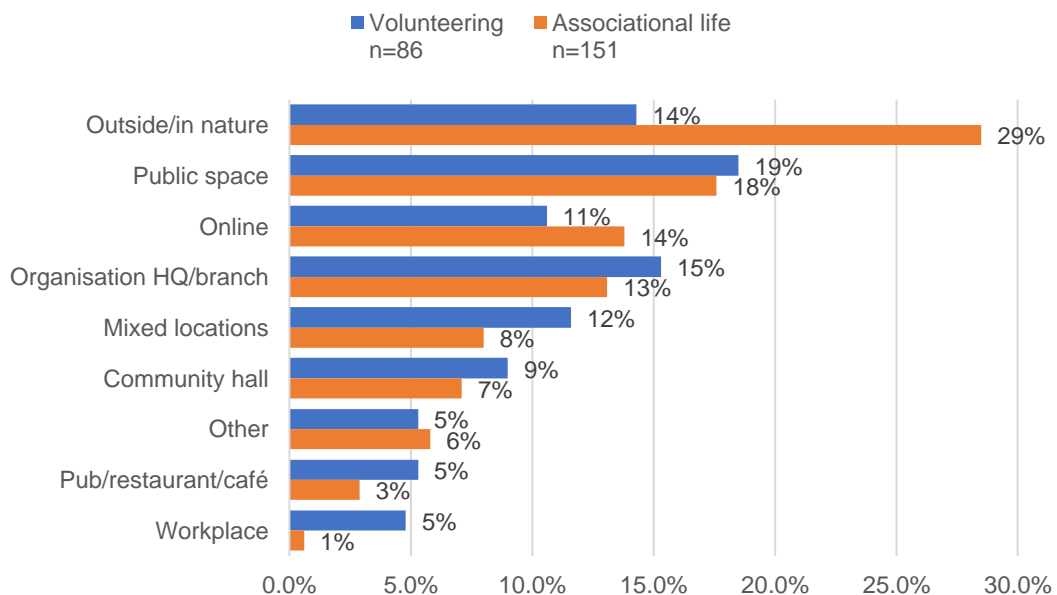

Figure 5.1 Location where volunteering and other types of associational life takes place

Another aspect of space is where people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life in relation to their home. Figure 5.2 shows where

respondents said volunteering and other forms of associational life took place. The most prominent difference is that respondents reported that other types of associational life more often took place near their homes, compared to volunteering, which often involved some level of travel. Apart from the 'Near home' category, the proportions are similar for the other categories, which suggests that this is where volunteering and other forms of associational life differ the most. This suggests that the respondents were willing to travel further for their volunteering, or tended to choose activities that were closer to home for other forms of associational life.
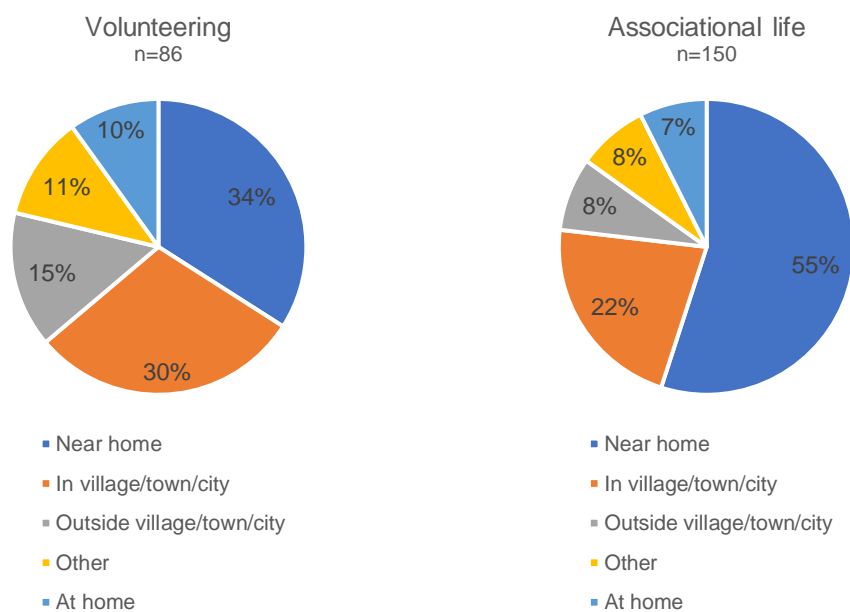
Figure 5.2 Location where volunteering and other types of associational life takes place, separately

This difference was also reported by the stakeholders in interviews, where the Community Shop (South Ayrshire) had volunteers coming in from neighbouring villages, who had no "village loyalty", according to the interviewed director of the shop, and some of the members of the Statutory Volunteering Organisation (South Ayrshire) lived in neighbouring council areas. By contrast, one of the boardgames clubs in Glasgow had seen the group break into two when they lost their old location and had to move, despite the new location still being in Glasgow. This could potentially show a key difference between volunteering and other forms of associational life in terms of individuals' preparedness to travel for activities.

Another aspect to look at is how the built environment interacted with people's participation in volunteering and other forms of associational life. The data from this survey suggests that associational life other than volunteering is

more dependent on the attributes of the built environment than volunteering is. Aspects of the built environment that can affect participation are both the space itself, its surroundings, and how this interacts with people. In the interviews, there were no mentions of the physical environment having an impact on volunteering, but there was for other types of associational life. The only example of the physical environment being mentioned in relation to volunteering was in relation to Dita's first step to becoming a volunteer, which also highlights that elements of place and aspects in the local environment can provide a way for people to engage in volunteering:

> I think it was I just liked the signs in the window [of the voluntary organisation]. I guess I liked doing lots of different activities and I felt like I was interested in something that gave me a qualification out of it if that makes sense. There were lots of other things at the time, like helping people, helping disabled kids, learn to horse ride and things like that. That was something that also appealed to me. I think there were loads of things to do, it was always interesting to see was in the window, so I'd always stop by when I was walking by. (Dita, F/31, South Ayrshire)

For associational life, the real impact that different spaces can have on participation is evident in the examples of the Community Garden and the two Board Games Clubs. When speaking about what might be a barrier for people to participate, the manager of the Community Garden said:

> Well the first [barrier] used to be [the building] itself. It's a physical unknown, it's big. No one really knows what it is for the local community [...] The next barrier is this cafe in [the same building] which is just next to us, who introduced an alcohol license a few years ago. And if alcohol is not something that's OK for you, for religious purposes, you've got to walk through the patio to get to the [organisation]. And through the cafe and then the patio to get to the garden, so you have to walk through where people are drinking alcohol, which may not be an okay. So physical space and this issue could be one of the barriers, since COVID, the building has been closed or you can't walk through so now people come around on to one side and we've had to really put money into improving our other entrance and that's been quite successful but we're still not getting the people in that we would like to get in. (Community Garden, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

How space can play a significant role in decisions to participate in associations was more evident in the case of the two Board Games Clubs. One of the clubs saw new members join regularly and had a younger demographic, while the other rarely got new members. This latter club had mostly members over the

age of 50 and up, with two or three younger members that showed up sporadically. While the age demographic could potentially explain this difference to an extent, it can also be argued that attributes of the space where they played the board games that impact on how people engage in the club, and if new members can join easily.

The Board Games Club with the older demographic were interested in gaining new members, even though this rarely happened:

> We do put flyers in [games] shops, the club have a website, anybody looking for [...] games in [location] via the Internet is likely to find us because we have computer techies who run, which is quite a good, website. If somebody done the research, it's likely they would come across our website and we welcome people joining. This hasn't happened for a while, partly to do with Covid. (Board Games Club 1, Treasurer, Glasgow)

This showed that any individuals interested in the club's activities had to first find them online to then join. The space where the club would usually meet to play pre-pandemic was a community hall that the club rented on a regular basis. This is where the two clubs differed the most, as the other club, playing the same sort of games, was connected to a shop on a high street. Because the shop was a public place where anyone could come, they had new members come in regularly, many of whom had come in to just to browse the games in the shop and then continued to play in the club:

> Some people go to the store and have never really met anyone before they go, learns about the hobby, meet all the new people, make good friends with them, and then go from there type thing. So, you can meet at the store to play, or you can arrange with them privately. (Board Games Club 2, Member, South Ayrshire)

One member had started to play because their daughter wanted to take a closer look at the models that were displayed in the window, and as they went inside and he saw people playing, he decided to join the club.

This example shows two similar clubs, but with two different outcomes from a participation perspective. The different outcomes can be understood by applying Oldenburg's (1999, 2001) concept of third places, places that facilitate community life to take place. While the community hall that the first club used as a space for members to play the board games can be seen as a third place, it was not accessible to the general public as it was booked for members only. The only way to join this group was to either know a member in the group

or to actively find information about the club online or through posters at gaming events. Joining this club required more effort than the second club, which operated from a games shop, accessible and open to anyone passing by who could see people playing these games. This also highlights how commercial spaces play an important role as third places (Lin, 2012), and in this case, was able to better facilitate these interactions than the community hall. Despite this, the community hall would perhaps fit better with how Oldenburg characterised places where community life takes place and where people from different backgrounds can meet on neutral ground. For this to happen, the focus ought to be on whether relationships can be formed or not:

> The importance of physical spaces where diverse groups can meet, and bonds and networks are formed and maintained, was found throughout the research: without access to a hall or a room many collective activities would simply not happen. These spaces that provide access to a range of activities and people allow pathways and connections to be established that support sustained participation. (Brodie *et al.,* 2011, p. 71)

Related to the importance of space, the member of the Board Games Club in Glasgow who rented the community hall said that they saw half of the group re-establish themselves as a new group and in a new location when they had to move from their previous location. This new group established themselves in a location that worked better for them where they lived, which suggests that geography and infrastructure play a role in people's engagement in associational life. Infrastructure, or lack thereof, was an issue that the community Sports Club in South Ayrshire had, as the lack of transportation infrastructure was a barrier for people to participate:

> Transport is a huge issue it's a rural area. And it's expensive, it's inconvenient and it never seems to sort of actually run at the appropriate time, so I would say, from that point of view, transport is a massive issue in our area and probably stops an awful lot of people participating in an awful lot of things. [...] If they're in a primary school that has no public bus service, it would take them at least an hour and a half to get to training. They're not going to get taken there if they haven't got private transport and the parents aren't able or willing to do it. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

The lack of transportation also highlights that there are differences between Glasgow and South Ayrshire in terms of how people engage in volunteering and other forms of associational life. Figure 5.3 shows how the survey respondents engage in their volunteering and other types of associational life,

by location. Starting with associational life, a larger portion of the respondents in Glasgow said they were engaging in their associational life activities near their home, while in South Ayrshire the respondents reported to a higher extent doing these activities in and outside of their village or town. Volunteering saw a similar pattern, but the differences were less pronounced. The differences for volunteering in the same village/town/city were less pronounced than for other types of associational life, where the respondents in South Ayrshire said they did more of their volunteering in the same village or town. The respondents in South Ayrshire said they took part in volunteering mainly outside of the village or town compared to Glasgow. These smaller differences between locations for volunteering, compared to other forms of associational life, again suggest that volunteering is less affected by location than other types of associational life.

Figure 5.3 Where people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, by location

The importance distance had for the participants to engage in an activity or not depended on the nature of the activity. The volunteer coordinator from the Migrant Support Charity talked about how, while the charity's offices, which is a type of third place (Oldenburg, 1999), were in a specific location, this did not define where their participants lived. Instead, the participants came from all over Glasgow, showing that geographic location was less an issue for them:

> We're definitely very much a community of interest, so not just [a community of] place. We happened to be in the area, but the people that we're serving they don't just come from the area and, in fact, as you know as well, asylum seekers get housed all over the city of Glasgow actually, and the initial accommodation for many people is around here. So, initially, many people get housed there, but then, when they came to get looked at and we're further down the line, they get quite literally dispersed within Glasgow, then they get

to live in the deepest darkest outskirts and then all of a sudden they are miles away and maybe an hour and a half buss journey away from us. So, it doesn't matter to us where they are now and often people have made their community with us, they like to stick with us because they've got to know us and they come back wherever they are, and we're often able to give them travel expenses, but definitely very much a community of interest where people travel in to come to us. (Migrant Support Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

This can be contrasted with the break-away group from the Board Games Club in Glasgow where they created a new club as they wanted to meet up in a more convenient location within Glasgow. The people engaging with the Migrant Support Charity's groups were continuing to do so even after they have moved far away from the charity's location, as this is where they had found a sense of community, according to the group coordinator. The Migrant Support Charity provides not only groups to engage in, but also advice to asylum seekers, while the Board Games Club was purely about leisure, which might be the primary, or an additional, reason that volunteers at the charity continue to engage with the organisation. This also shows the variety of how people engage in different types of associational life and what they are looking to get from it.

Understanding how people engage in volunteering and other forms of associational life can be difficult because, as Paarlberg *et al.* (2022) points out, there are a multitude of variables that can influence these activities, as noted by the interviewees themselves. The person interviewed from the Community Shop in South Ayrshire talked about this when talking about finding volunteers:

I think the income streams of the village are quite limited as well. Bigger villages, for one thing, have far more people to draw on. If you have a very limited pool of people to draw on, then you are limited almost in what you can do. People need to put money in, you know you need people to come and spend. There's actually a very similar village about 10 miles away, but it is much more remote, it has a different social profile, lots of holiday cottages because it's very pretty, lots of middle-class holiday cottages, a lot of Airbnb, and it has a Community Shop again. But it's run in a completely different way, with a different catchment and what they offer is very different altogether, and it's run by volunteers. (Community Shop, Director, South Ayrshire)

This highlights that the ways in which location and engagement interact with associational life is not only about the location itself, but other factors, such as

the demographical composition of the area, and the distances between home and activity, the type of housing offered.

This section has provided an overview of where people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, which highlighted that volunteering is less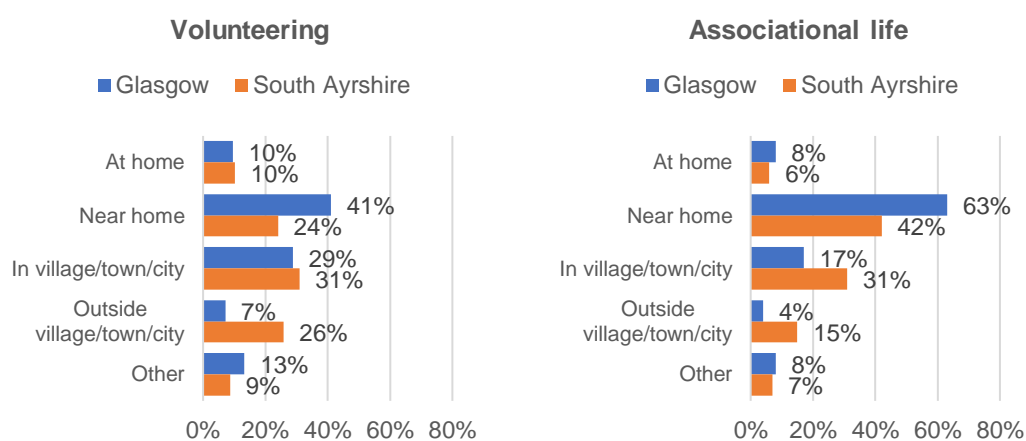 affected by location than other types of associational life are. Respondents said they were willing to travel further to do their volunteering than they would for their other activities as part of their associational life, and even when comparing Glasgow and South Ayrshire, with the latter having larger rural areas which could mean people have larger distances to travel, people were still willing to travel longer for their volunteering in both areas. The implications of people's willingness to travel, or non-willingness to travel, have an impact on organisations, clubs, and associations, as they need to consider the impact that geography, the physical space, and access to public transport have on all forms of associational life. This is less of an issue for organisations that have volunteers. One reason for volunteering seemingly being less affected by geography and space could be that it is done by people with resources, both in terms of social and cultural capital but also financial, which previous research has shown (Balderstone, 2014). This could mean that individuals who volunteer are able to travel to their volunteering to a greater extent than those with less capital, be this social, cultural, or monetary (Dean, 2016, 2021). This will be discussed further in the next section.

5.2 How socioeconomic factors affect volunteering and other types of associational life

This section will discuss how socioeconomic factors can affect people's volunteering and participation in other types of associational life. The survey had four questions that were directly related to socioeconomic status: highest education level, employment status, home ownership status and household income. Respondents were predominantly people with a degree, professional qualification or an HNC/HND, and most owned their own homes or had a mortgage (see Figure 5.4). Regarding household income, a little over half of the respondents lived in households earning below £40.000 per year. While such information is not available for participation in all types of associational life, this distribution is consistent with previous research on volunteering specifically (e.g. Volunteer Scotland, 2021) and sports participation (e.g. Rowe, 2019), showing that the dataset is in line with what previous research has identified in terms of demographics. For income, the spread was evenly dispersed and the majority of respondents were homeowners, which is

consistent with Scotland wide data on housing in Scotland at 62% home ownership or having a mortgage (Scottish Government, 2019c).
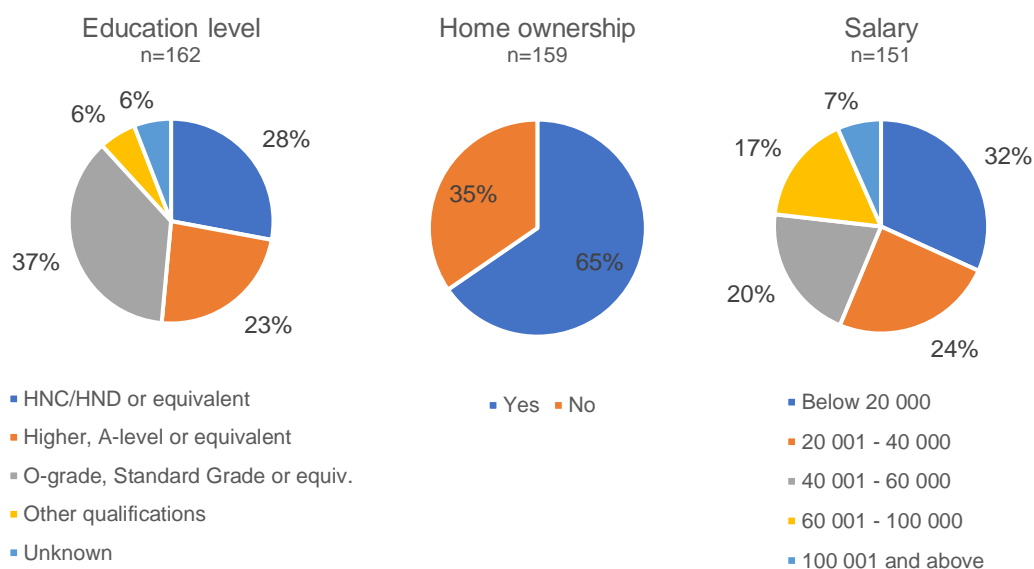
Figure 5.4 Demographic composition of survey respondents, by education, salary, and home ownership

In terms of participation in volunteering and other types of associational life, Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 compares the hours the respondents spent on each before and during the time when COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions were in place. 10 respondents who reported more than 140 hours of associational life were excluded from the calculations as they heavily skewed the results, with one reporting 220 hours per month spent on associational life. One of these respondents also reported 150 hours of volunteering and was excluded from the calculations on volunteering. To remove these outliers, and avoid biases in the data, a standard deviation rule was used, rather than a trimmed mean which would discard the lower end of the scale. This was calculated by using the standard deviation times 2.5, plus the mean value (Field, 2013), which meant that all cases which exceeded 70 hours were excluded for volunteering and cases that exceeded 120 hours were excluded for other types of associational life. Values on the lower end were not removed, as most values were on the lower end.

Table 5.1 compares the mean hours the respondents spent on these activities by highest level of education they reported as completed. For associational life other than volunteering, it shows that those with a degree or professional qualification and those with an HNC/HND saw less of a decline during the COVID-19 pandemic than those with Highers or A-level and O-grade or

Standard level qualifications. However, those with a degree or professional qualification reported fewer hours of other types of associational life than those with lower qualifications before the pandemic. For volunteering, respondents of all education levels saw an increase in volunteering hours, with those with a degree or professional qualification seeing the lowest increase. However, this result could be due to the low sample size in the other groups, meaning that outliers can skew the results to a greater degree.

Table 5.1 Mean hours of participation in volunteering and other types of associational life per month, by education level

Highest education completed		AL before pandemic	AL during pandemic	Vol. before pandemic	Vol. during pandemic
Degree, professional qualification	Mean	17.83	14.46	9.65	10.04
	N	63	63	51	51
	Std. Deviation	19.39	20.84	10.33	13.17
HNC/HND or equivalent	Mean	23.23	24.08	9.90	19.70
	N	13	13	10	10
	Std. Deviation	25.01	26.00	12.22	25.74
Higher, A-level or equivalent	Mean	23.00	14.82	7.00	10.67
	N	11	11	12	12
	Std. Deviation	23.70	18.34	7.15	13.36
O-grade, Standard Grade or equivalent	Mean	21.83	11.25	11.00	21.50
	N	12	12	6	6
	Std. Deviation	14.10	15.86	10.12	44.49
Total	Mean	21.47	16.15	9.39	15.48
	N	99	99	78	78
	Std. Deviation	20.55	20.26	9.96	24.19

Note: The options 'Other qualifications' and 'Unknown' were excluded as both had 2 respondents only.

When comparing between income groups, which showed a more even sample size between the groups, a different pattern emerged. For associational life, those with an income between £60 001 and £100 000 had the lowest number of mean hours before COVID-19 pandemic hit, while the mean hours were roughly the same during the height of the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. For volunteering, there were small differences between respondents of different income levels in terms of the hours they reported to have volunteered, except for those below £20 000 having the highest mean hours before and during the pandemic. However, this group was also one of two groups that saw a decrease in mean hours during the pandemic, like those in the above £100 001 income group. This again suggests that volunteering is less affected by outside factors, such as the drastic change to how people engage with others that the pandemic brought, even when considering education and income levels.

Table 5.2 Mean hours of participation in volunteering and other types of associational life, by income

Income groups		AL before pandemic	AL during pandemic	Vol. before pandemic	Vol. during pandemic
Below £20 000	Mean	22.35	14.77	16.41	11.65
	N	26	26	26	26
	Std. Deviation	19.69	21.09	15.35	19.17
£20 001 to £40 000	Mean	18.79	14.63	5.88	8.24
	N	24	24	24	24
	Std. Deviation	19.44	20.39	4.33	12.29
£40 001 to £60 000	Mean	27.47	21.88	6.70	11.20
	N	17	17	17	17
	Std. Deviation	30.91	30.35	6.73	11.20
£60 001 to £100 000	Mean	11.50	10.59	4.38	10.25
	N	20	20	20	20
	Std. Deviation	10.59	11.49	4.41	7.50
Above £100 001	Mean	24.50	18.12	7.80	7.20
	N	8	8	8	8
	Std. Deviation	18.12	23.98	7.01	9.73
Total	Mean	20.92	15.99	8.23	9.71
	N.	95	95	95	95
	Std. Deviation	19.75	21.46	7.57	11.98

What is missing from this quantitative analysis is the respondents who do *not* engage in neither volunteering nor associational life and how socioeconomic factors influence their non-participation. These were issues that the organisations and stakeholders interviewed were able to give an insight into. The Sports Club was aware of this in terms of finding new volunteers:

> I don't think most people [the volunteers], have any particular problems, because the ones that actually do the volunteering have the resources to do it, we're not seeing the ones that don't. [...] And I do know that, certainly in areas where poverty is an issue, volunteering is much lower because if you look at the sort of the contrast between schools in [larger town] and schools in [two smaller towns], parent engagement is much, much less. So, getting volunteers from socially deprived areas is much harder. And I don't know whether that's a cultural thing, a practical thing, or financial thing. I don't know what it is, I do know it's an awful lot harder. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

Although limited financial resources can impact on people's participation in volunteering, this quote also hints at the cultural dimension of whether people choose to participate in volunteering or not. They were aware of this perception of volunteering and were trying to actively challenge this in their work:

> We are trying to make positive efforts to go to areas and hold training camps and that kind of thing in areas of higher deprivation, because that way, it stops it being seen as an elitist thing. I think volunteering in a lot of ways is

seen as the province of the affluent, fairly affluent socially conscious middle class, and you know, we're trying really hard to break down that barrier. [...] Volunteering is seen as not... Not appropriate for a lot of people to do, they don't know that they'd be welcome, they don't maybe think they would do it the way that people do in clubs. I mean all volunteer organizations suffer from having a sort of an entrenched mentality, to a certain extent, and if people are a bit snobby or a bit sneery, which they can be in a lot of voluntary organizations, it just puts people off trying. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

An awareness of this cultural dimension to becoming involved was also shared by the director of the Community Shop when speaking about the differences between their customers and those who volunteered:

[It] is very interesting because working-class women who come into the shop, there's quite a lot of them, they come into the shop, every day they come in and it doesn't occur to them that they could come in and actually contribute to the work. I think there is this notion that it is an organization run by a group of people, this is sort of cartel of people in their eyes. (Community Shop, Director, South Ayrshire)

And although some people might start to volunteer, the habitus they are part of can still play a role in terms of what type of volunteering they engage in:

Yeah, I think so. I think the demographic means that they are far more likely to get involved in the practical, hands on, coaching, getting in there with the kids. They probably wouldn't look at becoming a committee member, a treasurer, president, that kind of thing because that's not what they see as their... possibility or you know. I don't know why they don't but the people who come from the less affluent kind of demographic, maybe slightly less formally educated, they gravitate towards the hands-on stuff rather than the Committee roles and you know that the sort of theoretical stuff that goes on behind the scenes. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

The above views are specifically about volunteering, and show similarities to what Davies (2018) found in relation to young people's perceptions of volunteering in deprived areas as something people in their areas do not tend to engage in. These sentiments were not expressed when speaking about associational life, although some research suggests that lower education levels can impact on whether people take part in associational life activities in general (van Ingen and Dekker, 2011). While engaging in these activities might not be part of people's habitus, explaining their non-participation by only looking at the concept of habitus is too prescriptive, as individuals also have agency to

participate in activities outside of their usual realm. While access to cultural and material resources can play a large part in this, Brodie *et al.* (2011) also identify other barriers and facilitators to participating in volunteering and other types of associational life, like practical resources such as time and money, learnt resources like skills and experiences, and other resources like confidence. In the example above from the Community Shop, people's habitus seemed to have played a role in their choice to not volunteer. It could be that they do not have the skills to engage in a voluntary space, or a lack of confidence, that prevents these women who frequent the shop from becoming volunteers. The difference between habitus and the resources that Brodie *et al.* discussed can also be seen in the example that will be discussed in section 5.6, where a young woman gained the confidence to engage in other forms of associational life through being a volunteer. In that example, it was not about her habitus, but about the resources she was in possession of, but more importantly, the resources she had *gained*.

There is also a link between individuals' location and socioeconomic factors, both in terms of distances and access to transport, and how one's employment opportunities impact on being able to participate in volunteering and other types of associational life. A direct example of how poverty and employment can impact people's ability to take part in volunteering and other forms of associational life is access public transport:

> We have an awful lot of poverty So for young people, and I am referring to 16 and up, who want to go on and do coaching or remain actually engaged in sport or in the club, it's very, very difficult because transport is a huge issue, it's a rural area. It's expensive, it's inconvenient and it never seems to sort of actually run at the appropriate time, so I would say, from that point of view, transport is a massive issue in our area and probably stops an awful lot of people participating in an awful lot of things. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

While transport can be an issue, the build environment might also play a role in generating barriers, both real and imaginary:

> Going back to the working-class thing, I think probably as you get in any village, there is a sort of divide. If you imagine it's a triangle and there's the one street where we live, which has the nice old houses and it tends to be the more middle class, more affluent people who live on this street. And then up towards the top of the village is where the council houses are and that's where the "other people" live. We do have one or two, I would say, who come from

there, but on the whole, not many. [...] I think there is always this feeling that there is a slight divide between some parts of the village and others. (Community Shop, Director, South Ayrshire)

Employment opportunities were also related to physical location in urban versus rural areas, which can be more of a barrier for people in rural areas, especially young people:

> They can't afford to spend the time volunteering when they could be earning money. And need to earn money, you know, it's not just that they're sort of being greedy but, but they need it. And I think they, by and large, they, the ones that stay with us, are the ones who want to go on and have a career. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

Being young and having to find employment before being able to spend time on volunteering or other types of associational life is true regardless of location, but as mentioned by the volunteer above, rural areas are affected by sessional and seasonal work to a higher degree than urban areas (Scottish Government, 2021a).

The key finding from what has been discussed here is that socioeconomic variables such as education levels and income levels can indicate that people are part of a certain habitus and have certain predispositions towards volunteering and other forms of associational life. However, there are also key personal circumstances that affect participation, both in material and immaterial terms. Volunteering was also less affected by COVID-19, even when considering differences between education and income levels.

5.3 Effects of children in the household

This section examines the effects that children in the household have on volunteering and participation in associational life. From the survey data, two groups were compared: households with children under the age of 18 and households with no children under the age of 18. The number of children or adults in a household was not used in the analysis, as the response numbers were too low to produce reliable data to disaggregate to this level. As such, this data does not account for effects of single-parent households, the effects of different numbers of children respondents might have, and information on same-sex households is not available. Table 5.3 below shows the composition of the survey data in relation to the presence of children in household as a factor.

Table 5.3 Household composition, one or two adults with and without children, by gender

	Women	Men	Total
Single household, no child(ren)	14	6	20
Two-person household, no child(ren)	13	2	15
One adult with child(ren)	9	6	15
Two adults with child(ren)	13	0	13

In terms of how the presence of children under the age of 18 in the household impact on people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life, the data from the survey shows that children in the household had less effect on volunteering than they had on other forms of associational life. Although this difference was not significant. Table 5.4 shows the mean hours that people said they volunteered and participated in other types of associational life, where both before and during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns were included. These findings should be prefaced with that the reliability of self-reported hours can be difficult to assess, especially in this survey where the respondents were asked to report hours spent on each type of associational activities. Similar to the previous section on socioeconomic factors, a standard deviation-based rule was used to exclude cases that would otherwise bias the data.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, these number of volunteering hours increased, while they decreased for other types of associational life. This is most likely due to the increase of mutual aid volunteering that took place (Maltman, Linning and Stevenson, 2020; Roy *et al.*, 2020). For associational life other than volunteering, the effect of having children was greater before the onset of the pandemic, with a difference between the two groups of approximately 7 hours, while during the height of the pandemic, this difference was approximately 5 hours, while this was approximately 5 hours for volunteering before the pandemic and 4 hours during. Although a correlation analysis shows that the relationship between number of hours of volunteering or hours engaging in associational life are not statistically significant, total hours spent on volunteering is less affected by there being children in the household than for other types of associational life. Overall, having children appears to correlate with a decrease in hours spent on both volunteering and participation in other forms of associational life. The intention was to also analyse whether there were differences between women and men, since there is research on volunteering showing that women do more informal volunteering, which often relates to supporting children and older family members (Windebank, 2008; Volunteer Scotland, 2021). However, as the sample size was too small, this analysis could not be done on this datset.

Table 5.4 Mean number of hours of volunteering and other types of associational life, by children in household or not

Children in household		Associational life (n=59)		Volunteering (n=51)	
		Before p.	During p.	Before p.	During p.
No	Mean	20.45	16.16	12.97	13.03
	N	38	38	35	35
	Std. Deviation	19.31	23.05	14.09	19.71
Yes	Mean	13.10	10.81	8	9
	N	21	21	16	16
	Std. Deviation	12.02	11.43	7.87	8.84
Total	Mean	17.83	14.25	11.41	11.76
	N	59	59	51	51
	Std. Deviation	17.33	19.76	12.61	17.06
	Pearson Corr.	-.205	-.131	-.185	-.111
	Sig (2-tailed)	.120	.324	.194	.440

Note: respondents reporting over 140 hours of associational life per month were excluded.

In the interviews, participants with children said they had less time to engage in either volunteering or other forms of associational life. Max (M/36, South Ayrshire) explained that he had done more cycling before having children, 'but then the kids came along, and the time I had for that diminished'. Mairi had a similar experience, although she did bring her child to her activities on some occasions:

> Then things changed when I had my daughter, I'm still very actively involved, but at the time she was getting to her teenage years, it wasn't as easy. She was happy to be dragged along to meetings and whatnot when she was young, but then started to be a bit rebellious and at that stage life was, you know, I had a full-time job, I was managing a big science department at that time, so I stopped doing various things. (Mairi, F/65, South Ayrshire)

This is not a universal experience, as there were examples from the Community Garden and the Board Games Clubs where having children was the reason for some adults to become involved. When disaggregating the survey responses by participation in different types of associational life other than volunteering and contrasting it to volunteering, some differences can be seen. Figure 5.5 shows proportion of respondents for activity that have children in the household and those who do not. Only Sports and Informal sports/exercise saw a slightly higher participation rate for those with children in the household, and Religious/spiritual groups and local community only saw a slightly higher participation rate for those without children. Hobby activities had the lowest participation rate for those who had children in the household, with volunteering also seeing a lower participation for this group. In the category 'None', meaning respondents did not do any activities, the largest group was

those from households with children (this category does not exclude volunteering, as 14 respondents in this category did volunteer).
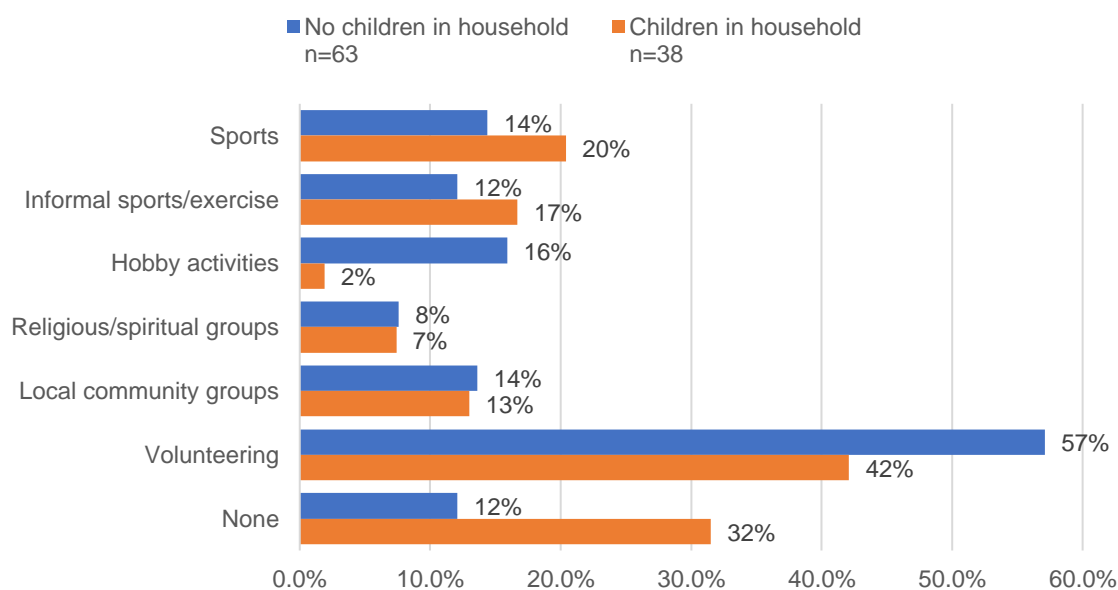

Figure 5.5 Participation in volunteering and other types of associational life, by children in household or not
Note: Activities with less than 10 respondents in total or 0 responses in either category is not shown.

Similar patterns to those that can be seen here are in line with what other pieces of research have found. In terms of hours spent on volunteering, Volunteer Scotland (2021) reported that the two age groups that do the least hours are individuals between the ages of 25-34 (at 6.8 hours) and those aged 35-44 (at 7.5 hours), which are also the reflecting the life stages where people are more likely to have children at home. The same report indicated that the group that have the highest participation rate is that of adults aged 35-44. It is of interest that both Sports and Informal sports see little difference in participation rates between those from households with children and those without. Parents being involved in their children's sports activities could perhaps explain this. Both Max (M/36, South Ayrshire) and Mairi (F/65, South Ayrshire) became volunteers through their children's activities. Max did not intend to become a volunteer for the local community football club his two daughters play in, but a shortage of coaches and a sense of duty and obligation made him volunteer as a coach:

> I had no intention of getting involved in this, and we had coaches but then they left, then we had these teenage girls and they were doing their best, they were doing the Duke of Edinburgh, so they were quite young themselves, and then, as a couple of guys just started doing it, and then I thought "you know, I'm standing here watching, freezing, whereas when I was putting the cones

out and running around, then I would actually be warm", and to be honest, why am I standing here when other people are doing the work. (Max, M/36, South Ayrshire)

Mairi also volunteered for her daughter's figure skating when she was younger. Most of this was mainly in an informal manner, like taking the daughter and other members to practice and competitions, but at one point she was also the club secretary and did some fundraising for the club, as she had learned those skills from her engagement in the local political party. Unlike in Max's case, Mairi's volunteering was somewhat compulsory, for safety reasons:

> When I think back to my daughter skating, which was her hobby, but as adults we had to be there because it's dangerous, ice-skating's really dangerous, falls, cuts, because ice-skates are really sharp, and people jumping and spinning, so the rule was that every child under 16 had to have a responsible adult there in the rink, there with them, so we did spend a lot of time at the ice rink. And we didn't know anybody, we didn't know any of the people there, but I had volunteered to do fundraising and as a result of that, and me volunteering, other people who had volunteered to take on other roles, we all became very good friends, so we got a good friendship out of that. (Mairi, F/65, South Ayrshire)

For both Max and Mairi, the volunteering to enable or support their children's participation in associational life led to socialising with other parents and socialising outside of the activities. This is further explored in Figure 5.6 and Figure 5.7, which show the people individuals engage with in their volunteering and other types of associational life, by presence of children in household. For volunteering, there was little difference between those with and those without children in terms of whether they volunteered with people they did not know previously. For the other categories, while the sample is low, it shows that those with children in the household volunteer more with people they know from other activities and neighbours than those without children, who in turn volunteer more with friends and colleagues. These findings suggest that children in the household do not impact much on whether people volunteer with people they did not previously know, but they do volunteer to a higher extent with people they met in other activities. While the data does not provide a rationale for why this is the case, it might be connected to activities the children partake in.
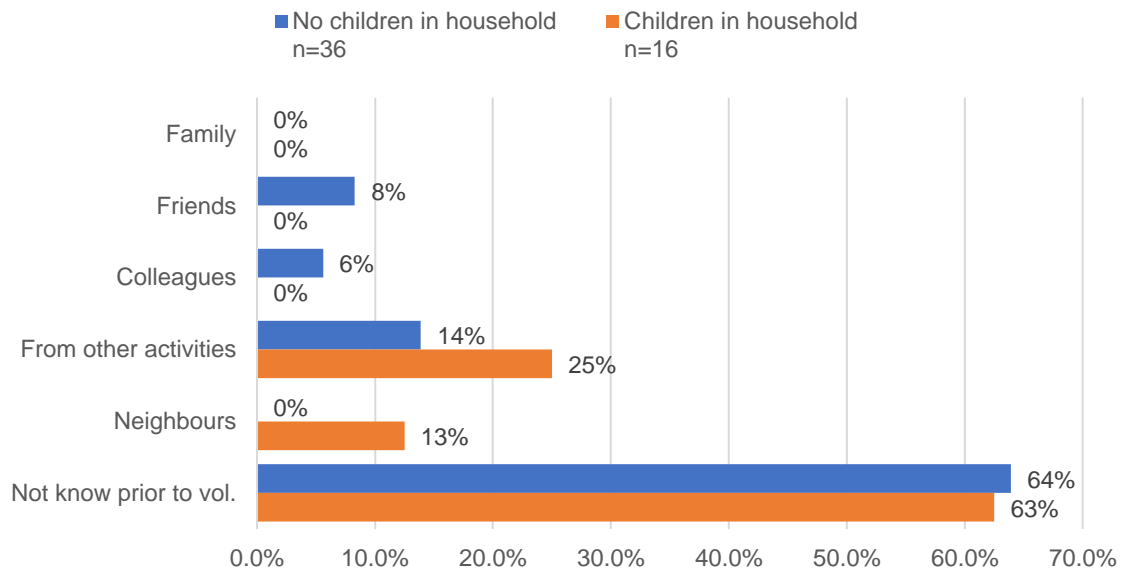
Figure 5.6 Who the participants volunteer with, by presence of children in household
Note: Categories with fewer than 5 responses not included in figure.

For associational life other than volunteering, a pattern of convenience can be discerned, which is not present for volunteering. Engaging in associational life with family, friends, and neighbours had a higher rate of people from households with children, which was not the case for volunteering. This could suggest that for associational life, pre-existing relationships and those that are more convenient in terms of proximity, like neighbours, are probably easier to engage with than relationships that require more effort in terms of travel and scheduling. As people from households with children reported doing more activities with people in their own family and friends, their networks seem more contained and could perhaps be more homogenous as a result. People from households without children appear to have more opportunities to engage with people that they did not previously know by being exposed to weak ties through colleagues, mentors, and classmates, or being the weak ties between groups themselves. The higher response to 'Did not know before' for those without children, compared to volunteering above, also suggests that volunteering is less affected in this instance by there being children in the household or not.
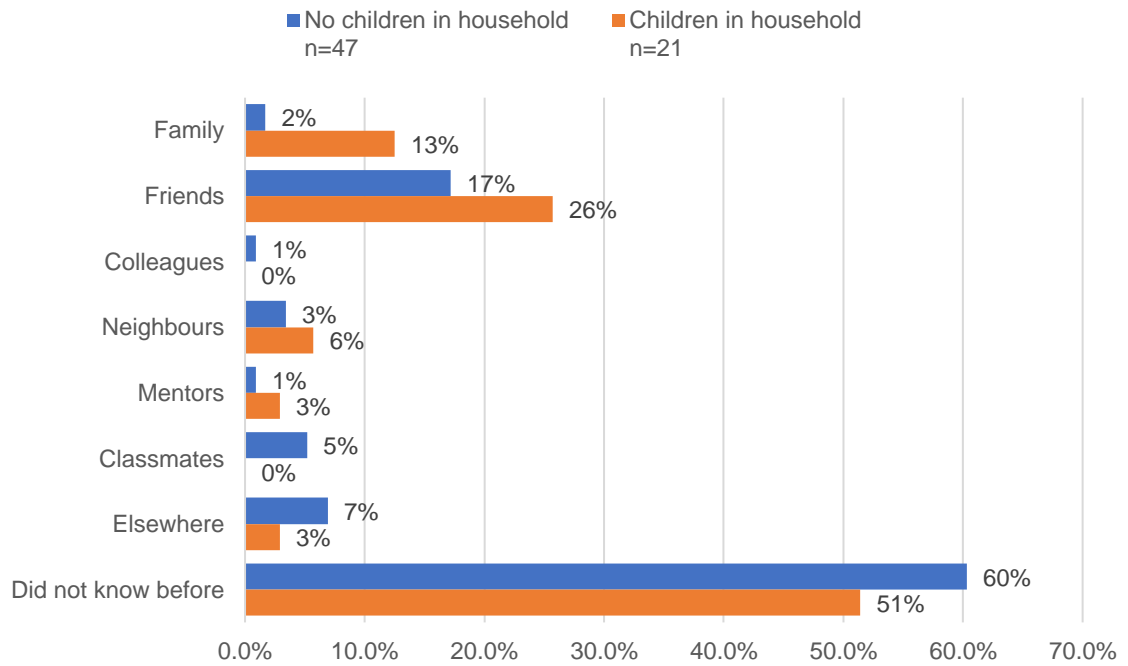
Figure 5.7 Who participants engage in associational life with, by presence of children in household
Note: This refers to responses, and not respondents, as question was asked multiple times.

The question of whether people in households with children have less opportunities to meet new people can be further explored by looking at who the respondents said they mixed with when they volunteered and engaged in other forms of associational life. Figure 5.8 shows the groups that participants reported mixing with when volunteering; people living in households with children reported less mixing across all categories, meaning they were less likely to volunteer with people from different ages, ethnicities, social backgrounds, or from different locations, than those from households with no children. Only one person said they did not mix at all with different groups.
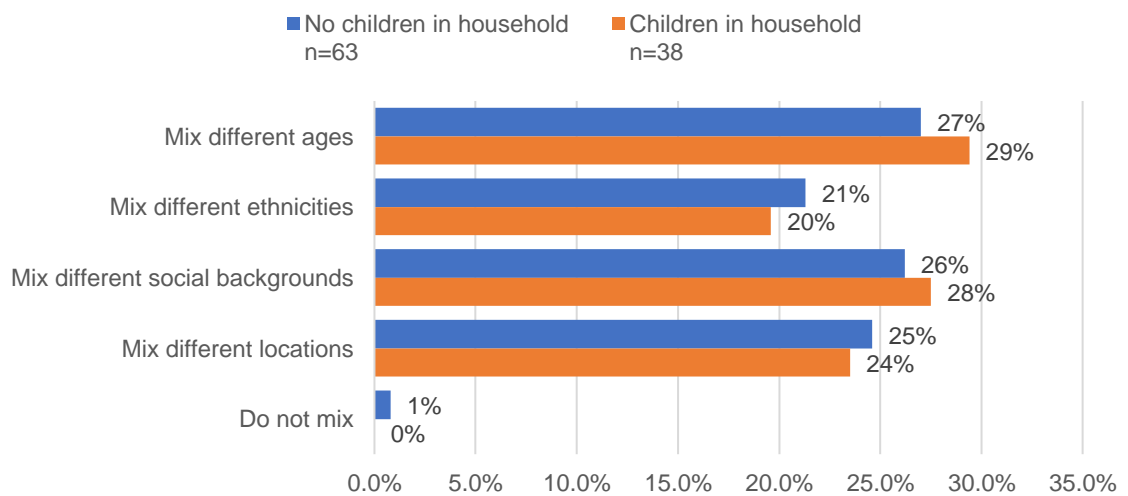

Figure 5.8 Who people mix with in their volunteering, by children in household or not

When looking at the effect that having children has on who people mix with in associational life, the results vary between the groups. The respondents from households with children were more likely to say they mixed with people from different ages and ethnicities to a higher degree. This group also had a higher rate of respondents saying they did not mix with people from these categories at all. Respondents from households with no children said they mixed to a higher degree with people from different social backgrounds and across different locations.
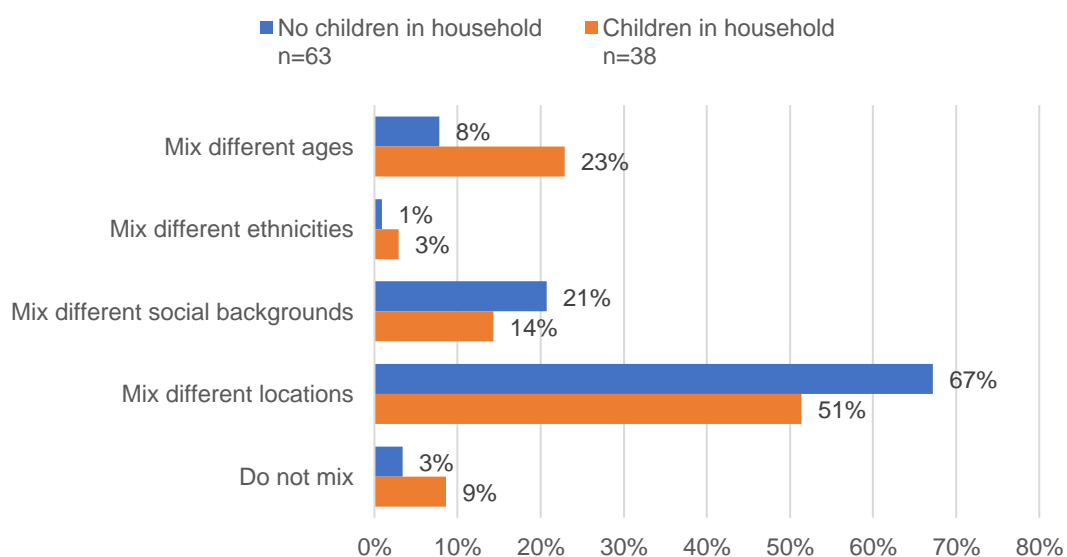

Figure 5.9 Who do people mix with in their associational life, by children in household or not

It is curious that the effect of children in household on who the respondents mix with is consistent for volunteering but varies between the demographic groups for other types of associational life. Unfortunately, it was not possible to compare the different types of associational life other than volunteering to see if there were any differences as the data did not have enough respondents for all groups in this instance.

This section has showed that the presence of children in the household has an impact on people's participation in both volunteering and other types of associational life, but to different degrees, as the effect is not as great for volunteering. When looking at specific activities, the effect of there being children in the household differed. In the case of sports activities, there was an equal distribution between individuals with children and those without, whilst all the other activities saw a lower participation from those with children. It is also of interest to see that people in households with children reported they engaged less with people they did not know previously from doing an activity,

which in turn means less opportunities to meet new people, as they also reported that they engaged less with people from different ages, ethnicities, social backgrounds, and in different locations. This could potentially lead to them being less likely to come across people who could be categorised as weak ties and can introduce them to other activities. In terms of gender, the presence of children in the household had different outcomes for women and men, but this was more pronounced for associational life in general than for volunteering, suggesting that volunteering was more stable overall from the influence of having children in the household.

This section has relied mainly on survey data, due to the limited number of interviews where the participants had children, thus limiting what this might look like for volunteering and participation in other types of associational life. Future research ought to be done on this topic.

5.4 The impact of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions on volunteering and other types of associational life

The lockdowns and restrictions that were put in place in response to COVID-19 did have an impact on how the data was collected for this thesis and how the respondents and interviewees viewed their participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. The data was collected between March 2021 and January 2022, which was preceded by lockdowns and restrictions to physical contact and how people were able to socialise during this period, which necessitated online interviews to be done for this research. Several studies have already documented the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions on volunteering and other types of associational life, (e.g., Hardill, Grotz and Crawford, 2022). In this section, I add to this body of knowledge by reporting on how the pandemic affected different types of associational life and how people engaged in COVID-19 specific volunteering.

Looking at the mean hours spent on the different activities (see Figure 5.10), time participants spent on almost all activities decreased during the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions except for participation in local community groups and volunteering, which both increased instead (from 11 hours a month to 12 hours, and from 13 a month to 14 respectively). The category 'Other' also had more responses, but it is unknown what this meant in each respondent's case. It is also likely that the increase in participation in local community groups was linked to the increase in mutual aid activities that intensified during the pandemic (Roy *et al.*, 2020).
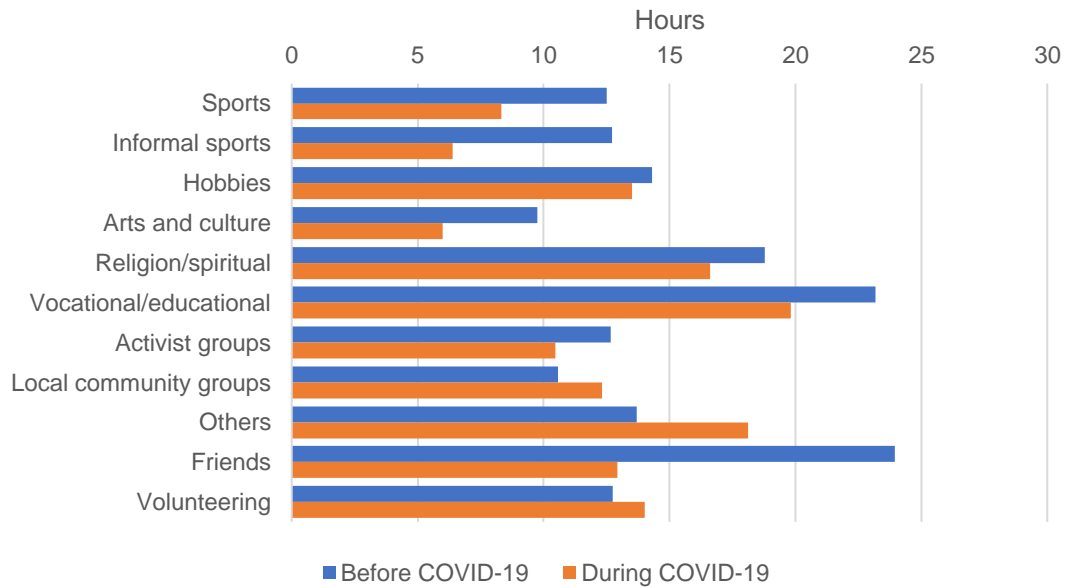
Figure 5.10 Mean number of hours per activity, before and during COVID-19
Note: Activities with less than 10 respondents not included

Unlike previous examples in this thesis, where volunteering was less affected by factors such as with whether participants had children, the difference in mean hours before and during the COVID-19 restrictions might have less to do with the nature of volunteering as a type of activity, and more with it being specific to a larger societal response to help out during a difficult time. What was exceptional during the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions was the uptake in volunteering that took place. The survey did ask about the volunteering people had done that was linked to COVID-19, and Figure 5.11 shows how many people volunteered when the lockdowns and restrictions were in place specifically, and differences between those who said they had volunteered in the last two years. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of those volunteering previously did also volunteer during the pandemic. Of those who had not volunteered before, around 40% said they had volunteered during the COVID-19 pandemic, which indicates the increase in volunteering that was specific to the pandemic.

When looking at how the COVID-19 specific volunteering they engaged in was organised, the vast majority took place within an existing organisation, as seen in Figure 5.12. Roughly a quarter of the volunteering was through a community group, both pre-existing the pandemic and created during the pandemic.
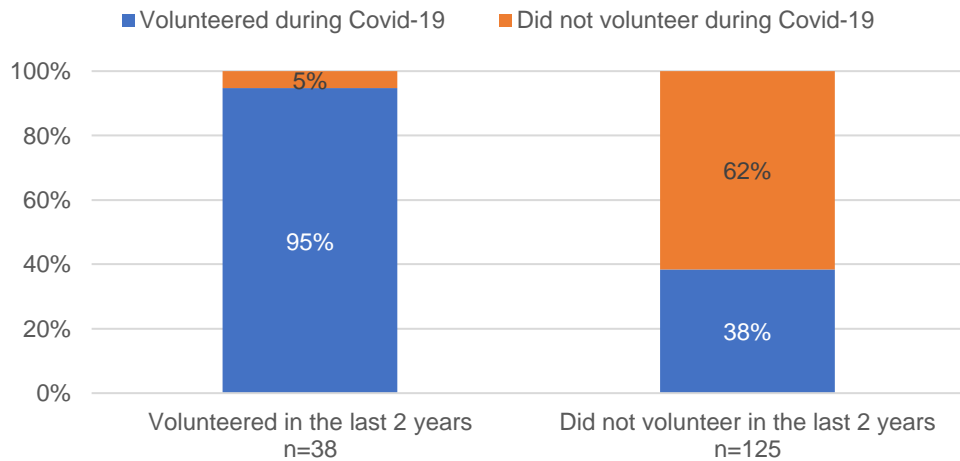
Figure 5.11 Volunteering during COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, by volunteered in the last 2 years
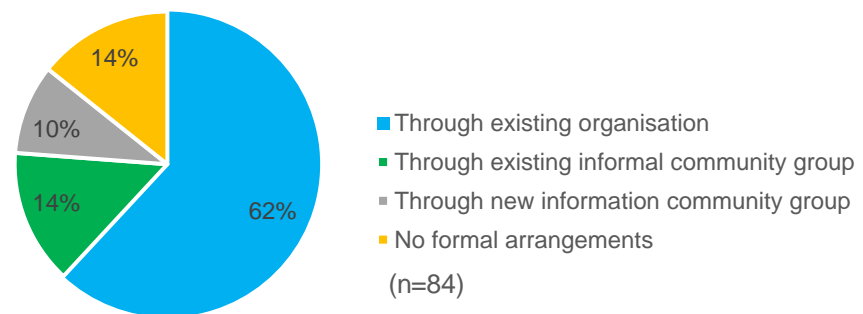

Figure 5.12 How COVID-19 specific volunteering was organised

In the interviews, the volunteering linked to the specific needs of the pandemic was often organised through pre-existing connections. Laura (F/28, Glasgow) found her volunteering during the pandemic through a Facebook page that was set up specifically to find volunteers, and mostly delivered food for people who were unable to leave their homes. Alice (F/51, Glasgow) did grocery delivering through a charity where she volunteered before the pandemic as a mentor for a young person. It also seemed like volunteering through an organisation which they already had a relationship with made this easy:

> I think just when Covid started they were just looking for volunteers, so we just did it at the start of Covid, because we had our car and we could go out and about, we didn't have anything stopping us from doing that. (Alice, F/51, Glasgow)

In terms of the volunteering people did before the pandemic hit, many adapted to the new reality of online volunteering, while some preferred not to:

> When the pandemic hit we had to shift, quite quickly, into remote support, so that has changed, so now we provide, kind of, phone or video contact once

a week, volunteers are calling [the family] for about an hour a week. And that has worked really well for some volunteers, because they no longer have to, kind of, try working that travel time, bundle themselves up and sit in traffic, and just kind of those logistical things, so they really like the digital platform and some of them are looking to kind of stay with that going forwards, some volunteers are able to take on two, three families, because they just have a little bit more flexibility when they're on Zoom, they can kind of click on, click off, and then do another meeting. Some volunteers have been completely against that and have actually decided to go on, what we call, "resting" throughout the pandemic and they are basically on hold until we're able to get back into face-to-face visiting. (Family Support Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

The increased willingness to volunteer during the pandemic could be a combination of the altruistic societal response, but also that some people had more time to volunteer, given the switch to remote working or many individuals being furloughed. The Environmental charity continued to receive applications from people to volunteer but had to turn volunteers down as they did not have the capacity to take them on during the height of the pandemic. The Statutory Volunteering Organisation also saw an increase, but also a demographic shift in who showed an interest to volunteer:

We actually got more applications than we normally do, in January we were slightly higher in a lot of areas, so it supported that. I would say, probably at the start, there were maybe a lot more older people or more retired people going in for it, but I've definitely been seeing more and more younger people, or more people maybe in the age 40 to 50 bracket. (Statutory Volunteering Organisation, Clerk, South Ayrshire)

This was not uniform, however, as some organisations had challenges with volunteers coming back when the lockdowns and restrictions were lifted which should have enabled people to volunteer again:

Because of COVID, it's set people back a long, long way and I'm now recruiting and going back to my volunteers that has volunteered for a while with me, and a lot of them are even struggling to come back and volunteer. They're not sure, they've got illnesses they didn't have before, they've become unfit, they're worried they don't... you know... (Community Garden, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

So, while volunteering, and especially the informal type of volunteering, increased during the lockdowns and when restrictions were in place, there were still barriers for people to volunteer as they had previously done. Worth

noting is that in this interview, the Community Garden manager used the word 'volunteer' to also include those who are participating in the activities, which will be discussed in more detail in section 5.5.

For associational life overall, some activities were easier to adapt to a new way of engaging with people than others. The members from the two Board Games Clubs all said that they were able to move online, as many of the board games also have online versions. One of them also discussed playing with both people they already knew and unknown people:

> I meet up with basically the same core group of people every time I log on to play games, and not individualized, I'm playing with my club members, so you can do your online games, absolutely, in an individualized way, I'm interested in this, "let's log on, let's see what other players have logged on at the same time. Right, let's have a game" and it's random. You can, you can definitely do that. (Board Games Club 1, Treasurer, Glasgow)

This section has discussed the impact that the lockdowns and restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic had on volunteering and other forms of associational life. Findings in this section mirrors those found in other studies on volunteering and other types of associational life during the COVID-19 pandemic. While most activities saw a decrease in the average number of hours individuals spent on them, both volunteering and engaging in local community groups increased during the pandemic. This is likely to be linked to the increase in COVID-19 specific needs for volunteering, with almost 40% of the respondents volunteering during the pandemic who had otherwise not volunteered before the pandemic, and around 40% of all COVID-19 specific volunteering not taking place through pre-existing organisations. Volunteering during the pandemic has thus brought people together in a time of significant need and adversity for many. However, only some other types of associational life were able to adapt by moving online.

5.5 The transition between volunteering and other types of associational life

This section builds on previous research on the participant-to-volunteer route (see Davies, 2018), which reported that many young people got into volunteering by first participating in activities organised by volunteers. This analysis looks beyond the participant-to-volunteer route to also include the volunteer-to-participant transition. The aim here is to better understand the possibilities to transition between volunteering and other types of

associational life, and what facilitates these transitions and in what ways this happens.

Some organisations included in this study were better at enabling the transition between volunteering and participating in other types of associational life, and even between different kinds of associational life, with the Community Garden and the Environmental charity as good examples of this. Interestingly, a recurring theme when speaking to these organisations that offered both volunteering and participation in other types of associational life was the ways in which they enabled people with adverse life experiences to take part in a way that benefitted them. This was specifically attributed to the multiple ways available for members to engage with the organisations. The Community Garden had forged relationships with other organisations, like mental health organisations, and mental health support workers knew about their work and regularly introduced members and clients to the Community Garden:

> Their support worker will email me and then we'll make a plan that the first week they'll come in and maybe walk around the garden, and on a day when there is volunteering, I might meet them casually. And then the next week we'll have a conversation, then third week they might come and volunteer for an hour and see what it's like. So we'll try a stepwise approach to engage. […] But it might be they're engaged with groups first and then from that, they [volunteer]. I will talk to them, we're trying to guide you toward the gardens, will encourage them to take part, maybe in volunteering if that suits them, but that might not be something that suits them at all. But when they've been doing their activity, they might see the garden going on and that might then get their interest from seeing what's going on [there]. (Community Garden, Volunteering coordinator, Glasgow)

Some of the people that had been referred to the Community Garden through their relationships with support workers and organisations had struggled with addiction issues. While some of these participants' backgrounds and past experiences had caused some friction between other volunteers and participants in the past, these were resolved skilfully by the organisation. This also highlights the benefits of engaging in an organisation, which has resources in terms of volunteer coordinators, but also in that they can offer multiple ways of participating with them, which can be tailored to participant's specific needs and circumstances. The volunteer coordinator at the Community Garden recounted one specific example of a person who had been referred to them who had found their niche within the organisation:

> He has responsibility now doing the [task], he is really in charge of it, and you know, we just go and ask him if we need to do something and his friend, who he met through volunteering. They would far rather be at the gardens and, it's definitely a distraction from being at the pub, they could be in the gardens all day gardening and love doing that. (Community Garden, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

Another example of an organisation offering both volunteering and other types of associational life activities being beneficial for someone with adverse life experiences was the Environmental Charity. As they were offering workshops for people to come and work on their bikes, with volunteers helping, a housing officer suggested to one of the residents who was socially isolated to get involved with the organisation:

> He stays in housing association flat and the housing officer was aware of us as an organisation, and had been going into visit and he was pretty isolated living alone, pretty isolated and not engaged in the Community. The housing officer had just gone to do a routine visit and said 'you like going out cycling, why don't you contact these guys here, to see if there's anything they can do', so he ended up working, or doing shifts at the bike workshop. (Environmental charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

Both examples show how organisations that offer multiple ways of engaging can help people find ways to engage in the most flexible ways that suit individuals' needs and personal constrains. This can be either through volunteering or as a participant, or both, and this can be especially important for people with adverse life experiences. The network that the Community Garden had with other organisations and how the housing officer knew about the Environmental Charity organisation are examples of the positive impacts these organisations can have. Part of this is probably because there were multiple ways to interact with the organisation so people could choose what worked best for them. Both organisations discussed here were also leisure focused, rather than service a provision, which had the benefit of being able to offer roles with some level of continuity, while still being a somewhat casual activity.

In some cases, the boundaries between being a volunteer or a participating member might not be as clear. In the above organisations, the roles were clear, as they were using the terms 'member' and 'volunteer' explicitly, while in other more informal clubs and associations, the boundaries between volunteering and participating as a member can be less clear. In the case of the Mental

Health Charity, while this had a formal structure, there were no explicit boundaries between being a volunteer or a member:

> So it's not like [there's] the people that volunteered and run the charity, and then the people that are service users. It's like everyone's a big group, and they're all friends and family and it's very much a community. (Mental Health Charity, Activity coordinator, South Ayrshire)

Despite there not being an explicit difference between being a volunteer and participant in the charity, people were performing these two different roles at different times. The charity spoke about one family in particular:

> They came to the charity when he [the son] was eight, he's now 19, so that is over 10 years that he's been with us now, and he started off and the mom was coming in and coming to all the meetings and she was like "I don't know what to do, what am I doing here" and then people like my parents were able to go "oh, try this, try that, try this" and help them out. So then as he's grown up in the charity, the moms went "well, I've now experienced all of that, so I can help another family that's struggling the same just like me". (Mental Health Charity, Activity coordinator, South Ayrshire)

In this case, the mother was at one point a beneficiary of the charity, and later also a volunteer, although the beneficiary and volunteer roles can occur simultaneously. This was made possible through the informal way this charity was run, as opposed to a larger charity where volunteering is more likely to be more formal. The benefit of doing their work through an informal charity was the ease with which people could move from being beneficiary to becoming a volunteer. This can be compared to the Family Support Charity, which also saw beneficiaries coming back to volunteer:

> We actually just published a really nice story about, a now volunteer, she was a family that came to us and was really, really struggling and is now kind of giving back and supporting other families, based on her experiences. So we do have a few volunteers who have been families themselves. (Family Support Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

However, in the case of the Family Support Charity, people are not able to be a beneficiary and volunteer at the same time, as the organisational structure is more formal than the Mental Health Charity. Hence, this type of volunteering and engaging beneficiaries does not seem to be able to foster an easy transition between participant or beneficiary and volunteer.

With these two cases in mind, the distinction between a participant, a volunteer, and a member in an organisation is on a sliding scale. Cameron (1999, p. 53) observed that with people volunteering through their church, the sentiment was: 'I am not a volunteer, I'm a member'. She suggests that this distinction between member and volunteer stems from what the type of activity the organisation is doing. If it is providing a service to others, people are more likely to view themselves as volunteers when they get involved with the delivery of the service, while if the aims of the organisation or association are explicitly for the benefit of the members, they view themselves as members. This distinction can be clearly seen here, where the people involved in the Mental Health Charity consider themselves members, and the volunteers for the Family Support Charity saw themselves as volunteers, as the separation between volunteers and service users or clients was clearly defined.

As for the link between volunteering and other types of associational life, this section has shown that if the difference between being a member and a volunteer is less distinct, more people can potentially find their way into volunteering, whether this is by starting as a participant or volunteer from thr start. This could also lead to people being introduced to volunteering when they would be unlikely to consider joining an organisation in an explicit volunteering role initially. This is an especially important aspect to consider in relation to volunteering, as when asked about the difference between being a volunteer and engaging in other types of associational life, the interviewees said the main difference between the two is the level of commitment:

> I think [volunteering is] a commitment. I mean there's a commitment to volunteering and I think that is a conscious decision that you're going to turn up every Tuesday. [...] Yes, I think, if you commit, you're implying that you're prepared to join a team and you're prepared to put time and energy into one specific organization. If you turn up and sing in a choir, for instance, you just turn up and if you don't turn up you don't turn up. If you go to join a Pilates group, it's your problem if you don't turn up. (Community Shop, Director, South Ayrshire)

This notion of commitment was also expressed by Anne (F/60, Glasgow), as she made a clear distinction between her engagement in volunteering and other forms of associational life, and purposefully only did volunteering that required her time on a quarterly basis, as she did not want the commitment that often comes with other volunteering roles. This is why her volunteering only included being a board member of a small charity where she kept the

accounts (see her Miro board in Appendix 5), as this only required her attention on a quarterly basis. This was a deliberate choice, as what she 'didn't want to do particularly was volunteering that ended up taking up far more time, because if that was the case, then I might as well go back to work'. However, her participation in Tai-chi, yoga, cooking classes, and arts and crafts classes happened on a weekly basis. But as the quote above from the Community Shop pointed out, volunteering involves a commitment that is often continuous and structured, which most other types of associational activities might not require. If it is the commitment that makes some people think twice before deciding to volunteer, being involved as a participant or member first may make the transition to become a volunteer easier to traverse.

In the case of organisations where people can be volunteers, participants and/or members, the possibilities of engaging in volunteering as associational life provides a platform where people can decide on their level of involvement and commitment, which can enable the participant-to-volunteer route. Also, it was observed that people with adverse life experiences can benefit from organisations that involve volunteers and participants in collaboration with partner organisations and community workers. The next section will look specifically at how other types of associational life can lead to volunteering.

5.6 Associational life leading to volunteering in the same or other organisation

This section will look at whether engaging in associational life more widely led to volunteering, either in the same organisation or in other organisations, and what factors influenced this. This is valuable, as it can provide an understanding of how volunteers found the organisations they volunteer with, and what organisations can do to ease or promote this transition.

Of all the respondents that said that their participation in associational life led to volunteering, two thirds said it led to volunteering in the same organisation, and for one third it led to volunteering in another organisation from the one that they were participating in. Breaking down the analysis by type of activity and whether it led to volunteering in the same organisation or other organisation, there are noticeable differences between different types of associational life. In Figure 5.13, which includes a range of activities to show broader links, Sports and Religion had the largest proportion of activity leading to volunteering in the same organisation, although sports also had the lowest rate of it leading to volunteering overall. This can be contrasted to

Hobbies and participation in Local community groups, which had a larger group of respondents saying the activity lead them to volunteer in other organisations.
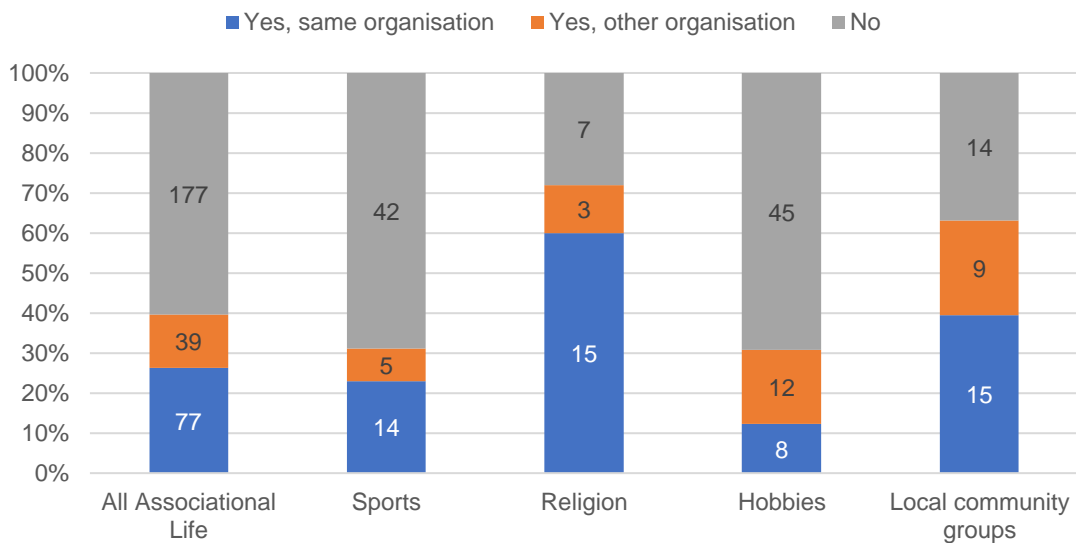

Figure 5.13 Activity leading to volunteering in same or other organisation

The sports activities are formal sports only and not informal, which did not have enough respondents to be included here. While a large part of respondents said the activity they were involved in did not lead to volunteering, most of those who said they volunteered did this in the same organisation. This pattern is indicative of the role of bonding social capital that is nurtured in sports. Worth noting, as Storr and Spaaij (2016) reported in their study on formation and mobilisation of social capital in youth sports, organisations might select who they want to take part and who is 'allowed' to volunteer, as those who exhibit desirable characteristics are chosen as volunteers. While what Storr and Spaaij describe was not observed in my interviews directly, the volunteer from the Sports Club did express that there was a potential tension between social inclusion and sports performance:

> Well, in my words, the focus lies on social inclusion. That's what I want to promote. If you ask our senior club coach, he'll say it focuses on getting people to play at a high level and the best level that they possibly can and winning matches. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

Taking part in religious or spiritual groups had the highest rate of people saying that this led to volunteering, most of which was taking place in the same organisation. This can be explained by how religious participation produces bonding social capital, which creates a strong bond between members of the

congregation, and also existing evidence shows that people who are active in a religious group are more likely to volunteer for that group (Kettell, 2019; Vermeer and Scheepers, 2019).

Hobbies and Local community groups had the highest percentages of participants saying that activity led to volunteering in *another* organisation. For Local community groups, this might be because people are introduced to volunteering opportunities through the participants in local community groups, which is why they started to volunteer for *another* organisation. The survey data also indicated that hobby activities led to volunteering to the same extent as sports, but these had a much larger chance of leading to volunteering in another organisation than the hobby organisation. This seems to stem from individuals meeting hobby group members who then introduced them to volunteering opportunities. For Paul (M/60, South Ayrshire), it was in his Tai-chi class where he met someone who told him about dog-walking guide-dogs, and it was someone in his walking group that led to his volunteering as a dog walker. Following Häuberer's (2014) reasoning, this would mean that hobby activities are more likely to activate bridging social capital, as the group are likely to be more diverse as people come together around an interest, and as such, there are more opportunities to learn about other activities and thus lead to further engagement in associational life. When volunteering took place in the same organisation that individuals had been members of, it was often because of a specific need arising in the organisation: Max (M/36, South Ayrshire) volunteered as a coach for his daughters' football club as the previous coach left, and Mairi (F/65, South Ayrshire) was asked to volunteer for the committee for the retirement club because her father was involved in the retirement club and the group knew she had the skills required, which she had gained through her previous involvement in other organisations and political groups.

Regarding age and location, there are some notable differences when it comes to whether the involvement in associational life led to volunteering. For location, taking part in associational life more generally led to volunteering to a greater degree in Glasgow than in South Ayrshire, but both Sports and Hobbies led to volunteering to a higher degree in South Ayrshire than in Glasgow (see Figure 5.14). The type of associational life that showed the biggest difference between Glasgow and South Ayrshire was Sports. The reason for this is unknown.
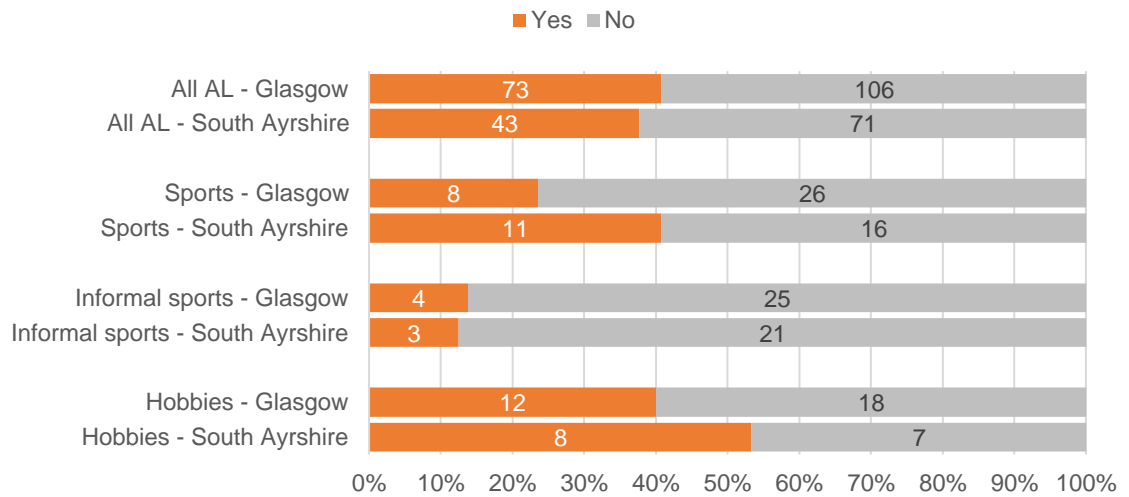
Figure 5.14 Activity leading to volunteering, by location
Note: Not all types of associational life are shown

Similar to the location variable above, comparing associational life leading to volunteering by the two age groups does not show a marked difference overall, but some specific types of associational life do. As seen in Figure 5.15, Sports led to volunteering to a higher degree for the older age group than for the younger age group, while the opposite is true for Hobbies. The difference for Sports could be explained by life course differences, as the older age group are more likely to have more free time as their children are more independent or have moved out, which means they have more time to volunteer for the Sports Club they are part of, or even their children's football club. For Hobbies, the opposite is true, where Hobbies led to volunteering for the younger age group to a higher degree. However, the number of respondents for this group was low, which means it is difficult to make any definitive conclusions from this.
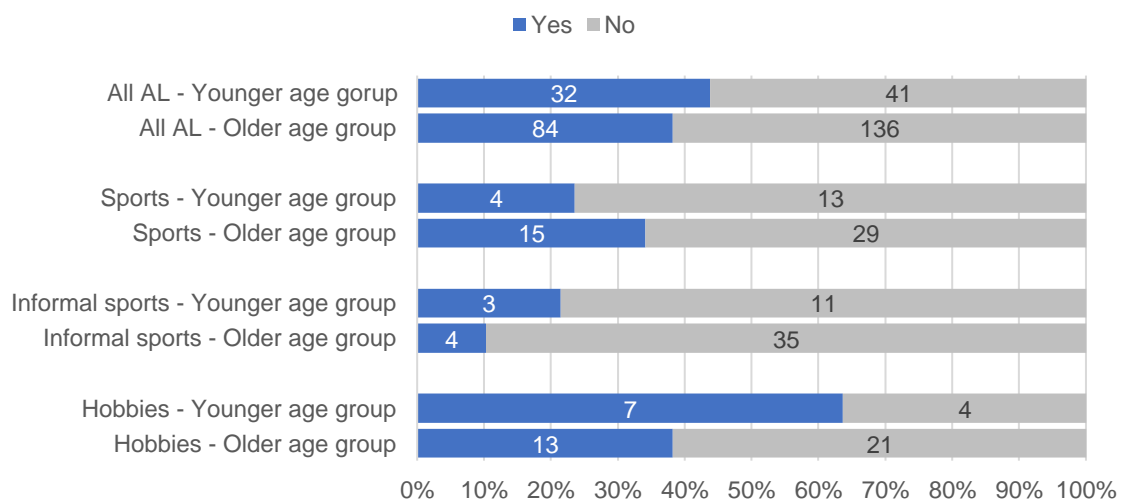

Figure 5.15 Activity leading to volunteering, by age groups

In relation to examining volunteering leading to other forms of associational life, the survey asked participants if volunteering had made them engage in more group activities than they did before volunteering. This was done using a five-graded Likert scale from 'Strongly agree' (1) to 'Strongly Disagree' (5). Most people answered 'Somewhat agree' (mode=4), with no differences between locations or age groups. An example of this from the interviews comes from the Family Support Charity, where a volunteer became more confident to be more social through her volunteering:

> I'm thinking about one volunteer, in particular, who is going through our training right now, she is a young university student, she's just finished her first year. Coming into volunteering she was really nervous and hesitant, she hadn't kind of been involved in a lot of things outside of the current education sphere, kind of, going into university and those courses. And she's, kind of, fed back now that, because she's done this, she's met other volunteers, she's looking into joining, I think it was [activity] or something, you know, she's looking into joining something in her community, so it's kind of given her a little bit more confidence to go out and do different types of things. (Family Support Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

This section has discussed associational life leading to volunteering, and how this differs between different types of associational life. There were noteworthy differences as to whether an activity led to volunteering in the same organisation or in another organisation. Hobbies that led to volunteering had the highest reported percentage of leading to volunteering in *another* organisation, more so in South Ayrshire than in Glasgow and particularly among younger participants. While the data cannot provide more information on why this is the case, the fact that hobbies led to volunteering in another organisation to such a great degree, compared to other activities, is something that needs to be explored further as a way for voluntary organisations to recruit volunteers.

5.7 Benefits and skills

This section will discuss the benefits and skills participants reported they gained from their participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. It also looks at the previous skills that led them to both volunteering and other types of associational life.

One of the reported benefits of volunteering was the experiences people gain that they can use to enter the labour market, which is also what motivates some people to volunteer:

A lot of people have said that's what's really helped them, being a tour guide has maybe helped them get into work and sometimes, we are able to employ people that have been volunteers with us as well, and sometimes they go on to other work and employment, and it's been quite a lot of that going on this year, which has been interesting. […] One of our staff now, who's our cleaner, she took part in cultural cookery and then she became a volunteer and she helped out at a number of events and then she eventually, a member of staff. (Community Garden, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

Another benefit of volunteering that could be discerned from the data was that it could serve the function of introducing people who might be isolated to a new social setting. The Environmental charity volunteer coordinator spoke about a young man who benefited from volunteering in this fashion:

He stays in housing association flat and the housing officer was aware of us as an organization, and he was pretty isolated living alone, pretty isolated and not engaged in the community. And the housing officer had just gone to do a routine visit and said 'you like going out cycling why don't you contact these guys here, to see if there's anything they can do so', he ended up doing shifts in the workshop. (Environmental charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

Since then, this person has become an invaluable asset to the organisation, also helping the organisation outside of the workshops that he was participating in. Volunteering was seen as a special activity in this way, that it can give purpose:

One particular woman, I like very much, and a young man who comes, both have slight mental problems and probably are unable to have regular employment. But we've become like family, I think that's the thing, there is a notion that you join a team. And then you become part of it and you're welcomed and you're made to feel valued when you're there, so I suppose, if you don't have much else going on – that was awfully patronizing, but if you can come to a place and people value what you give, even if it's very little, what you're contributing, then it gives you a sense of wellbeing. (Community Shop, Director, South Ayrshire)

These benefits, both in terms of future employment and the benefits for those who were socially isolated seemed to be limited to volunteering and less so for other forms of associational life. The benefits of engaging in other forms of associational life were expressed more in terms of gaining friends and widening one's social circle, but not providing a platform to prevent social isolation. Instead, associational life provides further sociability:

> We met through the game, so when I first started going there, I didn't really talk to anyone, when I started talking to more people and then became good friends with them via that. And then we've gotten closer as friends and then start going out more as friends after that, doing other stuff. (Board Games Club 2, Member, South Ayrshire)

Another benefit that was expressed in relation to other types of associational life was the benefits of sociability, and 'softer' and less tangible skills that can come with engaging in an activity:

> I work in Community learning and development, and I see so many children that would benefit from this, doesn't matter whether they're going to be good, bad or indifferent players, it doesn't matter. Getting them in with other children is what actually matters and getting them to feel that pride, that self-confidence, all the things that it instils. It doesn't matter if they never catch a ball in their life, that doesn't matter. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

Another benefit of formal organisations, such as the Sports Club, is that they can have links with other services and other organisations, which can be used to introduce people who are socially isolated to these activities. For example, the Community Garden had a network of social workers and GP surgeries who could introduce individuals to the activities these formal organisations offered. As many types of associational life are more informal, this type of structure and organisational relationship is perhaps harder to establish, and ought to be considered to understand how the individualisation and informalisation of society is impacting on people's opportunities to gain these skills, both tangible and 'softer' skills.

The skills that people have prior to their volunteering or joining an activity were something that many participants mentioned. However, the participants thought there was a stronger link between volunteering and gaining skills than in engaging in associational life. When speaking to the stakeholders, skills were a recurring theme when talking about why they thought volunteering is important and was also highlighted when recruiting volunteers. Some stakeholders talked about skills individuals developed while undertaking the volunteering itself, like the Family Support Charity:

> I just always say to anybody that comes to us to volunteer, "It doesn't matter if you haven't been a teacher or you haven't been something specific, we will provide you with all those tools for your toolbox, basically, and as long as you kind of have those basics, that we can build on, then you're good to go". (Family Support Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

The manager from the Environmental charity also talked about life skills and what their volunteers can gain from being a volunteer outside of their volunteering commitment:

> I think it's I think it's about giving the opportunity and to so for him, he didn't believe he had skills to give them. He didn't believe he had the ability to do that. [...] Encouraging his confidence and building his confidence and helping him see that. The amount he's grown, and I think he's just hit the 500-hour mark, so he has given us a lot of his time and energy, and we have given him pathways, doors, opportunities to other things, and he has now got at quite a full and busy life. (Environmental charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

Gaining skills was also discussed by the survey respondents as something they were actively seeking through their volunteering. For Dita (F/31, South Ayrshire), the skills, and the qualifications that could be obtained, was a contributing factor as to why she wanted to volunteer in the first place: 'I feel like it gives me a lot of skills that are compatible with the workplace as well'.

Also, in Mairi's (F/65, South Ayrshire) case, the skills gained from volunteering lead to further participation, although this was not intentional. Her involvement in the local political party branch led her to develop certain skills, which also led her to gain a reputation of excelling at the organisational aspect of civic life, and to be called on for a variety of tasks.

> People got to know that I could organize things, I was fine at meetings, and I could also organize events, make sure people turned up and whatnot. So as a result of that, throughout a lot of my adult life, I was called on to do things: "Could you do this" because people knew that I was reliable and that I could do things. (Mairi, F/65, South Ayrshire)

Mairi is likely to be part of the 'civic core' (Reed and Selbee, 2001; Mohan and Bulloch, 2012), which Volunteer Scotland (2018) have defined as the group of individuals who volunteer for more than 16 hours per month. As she was the only one who expressed this situation, where she was asked to contribute due to her experiences, this example should not be understood as a common occurrence, but rather, something that might be investigated further in future studies. However, skills are one of four factors that link activities together, alongside specific issues, interests, and values and beliefs, according to Brodie et al. (2011). In Mairi's case, values and beliefs (which in this case seem to have come from her home environment, which will be discussed in section 6.1), and skills seemed to be the linking factors for her.

Brodie et al. (2011) also reported that when skills, both professional and earned from participation in associational life, were the contributing factor for why people's wanted to take part in an activity, that this was related to being well-educated. They suggest that people want to use skills that they had and were good at in other contexts. This was also highlighted by the Family Support Charity, the Statutory Volunteering Organisation, and the Tutoring Charity, whose representatives I interviewed all said they had some volunteers who were or had been teachers or social workers, whose primary reason to volunteer was to put the skills they already possessed to use:

> I've had a long happy career, I'm in retirement now, but I'm not ready to hang up my boots and go and sit in the corner, I still feel I've got something to offer, so this is why I'm here. And I think that that applies to the most of the people that are on the committee. (Carers Support Charity, Chairperson, South Ayrshire)

Similarly, Burt (M/62, Glasgow), who previously worked in the civil service, also made use of his professional skills in his volunteering, working with a Mental Health Charity, and a youth enterprise organisation, helping young people set up their own businesses. This can be linked to Skocpol's (2001, 2003) writing on the professionalisation of civic life, as with a more educated workforce, there is a bigger pool of individuals wanting to use their professional skills for a good cause, which also might lead to a type of engagement which is more "doing for" rather than "doing with" for this educated population. Both participants from the Sports Club and the Community Shop also expressed how levels of education affect who volunteers with them:

> I think the demographic means that they [those with lower levels of education] are far more likely to get involved in the practical, hands on, coaching, getting in there with the kids. They probably wouldn't look at becoming a committee member, a treasurer, president, that kind of thing because that's not what they see as their... possibility or you know. I don't know why they don't, but the people who come from the less affluent kind of demographic, maybe slightly less formally educated, they gravitate towards the hands-on stuff rather than the Committee roles and you know that the sort of theoretical stuff that goes on behind the scenes. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

The impact of education and sociodemographic differences was discussed in more depth in section 5.2, but interestingly, for one organisation, a volunteer's

sociodemographic background and their past experience with the charity, had a great impact on their future volunteering. The quote below highlights that experiences with a charity is also an important aspect to consider:

> We just got a new member of our board, who was tutored by us in the 80s, and they are care experienced, and care experiences people are the biggest demographic of young people that we work with, so it's absolutely brilliant to even have that at the highest level of the charity, running the place. (Tutoring Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

As for how skills relate to associational life, there was less evidence of what this relationship looks like. The only type of associational life that seemed to lead to employment related skills were activities related to the civil society and activism, as in Mairi's and Burt's cases. This could suggest that volunteering is better suited for being able to give people skills, whether it is for future employment or improved mental health. As education can be a predictor of whether people *gain* skills or *bring* skills to their volunteering, this is a factor that ought to be considered when planning the type of volunteering roles that organisations offer. The nature of (most) associational life other than volunteering does not seem have the benefit that volunteering has, which is building skills.

This section has shown the differences between how people express their motivations to volunteer and engage in other types of associational life. The chapter started by outlining how the motivations to volunteer were expressed more openly and explicitly, while those for associational life were implicit in nature. As this section outlined, there were difference between the routes through which people got involved in volunteering and other forms of associational life, and the benefits they gained from these. The evidence suggests there is a link between the altruistic element and how this informs people's motivations to volunteer in a more explicit manner, both for themselves and also in response to the discourse around volunteering in wider society, that sets volunteering apart from other types of associational life and makes it more stable.

5.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has looked at the ways in which people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, how they got involved in these activities, and the role that factors like location and place of residence and socio-economic situation play in this. As such, this chapter has described what affects

participation in volunteering and other forms of associational life and in what ways they differ. In terms of geography, it has shown that associational life other than volunteering tends to take place closer to individuals' homes to a greater extent than volunteering, which in turn means that people are often traveling further to take part in volunteering. This could either mean that the respondents are willing to travel further to take part in volunteering, or that volunteering takes place further away from people's homes. Regardless of why, this does have implications on who is able to participate in volunteering based on their current situation. Volunteering also seems to be less dependent on the physical location and whether it is accessible or not, while this is an issue for other types of associational life. For practitioners working in volunteering or organisations facilitating other types of associational life, this means that different aspects need to be taken into consideration for each. For volunteering, there needs to be an infrastructure in place for people to be able to take part especially in rural areas and for those who come from less affluent backgrounds. For other associational life, the impact that geography has on participation is more profound and includes whether people can find the activity and how accessible the location is, both physically and whether the location is an inviting space.

The second section of the chapter examined the socioeconomic factors and also discussed the role of urban and rural locations, as geography can heighten the effects of socioeconomic factors in rural areas. The quantitative data provided findings that showed a difference in how many hours the respondents spent on volunteering and other associational life before and during the pandemic, with volunteering hours increasing for all education levels during the pandemic, with mixed results for other forms of associational life. The data from the interviews showed an awareness of class having an impact on who volunteers, but this was never discussed in relation to other forms of associational life. Other research has found that the level of education does impact on all types of participation. Educational background partly functions in relation to income, which also impacts the ability of individuals to participate in terms of material resources available to them.

The impact identified in this study of the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions on volunteering and other types of associational life is consistent with previous literature, showing an increase in volunteering and a decrease in participation in other types of associational life. Some volunteering organisations saw an increase in volunteering applications and were forced to turn down new

volunteers because of the pandemic-related restrictions to social distancing and congregating in places, which indicates there was a difference between new types of volunteering during the lockdowns and restrictions due to COVID-19 and volunteering that took place before.

In the fourth section of this chapter, the impact children in the household have on people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life was discussed. The conclusion was that volunteering was less affected by this compared to other types of associational life, but that more research is needed on this, as there is likely to be a difference between the genders, but what this might look like is currently unknown.

The fifth section discussed the transition between volunteering and other types of associational life, which appears to be heavily influenced by the organisational structure and the nature of the activities offered by an organisation. While the delineation between volunteer and user, beneficiary, or participant was clear in some cases, this was more fluid in others. The fluidity was especially beneficial for people with adverse life experiences, as volunteering offered structure that they needed. This section also discussed how volunteering is perceived to have a different commitment level to other types of associational life, which can be a barrier for some individuals to volunteer as they are not able to, or do not want to, commit to regular participation. The section has also demonstrated the benefits of organisations offering both volunteering opportunities and ways of engaging in other types of associational life and the ways in which individuals transition between these. This is especially important as the ways people engage in volunteering is changing, becoming more episodic and coming from an individualistic point of view rather than one that is more collective (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2011; Hustinx *et al.*, 2016).

The sixth section discussed the conditions under which participation in associational life more generally leads to volunteering specifically. A surprising finding was that engaging in hobby-related associational life led to volunteering in a different organisation for many respondents and was among the highest alongside local community organisations. This is perhaps somewhat counterintuitive, as volunteering is about helping others and being altruistic, while hobby activities are centred around self-realisation. As the interviews provided little insight as to why this was the case, this is something that ought to be further explored and something that voluntary organisations

ought to have in mind for volunteer recruitment. There was a difference between the urban (Glasgow) and rural (South Ayrshire) locations, where associational life led to volunteering to a higher degree in Glasgow overall, but for Sports and Hobbies this was higher in South Ayrshire than in Glasgow. Another explanation might be that there is a division between rural and urban life, where rural life is more conducive for volunteering (Volunteer Scotland, 2021), and could be attributed to a sense of reciprocity and a higher chance of people knowing each other to a greater extent than in urban settings (Linning and Jackson, 2018). Hobbies also led to volunteering to a greater degree for the younger age group than for the older age group, which might be life course related.

In terms of the benefits and skills that volunteering and other types of associational life can bring, it was clear that the structure of volunteering and some formal types of associational life, like sports, was beneficial for many of the participants. Organisations can form networks of support with other organisations and work together to include people as volunteers or signpost them to organised activities. The benefits from associational life of learning new skills were something many organisations were aware of and use this when recruiting volunteers. Participants using their existing skills in their volunteering and other types of associational life could also be linked to socio-economic factors, meaning that those who are resource-rich do the more advanced tasks, whereas those with less resources might tend to be involved in the more hands-on tasks – if they take part at all. This can be linked to Skocpol's (2003) arguments of the professionalisation of the voluntary sector, where people with higher levels of education seek out roles within the sector that are specialised rather than only providing manpower, and the more individualised nature of collective action.

Overall, this chapter has provided insights into the ways in which volunteering differs from other types of associational life. The first note pertains to it being more regular and stable, where participation in other types of associational life is more affected by geography and individuals' socio-economic situations. While this seems to suggest that volunteering is better at providing stability, it should also be acknowledged that this might have less to do with volunteering as a type of activity and more to do with *who* does the volunteering. As volunteering is pre-dominantly a 'middle-class' activity (Dean, 2016), this could mean that volunteers are resource-rich people, meaning that they are able to travel further away, dedicate more time, and have skills they want to

use when they volunteer. However, as the data in this chapter have shown, volunteering can also benefit those who need the stability and continuity that volunteering offers.

As associational life other than volunteering is more dependent on outside factors, such as *where* it takes place and *how* the space is organised, this means that organisations and clubs need to take these things into consideration when considering recruitment and being an open and welcoming space. This chapter has provided some 'good practice' examples and tools to understand this better, such as the two board game clubs. Using the concept of 'third places' can act as a guide to create spaces *for* communities beyond those already involved. In addition, as this chapter has shown, some types of organisations are better at promoting the transition between individuals' engagement as participants, beneficiaries, members and/or volunteers. This is even further enhanced when there is a relationship between organisations that can especially help vulnerable groups of people, showing the benefits of inter-organisational relationships *and* organisations offering multiple routes to engage with the organisation.

While the aim of this chapter was to describe the ways in which volunteering differs from other types of associational life as activities, the next chapter will focus on participants' intrapersonal and interpersonal relations, bridging the gap between structure and agency.

6 Relationships, volunteering, and associational life

While the previous chapter provided an overview of the structures of volunteering and other types of associational life, this chapter will examine the relational side of associational life and will answer the second research question: what role do relationships play in volunteering and other types of associational life? The chapter will also critically examine how participation in associational life, including volunteering, impacts on sociability beyond friends and family, thus understanding whether an activity leads to contact with more people or not.

The chapter is divided into seven sections with one concluding section. The first section investigates the role of people's upbringing and how this might impact on how people think about their participation in associational life. This section on individual reflexivity enables an understanding of how both structure and agency interact with people's participation, and functions as an introductory section to understand how relationships impact on people's participation in associational life. The second section is on the motivations participants reported to take part in associational life, with the third looking specifically into the relationship between how different generations express their motivations. The following section examines the routes people took into associational life. The fifth section examined the role of friends and friendships and shows how important these are for participating in different types of activities. The following two sections are about sociability and 'thick' and 'thin' communities. Sociability is about relationships beyond friends and how participants understood the relationships with the people they engaged in associational life with. The subsection on 'thick' and 'thin' communities uses Dotson's conceptualisation of these to look at the type of groups in relation to different activities, which affected participants' opportunities to meet new people.

6.1 Upbringing and reflexivity

This section examines how participants' upbringing impacted on their volunteering and engagement in associational life. How parents, and the family as a unit, engage in associational life has an impact on individuals' future relationships to these activities. However, to fully understand these familial influences, it is necessary to go beyond what Bourdieu (1997, p. 107) called 'domestic transmission of cultural capital', or the 'ethos' that is transferred from parent to child (Wilson and Musick, 1997; Chen, Li and Chen, 2013). Applying a relational perspective, as described in chapter 3 enables an analysis that goes beyond structure to also include the agency that individuals have and the choices they make, which might be *informed* by their upbringing, rather than their choices being predetermined by it.

The intergenerational 'transmission' of engagement in volunteering and other types of associational life can be seen clearly with Mairi (F/65, South Ayrshire) and Greig (M/20, South Ayrshire). During Mairi's childhood, both her father and her grandfather were heavily invested in politics; trade unions, current affairs and politics were always discussed in her home. This seems to have influenced Mairi, as, when she went to university in the 1970s, she said she was involved in politics in general, and when she started working she joined the trade union at her workplace, which then also led her to join a political party. She later also joined a Women's Aid group where she was the chairperson for a few years and was also on the committee for a local club for retired people, which her dad had initially been on the board for. In a similar fashion, Greig's (M/20, South Ayrshire) interest and involvement in sports also seemed to come from his family, as this was an interest shared by both his parents who had also volunteered in sports:

> My mom and dad were both very physically active and very involved in the sporting world, my mum's a [sport] player representing her country, and my dad was a decent football player, he was semi-professional for quite a few years. [...] All the men in my family are massive football fans so I always steered towards football. [...] My mum always volunteered when I played, she would help out in the kitchen, she would team manage if there was any sort of information needing passed on, she would be the person to pass that around. My dad also volunteered for my team when I played [another sport]. (Greig, M/20, South Ayrshire)

His parents' involvement in sport seemed to have informed Greig and his interest in sports, as he was an active player up until a serious injury which

changed his involvement in sports; he became a coach instead and took part in a modern apprentice scheme to work as a coach. Sports was also a means for him to engage with friends, as he was taking part in three informal types of sports with his friends and played poker with a separate group of friends. As such, sports were a big part of Greig's life, and this seem to have come from his parents.

This transference of interest from parent to child is not limited to formalised activities such as political involvement, volunteering and sports like in Mairi's and Greig's cases. The member of the Board Games Club in South Ayrshire started playing boardgames because both his parents had an interest in board games and the literature genres associated with the games:

> I got into it because I walked past it with my dad. He likes his Lord the Rings, so I was in the store when I was about six or seven, and we went in and had a look around, and my mum who love Star Trek, she was really interested in it as well, and she got me into more of it as well, for the Science Fiction sort of way. (Board Games Club 2, Member, South Ayrshire)

He also talked about a friend of his in the club and how it was this friend's siblings that got him involved in playing: 'one of my friends, he has four siblings and they've all played it and he's the youngest of the four, so he's watched them play, and he joined them playing it.' This was also the case at the Board Games Club in Glasgow, where children of club members also joined the club.

In the above examples, the social environment they grew up in, and in many cases continue to be part of, informs what activities they take part in, be this volunteering or other types of associational life. However, while this is an easy and convenient way of understanding how, and why, people are involved in volunteering and other types of associational life, it does not provide the full picture as people's lives are not predetermined by their upbringing. For example, Mairi said that her brother was not politically engaged and had not followed in the footsteps of their father and grandfather as she had done. Despite growing up in the same household and being part of the same habitus as Mairi, the resulting patterns of engaging in associational life were not the same.

Similarly, Laura's (F/28, Glasgow) parents did not engage in associational life, but she said that the experience of going to a boarding school, which offered extra-curricular activities, made her take part in various activities. However,

while Laura chose to take part in many of the activities offered there, which have informed her adult participation, her siblings had a different relationship to associational life than her:

> I've got two other siblings that also went to the same [boarding] school and I'm trying to think if they... I don't really think that they do anything. So I'm trying to think if there's a pattern in the family, maybe that people do a lot of extra stuff. I mean, my sister did theatre at the school and were in a few plays and things, but other than that, I don't think there was much that they [did]. (Laura, F/28, Glasgow)

By taking a relational approach, which takes people's agency into account, reflexivity offers a different lens to look at engagement in associational life to circumvent the issue of determinism when it comes to examining people's way of engaging. The family is only one set of relationships that influence individuals, as also friendships and peer groups influence how people participate in associational life. Later in life, individuals are also influenced by the colleagues they work with and the peers or people they meet through their hobbies. While Mairi's brother and Laura's siblings were not interviewed for this thesis, it is not known what had informed their decisions to not volunteer or engage in civic life, but relationships outside of the family, different sets of experiences and their own agency, could help to explain the differences between the siblings. This will be further explored in later sections of this chapter in relation to the role that friends and other relationships play in people's participation in associational life.

Another component of how people's upbringing affects their, and their children's, participation in associational life is how they reflect on this and how this can inform their choices. In this way, individuals' upbringing is not merely a transference of a way of engaging in volunteering and other types of associational life. Max (M/36, South Ayrshire) shared in detail in the interview how his upbringing, and *lack* of participation in different activities, affected his present participation and how he wanted to influence his two daughters' participation in different activities. When speaking about why he took his daughters to start playing football, his reasoning was:

> I had a couple of pals in football clubs, and they seemed to get a lot of enjoyment out of it and get a lot of meaning from it, and when I look at some of the things that have held me back in life, a lot of it is confidence related, whereas these people seem to have loads of confidence and more team

working skills. You don't know where that comes from, I suppose, but I have a feeling that's certainly part of it anyway. (Max, M/36, South Ayrshire)

Max saw what this had meant for his friends growing up, and reflecting on his own experiences growing up and what he felt he had missed out on, which in turn made him make a decision on what experiences he wanted his daughters to have, but also what kind of parent he wants to be:

> I'm really against this model of parenting where you just drive your child from one activity to the next. I think it's kind of an abdication and it's anxiety driven parenting and it's really about the parent. It's sort of the myths that people tell themselves about what's great parenting, they take them here, there, and everywhere, then sit in front of the TV. (Max, M/36, South Ayrshire)

It is clear that he has reflected on his own relationship and past experiences of participation in associational life and what those experiences can bring to an individual's life. This made him take action, as he wanted his daughters to reap the benefits of what he perceived came from participation in associational life.

Further, he acknowledged that while playing football was mainly about having a good time, it was also about giving his daughters' life skills, which also had a gendered aspect where he wanted to empower his daughters:

> I think a lot of these stereotypically female activities are about passivity, being objectified and waiting and standing for someone else to tell you what do. Whereas football is good because it got a team-working aspect to it, and in theory, if you're a footballer and you don't like how the game is going, you can go and do something about that. You can go put your foot on the ball if you're good, you can change the game, you can do things to influence the flow of it. [...] There's the competitive aspect of it, there's the physical side of it as well, that I think girls are discouraged to show, determination, assertiveness. We took them up to Hampden to the women's football match last Friday for them to see positive female role models. (Max, M/36, South Ayrshire)

While his views on 'stereotypically female activities' can be disputed, he had clearly given some serious thought to the benefits of participation in associational life could give his daughters, which was informed by his own experiences and awareness of wider societal expectations.

This reflexive reasoning to engage in volunteering and other types of associational life was also present in other participants. Dita (F/31, South Ayrshire) began to volunteer because she was interested in the qualifications

she could get from it, and later, as a route to get back into work after some time being off sick. Paul (M/60, South Ayrshire) exhibited this reflexive aspect when he started to volunteer for various charities because of his own experiences previously as a beneficiary of a similar charity to the one he volunteered for.

This section has discussed the impact that people's upbringing has on their participation in volunteering and other types of associational life and demonstrates a reflexive approach that informs people's choices to volunteer and engage in other types of associational life. Family practices around participation in volunteering and other types of associational life can function as a predictor of people's participation later in life, but other types of relationships also affect people's participation. All relationships people have growing up, and have later in life, influence how they engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. As such, people's upbringing and their reflexivity are not disconnected from each other, and together shape individual routes into associational life, and their choices and their rationale to volunteer and to engage in other types of associational life. A relational approach allows one to account for both, as 'the decisions, choices, and actions of each of us are not purely individual acts, but are arrived at in relation to and with others' (Donati and Archer, 2015, p. 15), where societal structures also come into play. For example, Max was educated to postgraduate level, and described himself as middle-class and said that 'this is a really middle-class area where we are, so it is a high-capacity area'. This means that he most probably had the cultural capital to know how to engage in community sports organisations, considering his background and education level, which meant that both he and his daughters gained access to the social and cultural capital that existed in the club and the area that they lived in. His two daughters will probably be more positively inclined to engage in associational life in the future, as this is now part of their habitus, and they may volunteer in future, as they have seen their father volunteer. How other types of relationships influence participation is discussed in sections 6.5 and 6.6, which focusses on friendships and sociability.

6.2 Motivations to engage in volunteering and other types of associational life

In this section, the differences in how respondents talked about their motivations to volunteer and engage in other forms of associational life will be discussed. There were differences in how individuals expressed their motivation to get involved and stay involved between volunteering and other

types of associational life. In the case of volunteering, individuals' motivations appeared to be mainly about helping others, but also getting involved for social and instrumental reasons. For other types of associational life, the motivation was often intrinsic. For volunteering, the reported motivations were in line with what previous literature has identified for what motivates people to volunteer: altruism, social reasons, and instrumental reasons (Dolnicar and Randle, 2007; Handy *et al.*, 2010; Treuren, 2014). The altruistic motivations were often expressed in terms of 'giving back' to society or specific charities:

> I think, and I can speak for myself, and I know I can speak for some of the others [on the board], most of them are doing it because it's about giving something back. It's about, "I've had a career of..." some of them have had experience as carers themselves and want to do something about giving back. (Carers Support Charity, Chairperson, South Ayrshire)

This sentiment was shared by most volunteers and interviewees from organisations, either because they wanted to help in general or because they had specific experiences which made them volunteer for specific organisations:

> Most of the volunteers are coming to us because they are really interested in supporting young families. They've kind of had those similar experiences, maybe they haven't had family supports around them, and they want to then kind of pay it forward to give back and be a support for somebody else who doesn't have those supports. (Family Support Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

This was also the sentiment shared by Paul (M/60, South Ayrshire), who had not volunteered previously, but started to volunteer following the support he received from a charity when he had sustained a head injury. This prompted him to try and give back to others who were in his situation.

Motivations related to social and instrumental reasons were also observed. When instrumental reasons were reported, it was mostly to gain more experience for future careers:

> We quite often get a lot of university students applying as well, and, particularly, ones that are in social work, because it's a good way for them to learn more about the [role] as part of their course. (Statutory Volunteering Organisation, Clerk, South Ayrshire)

> We have a lot of volunteers who are students, who are looking to build up the resume and their skills and get some knowledge in, kind of the field that they're looking to pursue their career. And that fits kind of... that schedule

fits with their education schedule, their university schedule, so they're able to kind of do Monday to Friday, nine to five. (Family Support Charity, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

Certainly, the young coaches want to go and have a career in something where being a sports coach is a good thing. It might not necessarily be sport, but the skills that that brings to them, they can transfer them to other jobs and it does make them more employable. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

For Dita (F/31, South Ayrshire), volunteering was a way for her to help herself back into work after some health issues:

More recently, I would say I've had health issues, so that's probably what has pushed me towards volunteering again as an adult, if that makes sense, because I have a limited ability to work because of the health issues. Basically, part time stuff is my limit. I've been tutoring, admin assistant voluntary work to try and get back into it. That was how I started getting back into the workplace, after the health issues. (Dita, F/31, South Ayrshire)

In the above examples, the motivation to volunteer had a clear purpose and served an instrumental purpose, which did not interfere with the aims of the organisation where the volunteering took place. In the Charity Shop, however, the volunteers' motivations did somewhat hinder the aims of the charity. The shop manager explained the situation like this:

It's predominantly an older age group who are working in the shop and their motivation for going into the Charity Shop, probably it's to do with being part of a small social group, they're able to socialize with, and the motivation isn't so much the issues and helping the public, it's more of a personal thing for them. [...] They're able to stay within the comfort zone but not really being challenged by someone else's different practices. People will turn up regularly on the same day each week because they know that they're going to be working with those people, whereas that wouldn't [have] been the case if we had a more fluid volunteer rota going on. (Charity Shop, Charity administrator, South Ayrshire)

The volunteers who staff the shop had established 'cliques' inside of the group, to the point where people only wanted to volunteer with the people they already knew. As there was little overlap between the groups within the charity, this also meant few weak ties which could enable more social interaction among volunteers. In this case, despite the bridging sort of social capital that often comes with volunteering, social interaction among volunteers did not

take place in this shop. Instead, the volunteers had moulded the environment to be a place of bonding social capital, as this was an important space for them:

> Well, the older population of the cohort, say the 70 year olds onwards, it's probably their main... or maybe not their main, because I don't know what they do, some of them only come in for a couple of days or one day only, but it's certainly constant enough to appear as though, it certainly high on their list of to-do's, their social events for the week. [...] I never hear them doing things outside, though, it always seems to be around them and their families, apart from a couple of younger volunteers in their 40s or 50s who will talk about where they were at the weekend, something like that, but mainly for the older community, they don't go out so much, as far as I can tell. (Charity Shop, Charity administrator, South Ayrshire)

This had created somewhat of a conundrum for the manager and the charity board, as they needed to choose between expanding the volunteering opportunities available in the shop to include more people or keep the volunteering base the same for the current volunteers, as it seemed to be a very important part for their social life.

For other types of associational life, people did not express their motivations other than something they enjoyed doing, a way to occupy their time, or to socialise:

> My partner is working from home at the moment, which is fine, but he's not always going to be working from home, so I wouldn't be wanting to be kind of run around the house all day by myself. And it's quite good to go out and socialize with the different ladies on my different groups. (Anne F/60, Glasgow)

Participation in volunteering shows more altruistic features than other types of associational life. On the difference between volunteering and other types of associational life, Anne said:

> [Volunteering is different] because it's not so much for yourself, whereas I do yoga really for me. Any volunteering, and I don't know how other people feel, but the volunteering is really for other people, it's not for me. That's what I would say is the biggest difference. I mean, some people get immense satisfaction out of volunteering and maybe get a social life and things out of it as well, that's not really why I'm doing it. (Anne, F/60, Glasgow)

From this data, one main difference in what motivates people to engage in volunteering and other types of associational life appeared to be the presence

or lack of a perceived altruism. Volunteering seemed to be more about altruism, while the motivation to engage in other types of associational life is more about the self. This can be compared to section 5.5 that described volunteering demanding a higher level of commitment, as it is most often done in a regular manner, which is one way that volunteering differs from other types of associational life. The next section will discuss motivations by comparing how the two groups expressed their motivations in different ways.

6.3 Motivations and age

In terms of how participants expressed their motivations to engage in volunteering and other types of associational life, a significant difference could be observed between the two age groups, which can be linked to the increased individualisation and informalisation outlined in section 2.1 of this thesis. The younger age group (below 40) framed their motivations in a more intentional and deliberate fashion, while the older age group (above 40) tended to express more collectivist ideas. In addition to this, the younger age group showed less overlap between their different social groups and activities.

The older age group, who grew up in a society which was more collectivist than the younger age group, explained their motivation to volunteer and engage in other types of associational life in ways that did not offer insights into how they came to the decision to get involved. When Mairi (F/65, South Ayrshire) talked about why she was involved in activities she was taking part in, which were mainly through the local branch of a political party, it was almost as if her involvement was self-evident and did not need to be explained in more detail other than that she grew up in a family that was politically active. She said:

> At [work], I got involved in the Union, and then in 1984, when it was the miners' strike, I took the plunge and joined the [political party], so that I could practically help in whatever way I could, and that's really been… from that moment on, I became very active within community on a whole range of different things. (Mairi F/65, South Ayrshire)

When talking about her activities, Mairi was very descriptive and factual. Similarly, Burt (M/62, Glasgow) described his involvement with a political party in a factual manner; joining the party from a young age was presented as almost expected, if not a common occurrence among his peers:

> I mean I suppose the school I went to, we weren't exactly encouraged to get involved, but a lot of us were, and we used to have debates, but quite respectful debates and thinking back to it, between people who held different

are opposing views, which was quite interesting and some people went off and joined the different youth branches of the political parties, and I went off and joined the [political party]. (Burt M/62, Glasgow)

Both Mairi and Burt adopted their inclination towards (political) associational life through their environment growing up and adopted a style of engaging in the civil society through their environments. Their choices to take part were influenced by the communities around them, which favoured a collectivist mindset.

The above cases contrast with the participants belonging to the younger age group, where the motivation to engage in volunteering and other types of associational life was described in a more intentional and deliberate manner. Laura (F/28, Glasgow) described her motivations to engage in associational life to build confidence and because she wanted to help people: 'I like helping people and I like providing a service because that makes me feel useful and like I'm contributing to wider society'. She volunteered for a citizen's advice service and took part in a mutual aid group during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

This was especially clear in Max's (M/36, South Ayrshire) case when describing why he wanted his two daughters to play football, which also led him to volunteer as a coach for the club. His reasoning was to give his daughters life skills, like teamwork and agency, as this was something he thought was lacking in other activities targeted at girls, for example, dancing. While his views on gendered norms can be challenged, it is clear that he has given his daughters' engagement in associational life a great amount of thought and has also thought about being an involved father. In a separate part of the interview, he also discussed his own father's non-involvement in his associational life growing up, and what he thought he had missed out on by not being involved in sports as a child himself, reflecting on skills his friends got from it. Max had an awareness of the value of engaging in associational life which informed how he chose to engage his two daughters in associational life, and ultimately led him to also become a volunteer coach. As such, he framed this involvement through what Hustinx *et al.* (2016, p. 350) described as the 'individual world of experience, in which the nature of involvement depends on individual preferences and needs'. Although it is not possible to generalise this over only a few interviews, it does fit with the literature on how younger people understand their involvement in different activities (Ertas, 2016; Kovic and Hänsli, 2018).

When analysing the evidence from the Miro boards generated during the interviews, the boards produced by most of the younger participants also tended to show more separation between groups and activities, while there was more of a noticeable overlap between different activities in the older age groups' boards. For both Laura (F/28, Glasgow) and Dita (F/31, South Ayrshire), there was no overlap between the different groups and activities they were taking part in, while there was a noticeable overlap between Paul's and Burt's groups and activities. This could indicate that each activity for the younger age group is carefully chosen to fit the narrative they have created of their life. For the older age group, they were more collectivist oriented, and thus found their identity in the collective. It should however be noted that there was not the case for all participants. For example, Greig's (M/20, South Ayrshire) pattern of participating in associational life had more overlaps between activities and more akin the older age group, while Alice (F/51, Glasgow) had no overlaps identified between her volunteering and other associational life groups and all activities and groups were separate from each other.
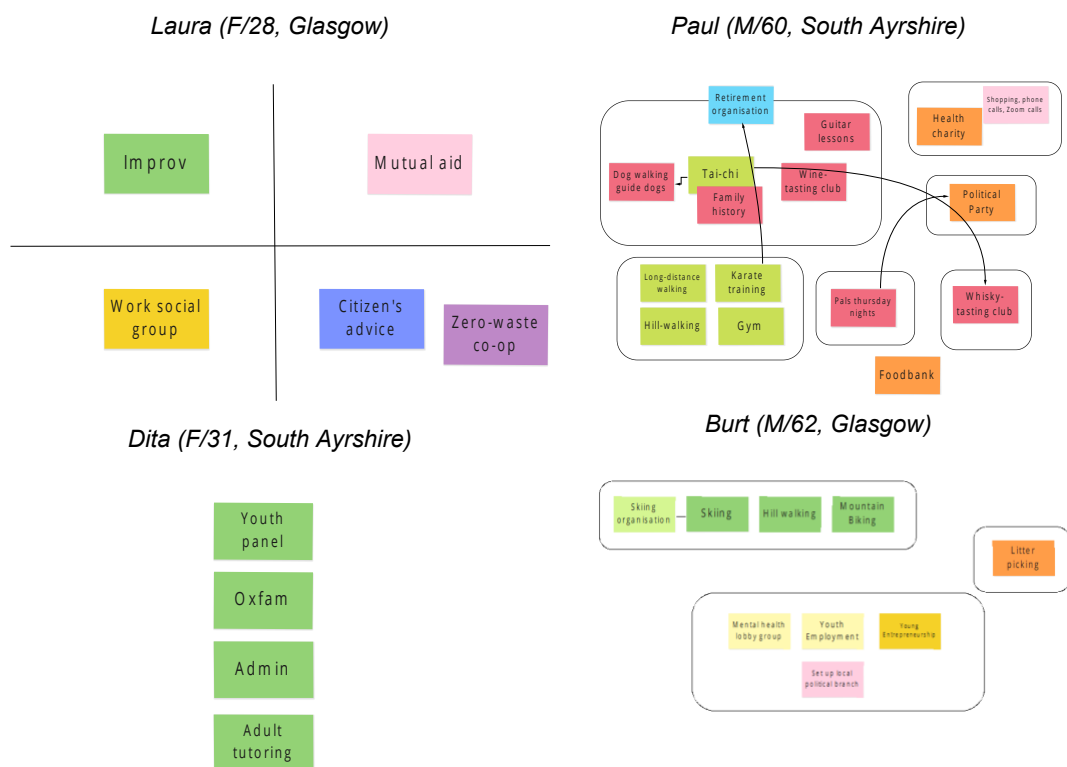

Figure 6.1 Miro boards, comparing younger and older age groups

136

While there was a difference between how the two age groups framed their engagement in associational life and how they expressed their motivations, the data is limited to 10 interviews and Miro boards. This means that these differences might to an extent be explained by life courses differences, where older generations are perhaps more likely to have free time and there is likely to be more of an overlap between the group's individuals get involved in. However, the focus that the younger age group is expressing when discussing their motivations are in line with how Becker (1994, p. 13) described how people increasingly 'produce, stage and cobble together their biographies themselves'. As this move towards a more individualised approach has been noted in volunteering (e.g. Hustinx and Lammertyn, 2003) and in society in general (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2011), this means that voluntary organisations and associations might continue to see shifts in participation patterns, such as more episodic volunteering, and more informal approaches to engaging in associational life generally.

6.4 Routes into volunteering and other types of associational life

The routes that people took to become involved with associational life, including volunteering, provides an additional angle to people's motivations, as the routes they take show *how* people came into contact with associational life opportunities. For example, being introduced by a friend can indicate a social motivation for getting involved, while being introduced by a colleague or mentor might indicate a mainly instrumental motivation. This section will outline these routes people reported for their associational life.

The interviewees from the organisations and associations that were involved in the study said that most of their volunteers approached them either from advertisements on the radio, like the Statutory Volunteering Organisation, or finding volunteering opportunities through a Third Sector Interface, like Volunteer Glasgow or Voluntary Action South Ayrshire, which Anne (F/60, Glasgow), Burt (M/62, Glasgow), and Dita (F/31, South Ayrshire) did. Geoff (M/69, Glasgow) saw posters about volunteering opportunities at the local supermarket, which led him to apply for his volunteering.

The exception to this was the Charity Shop, which recruited most volunteers through friendship networks:

> The most common way has been word of mouth. We've had two or three people who have come along, who have shown an interest, and they have probably been to the job centre and have been looking for something to do,

to get their CV up to date, etc, to expand on that, but the majority is a well-established set of people have been there for quite a while and anytime people come in to help, they're usually friends of someone who is already in the shop. (Charity Shop, Charity administrator, South Ayrshire)

It should be noted that this is an exceptional case, as was described earlier, the shop appeared to be a relatively closed group and had several, as they described it, 'cliques' within the volunteering group.

Another route into volunteering was more 'accidental' and akin to the participant-to-volunteer route (Davies, 2018). The Community Shop director described this route from the voluntary organisation's perspective:

> In my Machiavellian mind, people come to the group opportunities and then if they enjoy it and they engage in it, and then you suddenly go: "by the way, we need people to help us run it", you're more likely to get people to participate and join in, if you spot them carefully. The gardening club is a very good example because that's just run by volunteers in the village. But it is run by a succession of people who go to the gardening club and then get roped in or get involved in the actual running of it, so they wouldn't just arrive cold and say I want to come and run the gardening club, it would come through having gone to the event in the first place. (Community Shop, Director, South Ayrshire)

The evidence of this participant-to-volunteer route was, however, limited in the data. The Community Shop director, as seen in the quote above, and the volunteer coordinator at the Community Garden did say that this happened, but from the individual interviews only Mairi (F/65, South Ayrshire) and Max (M/36, South Ayrshire) described this to take place. Mairi was a participant in the retirement club and then joined the committee of the club. However, this was somewhat exceptional, as her father had previously been on the board of the club. Max became a volunteer coach for the community sports club because his daughters played football. In the Board Games Club in Glasgow, the participant-to-volunteer route had somewhat negative connotations: 'in our particular club there's a long-standing joke, that if you don't turn up to the AGM [Annual General Meeting], you'll be volunteered for something'. This is not to say that the participant-to-volunteer route is uncommon; as section 5.6 pointed out, participation in different types of associational life does lead to volunteering, although some to a higher extent than others.

Another route into volunteering, which was also discussed in section 5.5, is when organisations have relationships with other services, like GP surgeries

and social workers which can be of great importance for people with adverse life experiences:

> With the men's group for example, that might be their first step, they've been referred, maybe by the Glasgow Disability Alliance, so they might've engaged with a different group first, but sometimes it might be through GPs, or it might be through, if you've heard about Community connectors, who work with the GP surgeries, yeah? So they come from all sorts of organizations as referrals. Social work, it can be for the cultural cookery. Through the Red Cross, through any number of full organizations, so that is often a stepping stone. (Community Garden, Volunteer coordinator, Glasgow)

Comparing the routes into volunteering to those into other types of associational life, friends were more likely to be mentioned as an influencing group in the case of associational life other than volunteering. Paul (M/60, South Ayrshire) joined the retirement organisation through someone he knew from his martial arts training, and he joined the whisky tasting through people he knew from a Tai-chi class; Mairi (F/65, South Ayrshire) joined the women's aid group through friends she had from her political activities. These can be seen on their Miro boards in Appendix 5.

Interestingly, none of the three people interviewed from the Board Games Clubs said they had joined through a friend and said this was not a common occurrence for other members either. They said that people met new friends through these clubs, bonding over their shared interest of these games, but friends did not seem to be a route to get into clubs in the first instance. The most common entry-point to these clubs was an initial interest to play games with other people (or, as highlighted in section 5.1, 'walk-ins' from seeing the shop on the street). This observation is only based on three interviews, but these three individuals were all active or senior members in the clubs, and the interviews explicitly asked how members got involved with the club so it should reflect what their experience in how people got involved in their clubs.

This section has highlighted some differences between volunteering and other types of associational life in terms of how people got involved in activities. The next section will examine the role friends play for people getting involved with volunteering and other types of associational life.

6.5 Friends

This section will take a closer look at the role that friends, and other social relations, play in relation to volunteering and other types of associational life.

Friendships play a significant role in most people's lives, which makes it an important aspect to investigate in relation to volunteering and other types of associational life. One aspect that makes friendships different from other relationships is that they are enacted in both the private and public sphere at the same time; they are personal relationships, but often enacted in public places (Wilkinson, 2019), like coffee shops, bars, sports clubs, voluntary organisations and other associations. Also, the interplay between friendships and organisations and associations which goes two ways; friendships can be the route for people to become a volunteer or to start engaging in other forms of associational life, and an organisation or club can have an impact on who people meet and form friendships with.

In the survey, participants were asked where they had met their friends. As can be seen in Figure 6.2, 33% of the respondents said they met friends in the private sphere, i.e. through mutual friends and friends they made in childhood, and the remainder saying they met their friends in public settings, such as work, education, associational life. Worth noting here is that volunteering and other associational life together account for 30% of how participants met their friends, highlighting the importance of associational life in enabling individuals to meet other people.
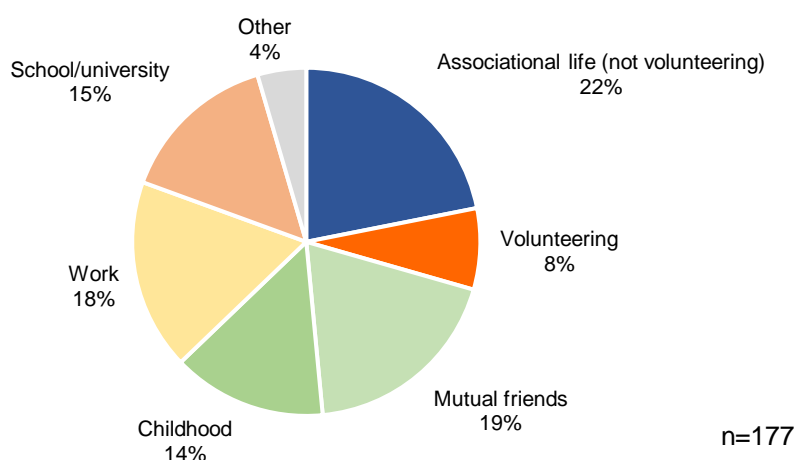

Figure 6.2 Where respondents met their friends

The importance of understanding the role that friends and friendships play in people's engagement in associational life is also highlighted in the data on who people engage with in different activities, and who introduced them to volunteering and other types of associational life. Figure 6.3 shows who the respondents said they engaged with when they volunteered and in their wider associational life, and Figure 6.4 shows who the respondents said that had introduced them to their volunteering and other types of associational life.

When analysing who the respondents engaged with, and who introduced them to activities, friendships appeared to play a significantly larger role for associational life other than volunteering.
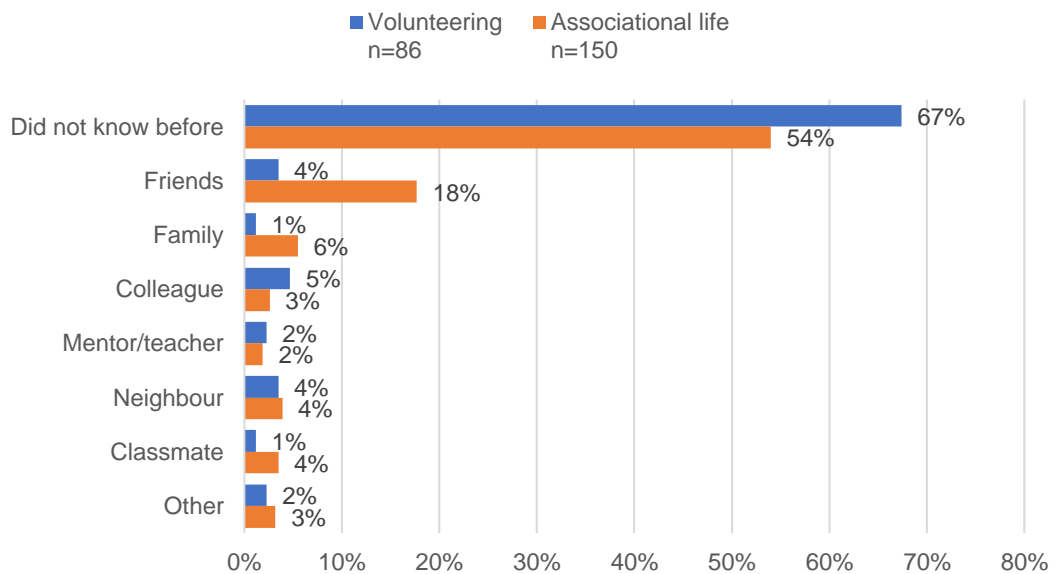

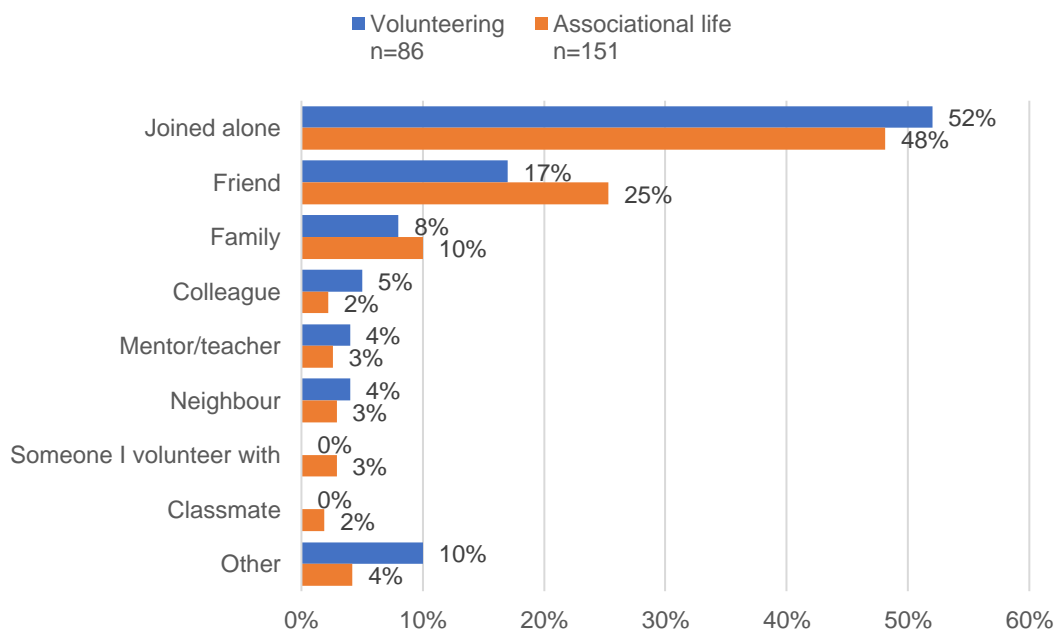Figure 6.3 Who respondents engage with in their volunteering and other types of associational life

Figure 6.4 Who introduced the respondents to their volunteering and other types of associational life

Both figures show similar patterns, where participants engage with people they did not know prior to joining an activity and joining alone at the top, although volunteering have a slightly higher rate in both cases. Looking at who people engage with in these activities, a stark difference in the Friends category can be observed, where for volunteering only 4% say they engage with friends,

while this is at 18% for other types of associational life. This could indicate that respondents start to consider the other participants as friends to a higher extent in other types of associational life than for volunteering, which would suggest that volunteering might be less prone to enter the friendship space. Family also seems to play a slightly larger role for other types of associational life than for volunteering, which again highlights how volunteering seems to be less dependent on relationships, friendships and family, unlike other types of associational life. When it comes to who introduced the respondent to volunteering and other types of associational life, friends played a larger role for other types of associational life than for volunteering, which again suggests that friends play a greater role in participants' associational life other than volunteering. However, it should be noted that most people engage with people they did not know prior to joining an activity, both for volunteering and other types of associational life, so both have similar effect on people meeting new people.

When comparing who people said they engage with and who introduced them to associational life between the two age groups and locations, some key differences can be seen. In terms of location, as can be seen in Figure 6.5, people in South Ayrshire said they engaged with friends and family members (both in and outside of household) to a higher degree than people in the urban area (Glasgow). Respondents in Glasgow were only slightly more likely to say they engaged with people they did not previously know. In terms of who introduced the respondents to associational life, the differences were more pronounced, as seen in Figure 6.6. Respondents in Glasgow reported a higher percentage of joining alone (56% compared to 34% in South Ayrshire), and respondents in South Ayrshire were more likely to say they had been introduced by friends than those in Glasgow (37% and 19% respectively). This seems to suggest that friends and volunteering have a greater impact on people's participation in associational life in South Ayrshire, a rural area, than in the urban area. This will be further discussed in the section below on 'thick' and 'thin' communities.

Comparing the two age groups, these follow the same pattern overall in who they engaged with in associational life that was not volunteering. However, when looking at who introduced them to other types of associational life, there were significant differences in terms of how many joined an activity alone, with only 27% in the younger age group compared to 52% in the older age group. The younger age group were also introduced by friends to a greater extent than

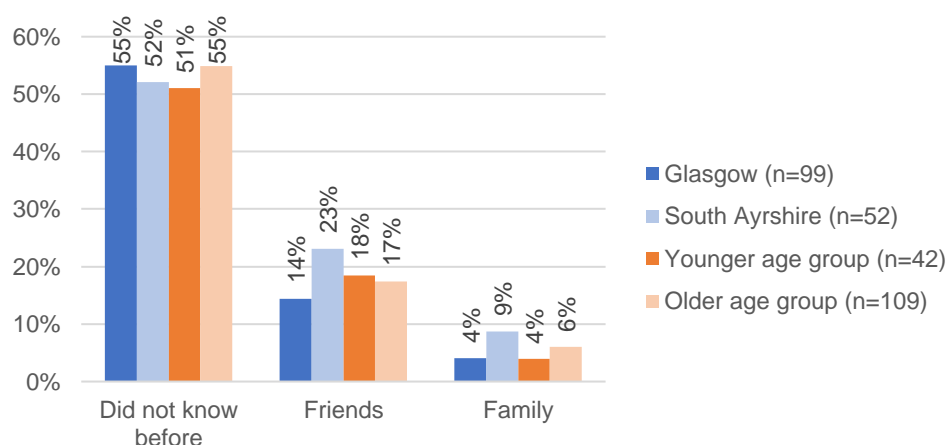the older age group, but this difference was less pronounced (30% and 24% respectively).

Figure 6.5 Who are people engaging with in their associational life, by age group and location
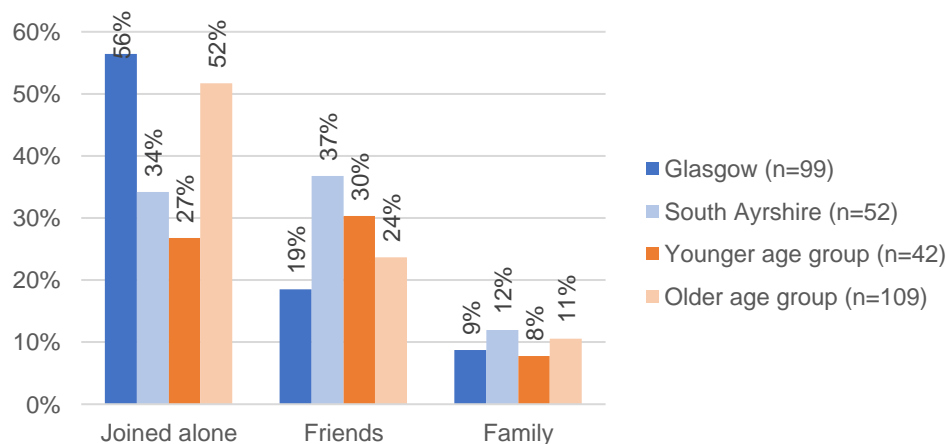*Note: Only the three categories with most responses shown.*

Figure 6.6 Who introduced them to associational life, by age group and location
Note: Only the three categories with most responses shown.

Looking at volunteering specifically, both in terms of who participants said they volunteered with and who introduced them to volunteering, the findings were similar overall (see Figure 6.7 and Figure 6.8). The difference in these figures compared to those for other types of associational life (see Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6) is that the differences between the groups vary greatly only for who introduced them to volunteering. In terms of location, the respondents in South Ayrshire were far less likely to say they joined alone at 28%, while this was at 65% for Glasgow. This could perhaps be explained by there being more volunteering opportunities that suit people in an urban area than for a rural area. Otherwise, the differences between the age groups were less pronounced for volunteering. While 44% of those in the younger age group compared to

54% in the older age group joined by themselves, the difference between the two are only 10 percentage points, compared to 25 percentage points between the age groups for other types of associational life. This would suggest that volunteering is less affected by age in terms of volunteering participation, although previous research shows that the younger age group volunteer for different types of organisations (Ertas, 2016).
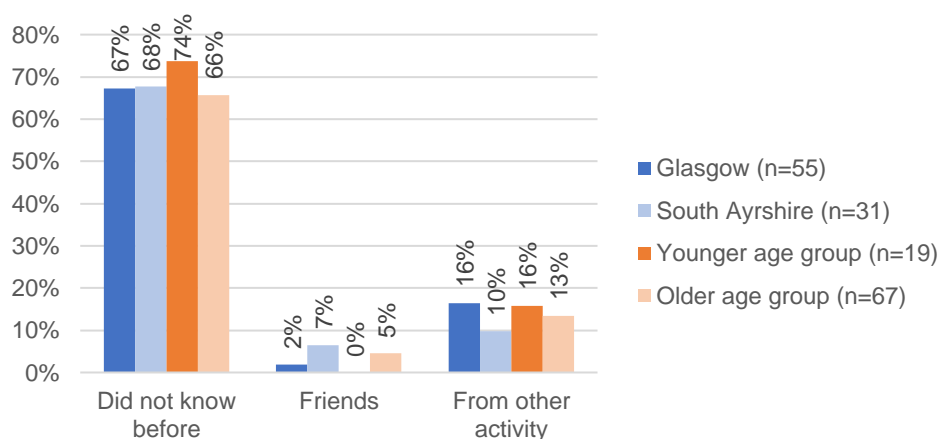

Figure 6.7 Who are people volunteering with, by age group and location
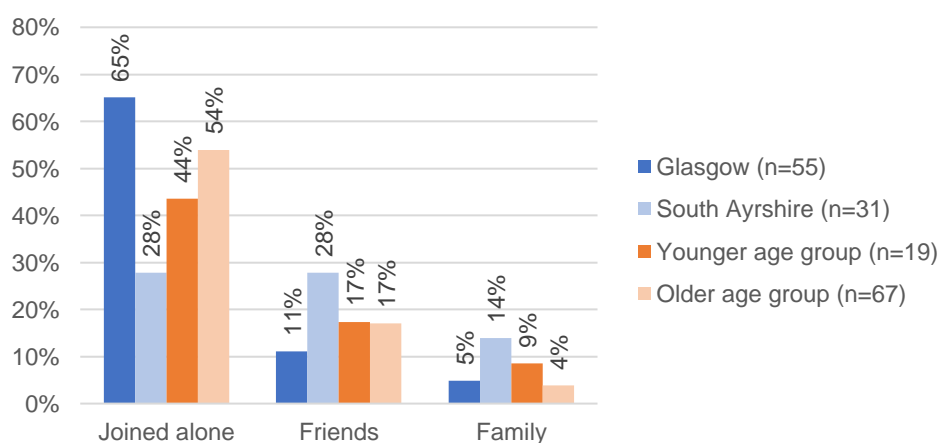*Note: Only the three categories with most responses shown.*

Figure 6.8 Who introduced them to volunteering, by age group and location
Note: Only the three categories with most responses shown.

The interviews also showed a strong relationship between friends and friendships in associational life. In Mairi's (F/65, South Ayrshire) case, friendships were tightly interwoven with her participation in associational life, including her volunteering. As was discussed earlier in this chapter in section 6.1, being engaged in a local branch of a political party was part of her upbringing, and became an integral part of her social life, where she met most of her friends:

All of my friends are [politically involved]. Friends that I have kept from university as well. Even when I went to a swimming class for a while and I got friendly with a couple of folks there, one of whom was, not the same politics as me, but she was politically active, and both became quite good friends, because we were both the same kind of "party animals" if you like. Different parties, but same interests. (Mairi, F/65, South Ayrshire)

It was also through the local branch of the political party that she met a group of women who were very active in the local community, and through them she got involved with the Women's Aid group, which she chaired for some years. In her case, engagement in civil society activities brought her and her friends together, and it was through these friendship networks she got involved in other activities. However, the friendship aspect seems to only apply to her activities that relate to the civil society, and not to the more leisure like types of associational life she was takings part in, such as her Spanish classes, which did not seem to have the same connection to friendships as her other activities.

Similarly to Mairi, Greig's (M/20, South Ayrshire) social life was centred around one activity, which in his case was sports, where he took part in three semi-formal sports with his friends and played poker with another group of friends. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Greig's involvement was connected to his family taking part in sports activities, which was also the case for Mairi's family that was deeply involved in the trade union and a local branch of a political party. Hence, in both these cases their family background had informed, not only the type of activities they engaged in, but also *how* they engaged with their friends and perhaps even how they formed friendships.

When asked in the survey if their friendship groups led to volunteering, 10% of respondents said their friendships had led to volunteering in the same organisation as their friends, 6% said their friendships led to volunteering in another organisation, and 83% that none of their friendships led to volunteering at all. Hence, friendships were less likely to lead to volunteering than other types of associational life. When asked about whether their friendship groups were characterised by 'thick' or 'thin' communities (i.e., whether they do most activities with the same people, or if they have different groups of people they socialise with, with little to no overlap between the groups), most respondents (45.5%) said that their friends did not participate in all their activities. The next section will take a closer look at sociability and how this might look different between volunteering and other forms of associational life.

6.6 Sociability

While the previous section explored the ways in which friends and friendship plays in people's participation in associational life, including volunteering, this section will look at the broader concept of sociability that goes beyond friends and family to also include more casual relationships and colleagues, acquaintances, and professional relationships.

The survey data on sociability will be presented differently for volunteering and other types of associational life, as the questions could not be asked in the same manner due to the survey design as all volunteering activities were combined into one set rather than asking about each volunteering role the respondents might have. Instead, the survey asked about volunteering in general, using three Likert scale questions with five responses from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree'. The questions were: Has volunteering made you engage in more activities?, Has your friendship group expanded because of your volunteering?, and Has your volunteering made you feel more connected to your local community?
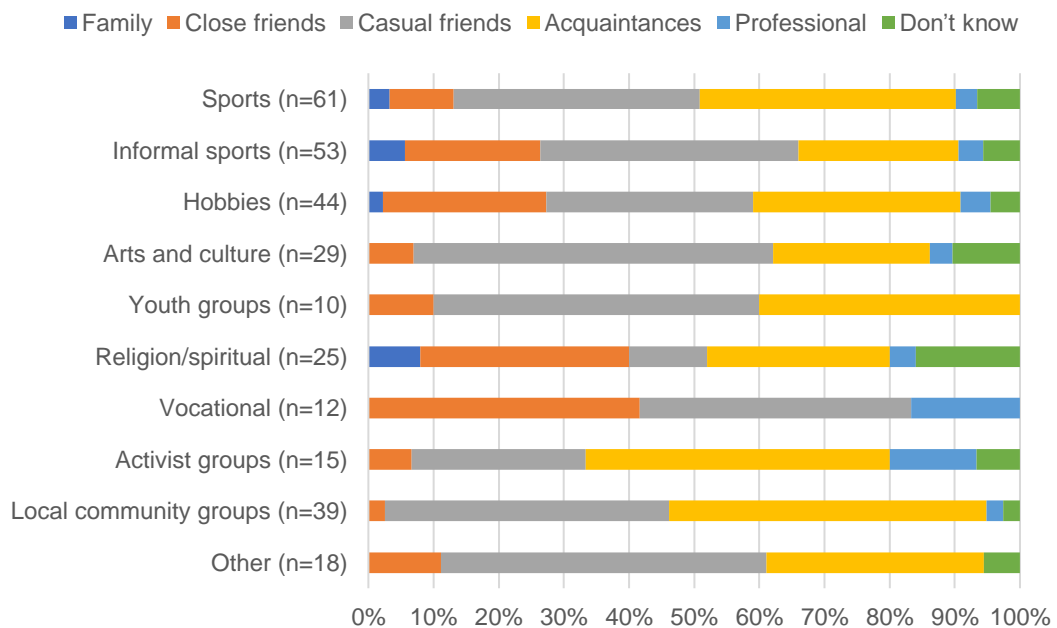

Figure 6.9 Type of relationships participants reported they had in different activities
Note: Activities with less than 10 respondents were not included.

As can be seen in Figure 6.9, the activity with the largest percentage of family and a large part of close friend relationships, and the smallest percentage of casual friends, was perhaps unsurprisingly religious groups, which is characterised by bonding social capital. Perhaps surprisingly, vocational activities had the largest amount of close friend relationships, which perhaps

links to the literature on serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982, 2007), which is the pursuit of hobby or other leisure-like activity in a career oriented manner. Participants involved in local community groups also reported the smallest number of close friends, with more casual friends and acquaintances. This figure shows the variability between different types of associational life when it comes to the different types of relationships people have to each other in them.

From the interviews, the most common route to get involved in volunteering from first taking part in other forms of associational life was through the interaction with other people in an activity. In Paul's (M/60, South Ayrshire) case, it was a friend in his martial arts club that led him to be involved in a retirement club, which in turn led him to take part in a whisky tasting club. For Geoff (M/69, Glasgow), being out and about with a walking group led to volunteering:

> When I was on one of the organized walks, nothing to do with volunteering, all fit and healthy people, when I was on one of those, we passed a group where I recognized one or two people and through speaking to them, I found out that they were walk leaders for a charity, and they said that they're always looking for someone to help take out people with disabilities, and at the same time, or around that time, through my coordinator at [charity], she told me that they were looking for walk leaders to be trained up, so that's how it ventured from one to the other. (Geoff, M/69, Glasgow)

This route of becoming further involved through the people one meets is well researched and comes down to bridging social capital and the importance of weak ties to function as sources of further engagement (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Through engaging in organisations, associations and other types of groups, individuals have more opportunities to meet others that can introduce them to other activities.

When breaking this down by age group and location (see Figure 6.10), some differences can be discerned, although it should be mentioned that the sample is small so it is not possible to draw any definitive conclusions from this. The younger age group had more professional relationships in their associational life, 7% compared to 3%. This could be linked to what Skocpol (2001, 2003) refers to as the professionalisation of civil society, where people are increasingly participating *because* of the professional skills they possess and want to use them, hence why the younger age group would have more professional relationships in their associational life. In terms of the two

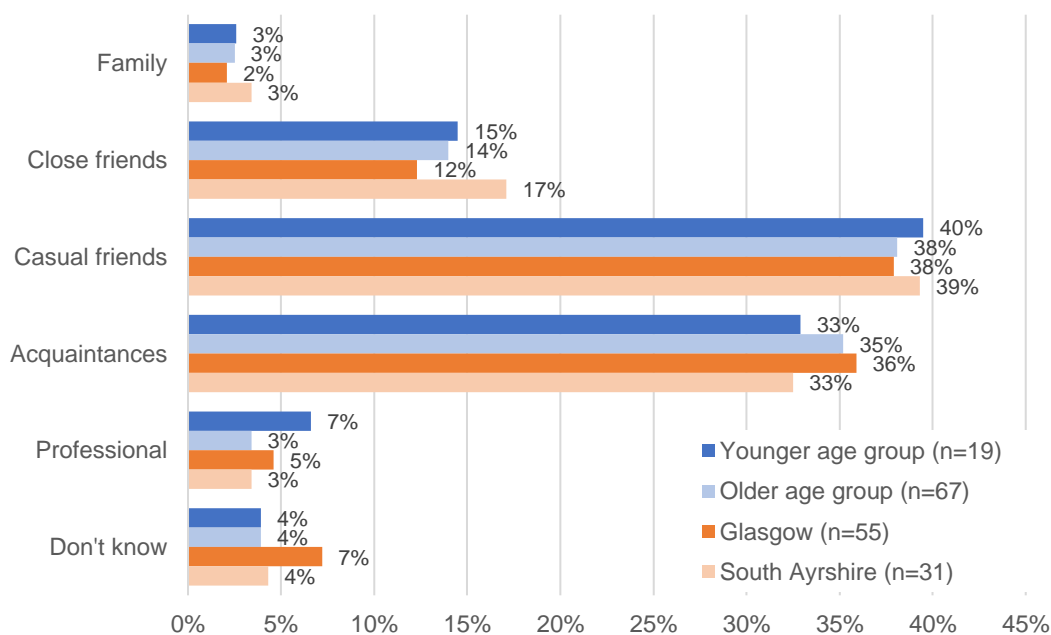locations, South Ayrshire had a higher degree of reported close friends at 17% compared to 12% for Glasgow.

Figure 6.10 Type of relationship in associational life, by age group and location

Considering the role that friends play for starting to volunteer or engage in another type of associational activity, Figure 6.11 shows who participants said introduced them to the different types of associational life, including volunteering (only the three major routes are included to provide a meaningful comparison between them). This chart shows that most activities reported followed similar patterns, with Sports and Volunteering having the largest proportion of participants reporting they had joined alone. The outlier in the figure is Religion/spiritual activities, where family is higher than any other type of relationship in terms of introducing participants to a new activity and friends is the lowest. However, this is consistent with the bonding social capital that is common in religious groups and how religion is often part of people's upbringing, and might explain the low rate of friends introducing them (Kettell, 2019; Vermeer and Scheepers, 2019). Hobbies also have a large proportion of people being introduced to the group by a friend, which puts the Board Games Clubs as an outlier to other types of hobby activities, meaning that there might be another variable that influences this.

Comparing routes into associational life, including volunteering, by location and age groups revealed some interesting differences. For volunteering, which can be seen in Figure 6.12, there were small differences between the two age

groups, but a marked difference between Glasgow and South Ayrshire, indicating a difference between urban and rural locations, as to how participants said they joined their volunteering. However, as can be seen in Figure 6.13, the percentage of respondents who said they were being introduced by a friend or joined alone were similar in South Ayrshire and Glasgow. Also, this also shows a similar pattern of people being introduced by a friend or joining alone is somewhat more equally distributed in South Ayrshire compared to Glasgow.
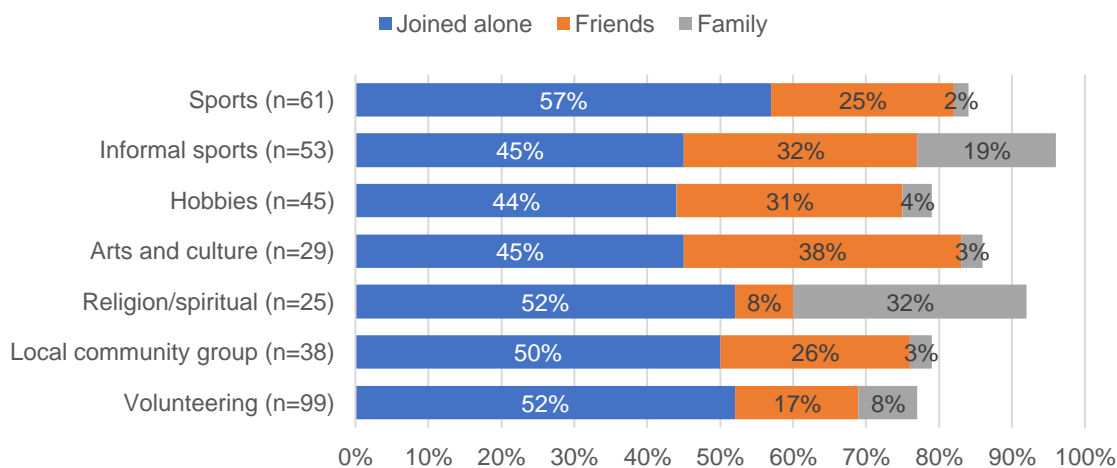

Figure 6.11 Who respondents were introduced to volunteering and other types of associational life by volunteering and selection of associational life
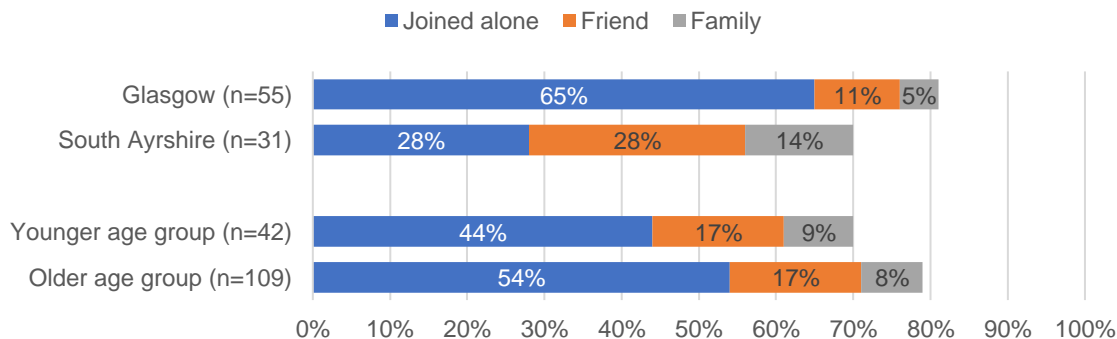

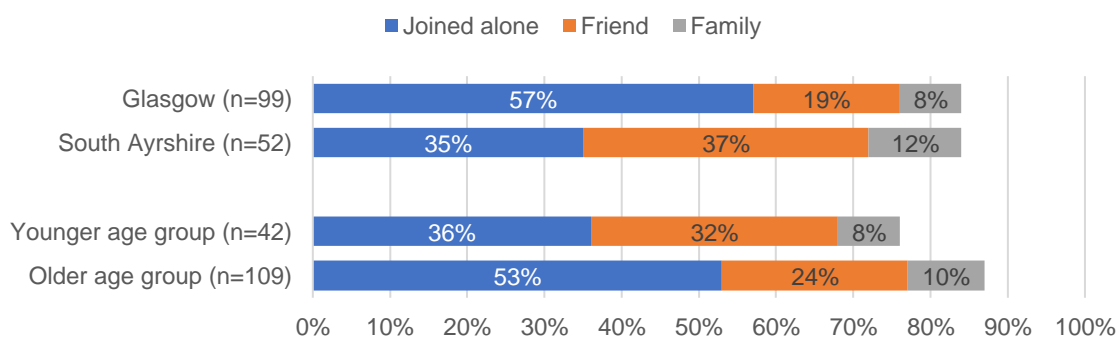Figure 6.12 Who introduced people to volunteering, by location and age group

Figure 6.13 Who introduced people to associational life, by location and age group

For volunteering, respondents were asked about how much they agreed or disagreed with three statements regarding whether their volunteering has made them engage in more group activities, has expanded their friendship groups, and if volunteering has made them feel more connected to their local community. The median value of these responses was 'Somewhat agree', but when comparing it between the two age groups, location, and gender, one difference can be seen. Figure 6.14 shows the only difference is for the younger age group on the question on whether their volunteering had expanded their friendship group, the median value is 'Neither agree nor disagree'. While the sample is small, this difference between age groups could be related to the individualisation of society, where the younger age groups might draw a distinction between their friends and the activities they take part in, as was discussed in section 6.3 on how different generations frame their motivations.
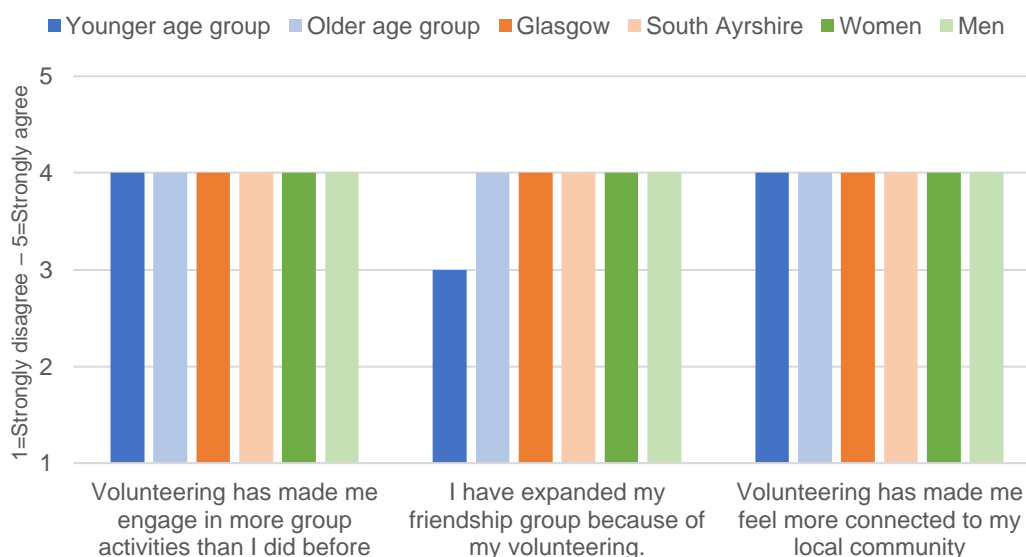

Figure 6.14 Median results from volunteering sociability survey questions, by location, age group, and gender

Considering gender, men were more likely to report close friends and fewer acquaintances, while the opposite was the case for women (see Figure 6.15). Women also reported a larger proportion of 'casual friends'. This could be related to that women do more of the emotional and social labour in families, especially when it comes to informal volunteering (Volunteer Scotland, 2021), which could be why their social relations look different to men's. Looking at the ways that men and women reported they engage and socialise in associational life is important, as 'cultural values shape and constrain the socialization of females' and males' emotional expressivity, ultimately affecting the quality of their functioning and interpersonal relationships' (Brody, 2009,

p. 281). The way this is enacted in volunteering and other types of associational life is how men's engagement often relies on 'traditional masculine values of action, challenge, and mastery' (Dilley and Scraton, 2010, p. 127), while women often focus on creating and maintaining relationships for social support and empowerment (Doran, 2016; Choi *et al.*, 2018).
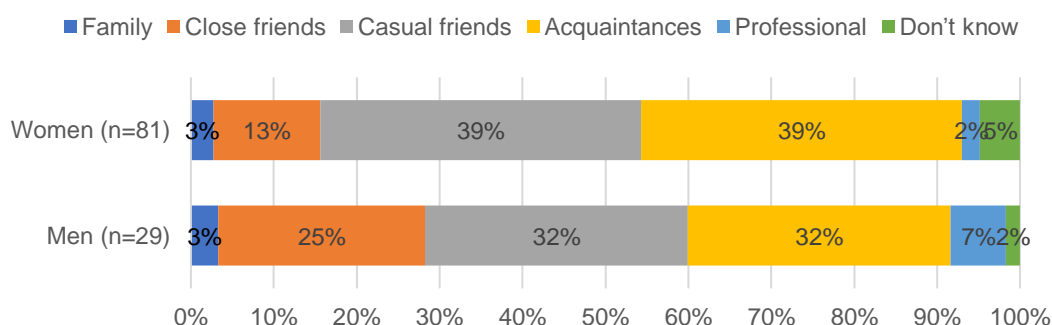

Figure 6.15 Character of relationships in associational life (volunteering not included), by gender

Max (M/36, South Ayrshire) also discussed this in relation to how he believed it was easier for his wife to make new friends, but also how her role as a mother might influence the way she interacted with other mothers and the number of acquaintances she had:

> My wife has got many more acquaintances now and made new friends since she moved here, much to a greater extent than I have, and I think there's a very gendered aspect to bringing up children. OK, so it's now called Parents and Toddlers, but you'll probably be the only guy there. You can go to the school gate, but most people are mums. Maybe it would be different if you were a stay-at-home-dad, you'd make these friendships, but I don't know, I do think it'd be... Even like, there's a WhatsApp group for primary one mums, and that's what it's called, so it's still quite gendered. (Max, M/36, South Ayrshire)

The Scottish Household Survey also showed that women do more of the informal volunteering of everyday life, which involves both emotional and social labour (Scottish Government, 2019a; Volunteer Scotland, 2021). When it comes to formal volunteering that relates to children's education, women are in clear majority at 26% compared to men at 13% (Scottish Government, 2019a).

In the interviews, Max (M/36, South Ayrshire) expressed difficulties in finding new people to socialise with and that there might be a gendered aspect to this, as well. He said it had been easier for him to meet new people at university,

and that this had influenced his opportunities to socialise, which had also changed during the life course.

> This male model sociability is that you, my feeling anyway, in my experience, that you do things together, you maybe not have that great of an emotional bond with people, maybe. You do things together, and through doing your thing together, that's where that starts to come from, but it's not something that would happen in any other way. Maybe it's just me, but my feeling is for most men in my situation, that there's just not the opportunity, and you can't just go to the pub all the time. [...] Even go for coffee, that would be weird. Maybe it's different now, but when I was growing up you go for a beer and then you get progressively more and more drunk. So men would go drinking together, or cycling, mountain biking, play football together, or something like that, so it's that kind of thing. Or watch football together, but there would always be another point to it almost and it's only further down the line you might be having a connection. (Max, M/36, South Ayrshire)

The interviews also provided other examples of what sociability looked like for different people. For example, both members of the Boards Game Club in South Ayrshire and Anne (F/60, Glasgow) said that their participation in associational life did lead to further sociability:

> Yeah, we met through the game, so when I first started going there, I didn't really talk to anyone, when I started talking to more people and then became good friends with them via that. And then we've gotten closer as friends and then start going out more as friends after that, doing other stuff. (Board Games Club 2, Member, South Ayrshire)

> There's one or two of them, certainly from my yoga class, I would certainly consider to be friends now because I've been doing that for about 18 months, and so, since we were able to do the class again after lockdown, there's three of us that go out for coffee and lunch and things like that together. (Anne, F/60, Glasgow)

This also took place in the Mental Health Charity in South Ayrshire, as members of the charity found friends through the organisation: 'we've got two mums that meet up every week for a coffee because they met through us, and there are two little girls that are now best friends because they've came through [the charity].'

However, the act of meeting others in associational life, including volunteering, does not lead to further opportunities to socialise by default, as this depends on what people want from their participation in different

activities. For Max (M/36, South Ayrshire), the volunteer coaching he did for his daughters' football club has led to him socialising with the other volunteer coaches, with visits to the pub and more organised outings for special occasions, like a Christmas night out. This can be contrasted with the cycling group he was part of, which was purely about cycling:

> Through cycling you meet acquaintances and maybe training buddies, but you never text them or anything like that or do anything else with them, they're just people you would do those activities with. [...] With this club, if you turned up and didn't talk to anyone, no one would care. And it is also almost all men. If you were everyone's best mate, but you couldn't ride right, you were dangerous to ride with, you would get disinvited, even if you were the funniest guy ever. (Max, M/36, South Ayrshire)

In his case, the relationship he had with the other cyclists was confined within the space of cycling and did not traverse this border. Max did also talk about a second bike club, which was more social in nature, but as this was not what Max wanted out of his cycling, he chose to continue with his current club. In terms of the different types of social capital, the cycling club Max joined would be better categorised as a place with bonding social capital, if any bonding took place at all, with little differences in access to, and ability to transfer, social capital (Häuberer, 2014). There are thus more factors at play than the type of organisation or club which influence the socialisation that takes place, as there is a certain culture inside a group which determines opportunities for socialisation within the club or outside it. This could also be linked to whether the aim of the group is inwardly or outwardly focused, i.e., who are beneficiaries of the group: its members or the situation outside the group. Looking at Figure 6.9 again, the two groups which reported the lowest numbers of close friends and larger numbers of acquaintances were activist groups and local community groups, both of which could be argued to have an outwardly looking focus, outside the immediate circle of members. Häuberer (2014) argues that there is a difference between political and apolitical groups in terms of the available social capital, which in turn can affect socialisation. However, the reality of sociability is much more complex as this, as the example with Max has shown, where an inwardly focused group did neither foster nor enable further opportunities for networking. Also, Mairi, who gained most of her friends from her political engagement, also illustrated the difficulty in drawing wider conclusions about what might foster further socialisation. She said:

> If I was to move somewhere else, if I was to go somewhere else, where I didn't have any friends, I would do something like join or get involved in the local [political party] there, where I would meet some like-minded folks and hopefully make some friends. (Mairi, F/65, South Ayrshire)

To her, the political party was her go-to place for finding new friends, and where she would look for social connections. An interesting facet of this to consider in both of these cases is the transference of social capital. While the branch of the political party was likely 'richer' in social capital, because members tend to be more alike, with similar experiences and knowledge, the *transference* of social capital was limited. The reason why Mairi had found her friends through the political party was perhaps because they were likely to be similar to her in terms of interests and background. In Max's case, there was also little transference of social capital, but mainly because the group was mainly focusing on the cycling and the social aspects were a low priority.

From the interviews, only two people said their volunteering had led to socialising with other volunteers outside of the volunteering activity. Associational life other than volunteering was reported to lead to socialising to a greater extent, which adds to Morrow-Howell *et al.'s* (2019) argument that volunteering is best suited for social participation because it is altruistic, as this shows that other types of associational life also provides the same, if not more, opportunities. This also shows how the concept of associational life, as it is understood in this thesis, can benefit from future research on sociability and social participation.

Looking at it from the perspective of relational sociology, these examples show the interplay between structure and agency. There have been attempts to predict the social outcomes from different types of organisations, such as Häuberer's (2014) work on social capital in voluntary associations. She refers to Gordon and Babchuk's (1959) typology of instrumental and expressive organisations, which indicates whether the aim of the organisation is for the benefit of people outside the organisation (instrumental) or for the members themselves (expressive). However, such categorisations do not capture people's intentions and the purposes they seek from engaging with others or how structure and agency influence each other. For example, while there are structures in place which give people opportunities to engage in different types of organisations, people can then choose what suits them best, like in Max's case where he chose a cycling organisation that best suited his intents and purposes. Likewise, how people choose to interact with others has an impact

on structure, like in the case of the Charity Shop where the volunteers created a social environment that matched what they wanted, which had an impact on the structure of the shop. Hence, it is the *relationships* between people that constitutes the organisations, clubs, associations, and groups people are engaging in.

This section has looked at sociability in relation to participation in volunteering and other forms of associational life, which, together with the analysis on friends' roles in facilitating associational life, provides further insight into the relational aspect of associational life. This section has also highlighted how gender norms can influence how people engage with others, and in extension, how they engage in associational life.

6.7 'Thick' and 'thin' communities and associational life

This section will build on the topic of sociability using the concept of thick and thin communities. As discussed in section 3.2, there is a 'tug and pull' between the benefits of having a tight knit community and the benefits of extending outside of one's established groups. The latter can have a direct impact on individuals being introduced to other activities through the people they know, or whether the groups they are part of are homogenous or not.

The survey asked about whether the people they engaged with also took part in most, some, or none, of the other activities they also take part in, which would indicate if they were part of thick, mixed, or thin communities. As described in section 3.2.2, Dotson's (2017) categorisation of whether people are part of thick, mixed, or thin communities helps identify different levels of cohesion at community level. Respondents were asked to identify the types of communities they were part of for all activities taking part in, and in relation to their friends and their volunteering. The findings show that there are differences in whether communities are thick and thin communities, depending on different activities, age, and location.

While it might seem that thick communities are preferable over thin communities, both types of communities have benefits and drawbacks. Being embedded in a community with many links to others often means that this network is more likely to be characterised by bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000), i.e. the networks are strong, but they are more likely to be homogenous than in the case of thin communities, as thin communities can better at enabling transference of social capital within the group (Häuberer, 2014). A thin community is also more likely to have individuals left at the periphery of

the group and to work through weak ties to other groups of people, which can function as a bridge between groups (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). This in turn can support bridging social capital to exist.

In terms of how thick and thin communities interact with different types of associations and volunteering activities, some overarching conclusions can be drawn from the data. The two activities that were reported as having the highest degree of thin communities and the lowest number of thick communities were Sports and Volunteering (see Figure 6.16). This could suggest that these two activities have more of the bridging type of social capital, and, as the majority of respondents engaging in these two activities said that the people they engaged with also attended their other activities, this would suggest, following the theory of weak ties (see sub-section 3.2.3), that they had a higher chance of meeting people that could introduce them to new people and new activities.
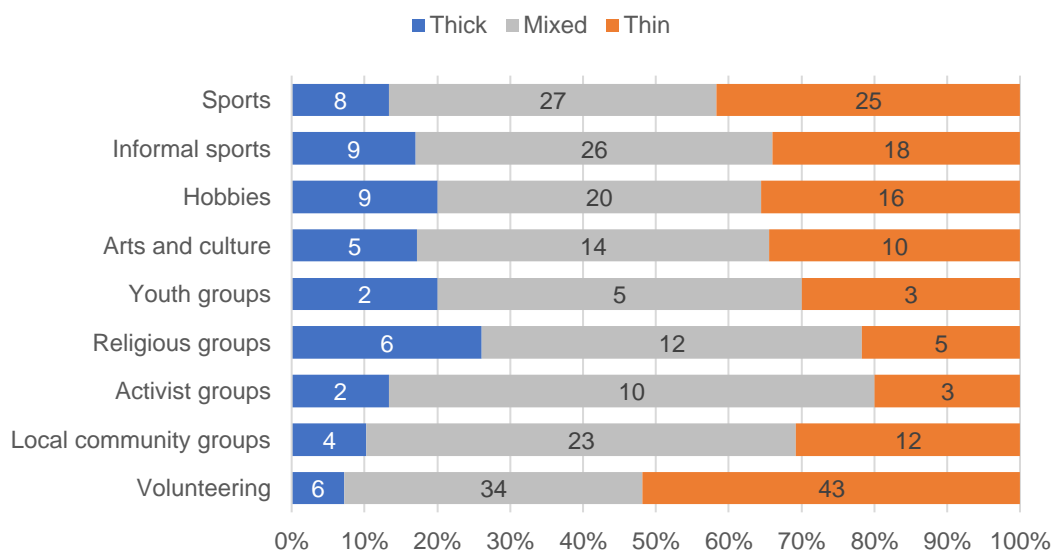

Figure 6.16 Reported thick and thin communities, by type of volunteering and other types of associational life

In the interviews, weak ties were reported as a characteristic of both formal and informal sports, although the latter had fewer thin communities than (formal) Sports. Weak ties in action were observable for both Paul (M/60, South Ayrshire) and Max (M/36, South Ayrshire). For Paul, who was part of many activities, a fellow participant in his martial arts training introduced him to the retirement club. In Max's case, becoming a volunteer coach in his daughters' football club led him to also informally socialise with the other volunteer coaches. In both examples, sport activities were the prompt for them

to be introduced to new activities through people they had met through their activities.

Religious groups and Activist groups had generally low numbers of reported thin communities. Religious groups were reported to have the highest rate of thick communities, which is consistent with previous research that suggest that religious groups are tight-knit communities, most probably characterised by bonding social capital (Kettell, 2019). The effect of this might be that it is less likely that there are members of the group with different backgrounds, beliefs, and knowledge. None of the people interviewed reported being part of any religious groups, but looking at the number of activities respondents in the survey who were part of religious groups were doing, 81% said they were doing at least one additional activity, and 82% had also volunteered. However, as this group have a higher rate of thick communities, they do these other activities and volunteer with the same people to a greater extent than other groups.
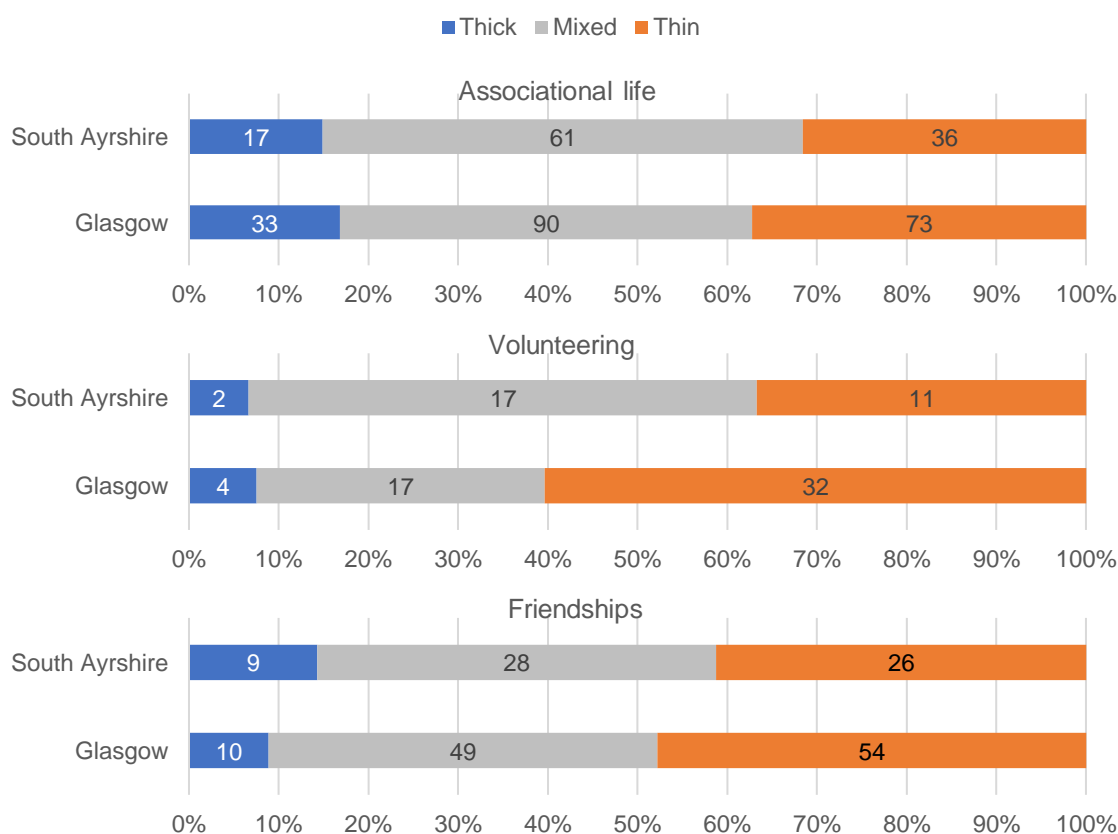

Figure 6.17 Thick and thin communities, by location and differentiated between associational life, volunteering, and friendships

Looking at thick and thin communities based on location and differentiating between associational life (other than volunteering), volunteering, and the two combined together with friendships, some patterns can be discerned. The

distribution between thick, mixed, and thin can be seen in Figure 6.17. Glasgow had a higher proportion of thin communities, but thick communities were fairly uniform between the different activities. The largest difference observed was for volunteering, where Glasgow had a significantly larger proportion of thin communities than South Ayrshire. The reasons for Glasgow having a larger number of thin communities could be that a city offers more opportunities to engage in different activities and groups which leads to a higher chance of the same people being involved in several activities. However, both Glasgow and South Ayrshire had roughly the same amount of reported thick communities, which suggests that people were just as likely to find communities, and to feel a sense of belonging, regardless of place. Also, looking at thick and thin communities per activity *and* location, there were reported differences. As can be seen in Figure 6.18, Sports were associated with a higher degree of thick communities in Glasgow, but also a higher degree of thin communities, with Sports being mostly mixed in the rural area. While this is consistent with the idea of there being more opportunities in urban than in rural areas, there were also fewer instances of thick communities identified by respondents from South Ayrshire. One reason for this is likely distance, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also finding work opportunities:

> For the young folk a lot of them were employed in things like [local hotel] and that sort of thing, casual employment, sessional employment, that's gone. So finances, I think, for a lot of them are an issue. (Sports Club, Volunteer, South Ayrshire)

This could explain why more people would categorise their communities as mixed in the rural area, whereas in Glasgow there was more of a demarcation as to whether there existed an overlap between groups or not.

There were also differences identified for Hobbies and Arts and culture activities between Glasgow and South Ayrshire, where both have somewhat higher numbers of thick communities reported for Glasgow, but the rural area having more thin communities identified in these activities. Local community groups were the only type of activity where South Ayrshire had a higher degree of reported thick communities than Glasgow. This might be explained by a combination of communities being confined to smaller areas, a smaller pool of people, and larger distances to travel in the rural areas, or because there might be other social expectations in a rural community to take part in the local community. However, as Paarlberg et al. (2022) report in their study on volunteering in rural and urban locations, there are many factors that influence

differences between locations beyond the urban-rural dichotomy, making it difficult to make any definitive conclusions on why these differences exist.
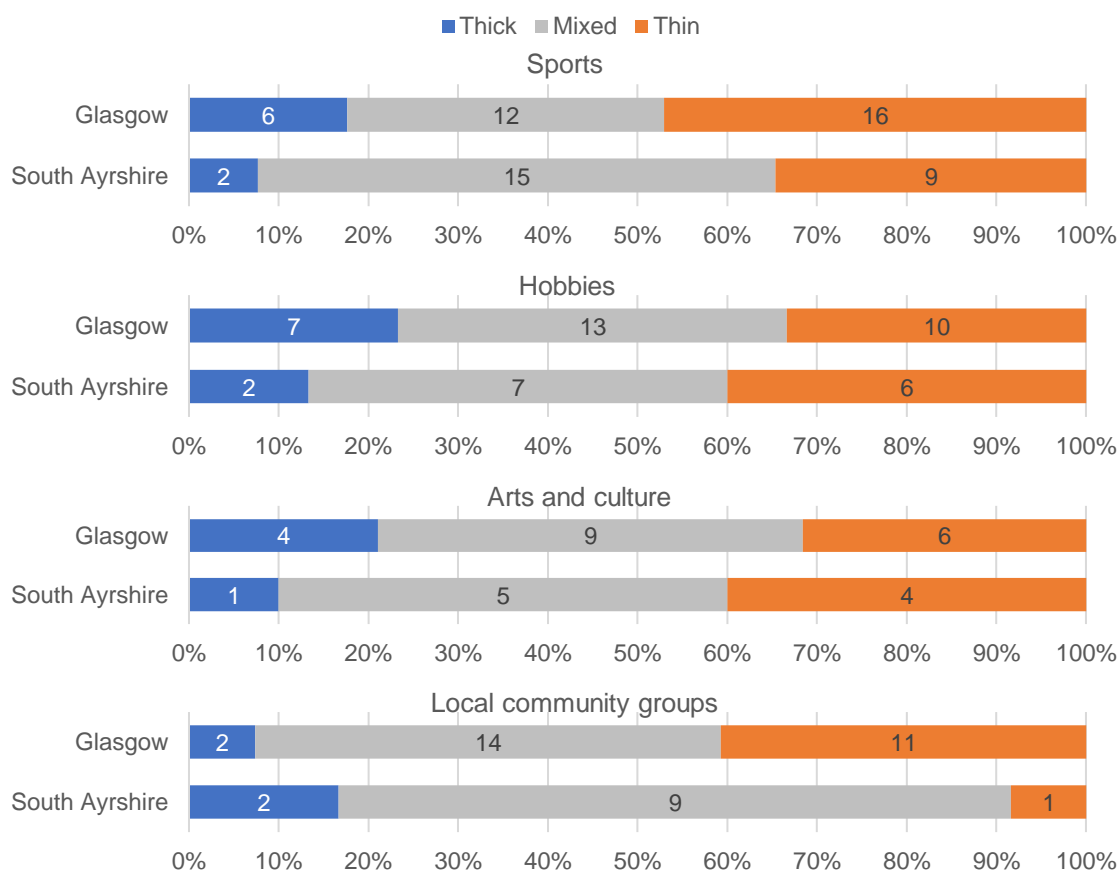

Figure 6.18 Thick and thin communities, by activity and location

This difference between urban and rural was also highlighted in the interview with a representative from the Community Shop where the director talked about a nearby village which also had a shop but operated in a different way because of the needs and characteristics of that village were different. Related to this, as has been discussed earlier, there was a difference in who volunteered for the Community Shop in terms of socio-economic differences and who used the shop. They understood this and also highlighted the value of diversity:

> The board has a board member who I would say is working class, painter and decorator, recruited by another board member who knows him very well, and he does come from the other side of the village and he's absolutely invaluable because he gives us the insight into how that side of the village works. (Community Shop, Director, South Ayrshire)

This section has provided an overview of how the concepts of thick and thin communities can aid understanding of how people engage in different activities. Volunteering had a larger number of thin communities than other

types of associational life, meaning that individuals who volunteer have a greater chance of meeting people they do not already know, which could lead to further participation in other types of associational life. When comparing Glasgow to South Ayrshire, respondents in Glasgow had more thin communities when it comes to associational life other than volunteering, and friendships. However, when looking at specific types of associational life, the rural area showed a greater number of thin communities in Hobbies and Arts and culture activities, with Glasgow showed a higher proportion of thin communities in Sports and Local community groups.

The evidence in this chapter has shown that relationships play a crucial role when it comes to participation in both volunteering and other types of associational life. Relationships during people's upbringing through family or friends can influence people's exposure to volunteering and other types of associational life. People's own reflexivity is also part of this, as structure and agency interact. Children also have an effect on their parents' participation, though volunteering is somewhat less affected by this.

6.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has examined volunteering and other types of associational life through a relational lens. Apart from providing an understanding of the role that relationships play for associational life, it has also analysed both structure and agency and how they interact with each other. To understand how people engage with others, the relational perspective is key, as 'the decisions, choices, and actions of each of us are not purely individual acts, but are arrived at in relation to and with others' (Donati and Archer, 2015, p. 15). This became clear when examining the role of people's upbringing and reflexivity. While there is a link between parent and child behaviour in relation to associational life, this does not mean that two siblings will get involved in the same way, as structure is not the only determinant of how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life. The motivations expressed to engage in associational life followed what previous literature has shown: a mix of social, altruistic and instrumental reasons. However, while people have agency, this agency is still affected by the relations that surround them, and this includes the people and the *societal context* around them where a shift towards a more individualist and informal way of relating to other people could be seen in the younger age group.

Section 6.4 on the routes into associational life, including volunteering, showed that the interviewees described relationships as being an important factor to become a volunteer or engage in other forms of associational life. The subsequent sections showed the important role that relationships play and how this differs between different types of activities. An important finding from this chapter was that volunteering appears to be less dependent on friends and relationships in general. Perhaps it is connected to the fact that volunteering requires a different amount of commitment, and that it is more altruistic than other types of associational life. Associational life other than volunteering, on the other hand, led to more people meeting their friends than volunteering did, and people engage to a higher degree with friends when engaging in associational life than in volunteering. Also, friends and family played a larger part in introducing individuals to associational life activities other than for volunteering, suggesting other types of associational life is more dependent on relationships than volunteering is.

The last sections of this chapter discussed the role that friends play in associational life, their impacts on sociability and how embedded people are in their networks. Volunteering was different when comparing it to other types of associational life, where friends and socialisation played a lesser role in volunteering, whereas friends played a larger role in associational life. There were some notable differences when comparing between the younger and older age groups and between Glasgow and South Ayrshire. In terms of the age groups, the older age group were more likely to say they were volunteering with friends, colleagues, and neighbours compared to the younger age group, while it was the opposite for other types of associational life with the younger age group, who tended to do their associational life with friends and colleagues to a higher degree than the older age group. In terms of who introduced participants to an activity, there were few differences between the age groups for volunteering, but for other types of associational life, the older group were more likely to say they were joining activities alone and the younger group were more likely to report joining through friends. Regarding locations, people said they volunteered with the same groups in both Glasgow and South Ayrshire to the same degree, as for other associational life, people joined these through friends to a greater extent in South Ayrshire and conversely, less through joining alone. In terms of who introduced them to associational life, people in Glasgow reported much higher levels of joining alone for volunteering, and respondents in South Ayrshire joined their volunteering through friends to a greater extent, which was also true for joining other types of associational life.

In summary, volunteering appeared overall to be less affected by both age and location in terms of who people volunteer with, but it seems to be affected by location when looking at who introduced participants to their volunteering. Other types of associational life, on the other hand, varies more between both age groups and location, both regarding who participants reported engaging with and who introduced them to the activity.

Related to volunteering being more stable than associational life, when looking at what the respondents said about their thick and thin communities, volunteering was associated with the largest proportion of thin communities, and least with thick communities. Taking the previous evidence into consideration, the reason why volunteering was more stable might be because of the mostly thin communities they involve, meaning that these networks of people are diverse and could have a higher incidence of weak ties and more bridging social capital. The number of weak ties, and perhaps a greater incidence of strong ties as associational life relies more on friends, can explain the differences shown between volunteering and other types of associational life.

This concludes the presentation of the evidence. The next chapter is the concluding chapter and highlights the original contribution to knowledge this thesis makes, its limitations, future research and the policy recommendations.

7 Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings from the two preceding data chapters and serves the function to both summarise the findings and to explicitly show how they relate to previous literature. The importance of comparing volunteering to other types of associational life was because the motivation to volunteer, or to take part in any other activity, is increasingly part of a larger narrative in people's lives, which means that a more holistic perspective is needed to understand volunteering. By introducing the concept of associational life to describe types of activities that people *do* together, this holistic perspective enabled the examination into how volunteering relates to people's social lives in terms of other activities they take part in. The chapter outlines the original contribution to knowledge this thesis is providing, and how it relates to the field of voluntary sector research. Two research questions were posed at the end of the chapter 2, the literature review: the first question was about how volunteering differs from other types of activities, and the second asked what role do relationships play for participation in associational life. The two subsections below outline what this research found in relation to both questions. The chapters finish with some recommendations for the voluntary sector researchers and voluntary sector practitioners.

7.1 How volunteering differs from other types of associational life

This research showed that volunteering differs in a range of ways from other types of associational life. The main finding is that volunteering is generally more stable and is less affected by factors such as there being children in the household and geographic location. The survey data showed that volunteering was less affected by adults having children, compared to other types of associational life, while the qualitative data also attributed their participation in some associational life to their children's activities. Some notable differences could also be seen when breaking it down by types of associational life, where participation in hobby activities and local community groups was more affected by there being children in the household than other activities. Also, during COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, volunteering saw a smaller decrease in mean hours of participation than other types of associational life. While studies on volunteering and family life have been done previously, with

a study from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (Ellis Paine *et al.*, 2020) outlining this well. The contribution of this thesis is evidence of the stability of volunteering. While participation in other types of associational life is lower for households with children, volunteering is less affected. This could be attributed to the commitment that volunteering often comes with, as it is mostly a recurring event and because volunteering is about helping or giving aid to others, there is accountability towards those who receive the help to continue, which other types of associational life often lacks. This was also reflected upon by the participants, with some choosing not to volunteer because they wanted to avoid the commitment it requires.

Related to this difference, when looking at the ways in which participants transitioned between volunteering and other types of associational life, the level of commitment played a role as well. Organisations who offered both volunteering opportunities and ways to engage as a participant benefitted certain groups of people more, as people were able to find ways to participate in these organisations that suited them and their circumstances. This was possible because participants could volunteer and achieve a sense of continuity while doing activities that were less about delivering a service to others and more to do with engaging in a leisure-like activity. This was especially beneficial for people with previous substance abuse issues or mental health issues. One organisation also had relationships with GP surgeries and community link workers that helped introduce individuals to the organisation as they had recognised that a volunteering role offered them some benefits, which is partly due to the continuity that volunteering offers. This finding expands on previous research on pathways to volunteering, like the participant-to-volunteer pathway (Davies, 2018), and could help inform the volunteer-engaging organisations to create an added social value to what they offer by recognising the benefits that the commitment, and continuity, gained by volunteering.

The other major finding relates to what the voluntary sector ought to focus on, which previously has been under researched. The data showed that participants in hobby-related activities reported that their engagement with the hobby led to volunteering in *another* organisation to a higher degree than in the same organisation. The degree to which hobbies led to volunteering in another organisation was also higher than for sports, which is a well-researched area in voluntary sector research. While this can be partly explained by there might be limited volunteering opportunities within a hobby

organisation, this is still of great interest, as hobby activities are perhaps more closely associated with self-centred satisfaction rather than helping others, so it leading to volunteering might be surprising. Sports and hobbies led to volunteering to the same degree when combining volunteering in the same organisation or another organisation, but the fact that hobbies led to volunteering in *another* organisation to such a degree highlights the need to explore this further. While there were some geographical and age related differences, where sports and hobbies led to volunteering to a greater degree in the rural area, and hobbies also led to volunteering to a greater degree for the younger age group, this suggests that more research is needed to understand the relationship between engaging in a hobby-related activity and how that can lead to volunteering. Previously, the relationship between hobbies and volunteering has only been explored to a limited degree (e.g., Brodie *et al.*, 2011).

Other examples of differences between volunteering compared to other types of associational life, is that volunteering takes place further away from the home than other types of associational life. This suggests that people are more willing, or perhaps more able, to invest in travel time to a greater extent for their volunteering than for other types of associational life. However, this could also be linked to socio-economic status, as rural locations face additional issues, such as lack of transportation and less work opportunities, which have a knock-on effect on whether people can take part in associational life at all. This was also corroborated in the interviews with the stakeholders, who highlighted that in their experience, people living in poverty and those from 'working class' backgrounds did not always have the material or cultural resources to participate in volunteering. In addition to this, participating in either volunteering or other types of associational life might not be part of their habitus, which is about the cultural resources people have access to. This indicates that Balderstone's (2014) historical study on how the middle classes are more mobile in terms of their engagement in associational life, which was partly because they have the means to do so, does not seem to have changed. Although, while resource-rich individuals tended to report higher rates of participation, the survey data showed that those with a degree or professional qualifications engaged in fewer hours across all types of associational life than those with less qualifications, which is in line with previous research on volunteering specifically (Volunteer Scotland, 2021). As such, this shows that differences between geographic locations are difficult to measure, as there are many factors to consider for all types of associational life, as pointed out in the

study by Paarlberg *et al.* (2022) on the rural/urban volunteering divide. However, understanding differences in how people engage in volunteering and other types of associational life between rural and urban places is important, as uneven distribution of resources can have a significant impact on what opportunities people can take part in associational life (Mann *et al.*, 2022). Milligan and Fyfe (2004, 2005) also highlighted the need to understand how different places, even within the same city, differ in terms of what resources are available to them, which impacts on what opportunities there are to engage in associational life for people.

The concept of third places, places where community life takes place, is also more important for other types of associational life than volunteering. This is likely due to the fact that motivation to volunteer is more extrinsic in nature and the choice to start to volunteer might be less dependent on finding volunteering opportunities by chance, like it might be for other types of associational life. For other types of associational life, the accessibility of third places is of importance. The difference in how accessible the two board games club spaces were is a good example of how third places influence associational life. One was accessible given its location on the main street in the town and the other was taking place in a rented hall, which required prior knowledge of it taking place and more effort to start engaging with the club. This is adding nuance to the wider discussion of the importance and description of third places where community life takes place.

By comparing volunteering to other types of associational life, this study has found that volunteering is both more stable and enduring considering outside factors and can also offer stability for certain groups. People with children are volunteering to the same extent as those without children, and when a big disruptor like the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, participation in volunteering was less affected. One reason for this might be the continuity volunteering offers, as the participants said that with volunteering there is an expectation of showing up that does not exist in most other types of associational life, where some groups benefit from this continuity. Worth keeping in mind though is considering who the volunteers are. As people with higher education are more likely to report volunteering, even if they do fewer hours than those with less education (Volunteer Scotland, 2021). Hence, the stability of volunteering might be indicative of the middle classes, who have more time and resources to volunteer, and that it is part of their habitus to a greater degree (Dean, 2016), which might explain why volunteering is more stable than other types

of associational life. Regardless, the stability that volunteering can offer is an important finding to take forward from this thesis, which will be expanded on later in this chapter on the recommendations for practice and policy this research has led to.

7.2 Role of relationships for volunteering and other types of associational life

The individualisation of society means that relationships have become more important (Spencer and Pahl, 2006; Maffesoli, 2016), and as such, this research compared the role that relationships play in volunteering and other types of associational life. By using the relational sociology by Donati and Archer (2015), it was possible to discuss people's upbringing alongside their reflexivity and how both have impacted their participation in associational life as it can go beyond the duality of agency and structure. Relational sociology has in the past mostly been used to understand other types of associational life, with studies on volunteering having been mainly limited to sports volunteering (e.g., Kassman and Kneck, 2022), with this research applying it more generally.

The use of relational sociology enabled a two-pronged approach to understand how people's upbringing influences their participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. While people's upbringing can influence their future behaviours and attitudes to associational life, individuals have agency and make active decisions about their engagement in associational life. This was evidenced in the interviews where people discussed their rationales and motivations to engage in associational life. Interestingly, a difference was noted between how the two age groups expressed these. Those in the younger age group expressed their motivations in terms of how it fit with how they wanted to lead their life, or their self-made biographies as Becker (1994) would have expressed it. For the older age group, a more collectivist mindset framed their motivations, as their reasons were more implicit and perhaps something that was part of everyday life so they felt there was no need to explicitly say it out loud. This likely relates to the individualisation of society, as the younger age group are, in simplistic terms, creating their own biographies while the older age group are more inclined towards a collective mindset. This was also observed when looking at the overlap in people's networks, where the younger age group had less overlap between the groups that they took part in, while the older group showed more overlap and connections between the groups. This difference might indicate that the activities the younger age group took part in were separated because they 'cobbled' different groups together to form their

life narrative, while the older age group viewed their participation as being part of a wider collective. While the sample was small to make any definitive conclusions, this is consistent with previous literature on the effects of the individualisation of society and how people engage in social life. This difference in how different generations engage in volunteering and other types of associational life is important for organisations, clubs, and associations to consider, as it will impact on how people engage with them and how they might approach recruiting new volunteers. It could also be argued that the professionalisation of the voluntary sector is a successful adaptation to this change, as the reflexive type of volunteering is increasing with volunteers engagement is increasingly episodic and personalised (Hustinx *et al.*, 2016), where a paid staff member ensures continuity to the work of the organisation.

Relationships were also found to be important for people to become involved in most types of associational life, but relationships played a lesser role for volunteering. Friends and family members were more important to other types of associational life than for volunteering, both in terms of who they do these activities with and how they were introduced to the activity. A difference between the two age groups could be discerned too, where the younger age group's responses showed they were joining through a friend to a greater extent than the older age group. While the survey responses alone cannot say whether this is because of a generational shift or because they are at different stages in life, the interviews suggested that the two groups view joining different activities through friends in different ways. Also, when looking at how the respondents rated their group activities in terms of thick and thin communities, or how embedded they are in their networks, volunteering had a lower rate of reported thick communities than other types of associational life, and the highest rate of thin communities. As volunteering is less dependent on friendships and other relationships as a route in, this suggests that volunteering has both a higher degree of bridging social capital and increases the potential to meet new people, and also a higher degree of participants who can function as weak ties to bridge different groups. However, the group might be somewhat socio-economically homogenous, as noted earlier, the middle-classes have more resources to be able to volunteer. Another reason for relationships playing a lesser role for volunteering is that the motivation to volunteer differs from the motivation to engage in other types of associational life. As the very nature of volunteering being about helping and giving aid rather than engaging in an activity as a pastime, the link to friends and other relationships is more present for other types of associational life

than for volunteering. By identifying this difference, this research adds to the already well researched area of volunteer motivations (Chen, Wang and Tang, 2022) by comparing it to other types of associational life.

As volunteering has a higher rate of thin communities, meaning that people are more likely to meet people they did not previously know through weak ties, volunteering might at first seem to be a better option for community building efforts. However, knowing that volunteers are more likely to come from non-deprived backgrounds, and already have higher amounts of social capital at their disposal, the argument might be circular in that the community volunteering is supposed to create is perhaps not benefitting the intended group (Stuij, 2015). Instead, going forwards, organisations ought to take advantage of the benefits of both volunteering and other types of associational life in conjunction with each other; the structure and bridging social capital that volunteering brings, and the flexibility and relational elements that come from other types of associational life. This is especially important for living in a contemporary society, which is more individualised and less concerned with the collective. The voluntary sector, and other sectors, too, would benefit from understanding the relationship between volunteering and other types of associational life. This has been aided by the use of the novel conceptualisation of associational life, and how it has the potential to methodologically and theoretically contribute to voluntary sector research is discussed in the next section.

7.3   Theoretical contributions

The findings of this thesis were enabled by the conceptualisation of associational life as a way of understanding of what people *do* together in some type of organised way and have some level of continuity and is discretionary. This is different from how the term has been used previously, where it has been used solely to mean formal group activities or as a synonym for civil society (e.g., Schofer and Longhofer, 2011; Bunyan, 2014). By using the concept of associational life, the thesis was able to understand what people do together in a society which has become more individualised, which has resulted in activities being both more episodic and informalised. As associational life is something people *do*, it can capture social life regardless of the ways in which people engage with each other, whether this is in a formal setting, such as an organisation or club, or more informally with friends. This means that engaging in a sports club is associational life, as well as meeting up with a group of people to play in a video game tournament. Being involved in a society

through the university student's union is associational life, as is meeting up with people around a shared hobby. This also means that going out for a run alone, meeting up with friends for a casual game of bowling as a one-off activity, or taking part in one political manifestation, are not activities that would be categorised as associational life.

While this definition of associational life is simple and might be seen as too vague, the way associational life has been defined here is necessary for it to be able to cover many types of activities, both formal and informal. Yet, because of the focus on *doing* and there being a level of continuity and is discretionary, it offers more precision than alternatives like 'community' or 'leisure'. However, there are activities that might be hard to categorise as associational life, especially in relation to volunteering and what constitutes doing something *together*. For example, a hospital greeter is surrounded by people, but they are not doing this activity *with* the hospital visitors, but they are doing this as part of a programme of volunteers, and they will have fellow hospital greeters, who might be there at the same time. If the concept of associational life is to be used in another context to understand participation in a contemporary societal context, as it has been defined here, the demarcations might need to be reconsidered to fit that context. The concept of associational life has the potential to become a new tool in the toolbox for researchers doing work on volunteering, leisure or community.

By using relational sociology coupled with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, this study has been able to understand the relationship people have to volunteering and other types of associational life, and how interpersonal relationships can impact on participation in associational life. Using Bourdieu's work to understand participation in volunteering and other types of associational life has been proven to be an effective theoretical framework (e.g., Häuberer, 2014; Dean, 2016; Storr and Spaaij, 2016; Kettell, 2019), but relational sociology remains underutilised in voluntary sector research, with only tentative moves towards using it (Stanzani, 2017). This study is original in the use of relational sociology in voluntary sector research, showing it can contribute to important insights into how people engage with volunteering, such as how it is less affected by factors like geography and whether there are children in the household, or how friends play a lesser role in starting to volunteer than for other activities.

7.4   Recommendations for practice and policy

This research has shown that volunteering and other types of associational life operate in different ways in terms of how people engage with them. This last section will outline what implications emerge from these findings in terms of what voluntary organisations, associations, and groups might find useful to inform their practice and policy, and also the implications it has on research.

- The introduction of associational life as a conceptual tool. The concept of *associational life* has the potential to be useful in many research settings where the aim is to understand how people engage with others in contemporary society, which is more individualised and informal. This shift towards a more individualised and informalised society, which makes people's social lives even more fragmented and boundaries between formal and informal increasingly blurred, requires a novel way of understanding how people engage in different activities. While the concept of associational life was applied to understand volunteering in this thesis, it has the potential to be applied to other areas, too, such as how age impacts on participation in social life.

- Research on volunteering needs to look beyond its relationship to sports, and consider other, currently unexplored relationships, to volunteering. As demonstrated in this thesis, hobbies led to volunteering in other organisations to a greater degree than sports. This has the potential to find new avenues for voluntary organisations to develop their recruitment.

- Voluntary organisations can benefit from offering potential members multiple ways of engaging with them, such as volunteer or participant. This can offer a more diverse choice of roles and routes to engagement, with alternatives for people to find the best way to participate that suits their needs and circumstances. A more diversified approach to recruitment can be a social good, by enabling vulnerable groups to become engaged, whether this be as a volunteer, participant, or something in between. This also takes into consideration the individualisation and informalisation of social life and can make the voluntary sector more resilient to these changes, by ensuring people have diverse opportunities through which to engage with them.

- Connect voluntary organisations with GP surgeries and support workers. This relates to the previous point on offering different types of participation in an organisation or club, as some people can benefit from the commitment that volunteering offers. Two organisations shared their

experiences for this research where support workers have been the mechanism for people benefitting from engaging in volunteering and other types of associational life.

- Ensuring places where associational life takes place are physically accessible. The example of the two board games clubs interviewed showed the importance of the space being accessible, also called *third places*, which enables people to more easily become introduced to an activity. By ensuring the locations of where associational life is accessible, and thus making it a third place, associational life becomes a place that can be 'discovered' more easily by everyone. The example of the man who went to the board games shop because his daughter wanted to look at the figurines in the window is a good, albeit specific, example of how this can happen. This does not mean that accessibility is synonymous with commercial places, but that it is a place where everyday community life can take place.

The first two of these recommendations can create a road forward to continue to investigate the role of volunteering in contemporary society which is increasingly individualistic and informal. The last three are intended for practices for how organisations, clubs, and associations can enable more people to take part in their offerings, which are a direct result from this research.

8 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the rationale for undertaking this research is revisited and discussed in relation to the findings. I also reflect on what the limitations of the study are and highlight what future research ought to focus on to continue to understand how volunteering and other types of associational life relate to people's lives in contemporary society.

8.1 The rationale revisited

The aim of this thesis was to better understand volunteering by comparing it to other types of associational life, considering the changes to how people engage with others in contemporary society, which have become more individualistic and informal (Taylor, 1985; Bauman, 2000; Hustinx *et al.*, 2016). In an effort to try to understand how people engage with others in this context, these changes are not seen as worsening of the condition of society. Instead, they are viewed as neutral, as society is forever changing, and will continue to change. This can be exemplified with what the French philosopher and mathematician de Condorcet (Stolle and Hooghe, 2005) said that every generation sees themselves as less civic minded as the previous. Later, when industrialisation led people to move to the cities, sociologists like Simmel (1950) and Tönnies (1974) expressed that cities were detrimental to social life as they led to more fleeting and impersonal relationships. However, the idea of a deterioration of society or loss of community life is not true on a societal level, but this does not preclude people from feeling that they have lost their community.

The idea of a loss of community and people becoming less civic-minded is also debated in relation to volunteering. Putnam famously argued in his book *Bowling Alone* (2000) that the loss of organised community life had a negative impact on society as a whole, with less trust and less social capital for individuals. However, while membership levels in organisations and associations have decreased, this is only one measurement of how people engage with others and does not take into consideration what social life looks

like in contemporary society. Perhaps the loss of trust and social capital that Putnam is describing are only valid if the unit of analysis is less engagement in formal associational life. As contemporary society is more individualised and informal than it previously was (Becker, 1994; Bauman, 2000; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2011), the creation of one's identity has shifted from coming from the collective to the individual, where people need to create their own life stories in a postmodern society. While the effects of this can be negative for some, as systemic issues are framed as a personal failure, the effects this have had on participation in volunteering and other forms of associational life have been outlined in this thesis. The individualisation of society has led to friends becoming more important than before and has led to activities that used to take place in formal organisations and associations to instead take place more informally. It has also led to volunteers becoming more reflexive, so that their volunteering practices have a better 'fit' with their life and their life narrative.

As such, volunteering is less of a means of taking part in collective action and more of the individual doing a specific task that is their own and not a shared task. This means that a more holistic approach is needed to be able to understand how volunteering relates to other types of activities people take part in. This holistic approach can enable an understanding of the role that volunteering plays in people's lives and how it relates to other types of activities people take part in, as they are increasingly connected. This is where the conceptualisation of associational life can be useful; to bridge the gap between the individualised and informal ways of contemporary society and how to research how people engage in volunteering. Associational life is defined as what people *do together* with other people, whether this takes place in a formal or informal manner, have a semblance of continuity, and is a discretionary activity.

To compare volunteering to associational life, 14 interviews with stakeholders from groups and organisations were undertaken, a survey with 294 respondents was used, and interviews with 10 survey respondents were completed to collect data. This mixed methods approach enabled an understanding of *how* people engage in volunteering and other forms of associational life and the characteristics these have, in addition to understanding *why* there might be differences between people's participation in volunteering and other types of associational life. The data was analysed within a theoretical framework of relational sociology, which enables an understanding of how structure and agency interact to inform people's

participation in associational life, including volunteering. What this thesis has shown is that the ways people engage in volunteering are different from engaging in other types of associational life. Volunteering was less impacted by factors like geography or whether there were children living in the household, and the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions impacted less on volunteering than other types of associational life. Volunteering was also less dependent on relationships when people started to volunteer, as participants are more likely to start volunteering by themselves without outside influence. Associational life, on the other hand, was more dependent on relationships to lead people to engage in a new activity. Also, based on the evidence in this study, socioeconomic status appears to be a strong determinant of how people engage in any type of associational life.

What this thesis has highlighted is the need for research on volunteering to view it in relation to people's wider life, and not in isolation. This study will hopefully encourage other voluntary sector researchers to also consider the wider societal context when researching volunteering.

8.2 Limitations

This thesis has provided evidence of how volunteering differs from other types of associational life. However, there are some limitations of this research, which this section will outline. From a methodological point of view, the comparatively low numbers of respondents in the survey and the low number of interviews means that there are limitations to the findings reported. While 294 survey responses from only two Scottish local authority areas is a reasonably robust dataset for descriptive statistics, it still prevented more advanced statistical analysis to be carried out. Examples of such analyses include regression analyses and even the ability to perform simpler tests like Chi square tests on many of the variables, as there were not enough responses in certain categories. It was difficult, for example, to establish any differences between gender and participation, and whether there were children in the household, as only four respondents were men who had children in the household. This limitation meant that most of the statistical analyses was descriptive only, which is still valid and useful, but more advanced statistical analysis would have been able to test for probabilities and also highlight relationships that the descriptive statistics could not reveal.

A second limitation is regarding recruitment of participants for the 14 interviews with stakeholders and ten follow-up interviews with survey

respondents. All stakeholders were recruited through Volunteer Glasgow and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire, so the majority were involved with volunteering in one way or the other. Four of the stakeholders were recruited through private networks, which increased the number of people from groups of different types of associational life. The survey posed similar challenges, as it was at first circulated through Volunteer Glasgow's, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire's, and Volunteer Scotland's networks, with only people already interested in volunteering receiving and responding to the survey. This was, however, remedied by contacting local Facebook groups, asking to share the survey on their community pages, which led to about 65% of the survey respondents. Related to this is the issue of self-selection, the stakeholders interviewed, and the survey respondents, and especially those who were willing to take part in a follow-up interview, were more likely to be pro-social and agree to be interviewed, which could impact whose stories are heard in qualitative research. This was also evident when looking at the ages of those who completed the survey, where most were older (over 50) and most lived in Glasgow. To address this, I asked Voluntary Action South Ayrshire to help me find younger people from South Ayrshire that I could interview, which again skewed the interviewee group towards people who already volunteered and are heavily involved in this type of activity.

The last limitation is in relation to the research design. As this study combines all other types of associational life together, and then compares these to volunteering, the specifics and nuances of each type of associational life are lost. While this is a methodological limitation, it was necessary to construct the research design in this way as the focus was on understanding volunteering by comparing it to other types of associational life. More work is needed to understand the specifics of all types of associational life, but this would require more space than this thesis allows. This leads to the following section which is about future research areas that this thesis has identified.

8.3 Future research

This study uncovered several areas where future research ought to be undertaken to understand volunteering and other types of associational life. The quantitative analysis had some limitations, as the sample size was comparatively small, especially considering having samples with specific characteristics so more detailed analysis can be made. Future research on this area would need a larger sample to ensure more in-depth analysis can be made and enable more advanced statistical tests to be performed. While there are

secondary data sources that contain information on volunteering and other types of associational life, like the Community Life survey (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2023) and the Taking Part survey (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2019), both of which are available through the UK Data Service, they are too limited in scope. While providing a large data set, they only cover formal associational life or visiting or taking part in cultural activities, thus excluding informal associational life. Future research needs to include a tailored survey that would ensure that it include data needed on all types of associational life.

This thesis highlighted that the presence of children in a household had an impact on people's volunteering and their participation in other types of associational life. Future research ought to look at how this is affected by gender. It would be of interest to see, as volunteering was less impacted by children in the household, if women's and men's volunteering were equally impacted by children in the household, or if gender has a larger impact on overall participation than the *type* of activity people engage in. Similarly, because of the relatively low number of respondents for this research, especially people below the age of 40, obtaining a larger data set with more variety in ages would enable a more precise analysis of different life stages and the impact the individualisation of society has had.

This thesis has also highlighted that there might be generational differences in terms of how participants frame their motivations, related to the individualisation process. More qualitative research regarding this would be beneficial to understand how people understand their involvement in associational life and their views on taking part in associational life and how it relates to how they view themselves. As van Ingen and Dekker (2011) suggested, the individualisation process is continuing through cohort replacement. It would be of interest to see how this is reflected in interviews with different age groups. This would include not only volunteering, but also explore how people understand their participation in all types of associational life.

It would also be of interest to undertake this research in other countries, which would have different histories and relationships to volunteering, participation in associations and social structures. In Scotland, and the UK as a whole, volunteering plays an important role for providing social services (Dickinson *et al.*, 2012), while this is not the case in, for example, Sweden, which has very

little social service volunteering. Sweden would also be interesting from the perspective of reported rates of volunteering, which is high in comparison to other countries, but in reality, their definition of volunteering is actually more akin to how associational life has been used in this thesis (Henriksen, Strømsnes and Svedberg, 2019). Another interesting area would be the western Mediterranean countries (Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy), where Catholicism also impacts how people engage in volunteering and civil society in general (Sadlon and Rymsza, 2024), and the resulting differences in family structures and the role that family might play in these countries. Also, a former Soviet Union country would be of interest for this type of research to understand how the break-up of the union has impacted on participation in associational life. There are many approaches to research on associational life that would be of interest. Doing this type of research in countries beyond the Western world would be different, as the individualisation described here is largely a characteristic of Western culture, where the individualisation takes different forms, for example, in an east-Asian context (Rajkai, 2016).

References

Addley, E. (2020) 'Neighbourliness to the fore: "It's been the highlight of our lockdown"', *The Guardian*, 5 June. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/05/neighbourliness-to-the-fore-its-been-the-highlight-of-our-lockdown (Accessed: 5 June 2020).

Agnitsch, K., Flora, J. and Ryan, V. (2006) 'Bonding and Bridging Social Capital: The Interactive Effects on Community Action', *Community Development*, 37(1), pp. 36–51. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330609490153.

Alfes, K., Antunes, B. and Shantz, A.D. (2017) 'The management of volunteers – what can human resources do? A review and research agenda', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 28(1), pp. 62–97. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2016.1242508.

Allen, J. and Stevenson, I. (2023) *BSA 40: Gender roles*. British Social Attitudes 40. London: National Centre for Social Research. Available at: https://natcen.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-09/BSA%2040%20Gender%20roles.pdf.

Anderson, B.R.O. (2016) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso.

Andrews, R., Cowell, R. and Downe, J. (2008) 'Support for active citizenship and public service performance: an empirical analysis of English local authorities', *Policy & Politics*, 36(2), pp. 225–243. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1332/030557308783995044.

Archer, M. (2010) 'Critical Realism and Relational Sociology: Complementarity and Synergy', *Journal of Critical Realism*, 9(2), pp. 199–207. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1558/jcr.v9i2.199.

Ashraf, A. (2019) 'Presentation of Cricket Scotland at the VOLPOWER Launch Event, Glasgow Caledonian University'. *VOLPOWER Launch Event*, Glasgow Caledonian University, 7 February.

Atkinson, S. *et al.* (2020) 'Being Well Together: Individual Subjective and Community Wellbeing', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 21(5), pp. 1903–1921. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00146-2.

Attride-Stirling, J. (2001) 'Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research', *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), pp. 385–405. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410100100307.

Bailey, R., Cope, E.J. and Pearce, G. (2013) 'Why do children take part in, and remain involved in sport? A literature review and discussion of implications for sports coaches', *International Journal of Coaching Science*, 7(1), pp. 56–75.

Baker, A., Tolley, M. and Hill, K.M. (2016) 'More Than a Quick Pint: Investigating place attachment to a English recreational setting', *Social Psychological Review*, 18(2), pp. 1369–7862. Available at: https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsspr.2016.18.2.25.

Balderstone, L. (2014) 'Semi-detached Britain? Reviewing suburban engagement in twentieth-century society', *Urban History*, 41(1), pp. 141–160. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/s0963926812000788.

Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Beck, U. and Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2011) *Individualization: Institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences*. Reprint. Los Angeles: Sage (Theory, culture & society).

Becker, G.S. (1994) *Human capital: a theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. 3rd ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bekkers, R., Völker, B. and van der Gaag, M. (2008) 'Social Networks of Participants in Voluntary Associations', in N. Lin and B. Erickson (eds) *Social Capital: An International Research Program*. Oxford University Press, pp. 185–204. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199234387.001.0001.

Berg, J. and Ihlström, J. (2019) 'The Importance of Public Transport for Mobility and Everyday Activities among Rural Residents', *Social Sciences*, 8(2), p. 58. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8020058.

Bhaskar, R. (2008) *A Realist Theory of Science*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

Blaikie, N. and Priest, J. (2017) *Social Research: Paradigms in Action*. Chicester, UK: Polity Press. Available at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/strath/detail.action?docID=4783896 (Accessed: 19 September 2020).

Bomark, D. (2017) *A comparative study of the motivations of volunteers who support refugees in the United Kingdom and in Sweden*. Unpublished master's dissertation. University of Glasgow.

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Bourdieu, P. (1989) 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory*, 7(1), pp. 14–25. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/202060.

Bourdieu, P. (1997) 'The Forms of Capital', in H. Lauder et al. (eds) *Education: culture, economy, and society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998) *Practical reason: on the theory of action*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2008) *The logic of practice*. Reprinted. Translated by R. Nice. Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J.D. (1992) *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. 3rd edn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bourke, J. (1994) *Working class cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: gender, class, and ethnicity*. London; New York: Routledge.

Braun, V. *et al.* (2020) 'The online survey as a qualitative research tool', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 0(0), pp. 1–14. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1805550.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp. 77–101. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2013) *Successful qualitative research: a practical guide for beginners*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Braunholtz-Speight, T. (2015) *Power and community in Scottish community land initiatives*. Thesis. University of Aberdeen.

Brinkmann, S. (2013) *Qualitative interviewing*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199861392.001.0001.

Brodie, E. *et al.* (2011) *Pathways through participation: What creates and sustains active citizenship?* London: Involve. Available at: https://www.involve.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Pathways-Through-Participation-final-report_Final_20110913.pdf (Accessed: 13 September 2021).

Brody, L. (2009) *Gender, Emotion, and the Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronstein, J. and Lidor, D. (2020) 'Motivations for music information seeking as serious leisure in a virtual community: exploring a Eurovision fan club', *Aslib Journal of Information Management*, 73(2), pp. 271–287. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/ajim-06-2020-0192.

Brown, T., O'Keefe, S. and Stagnitti, K. (2011) 'Activity Preferences and Participation of School-Age Children Living in Urban and Rural Environments', *Occupational Therapy In Health Care*, 25(4), pp. 225–239. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3109/07380577.2011.589889.

Brubaker, R. and Cooper, F. (2000) 'Beyond Identity', *Theory and Society*, 29, pp. 1–47. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1007068714468.

Bryman, A. (1988) *Quantity and quality in social research*. London; Boston: Unwin Hyman (Contemporary social research series, 18).

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social research methods*. Fourth. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Bunyan, P. (2014) 'Re-conceptualizing Civil Society: Towards a Radical Understanding', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and*

Nonprofit Organizations, 25(2), pp. 538–552. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-013-9352-y.

Burr, J.A., Mutchler, J.E. and Caro, F.G. (2007) 'Productive Activity Clusters Among Middle-Aged and Older Adults: Intersecting Forms and Time Commitments', *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 62(4), pp. S267–S275. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/62.4.s267.

Cabras, I. and Mount, M.P. (2017) 'How third places foster and shape community cohesion, economic development and social capital: The case of pubs in rural Ireland', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 55, pp. 71–82. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2017.07.013.

Calhoun, C. (2003) 'Belonging in the cosmopolitan imaginary', *Ethnicities*, 3(4), pp. 531–568. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796803003004005.

Cameron, H. (1999) 'Are members volunteers? An exploration of the concept of membership drawing upon studies of the local church', *Voluntary Action*, 1(2), p. 13.

Candiotto, L. (2022) 'Extended loneliness. When hyperconnectivity makes us feel alone', *Ethics and Information Technology*, 24(4), p. 47. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-022-09669-4.

Cantó-Milà, N. (2019) 'On Simmel's Relativism and the Foundations of a Relational Approach', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 94(2), pp. 139–150. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00168890.2019.1585668.

Chambré, S.M. (2020) 'Has Volunteering Changed in the United States? Trends, Styles, and Motivations in Historical Perspective', *Social Service Review*, 94(2), pp. 373–421. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1086/708941.

Chan, E. (2014) 'Are Informal Connections a Functional Alternative to Associational Life in Enhancing Social Cohesion? Findings from Hong Kong', *Social Indicators Research*, 119(2), pp. 803–821. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-013-0506-5.

Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. Wilshire: SAGE Publications.

Chen, J., Wang, C. and Tang, Y. (2022) 'Knowledge Mapping of Volunteer Motivation: A Bibliometric Analysis and Cross-Cultural Comparative Study', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883150.

Chen, Y.-C., Li, R.-H. and Chen, S.-H. (2013) 'Relationships Among Adolescents' Leisure Motivation, Leisure Involvement, and Leisure Satisfaction: A Structural Equation Model', *Social Indicators Research*, 110(3), pp. 1187–1199. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9979-2.

Cheshire, L. and Lawrence, G. (2005) 'Neoliberalism, Individualisation and Community: Regional Restructuring in Australia', *Social Identities*, 11(5), pp. 435–445. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630500407869.

Choi, W. *et al.* (2018) '"We're a Family and that Gives Me Joy": Exploring Interpersonal Relationships in Older Women's Softball Using Socio-Emotional Selectivity Theory', *Leisure Sciences*, 0(0), pp. 1–18. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2018.1499056.

Clark, D.M.T., Loxton, N.J. and Tobin, S.J. (2015) 'Declining Loneliness Over Time: Evidence From American Colleges and High Schools', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(1), pp. 78–89. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167214557007.

Cnaan, R.A. and Goldberg-Glen, R.S. (1991) 'Measuring Motivation to Volunteer in Human Services':, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 27(3), pp. 269–284. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0021886391273003.

Coleman, J.S. (1988) 'Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital', *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, pp. 95–120. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1086/228943.

Coleman, J.S. and Hoffer, T. (1987) *Public and Private schools: the impact of communities*. New York: Basic Books.

Collier, R.B. and Collier, D. (2002) *Shaping the political arena: critical junctures, the labor movement, and regime dynamics in Latin America*. Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press.

Creative Scotland (2023) *Creative Scotland Audience Intentions Survey: Impacts of rising costs of living*. Edinburgh: Creative Scotland. Available at: https://www.creativescotland.com/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/95711/Creative-Scotland-Cost-of-Living-impacts-v2-1.pdf (Accessed: 26 November 2023).

Creswell, J.W. and Plano Clark, V.L. (2018) *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Third Edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Crossley, N. (2011) *Towards relational sociology*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Crotty, M. (1998) *The foundations of social research: meaning and perspective in the research process*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Czepkiewicz, M., Heinonen, J. and Ottelin, J. (2018) 'Why do urbanites travel more than do others? A review of associations between urban form and long-distance leisure travel', *Environmental Research Letters*, 13(7). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aac9d2.

Davies, J. (2018) *Young People & Volunteering: Attitudes and Experiences in Areas of Multiple Deprivation*. Thesis. University of Strathclyde.

Dawson, M. (2012) 'Reviewing the critique of individualization', *Acta Sociologica*, 55(4), pp. 305–319. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0001699312447634.

Dean, J. (2016) 'Class Diversity and Youth Volunteering in the United Kingdom: Applying Bourdieu's Habitus and Cultural Capital', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45(1_suppl), pp. 95S-113S. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764015597781.

Dean, J. (2021) 'Informal volunteering, inequality, and illegitimacy', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, (Symposium Issue), pp. 1–18. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/08997640211034580.

Delanty, G. (2013) *Community*. 1st edn. Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315011417.

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2023) *Trade Union Membership, UK 1995-2022: Statistical Bulletin*. HMSO, p. 39.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2019) 'Taking Part Survey'. UK Data Service. Available at: https://doi.org/doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-Series-2000052.

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2023) 'Community Life Survey'. UK Data Service. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SERIES-2000100.

Dépelteau, F. (2018) 'Relational Thinking in Sociology: Relevance, Concurrence and Dissonance', in F. Dépelteau (ed.) *The Palgrave handbook of relational sociology*. 1st edition. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–34.

Dickinson, H. *et al.* (2012) *The role of the third sector in delivering social care*. London, UK: NIHR School for Social Care Research. Available at: http://www2.lse.ac.uk/LSEHealthAndSocialCare/research/NIHRSSCR/Home.aspx (Accessed: 24 February 2024).

Diehl, K. *et al.* (2018) 'Students' Motivation for Sport Activity and Participation in University Sports: A Mixed-Methods Study', *BioMed Research International*, 2018(Article ID 9524861). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/9524861.

Dilley, R.E. and Scraton, S.J. (2010) 'Women, climbing and serious leisure', *Leisure Studies*, 29(2), pp. 125–141. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360903401927.

Dolnicar, S. and Randle, M. (2007) 'What Motivates Which Volunteers? Psychographic Heterogeneity Among Volunteers in Australia', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 18(2), pp. 135–155. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-007-9037-5.

Donati, P. (2002) *Introduzione alla sociologia relazionale*. 6a ed. Milano: F. Angeli (Sociologia e politica sociale, 5).

Donati, P. (2010) *Relational sociology: a new paradigm for the social sciences*. New York: Routledge.

Donati, P. (2015) 'Manifesto for a critical realist relational sociology', *International Review of Sociology*, 25(1), pp. 86–109. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2014.997967.

Donati, P. (2021) *Transcending Modernity with Relational Thinking*. 1st edn. London: Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003146698.

Donati, P. and Archer, M.S. (2015) *The relational subject*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Doran, A. (2016) 'Empowerment and women in adventure tourism: a negotiated journey', *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, 20(1), pp. 57–80. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2016.1176594.

Dotson, T. (2017) *Technically together: reconstructing community in a networked world*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Dworkin, S.L. (2012) 'Sample Size Policy for Qualitative Studies Using In-Depth Interviews', *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 41(6), pp. 1319–1320. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-012-0016-6.

Ellis Paine, A. *et al.* (2020) *Volunteering: A Family Affair? Summary report*. Summary Report. NCVO. Available at: https://publications.ncvo.org.uk/volunteering-family-affair/ (Accessed: 31 March 2021).

Engward, H. *et al.* (2022) 'Togetherness in Separation: Practical Considerations for Doing Remote Qualitative Interviews Ethically', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, p. 16094069211073212. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211073212.

Eppard, L.M., Schubert, D. and Giroux, H.A. (2018) 'The Double Violence of Inequality: Precarity, Individualism, and White Working-Class Americans', *Sociological Viewpoints*, 32(1), pp. 58–87.

Ertas, N. (2016) 'Millennials And Volunteering: Sector Differences And Implications For Public Service Motivation Theory', *Public Administration Quarterly*, 40(3), pp. 517–558.

von Essen, J. *et al.* (2015) 'Religion and volunteering : complex, contested and ambiguous relationships', in *Religion and volunteering : complex, contested and ambiguous relationships. International interdisciplinary academic workshop on the topic of Volunteering, Religion and Social Capital*, Springer, pp. 1–20. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-04585-6_1.

Eurostat (2022) 'Performing (non-work-related) physical activities by sex, age and educational attainment level'. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2908/HLTH_EHIS_PE3E.

Evers, A. (2013) 'The concept of "civil society": different understandings and their implications for third sector policies', *Voluntary Sector Review*, 4(2), pp. 149–164. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1332/204080513x667800.

Field, A.P. (2013) *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics: and sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll*. 4th edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Field, J. (2008) *Social Capital*. London, UNITED KINGDOM: Routledge. Available at: http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/strath/detail.action?docID=336286.

Fischer, C. and Durham, X. (2022) 'Forms of Group Involvement: Alternatives to the Standard Question', *Sociological Perspectives*, 65(4), pp. 661–683. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/07311214211046561.

Fleischmann, M.H. *et al.* (2018) 'Law enforcement officers' perceptions of and responses to traumatic events: a survey of officers completing Crisis Intervention Team training', *Policing and Society*, 28(2), pp. 149–156. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2016.1234469.

Fletcher, T. (2021) 'Examining the role and significance of parental support on children's uptake of sport', in D.E. Trussell and R. Jeanes (eds) *Families, sport, leisure and social justice: from protest to progress*.

Gaston, S. and Hilhorst, S. (2018) *At Home in One's Past: Nostalgia as a Cultural and Political Force in Britain, France and Germany*. Demos, p. 341.

Gee, L.K. *et al.* (2017) 'The paradox of weak ties in 55 countries', *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 133, pp. 362–372. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2016.12.004.

Geithner, L. and Wagner, M. (2022) 'Old-age lifestyles: Patterns of participation in leisure activities and their associations with different forms of capital', *Journal of Aging Studies*, 61, p. 101022. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2022.101022.

Gerring, J. (2004) 'What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?', *American Political Science Review*, 98(2), pp. 341–354. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055404001182.

Gillham, B. (2007) *Research Interviewing The Range of Techniques*. Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press.

Glover, T.D. (2004) 'Social Capital in the Lived Experiences of Community Gardeners', *Leisure Sciences*, 26(2), pp. 143–162. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400490432064.

Glover, T.D. (2018) 'All the Lonely People: Social Isolation and the Promise and Pitfalls of Leisure', *Leisure Sciences*, 40(1–2), pp. 25–35. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2017.1376017.

Gordon, C.W. and Babchuk, N. (1959) 'A Typology of Voluntary Associations', *American Sociological Review*, 24(1), pp. 22–29. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2089579.

Graeff, P. (2009) 'Social Capital: The Dark Side', in G.T. Svendsen and G.L.H. Svendsen (eds) *Handbook of social capital: the troika of sociology, political science, and economics*. Cheltenham, Glos, UK ; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

Granovetter, M. (1983) 'The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited', *Sociological Theory*, 1, pp. 201–233. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/202051.

Granovetter, M.S. (1973) 'The Strength of Weak Ties', *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), pp. 1360–1380. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1086/225469.

Granovetter, M.S. (1974) *Getting a job: a study of contacts and careers*. Harvard University Press.

Gray, D.E. (2004) *Doing research in the real world*. London ; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gray, E., Khoo, S.-E. and Reimondos, A. (2012) 'Participation in different types of volunteering at young, middle and older adulthood', *Journal of Population Research*, 29(4), pp. 373–398. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s12546-012-9092-7.

Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) 'Competing paradigms in qualitative research', in E.G. Guba and N.K. Denzin (eds) *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp. 163–194.

Halpern, D. (2005) *Social capital*. Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Hampton, K.N. and Wellman, B. (2018) 'Lost and Saved . . . Again: The Moral Panic about the Loss of Community Takes Hold of Social Media', *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews*, 47(6), pp. 643–651. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0094306118805415.

Handy, F. *et al.* (2010) 'A Cross-Cultural Examination of Student Volunteering Is It All About Résumé Building', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 39(3), pp. 498–523. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764009344353.

Hanifan, L.J. (1916) 'The Rural School Community Center', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 67(1), pp. 130–138. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/000271621606700118.

Hardill, I., Grotz, J. and Crawford, L. (eds) (2022) *Mobilising Voluntary Action in the UK: Learning from the Pandemic*. 1st edn. Policy Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2zjz6xk.

Harper, H. and Jackson, G. (2015) *Young People and Volunteering in Scotland Survey*. Stirling: Volunteer Scotland.

Harris, B. (2018) 'Social Policy by Other Means? Mutual Aid and the Origins of the Modern Welfare State in Britain During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *Journal of Policy History*, 30(2), pp. 202–235. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/s0898030618000052.

Harris, B. and Cresswell, R. (2024) 'The legacy of voluntarism: Charitable funding in the early NHS', *The Economic History Review*, 77(2), pp. 554–583. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.13280.

Haski-Leventhal, D. *et al.* (2016) 'Volunteering in Three Life Stages', in David Horton Smith, R.A. Stebbins, and J. Grotz (eds) *The Palgrave handbook of volunteering, civic participation, and nonprofit associations*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 682–701.

Häuberer, J. (2014) 'Social Capital in Voluntary Associations', *European Societies*, 16(4), pp. 570–593. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2014.880497.

Hawkley, L.C. *et al.* (2019) 'Are U.S. older adults getting lonelier? Age, period, and cohort differences', *Psychology and Aging*, 34(8), pp. 1144–1157. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000365.

Henriksen, L.S., Strømsnes, K. and Svedberg, L. (eds) (2019) *Civic Engagement in Scandinavia: Volunteering, Informal Help and Giving in Denmark, Norway and Sweden*. Cham: Springer International Publishing (Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98717-0.

Herzog, P.S. and Yang, S. (2018) 'Social Networks and Charitable Giving: Trusting, Doing, Asking, and Alter Primacy', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 47(2), pp. 376–394. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764017746021.

Heylen, F., Willems, E. and Beyers, J. (2020) 'Do Professionals Take Over? Professionalisation and Membership Influence in Civil Society Organisations', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 31(6), pp. 1226–1238. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-020-00214-9.

Hibberts, M., Burke Johnson, R. and Hudson, K. (2012) 'Common Survey Sampling Techniques', in L. Gideon (ed.) *Handbook of Survey Methodology for the Social Sciences*. New York, NY: Springer New York, pp. 53–74. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3876-2.

Hillery, G.A. (1955) 'Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement', *Rural Sociology*, 20, pp. 111–123.

Hoekman, R., Breedveld, K. and Kraaykamp, G. (2017) 'Sport participation and the social and physical environment: explaining differences between urban and rural areas in the Netherlands', *Leisure Studies*, 36(3), pp. 357–370. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2016.1182201.

Hooghe, M. and Botterman, S. (2012) 'Urbanization, Community Size, and Population Density: Is There a Rural-Urban Divide in Participation in Voluntary Organizations or Social Network Formation?', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(1), pp. 120–144. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764011398297.

Howe, N. (2019) *Millennials And The Loneliness Epidemic*, *Forbes*. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/neilhowe/2019/05/03/millennials-and-the-loneliness-epidemic/ (Accessed: 20 April 2020).

Hull, K.E. and Ortyl, T.A. (2019) 'Conventional and Cutting-Edge: Definitions of Family in LGBT Communities', *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 16(1), pp. 31–43. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-018-0324-2.

Hustinx, L. *et al.* (2016) 'Changing Nature of Formal Service Program Volunteering', in D.H. Smith, R.A. Stebbins, and J. Grotz (eds) *The Palgrave handbook of volunteering, civic participation, and nonprofit associations*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 349–365.

Hustinx, L. and Lammertyn, F. (2003) 'Collective and Reflexive Styles of Volunteering: A Sociological Modernization Perspective', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 14(2), pp. 167–187. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1023948027200.

Hwang, H. and Powell, W.W. (2009) 'The rationalization of charity: The influences of professionalism in the nonprofit sector', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 54(2), pp. 268–298. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2189/asqu.2009.54.2.268.

IBM (2021) 'SPSS'. IBM.

van Ingen, E. and Dekker, P. (2011) 'Dissolution of Associational Life? Testing the Individualization and Informalization Hypotheses on Leisure Activities in The Netherlands Between 1975 and 2005', *Social Indicators Research*, 100(2), pp. 209–224. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9612-9.

van Ingen, E. and Moor, N. (2015) 'Explanations of changes in church attendance between 1970 and 2009', *Social Science Research*, 52, pp. 558–569. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2015.04.004.

Jackson, E. (2020) 'Bowling Together? Practices of Belonging and Becoming in a London Ten-Pin Bowling League', *Sociology*, 54(3), pp. 518–533. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038519892528.

Jager, J., Putnick, D.L. and Bornstein, M.H. (2017) 'More than Just Convenient: The Scientific Merits of Homogeneous Convenience Samples', *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 82(2), pp. 13–30. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/mono.12296.

Jailobaeva, K. (2008) 'The Associational Life: Kyrgyzstan and Scotland', *Edinburgh Working Papers in Sociology*, 30, p. 24.

Jensen, O. and Gidley, B. (2016) ''They've Got Their Wine Bars, We've Got Our Pubs': Housing, Diversity and Community in Two South London Neighbourhoods', in F. Pastore and I. Ponzo (eds) *Inter-group Relations and Migrant Integration in European Cities*. Cham: Springer International Publishing (IMISCOE Research Series), pp. 19–38. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23096-2.

Johnson, C.W. and Samdahl, D.M. (2005) '"The Night They Took Over": Misogyny in a Country-Western Gay Bar', *Leisure Sciences*, 27(4), pp. 331–348. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400590962443.

Joint Economic Committee (2017) *What we do together: The State of Associational Life in America*. SCP REPORT NO. 1-17.

Jones, R. (2020) 'UK volunteering soars during coronavirus crisis', *The Guardian*, 25 May. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/26/uk-volunteering-coronavirus-crisis-community-lockdown (Accessed: 30 May 2020).

Kassman, A. and Kneck, Å. (2022) 'Doing it together. The dynamics of volunteer work in football clubs for children, the Swedish case', *Soccer & Society* [Preprint]. Available at:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14660970.2021.1953478 (Accessed: 20 May 2024).

Kelly, D. *et al.* (2020) *Health Improvement Briefing April 2020*. Glasgow: Glasgow Caledonian University. Available at: https://www.gcu.ac.uk/yunuscentre/media/gcalwebv2/ycsbh/Health%20Improvement%20Briefing%20April%202020pdf.pdf.

Kettell, S. (2019) 'Social Capital and Religion in the United Kingdom', in P.C. Manuel and M. Glatzer (eds) *Faith-Based Organizations and Social Welfare*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 185–203. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77297-4.

Khan, S. (2018) *Fewer young people joining trade unions because they 'don't see how they are relevant'*, *The Independent*. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/trade-unions-fewer-young-people-joining-frances-ogrady-tuc-a8382696.html (Accessed: 6 February 2020).

Kiger, M.E. and Varpio, L. (2020) 'Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131', *Medical Teacher*, 42(8), pp. 846–854. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159x.2020.1755030.

King, A.C. and Woodroffe, J. (2017) 'Walking Interviews', in P. Liamputtong (ed.) *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*. Singapore: Springer Singapore, pp. 1–22. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6_28-1.

Kintrea, K. and Madgin, R. (2019) *Transforming Glasgow: beyond the post-industrial city*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Klinenberg, E. (2013) *Going solo: the extraordinary rise and surprising appeal of living alone*. New York: Penguin Books.

Kovic, M. and Hänsli, N. (2018) 'Do Millennials Care About NPOs? Intergenerational Differences in Attitudes Towards Nonprofit Organizations', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 29(5), pp. 1112–1127. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-0025-8.

Lancee, B. and Radl, J. (2014) 'Volunteering over the Life Course', *Social Forces*, 93(2), pp. 833–862. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/sou090.

Law, B.M.F., Shek, D.T.L. and Ma, C.M.S. (2013) 'Validation of Family, School, and Peer Influence on Volunteerism Scale Among Adolescents', *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23(4), pp. 458–466. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731513476144.

Lee, K. and Ewert, A. (2019) 'Understanding the motivations of serious leisure participation: a self-determination approach', *Annals of Leisure Research*, 22(1), pp. 76–96. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2018.1469420.

Levasseur, M. *et al.* (2015) 'Environmental Factors Associated With Social Participation of Older Adults Living in Metropolitan, Urban, and Rural Areas:

The NuAge Study', *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(8), pp. 1718–1725. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302415.

Levi, M. (1996) 'Social and Unsocial Capital: A Review Essay of Robert Putnam's Making Democracy Work', *Politics & Society*, 24(1), pp. 45–55. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329296024001005.

Lin, E.-Y. (2012) 'Starbucks as the Third Place: Glimpses into Taiwan's Consumer Culture and Lifestyles', *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 24(1–2), pp. 119–128. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2012.650142.

Lin, N. and Dumin, M. (1986) 'Access to occupations through social ties', *Social Networks*, 8(4), pp. 365–385. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-8733(86)90003-1.

Linning, M. and Jackson, G. (2018) *What does the evidence tell us?* Stirling: Volunteer Scotland.

Llopis-Goig, R. (2014) 'Sports participation and cultural trends. Running as a reflection of individualisation and post-materialism processes in Spanish society', *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 11(2), pp. 151–169. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2014.11687938.

Lumivero (2020) 'NVivo'. Lumivero.

Maffesoli, M. (1996) *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*. London. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446222133.

Maffesoli, M. (2016) 'From society to tribal communities', *The Sociological Review*, 64(4), pp. 739–747. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954x.12434.

Maier, F., Meyer, M. and Steinbereithner, M. (2016) 'Nonprofit Organizations Becoming Business-Like: A Systematic Review', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45(1), pp. 64–86. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764014561796.

Maltman, D. and Linning, M. (2021) *NCVO - Time Well Spent - Scottish Analysis: Summary Findings*. Stirling: Volunteer Scotland, p. 24.

Maltman, D., Linning, M. and Stevenson, A. (2020) *Impact of COVID-19 on volunteer participation in Scotland*. Stirling: Volunteer Scotland.

Mann, R. *et al.* (2022) *Local civil society: place, time and boundaries*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, an imprint of Bristol University Press.

Marshall, D.J. and Staeheli, L. (2015) 'Mapping civil society with social network analysis: Methodological possibilities and limitations', *Geoforum*, 61, pp. 56–66. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2015.02.015.

McGuigan, J. (2014) 'The Neoliberal Self', *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research*, 6(1), pp. 223–240. Available at: https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.2000.1525.146223.

Meagher, K. (2010) 'The Tangled Web of Associational Life: Urban Governance and the Politics of Popular Livelihoods in Nigeria', *Urban Forum*, 21(3), pp. 299–313. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s12132-010-9089-2.

Means, R. and Evans, S. (2012) 'Communities of place and communities of interest? An exploration of their changing role in later life', *Ageing and Society; Cambridge*, 32(8), pp. 1300–1318. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/s0144686x11000961.

Miller, J. and Glassner, B. (2016) 'The "Inside" and the "Outside": Finding realities in interviews', in D. Silverman (ed.) *Qualitative research*. 4th edn. London: Sage, pp. 51–66.

Milligan, C. and Fyfe, N.R. (2004) 'Putting the Voluntary Sector in its Place: Geographical Perspectives on Voluntary Activity and Social Welfare in Glasgow', *Journal of Social Policy*, 33(1), pp. 73–93. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279403007268.

Milligan, C. and Fyfe, N.R. (2005) 'Preserving Space for Volunteers: Exploring the Links between Voluntary Welfare Organisations, Volunteering and Citizenship', *Urban Studies*, 42(3), pp. 417–433. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500034884.

Millward, P. (2023) *Football Fandom, Sexualities and Activism: A Cultural Relational Sociology*. 1st edn. London: Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003373490.

Mohan, J. and Bulloch, S.L. (2012) *The idea of a 'civic core': what are the overlaps between charitable giving, volunteering, and civic participation in England and Wales?* Briefing Paper 73. Third Sector Research Centre.

Montgomery, T. and Baglioni, S. (2023) 'Transformations of work in the era of the gig economy: Towards a new paradigm of worker autonomy or exploitation?', in I. Ness (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of the Gig Economy*. London ; New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group (Routledge international handbooks, 11), pp. 261–275.

Moon, K. and Blackman, D. (2014) 'A Guide to Understanding Social Science Research for Natural Scientists', *Conservation Biology*, 28(5), pp. 1167–1177. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12326.

Morgan, A., Langford, S. and Vassallo, T. (2021) 'Fulfilling Careers in the Sail Training Sector: Charting a Course for Professionals and Volunteers – it's not About the Boat!', *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure* [Preprint]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-021-00085-4.

Morrow-Howell, N., Wang, Y. and Amano, T. (2019) 'Social Participation and Volunteering in Later Life', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Psychology* [Preprint]. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190236557.013.404.

Mullahy, J., Robert, S. and Wolfe, B. (2018) 'Health, Income, and Inequality', in D. Grusky (ed.) *The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender*. New York, USA: Taylor and Francis, pp. 622–635. Available at:

https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9780429494468 (Accessed: 21 January 2022).

Mutz, M. and Müller, J. (2021) 'Social stratification of leisure time sport and exercise activities: comparison of ten popular sports activities', *Leisure Studies*, 40(5), pp. 597–611. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2021.1916834.

Nancy, J.-L. (1991) *The inoperative community*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press (Theory and history of literature, v. 76).

National Records of Scotland (2020) *Mid-Year Population Estimates Scotland, Mid-2019*. Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland. Available at: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/population-estimates/mid-19/mid-year-pop-est-19-report.pdf (Accessed: 30 April 2021).

National Records of Scotland (2022a) *Glasgow City Council Area Profile*. Available at: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/glasgow-city-council-profile.html (Accessed: 3 February 2024).

National Records of Scotland (2022b) *South Ayrshire Council Area Profile*. Available at: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/south-ayrshire-council-profile.html (Accessed: 3 February 2024).

National Records of Scotland (2023) *Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2022*. Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland. Available at: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/household-estimates/2022/house-est-22-report.pdf (Accessed: 14 May 2024).

NCVO (2019) *Time Well Spent: A National Survey on the Volunteer Experience*. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Nesbit, R. (2012) 'The Influence of Major Life Cycle Events on Volunteering', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(6), pp. 1153–1174. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764011429181.

Neuman, W.L. (2015) *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Pearson New International Edition. Edinburgh, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Nisbet, R.A. (1993) *The sociological tradition*. New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A: Transaction Publishers.

O'Connor, A. (2024) *Sailing and social class*. New York: Routledge (Routledge critical Leisure Studies).

Oldenburg, R. (1999) *The great good place: cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community*. Boston: Da Capo Press.

Oldenburg, R. (ed.) (2001) *Celebrating the third place: inspiring stories about the 'great good places' at the heart of our communities*. New York: Marlowe & Co.

Olin, J.L. *et al.* (2020) 'Characterization of clinical pharmacist and hospitalist collaborative relationships', *Journal of the American College of Clinical*

Pharmacy, 3(8), pp. 1413–1422. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1314.

Ortiz-Ospina, E. (2019a) *Are people more likely to be lonely in so-called 'individualistic' societies?, Our World in Data*. Available at: https://ourworldindata.org/lonely-not-alone (Accessed: 20 April 2020).

Ortiz-Ospina, E. (2019b) *Is there a loneliness epidemic?, Our World in Data*. Available at: https://ourworldindata.org/loneliness-epidemic (Accessed: 20 April 2020).

Osler, L. (2020) 'Feeling togetherness online: a phenomenological sketch of online communal experiences', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 19(3), pp. 569–588. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-019-09627-4.

O'Toole, M. and Grey, C. (2016) 'Beyond choice: "Thick" volunteering and the case of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution', *Human Relations*, 69(1), pp. 85–109. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715580156.

Paarlberg, L.E. *et al.* (2022) 'The Rural/Urban Volunteering Divide', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 33(1), pp. 107–120. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00401-2.

Packer, M.J. (2018) *The science of qualitative research*. Second edition. Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Pahl, R.E. (2000) *On friendship*. Malden, Mass: Polity Press (Themes for the 21st century).

Painter II, M.A. and Paxton, P. (2014) 'Checkbooks in the Heartland: Change over Time in Voluntary Association Membership', *Sociological Forum*, 29(2), pp. 408–428. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12090.

Papilloud, C. and Schultze, E.-M. (2018) 'Pierre Bourdieu and Relational Sociology', in F. Dépelteau (ed.) *The Palgrave handbook of relational sociology*. 1st edition. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 343–356.

Paxton, P. and Rap, R. (2016) 'Does the standard voluntary association question capture informal associations?', *Social Science Research*, 60, pp. 212–221. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2016.05.003.

Poata-Smith, E.T.A. (2013) 'Emergent Identities: The Changing Contours of Indigenous Identities in Aotearoa/New Zealand', in M. Harris, M. Nakata, and B. Carlson (eds) *The Politics of Identity: Emerging Indigeneity*. Broadway: UTSePress, pp. 26–59.

Portes, A. (1998) 'Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, pp. 1–24. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.24.1.1.

Putnam, R.D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Quandt, T. and Kröger, S. (2013) *Multiplayer: The Social Aspects of Digital Gaming*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

Rainer, T.S. and Rainer, J.W. (2011) *The millennials: connecting to America's largest generation*. Nashville, Tenn: B & H Pub. Group.

Rajkai, Z. (2016) 'The interpretation of individualisation in non-Western theory - Papers - researchmap', 立命館国際研究, 29(2), pp. 151–170.

Ravanera, Z.R., Beaujot, R. and Fernando, R. (2002) 'The Family and Political Dimension of Social Cohesion: Analysing the Link Using the 2000 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating', *PSC Discussion Papers Series*, 16(7), p. Article 1.

Reed, P.B. and Selbee, L.K. (2001) 'The Civic Core in Canada: Disproportionality in Charitable Giving, Volunteering, and Civic Participation', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 30(4), pp. 761–780. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764001304008.

Reich, R. (2020) *Just giving: why philanthropy is failing democracy and how it can do better*. First paperback printing. Princeton Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Resnik, D.B. (2018) *The Ethics of Research with Human Subjects: Protecting People, Advancing Science, Promoting Trust*. Cham: Springer International Publishing (International Library of Ethics, Law, and the New Medicine). Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68756-8.

Ringuet-Riot, C. *et al.* (2014) 'Volunteer roles, involvement and commitment in voluntary sport organizations: evidence of core and peripheral volunteers', *Sport in Society*, 17(1), pp. 116–133. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2013.828902.

Robison, L.J., Schmid, A.A. and Siles, M.E. (2002) 'Is Social Capital Really Capital?', *Review of Social Economy*, 60(1), pp. 1–21. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00346760110127074.

Roeters, A. (2018) *Time use in the Netherlands*. The Netherlands Institute for Social Research. Available at: https://digital.scp.nl/timeuse1/leisure (Accessed: 24 June 2020).

Rowe, N.F. (2019) *Sports participation in Scotland: trends and future prospects*. Observatory for Sport in Scotland, p. 113.

Roy, M. *et al.* (2020) *Solidarity in a time of crisis: the role of mutual aid to the COVID-19 pandemic*. Chief Scientist Office.

Rubin, H.J. and Rubin, I. (2012) *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE.

Sadlon, W. and Rymsza, M. (2024) 'Volunteering and Catholicism in Europe. The Inside Perspective Part 2: Empirical', *The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II*, 14(1), pp. 213–227. Available at: https://doi.org/10.15633/pch.14113.

Sarre, S. and Tarling, R. (2010) 'The volunteering activities of children aged 8–15', *Voluntary Sector Review*, 1(3), pp. 293–307. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1332/204080510x538301.

Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J. and Kitzinger, C. (2015) 'Anonymising interview data: challenges and compromise in practice', *Qualitative Research*, 15(5), pp. 616–632. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114550439.

Sayer, A. (2020) 'Critiquing – and Rescuing – "Character"', *Sociology*, 54(3), pp. 460–481. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038519892532.

van Schie, S. *et al.* (2019) 'What Keeps Corporate Volunteers Engaged: Extending the Volunteer Work Design Model with Self-determination Theory Insights', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 160(3), pp. 693–712. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3926-y.

Schofer, E. and Longhofer, W. (2011) 'The Structural Sources of Association', *American Journal of Sociology*, 117(2), pp. 539–585. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1086/661593.

Scottish Government (2018a) *A Connected Scotland: Our strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, p. 76.

Scottish Government (2018b) *Scottish Government urban rural classification, 2016*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government. Available at: http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/03/6040/0 (Accessed: 2 April 2021).

Scottish Government (2019a) *Scotland's People Annual Report 2018*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, p. 321.

Scottish Government (2019b) 'Scottish Household Survey: 2019 Questionnaire'. Scottish Government. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2019/08/scottish-household-survey-questionnaire/documents/questionnaires/scottish-household-survey-2019-questionnaire/scottish-household-survey-2019-questionnaire/govscot%3Adocument/Scottish%2BHousehold%2BSurvey%2B2019%2BQuestionnaire%2B%2528Updated%2529.pdf (Accessed: 6 February 2021).

Scottish Government (2019c) *Scottish household survey: local authority tables 2018*, *Scottish household survey: local authority tables*. Available at: http://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-household-local-authority-tables/ (Accessed: 16 April 2023).

Scottish Government (2020a) *Scotland's People Annual Report 2019*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2020b) *Scotland's People Annual Report: Culture and Heritage Report 2019*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

Scottish Government (2020c) *The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, p. 20.

Scottish Government (2021a) 'Rural Scotland Key Facts 2021: People and Communities, Services and Lifestyle, Economy and Enterprise', *A National Statistics Publication for Scotland* [Preprint].

Scottish Government (2021b) *Suspected drug deaths in Scotland: April to June 2021*. Edinburgh: Scottish Government, p. 11. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/suspected-drug-deaths-scotland-april-june-2021/documents/ (Accessed: 19 September 2021).

Scottish Government and Ipsos MORI (2020a) 'Scottish Household Survey 2018'. UK Data Service. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-8617-1.

Scottish Government and Ipsos MORI (2020b) 'Scottish Household Survey, Questionnaire 2018'. UK Data Service. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-8617-1.

Serrat, R. *et al.* (2019) 'Fifty-Five Years of Research Into Older People's Civic Participation: Recent Trends, Future Directions', *The Gerontologist*, p. gnz021. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnz021.

Shachar, I.Y. and Hustinx, L. (2019) 'Modalities of agency in a corporate volunteering program: Cultivating a resource of neoliberal governmentality', *Ethnography*, 20(2), pp. 205–226. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138117741503.

Simmel, G. (1950) 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in K. Wolff (tran.) *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. New York: Free Press, pp. 409–424.

Skocpol, T. (2001) *Associations Without Members*, *The American Prospect*. Available at: https://prospect.org/api/content/9752c199-eb3d-520a-a430-120fbf376ffa/ (Accessed: 30 October 2019).

Skocpol, T. (2003) *Diminished democracy: from membership to management in American civic life*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press (The Julian J. Rothbaum distinguished lecture series, v. 8).

Smith, D.H. *et al.* (2016) 'Volunteering as Related to Other Leisure Activities', in D.H. Smith, R.A. Stebbins, and J. Grotz (eds) *The Palgrave handbook of volunteering, civic participation, and nonprofit associations*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 145–177.

Smith, D.H., Stebbins, R.A. and Grotz, J. (eds) (2016) *The Palgrave handbook of volunteering, civic participation, and nonprofit associations*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Solnit, R. (2020) '"The way we get through this is together": mutual aid under coronavirus | Rebecca Solnit', *The Guardian*, 14 May. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/14/mutual-aid-coronavirus-pandemic-rebecca-solnit (Accessed: 22 May 2020).

South Ayrshire Council (2017) *Socio-Economic Profile for South Ayrshire*, *A Story Map*. Available at: https://south-ayrshire.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=6065caa5d51d413eb02efbd088fe99c6 (Accessed: 29 April 2021).

Spencer, L. and Pahl, R.E. (2006) *Rethinking friendship: hidden solidarities today*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.

Stanzani, S. (2017) 'Specificities of the Third Sector: the Relational Approach', *Italian Sociological Review*, 7(1), pp. 105–105. Available at: https://doi.org/10.13136/isr.v7i1.151.

Stebbins, R.A. (1982) 'Serious leisure: A conceptual statement', *Pacific sociological review*, 25(2), pp. 251–272. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/1388726.

Stebbins, R.A. (2007) *Serious leisure: A perspective for our time*. Transaction Publishers.

Stebbins, R.A. (2020) 'Culture and Social Change', in Stebbins, R. A., *The Serious Leisure Perspective*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 151–170. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48036-3_8.

Stewart, E. and Dodworth, K. (2023) '"The Biggest Charity You've Never Heard of": Institutional Logics of Charity and the State in Public Fundraising in Scotland's NHS.', *Journal of Social Policy*, 52(2), pp. 215–236. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279421000520.

Stockemer, D. (2019) *Quantitative Methods for the Social Sciences: A Practical Introduction with Examples in SPSS and Stata*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99118-4.

Stolle, D. and Hooghe, M. (2005) 'Inaccurate, Exceptional, One-Sided or Irrelevant? The Debate about the Alleged Decline of Social Capital and Civic Engagement in Western Societies', *British Journal of Political Science*, 35(1), pp. 149–167. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/s0007123405000074.

Stopher, P.R. (2012) *Collecting, managing, and assessing data using sample surveys*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Storr, R. and Spaaij, R. (2016) '"I guess it's kind of elitist": the formation and mobilisation of cultural, social and physical capital in youth sport volunteering', *Journal of Youth Studies*, pp. 1–16. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2016.1241867.

Strauss, W. and Howe, N.G. (1991) *Generations: the history of America's future, 1584 to 2069*. 1. ed. New York, NY: Morrow.

Studer, S. (2016) 'Volunteer Management: Responding to the Uniqueness of Volunteers', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 45(4), pp. 688–714. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764015597786.

Stuij, M. (2015) 'Habitus and social class: a case study on socialisation into sports and exercise', *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(6), pp. 780–798. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2013.827568.

Sundeen, R.A. (1990) 'Family Life Course Status and Volunteer Behavior: Implications for the Single Parent', *Sociological Perspectives*, 33(4), pp. 483–500. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/1389168.

Taniguchi, H. and Marshall, G.A. (2016) 'Neighborhood Association Participation and Formal Volunteering in Japan', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 27, pp. 695–723. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-015-9551-9.

Tannen, D. (2016) 'When Friends Are "Like Family"', *Well, The New York Times*, 25 March. Available at: https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/03/25/when-friends-are-family/ (Accessed: 4 August 2020).

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (eds) (2010) *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.

Taylor, C. (1985) *Philosophy and the human sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Philosophical papers, 2).

Therrien, F.-H. and Desrosiers, J. (2010) 'Participation of metropolitan, urban and rural community-dwelling older adults', *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 51(3), pp. e52–e56. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2009.11.017.

Tönnies, F. (1974) *Community and association: Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Reprinted and 1. publ. as a paperback. Translated by C.P. Loomis. London: Routledge (International library of sociology).

Tostensen, A., Tvedten, I. and Vaa, M. (2001) *Associational Life in African Cities: Popular Responses to the Urban Crisis*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.

Treuren, G.J.M. (2014) 'Enthusiasts, conscripts or instrumentalists? The motivational profiles of event volunteers', *Managing Leisure*, 19(1), pp. 51–70. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13606719.2013.849506.

Trzesniewski, K.H. and Donnellan, M.B. (2010) 'Rethinking "Generation Me": A Study of Cohort Effects from 1976-2006', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(1), pp. 58–75. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691609356789.

Tubaro, P., Ryan, L. and D'angelo, A. (2016) 'The Visual Sociogram in Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Research', *Sociological Research Online*, 21(2), pp. 180–197. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.3864.

Turner, M. (2024) 'English football, safe standing, and social movements: An eventful sociology of fan activism', in *Routledge Handbook of Sport, Leisure, and Social Justice*. London: Routledge.

Twenge, J.M., Campbell, W.K. and Freeman, E.C. (2012) 'Generational differences in young adults' life goals, concern for others, and civic orientation, 1966–2009', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(5), pp. 1045–1062. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027408.

Vaisey, S. (2007) 'Structure, Culture, and Community: The Search for Belonging in 50 Urban Communes', *American Sociological Review*, 72, pp. 851–873. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240707200601.

Vermeer, P. and Scheepers, P. (2019) 'Bonding or Bridging? Volunteering Among the Members of Six Thriving Evangelical Congregations in the Netherlands', *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 30(5), pp. 962–975. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00160-1.

Victor, C.R. and Pikhartova, J. (2020) 'Lonely places or lonely people? Investigating the relationship between loneliness and place of residence', *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), p. 778. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08703-8.

Villalonga-Olives, E. and Kawachi, I. (2017) 'The dark side of social capital: A systematic review of the negative health effects of social capital', *Social Science & Medicine*, 194, pp. 105–127. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.10.020.

Vogelsang, E.M. (2016) 'Older adult social participation and its relationship with health: Rural-urban differences', *Health & Place*, 42, pp. 111–119. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2016.09.010.

Volunteer Scotland (2018) *Volunteering in Scotland: Scottish Household Survey 2007-2017*. Stirling.

Volunteer Scotland (2019) *The Contribution of Volunteering to Scotlands Health and Wellbeing 2020 - 2040*. Stirling: Volunteer Scotland.

Volunteer Scotland (2020) *Young People in Scotland Survey 2019*. Stirling: Volunteer Scotland. Available at: https://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/1654757/ypis_2019_full_report _final.pdf (Accessed: 1 April 2021).

Volunteer Scotland (2021) *Who contributes the most to volunteering in Scotland?: Volunteering Intensity: a demographic analysis*. Stirling: Volunteer Scotland.

Volunteer Scotland (2022) *Scottish Household Survey 2020: Findings from the Scottish Household Survey*. Stirling: Volunteer Scotland.

Walker, A. (2013) 'The fall and rise of the Scottish community', *Social Sciences Directory*, 2(3), pp. 123–133.

Walsh, D. (2017) *The changing ethnic profiles of Glasgow and Scotland, and the implications for population health*. Glasgow: Glasgow Centre for Population Health, p. 35.

Warde, A., Tampubolon, G. and Savage, M. (2005) 'Recreation, Informal Social Networks and Social Capital', *Journal of Leisure Research*, 37(4), pp. 402–425. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2005.11950060.

Weaver, B. and Fraser, A. (2022) 'The social dynamics of group offending', *Theoretical Criminology*, 26(2), pp. 264–284. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/13624806211030459.

Webb, E. and Karlis, G. (2017) 'Theoretical developments in leisure studies: A look at perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation', *Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure*, 40(2), pp. 268–283. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.2017.1328790.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R.A. and Snyder, W. (2002) *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press.

White, E.S. (2021) 'Parent values, civic participation, and children's volunteering', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 127, p. 106115. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106115.

Wilkinson, J. (2019) *The Public Life of Friendship*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-03161-9_1.

Wilson, J. and Musick, M. (1997) 'Who Cares? Toward an Integrated Theory of Volunteer Work', *American Sociological Review*, 62(5), pp. 694–713. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2657355.

Wiman, E. (2018) 'NKS saknar barninredning – personal ber om gåvor', *Aftonbladet*, 19 February. Available at: https://www.aftonbladet.se/a/BJrpgQ (Accessed: 29 May 2024).

Windebank, J.E. (2008) 'Volunteering and the gender division of labour: A Franco-British comparison', *Community, Work & Family*, 11(4), pp. 457–473. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13668800802349802.

Winograd, M. and Hais, D.M. (2014) 'How Millennials Could Upend Wall Street and Corporate America', *Governance Studies at Brookings*, p. 19.

Wood, M. (2010) *Rethinking rural communities for 21st century empowerment, in ESRC/Scottish Government (2010) Rural community empowerment in the 21st century: building a 'can-do' culture*. Seminar Report, Mapping the public policy landscape seminar series. Swindon: ESRC.

Yates, J. (2021) *Fractured why our societies are coming apart - and how they can be put together again*. Manchester: HarperNorth.

Yerkes, M.A., Roeters, A. and Baxter, J. (2020) 'Gender differences in the quality of leisure: a cross-national comparison', *Community, Work & Family*, 23(4), pp. 367–384. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2018.1528968.

Yin, R.K. (2009) *Case study research: design and methods*. 4th ed. Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications (Applied social research methods, v. 5).

Young, A.A., Simpson, C. and Warren, A.E. (2017) 'Practices and attitudes of canadian cardiologists caring for patients with trisomy 18', *Canadian Journal of Cardiology*, 33(4), pp. 548–551. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cjca.2016.11.007.

Yousefi Nooraie, R. *et al.* (2020) 'Social Network Analysis: An Example of Fusion Between Quantitative and Qualitative Methods', *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 14(1), pp. 110–124. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689818804060.

Yuen, F. and Johnson, A.J. (2017) 'Leisure Spaces, Community, and Third Places', *Leisure Sciences*, 39(3), pp. 295–303. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2016.1165638.

Żadkowska, M. *et al.* (2022) 'The Sociological Confessional: A Reflexive Process in the Transformation From Face-To-Face to Online Interview', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, p. 16094069221084785. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221084785.

Zisman-Ilani, Y. *et al.* (2020) 'Shared Decision Making and Patient-Centered Care in Israel, Jordan, and the United States: Exploratory and Comparative Survey Study of Physician Perceptions', *JMIR formative research*, 4(8), p. e18223. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2196/18223.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Participation information sheets

Survey:

Participant Information Sheet

Title of the study: *What We Do Together: People's participation in social activities and volunteering in Glasgow and South Ayrshire*

Researcher: David Bomark, doctoral researcher in the School of Social Work and Social Policy

Introduction
This survey is part of my doctoral research project 'What We Do Together', funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Volunteer Scotland.

What is the purpose of the study?
The study aims to understand people's participation in group activities and clubs, and what the relationship is between these activities and volunteering, although you do not have to currently be a volunteer to take part.

Do you have to take part in the project?
No, you do not have to take part, your participation is entirely voluntary. The project consists of two parts: an online survey, followed by optional interviews, which will be undertaken later this year. You can express an interest in taking part in the interviews at the end of this survey, or you can choose to only complete the survey. Both are entirely optional.

Who can take part in this survey?
For this research project, only people currently living in Glasgow City Council area and South Ayrshire Council area can participate. You also need to be 16 years of age or above.

What does taking part in this survey involve?
The survey has four sections asking questions on your social life, your friends and friendship groups, your volunteering and about you. It will take around 15 to 20 minutes to complete. Participation is completely voluntary, and you can choose to leave the survey at any point. The questions that you have filled out might still be used in the analysis, unless you go back through the survey and delete your answers.

What will happen to my answers?
Your answers are confidential and will be saved in a password protected database. Only the researcher and the supervisory team will have access to this database. Personal information, such as your IP address, will not be collected.

Is the survey anonymous?
The survey can be completed anonymously, without giving any of your personal details. If you are interested in taking part in a follow-up interview, you can share your name and email address or telephone number at the end of the survey. If you choose to share your contact details, I will then follow up on your answers from the survey in the interview. This means that if you choose to leave your contact information, your participation will not be anonymous. However, your contact information will not be shared with anyone else and will be replaced by an unique ID number and kept separate from the survey data in a different folder and will be deleted after the follow-up interviews have taken place.

Where will the information be stored and how long will it be kept for?
The data from the survey will be anonymised and archived in the UK Data Archive to make the data available for other researchers interested in this area of study. Please also read the University of Strathclyde's [Privacy Notice for Research Participants](#).

What happens next?
If you would like to know more about the outcomes and findings from this survey, please contact me directly using the information below to be added to a mailing list for this research project.

Further information
The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee at the University of Strathclyde. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact me, David Bomark, or my supervisor, Professor Daniela Sime. If you have any concerns about how this study has been undertaken, you can contact the Chair for the Ethics committee, Dr Dan Heap. Contact information for each can be found below.

Thank you for reading this information – if you have any questions or are unsure about what is written here, please get in touch with me. My contact information can be found below.

Researcher
David Bomark
david.bomark@strath.ac.uk
Doctoral researcher, Social Policy
School of Social Work and Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Chief Investigator
Professor Daniela Sime
daniela.sime@strath.ac.uk
Professor of Youth, Migration and Social Justice
School of Social Work and Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Chair of Ethics committee
Dr Dan Heap
dan.heap@strath.ac.uk
Chair of Ethics Committee
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Participant Information Sheet

Title of the study: What We Do Together: People's participation in social activities and volunteering in Glasgow and South Ayrshire
Researcher: David Bomark, Doctoral Researcher in the School of Social Work and Social Policy

Introduction
This research is part of my doctoral research project 'What We Do Together', funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Volunteer Scotland. The project consists of three parts: interviews with people working in organisations, clubs, and associations that engage people in group activities, a survey, and a follow-up from the interviews and survey, which will be undertaken later this year.

What is the purpose of the study?
The study aims to understand people's participation in group activities and clubs, and what the relationship is between these activities and volunteering.

Do you have to take part in the project?
No, you do not have to take part, your participation is entirely voluntary.

What will you do in the project?
The interview will be questions about the organisation, club, or association that you work for, and on the people that engage in the activities of your organisation, club, or association. It will also ask about the local community in which you operate, and about how the pandemic have influenced participation in your organisation, club, or association.

Who can take part in this interview?
For this part of the research, people involved in organisations, clubs, or associations that engage people in group activities in either Glasgow City Council area or South Ayrshire Council area can take part.

What does taking part in this interview involve?
This interview would be around 30 minutes long and will consider the organisational context in which these group activities take place. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews would take place online through Zoom. Participation is completely voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw from the interview at any point without any questions asked.

What will happen to my answers?
The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The videos and transcriptions will be treated as confidential and will be saved in a password protected drive. Only me and my supervisors will have access to the recordings and transcriptions. Any identifying information, whether this is about yourself or members or beneficiaries of the organisation, club, or association you work for, will be anonymised before any data analysis will take place. Your contact information will not be shared with anyone else and will only be saved if you would like to receive information on events in relation to this research project or findings from the interviews.

Further information
The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee at the University of Strathclyde. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact me, David Bomark, or my

supervisor, Professor Daniela Sime. If you have any concerns about how this study has been undertaken, you can contact the Chair for the Ethics committee, Dr Dan Heap. Contact information for each can be found below.

Thank you for reading this information – if you have any questions or are unsure about what is written here, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Researcher
David Bomark
david.bomark@strath.ac.uk
Doctoral researcher, Social Policy
School of Social Work and Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Chief Investigator
Professor Daniela Sime
daniela.sime@strath.ac.uk
Professor of Youth, Migration and Social Justice
School of Social Work and Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Chair of Ethics committee
Dr Dan Heap
dan.heap@strath.ac.uk
Chair of Ethics Committee
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Participant interviews:

Participant Information Sheet

Title of the study: What We Do Together: People's participation in social activities and volunteering in Glasgow and South Ayrshire
Researcher: David Bomark, Doctoral Researcher in the School of Social Work and Social Policy

Introduction
This research is part of my doctoral research project 'What We Do Together: People's participation in social activities in Glasgow and South Ayrshire', funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Volunteer Scotland. The project consists of three parts: interviews with people working in organisations, clubs, and associations, a survey with people living in communities, and follow-up interviews with people who completed the survey or are members of associations in the areas researched. This Information Sheet gives you more information about the interviews with volunteers from the survey.

What is the purpose of the study?
The study aims to understand people's participation in group activities and what the relationship is between these activities and volunteering.

Do you have to take part in the project?
No, you do not have to take part, your participation is entirely voluntary.

Who can take part in interview?
People who took part in the survey and shared their contact information or members of associations I involved in the project are now being asked if they want to take part in these interviews. This is the reason I am sending you this Information Sheet.

What will you do in the project?
The interview will be about the activities that you take part in and how you understand your own participation in these activities. The interview will be about who you engage with during these activities, such as taking part in clubs or volunteering, where do these activities take place, and other aspects of your participation in these activities, including how different activities relate to each other.

What does taking part in this interview involve?
The interview is likely to take between 45 and 60 minutes and will discuss your participation in group activities and associations. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews will take place online through Zoom. Participation is completely voluntary, and you can choose to withdraw from the interview at any point with no questions asked. You can also choose to withdraw your information up to one month after the interview has been completed.

What will happen to my answers?
The interview will be recorded and transcribed. The recordings and transcriptions will be treated as confidential and will be saved in a password protected drive. Only I will have access to the recordings in order to generate transcriptions. Any identifying information, whether this is about yourself or other people, will be anonymised before any data analysis will take place. This means that no real names will be used in further analysis or publications. Your contact information will not be shared with anyone else and will only be saved if you would like to receive information or events in relation to this research project.

Further information
The study has been approved by the Ethics Committee at the University of Strathclyde. If you have any questions about the research, you can contact me, David Bomark, or my supervisor, Professor Daniela Sime.

If you have any concerns about how this study has been undertaken, you can also contact the Chair for the Ethics committee, Dr Dan Heap. Contact information for each can be found below.

Researcher
David Bomark
david.bomark@strath.ac.uk
Doctoral researcher, Social Policy
School of Social Work and Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Research Supervisor
Professor Daniela Sime
daniela.sime@strath.ac.uk
Professor of Youth, Migration and Social Justice
School of Social Work and Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Chair of Ethics committee
Dr Dan Heap
dan.heap@strath.ac.uk
Chair of Ethics Committee
School of Social Work & Social Policy
University of Strathclyde

Appendix 2: Consent forms

Stakeholder interviews

Consent Form

Title of the study: What We Do Together: People's participation in social activities and volunteering in Glasgow and South Ayrshire
Name of department: School of Social Work and Social Policy
Researcher: David Bomark, Doctoral Researcher

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, up to the point of anonymisation and amalgamation of the data, without having to give a reason and without any consequences. If I exercise my right to withdraw and I don't want my data to be used, any data which have been collected from me will be destroyed.
- I understand that once the data has been anonymised (i.e., that the data cannot be used to identify me personally) and amalgamated, it cannot be withdrawn. This will take place one month after the interview.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project
- I consent to being audio and/or video recorded as part of the project
- I consent to the anonymised data from this interview to be archived in the UK Data Service

Signature of Participant:

Click or tap here to add your digital
signature.   Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Participant interviews

Consent Form

Title of the study: What We Do Together: People's participation in social activities and volunteering in Glasgow and South Ayrshire
Name of department: School of Social Work and Social Policy
Researcher: David Bomark, Doctoral Researcher

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, up to the point of anonymisation and amalgamation of the data, without having to give a reason and without any consequences. If I exercise my right to withdraw and I don't want my data to be used, any data which have been collected from me will be destroyed.
- I understand that once the data has been anonymised (i.e., that the data cannot be used to identify me personally) and amalgamated, it cannot be withdrawn. This will take place one month after the interview.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project
- I consent to being audio and video recorded as part of the project
- I consent to the anonymised data from this interview to be archived in the UK Data Service

Signature of Participant:

Click or tap here to add your digital
signature.   Date: Click or tap to enter a date.

Appendix 3: Interview guides

Stakeholder interviews

Introducing the research project, check that they have read the Participant Information Sheet, and check if they have any questions. Explain how the data will be saved, stored, and that they can withdraw until the data has been anonymised and amalgamated. Check for consent again. Briefly explain the project, that it is about the group activities that people engage in, and what the relationship is between these and volunteering, and the reason why I want to interview you, is to understand the settings and context to where people engage with others.

Background

Could you please tell me about your organisation/club/association?
- What kind of activities do you offer?
- How many members/beneficiaries do you have?
- Are you part of a larger organisation or a network?

What is your role?
- How long have you been in this role?

Locality/geography

How would you describe the area that you are working in?
- Is there a sense of community in the area? Do you think your organisation/club/associational contribute to this sense of community?
- What are the social issues that people face in this area?
- To what extent do these issues inform how your organisation works?

What is your relationship to the local authority/council?
- Any funding?

Engagement and reach

Who are the people who engage in your organisation/club/association?
- In terms of ages? Ethnicities? Social backgrounds?
- Are they local, or is it mixed with people from other neighbourhoods/villages/towns/cities?
- Do you see some groupings engage in different ways, or for other reasons, than others?

Do you know of any barriers that hinders people from engaging with your organisation?
- Structural?
- Social?

Are there any enabling factors that assist people in engaging with your organisation?

How do people get involved with your organisation, or how do they get in contact with you usually?
- Family members?
- Friendship groups?
- Colleagues?
- Neighbour?

Have you seen in any changes in how people are engaging with your organisation over time?
- In the last 10 years?
- In the last 20 years?
- (Even further back?)

How has the pandemic changed the way people engage with your organisation?
- Do you think the pandemic will change how people engage with you in the future?

(If there are any volunteering roles in the organisation)
What relationship does the volunteers have to the organisation?
- Did they start as members/beneficiaries?

Link between volunteering and group activities

Depending on type of organisation:
Do you think there is a link between engaging in your organisation/club/association and people volunteering?
or
Do you think there is a link between volunteering with your organisation/club/association and how people engage in other group activities?

- What does this link look like?
- What are the factors that influence this link?

Is there anything else you think is important that we haven't yet talked about in relation to engagement and the local community?

Thank you.

Participant interviews

Interview schedule for phase 2 interviews

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this follow-up interview from the survey you did earlier this summer. Before we begin, I would just like to make sure that you have read the Participant Information Sheet and that you are still willing to take part? Do you have any questions about the research process before we start?

This part of the research is to understand how people engage in different group activities and how they relate to each other, especially to volunteering. We will talk through the different activities and volunteering activities you do and explore what the relation between the different activities might be, if there is one.

Before I start recording, do you have any questions?

Background

Could you please tell me a little about yourself?
- Where did you grow up?
- Where do you live now? Who do you live with?
- What role does organised group activities play in your life?
- What role does informal group activities play in your life?
- Has this changed over time, or has it been constant?
  - How and why did it change?

Mapping activities

I would now like to talk about the different activities that you take part of in more detail. I have prepared a Miro board, where I have added some information from your survey responses to get us started, but please feel free to add, take away, or change anything on the screen, this is your board. I want to get an understanding of what group activities you take part in, and later we'll explore if there's any relationship between them.

Prompts:
- What type of activity is this? Organised? Informal?
- Where does this take place?
- How did you get involved in this activity?
- Could you tell me about the other people involved in this activity? How connected do you feel to the others in this activity?
- What are the benefits for you of engaging in this activity? Does it affect your wellbeing in any way?
- Has your engagement in this activity changed over time? If so, in what ways?
- (How has the pandemic impacted on this activity?)
- Do your friends or family take part in these activities as well?

Also, could you add activities that you have done in the past as well?

Are there any activities that you would like to take part in, but haven't yet, or cannot take part in?
- What are the barriers for you not doing this activity?
- What would make you/what would it take for you to take part in this activity?
- (If not volunteering) What about volunteering?

Explore connections and networks

Moving on to how the different activities might be connected to each other, could you show me on the Miro board by organising them in groups or use the drawing tools available?

Prompts:
- How, and why, are these activities connected?
- Are there people you see in more than one activity? Or different people in each?
- Is the connection based on personal relationships?
- Location?
- Shared identity?

I would like to focus on volunteering now:
- What are your views on volunteering? Do you do any volunteering? Have you done any volunteering in the past?
- Is there any connection between these activities and (your) volunteering?
- Is volunteering distinct from other group activities? If so, why, and how?
- (If not volunteering) Is volunteering something you would like to do?

Is there anything else you think is important that we haven't yet talked about in relation to the activities you take part in, or how they might relate to each other?

Appendix 4: Survey

Code	Question
Intro-location	Where do you live? o Glasgow City Council area (1) o South Ayrshire Council area (2) o Other local authority area (99)
INTRO-postcode	Dropdown menu
INTRO-year	What year were you born in?
NGBH-belong	How strongly do you feel you belong to your neighbourhood? o Very strongly (1) o Fairly strongly (2) o A little (3) o Not at all (4) o Don't know/don't want to answer (99)
NGBH-rate	How would you rate your neighbourhood as a place to live? o Very good (1) o Fairly good (2) o Fairly poorly (3) o Very poorly (4) o No opinion (99)
NGBH-lived	How long have you lived in your neighbourhood? o Under a year (1) o Between 1 and 2 years (2) o Between 2 and 5 years (3) o Between 5 and 10 years (4) o Between 10 and 20 years (5) o More than 20 years (6)
NGBH-services	How satisfied are you with the local services and amenities in your neighbourhood? o Extremely satisfied (1) o Moderately satisfied (2) o Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3) o Somewhat dissatisfied (4) o Extremely dissatisfied (5)
AL	This section is about the groups, clubs and other social activities that you might take part in.
AL-types	o Sports Clubs and organisations (1) o Informal group sports or exercising activities (2) o Hobby related activities with other people (not sports related) (3) o Arts based or other cultural group activities (4) o Youth groups (5) o Clubs for retired or semi-retired people (6) o Religious or spiritual groups (7) o Vocational or learning-based clubs or organisations (8) o Activist groups (for example: political, rights groups, environmental, trade unions) (9) o Local community groups (10) o Other (11) o None (12)
AL-INFO	The next few pages will ask questions about the social activities you take part in.
	AL-type2 This page is about the [AL-types] you take part in. Note: This section was repeated for each type of associational life.
AL-number	How many groups of this type do you engage in?
AL-hours	How many hours would you estimate you dedicate to this activity on average per month, before and during the pandemic? o Before pandemic: ___ o During pandemic: ___

AL-space	In what kind of space does this activity most often take place? Select all that apply to you. o Community hall (1) o Public space (library, school building, religious building, sports hall etc.) (2) o Pub, restaurant, or cafe (3) o Organisation/club headquarters or branch (4) o Workplace (5) o In someone's private home (6) o Online (7) o Outside/in nature (8) o Different every time/mixed locations (9) o Other (10)
AL-location	Where would this activity usually take place in relation to your home? o In my home (1) o Near my home (2) o Elsewhere in my village, town or city (3) o Outside my village, town or city (4) o Different location each time (5)
AL-who	Who else would usually take part in this activity with you? Select all that apply to you. o People from my household (1) o Family members not in my household (2) o Friend(s) (3) o Colleague(s) (4) o Neighbour(s) (5) o Mentors or teachers (6) o Classmate(s) or coursemate(s) (7) o People I know from elsewhere (8) o People I did not know before joining this group or activity (9) o Other (10)
AL-introduce	Who introduced you to this activity? o Someone from my household (1) o Family member not in my household (2) o Friend (3) o Colleague (4) o Neighbour (5) o Mentor or teacher (6) o Classmate or coursemate (7) o Someone I volunteer with (8) o No one, joined by myself (9) o Other (10)
AL-overlap	Thinking of the people you are engaging with in this activity, are they part of any other group activities or friendship groups that you are part of? o Most people would also be in other groups or activities I take part in (1) o A few people might show up in more than one group or activity (2) o No one shows up in other groups or activities (3)
AL-mix	In this activity, would you mix with the groups below? Select all that apply to you. o People from different age groups to my own (1) o People from different ethnic groups or religions to my own (2) o People from a different social or educational background to my own (3) o People from other neighbourhoods, villages, towns or cities (4) o I do not mix with the groups mentioned above (99)
AL-relation	How would you characterise the relationship you have with the majority of people in this activity? o Family (1) o Close friends (2)

	o Casual friends (3) o Acquaintances (4) o Professional (5) o Don't know/don't want to answer (99)
AL-vol	Has participation in this activity led you to also give unpaid help or to volunteer? o Yes, with the same club or organisation (1) o Yes, but with another club or organisation (2) o No (99)
FR	This section is about your friends and friendship groups.
FR-hours	How many hours would you estimate you spend with your friends and friendship groups on average per month (both offline and online), before and during the pandemic? Before pandemic: ___ During pandemic: ___
FR-space	In what type of spaces do you most often meet and interact with your friends? Select all that apply to you. o Community hall (1) o Public space (library, school building, religious building, sports hall etc.) (2) o Pub, restaurant, or cafe (3) o Organisation/club headquarters or branch (4) o Workplace (5) o In someone's private home (6) o Online (7) o Outside/in nature (8) o Other (99)
FR-location	Where do you meet with your friends and friendship groups? Select all that apply to you. o In my immediate neighbourhood (1) o Elsewhere in my village, town or city (2) o Outside my village, town or city (3) o Online (4)
FR-overlap	Do your friends take part in the group activities from the previous section of this survey? o Most friends also take part in other groups or activities I take part in (1) o A few friends might show up in more than one group or activity (2) o None of my friends shows up in other groups or activities (3)
FR-mix	In your friendship group, are you mixing with the groups below? Select all that apply to you. o People from different age groups to my own (1) o People from different ethnic groups or religions to my own (2) o People from a different social or educational background to my own (3) o People from other neighbourhoods, villages, towns or cities (4) o I do not mix with the above groups (99)
FR-meet	Where did you meet your friends? Choose all answers that apply to you. o School or university (1) o From volunteering committment (2) o From childhood (3) o At work (4) o Through other friends (5) o Other (6) [Below were carried forward from previous questions] o Sports Clubs and organisations (7) o Informal group sports or exercising activities (8) o Hobby related activities with other people (not sports related) (9) o Arts based or other cultural group activities (10)

	o Youth groups (11) o Clubs for retired or semi-retired people (12) o Religious or spiritual groups (13) o Vocational or learning-based clubs or organisations (14) o Activist groups (for example: political, rights groups, environmental, trade unions) (15) o Local community groups (16) o Other (17) o None (18)
VOL-start	Have you started to volunteer because of a friend or a friendship group? o Yes, with the same club or organisation as my friend(s) (1) o Yes, but another organisation to my friend(s) (2) o No (99)
VOL	This section is about your volunteering and other unpaid help in groups, organisations, and clubs.
VOL-q	Have you done any volunteering in the last two years (including during the pandemic)? o Yes (1) o No (2)
VOL-type	What kind of groups, clubs, or organisations do you volunteer in? Select all that apply to you. o Children's education and schools (1) o Youth or children's activities outside school (2) o Health, disability and wellbeing related organisation (3) o Physical activity, sport and exercise (4) o Local community or neighbourhood (5) o Religion and belief related organisation (6) o Hobbies and recreation (7) o Groups aimed at supporting older people (8) o Politics (9) o Trade Unions, justice and human rights (10) o Environmental protection (11) o Culture and heritage (12) o Emergency services, first aid and public safety (13) o Adult guidance, advice and learning (14) o Animal welfare (15) o Other (16)
VOL-hours	How many hours do you estimate you volunteer on average per month, before and during the pandemic? Before the pandemic: ___ During the pandemic: ___
VOL-tasks	What kind of tasks do you usually do as a volunteer? Select all that apply to you. o Acting as a committee member or as a Trustee (1) o Promotion and marketing (2) o Office or administrative work (3) o Providing advice, support or advocacy (4) o Transporting people or things (5) o Providing education, training or coaching to develop skills (6) o Campaigning (7) o Fundraising (8) o Counselling (9) o Visiting, buddying or befriending (10) o Care work (11) o Generally helping out as required (12) o Other (13)
VOL-space	In what kind of spaces does your volunteering take place? Select all that apply to your volunteering. o Community hall (1) o Public space (library, school building, religious building, sports hall etc.) (2)

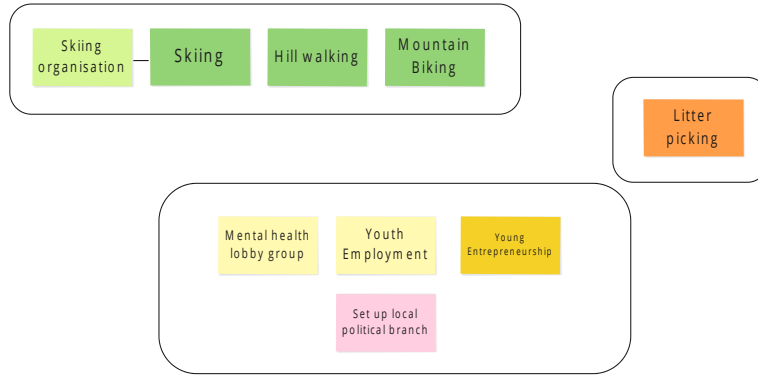|	
	o Pub, restaurant, or cafe (3) o Organisation/club headquarters or branch (4) o Workplace (5) o At someone's private home (6) o Online (7) o Outside/in nature (8) o Different every time/mixed locations (9) o Other (99)
VOL-location	Where would your unpaid help or volunteering usually take place in relation to your home? Select all that apply to your volunteering. o In my home (1) o Near my home (2) o Elsewhere in my village, town or city (3) o Outside my village, town or city (4) o Online (5)
VOL-who	Who are the people you volunteer with? This refers to the other volunteers, not beneficiaries or service users. Select all that apply to your volunteering. o People from my household (1) o Family members not in my household (2) o Friend(s) (3) o Colleague(s) (4) o Neighbour(s) (5) o Mentors or teachers (6) o Classmate(s) (7) o People I met in the social activities discussed earlier in this survey (8) o People I did not know before I started to volunteer (9) o I don't volunteer with other volunteers (99)
VOL-introduce	Who introduced you to volunteering? Select all that apply to your volunteering o Someone from my household (1) o Family member not in my household (2) o Friend (3) o Colleague (4) o Neighbour (5) o Mentor or teacher (6) o Classmate (7) o No one, joined through advertisement or contacted organisation directly (8) o Other (99)
VOL-overlap	Thinking of the people you are volunteering with, do they also show up in your other volunteering activities or group activities? o Most of them show up in other group activities as well (1) o A few people show up in more than one group or activity (2) o None of the people I volunteer with show up in other groups (3)
VOL-mix	In your volunteering activities, are you mixing with the groups below? Select all that apply to your volunteering. o People from different age groups to my own (1) o People from different ethnic groups or religions to my own (2) o People from a different social or educational background to my own (3) o People from other neighbourhoods, villages, towns or cities (4) o I don't mix with the above groups (99)
VOL-statement1	Volunteering has made me engage in more group activities than I did before. o Strongly agree (1) o Somewhat agree (2) o Neither agree nor disagree (3) o Somewhat disagree (4) o Strongly disagree (5)
VOL-statement2	I have expanded my friendship group because of my volunteering.

	o Strongly agree (1) o Somewhat agree (2) o Neither agree nor disagree (3) o Somewhat disagree (4) o Strongly disagree (5)
VOL-statement3	Volunteering has made me feel more connected to my local community. o Strongly agree (1) o Somewhat agree (2) o Neither agree nor disagree (3) o Somewhat disagree (4) o Strongly disagree (5)
VOL-statement4	Which of these statements apply to you? Select all that apply to your volunteering. o I started to volunteer through people I met in other social activities (1) o I started as a participant or beneficiary and then became a volunteer (2) o I joined a club or group activity through the people I met when I was volunteering (3) o None of these apply to me (99)
COVID	This section explores any volunteering you may have undertaken because of COVID-19 (March 2020 to present date).
COVID-vol	Have you undertaken any new types of volunteering since the pandemic started in March 2020? o Yes (1) o No (2)
COV-type	What type(s) of volunteering have you engaged in during the pandemic? Select all that apply to you. o Befriending or keeping in touch with someone who is at risk of being lonely (1) o Doing food shopping for others (2) o Helping with household tasks, such as cleaning and gardening (3) o Collecting and delivering prescriptions (4) o Providing food support (other than shopping) (5) o Helping at organisations which support people who face challenges (6) o Providing administrative or IT support to organisations, charities or individuals (7) o Helping at organisations which support people's physical and mental health (8) o Walking dogs or providing other help with pets (9) o Providing tutoring for children or adults (10) o Providing transport to medical appointments or hospital (11) o Collecting pensions/benefits or organising bill payments on someone's behalf (12) o Making personal protective equipment such as face masks or hospital gowns (13) o Helping to staff telephone or online support services (14) o Other (99)
COV-org	How have these volunteering activities been organised? Select all that apply to you. o Through an organisation (1) o Informal community group that existed before the pandemic (2) o Informal community group that did not exist before the pandemic (3) o One-to-one support, no formal arrangements (4)
DEMO	This section is about you. This information will only be used for research purposes and will not be used to identify you. You do not need to answer if you don't want to.
DEMO-gender	What is your gender?

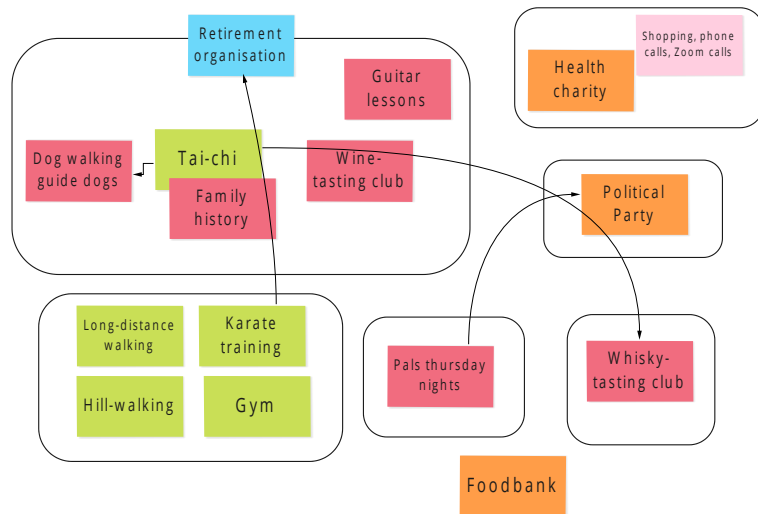|	
	o Woman (1) o Man (2) o Trans woman (3) o Trans man (4) o Non-binary (5) o Other (please specify) (6) o Prefer not to say (99)
DEMO-household	Please give the number of adults and children who live with you on a permanent basis: Adults (above 18) in household: Children (below 18) in household:
DEMO-ethnicity	What is your ethnicity? White: o British o Irish o Gypsy/traveler o Other white Asian: o Indian o Bangladeshi o Pakistani o Chinese o Other Asian Black: o African o Caribbean o Other Other: o Arab o Other
DEMO-education	Which of the following is the highest level of educational qualification you have completed? o Degree, professional qualification (1) o HNC/HND or equivalent (2) o Higher, A-level or equivalent (3) o O-grade, Standard Grade or equivalent (4) o Other qualifications (5) o Unknown (99)
DEMO-employment	What is your current employment status? o Working full time (1) o Working part time (2) o Caring for someone full-time (3) o Not currently employed, looking for work (4) o Unable to work (5) o Retired (6) o Student (7) o Other (99)
DEMO-home	Do you own your home (includes paying a mortgage)? o Yes (1) o No (2)
DEMO-income	What is your household income? o Below £10.000 (1) o £10,001 - £20,000 (2) o £20,001 - £30,000 (3) o £30,001 - £40,000 (4) o £40,001 - £50,000 (5) o £50,001 - £60,000 (6) o £60,001 - £70,000 (7) o £70,001 - £100,000 (8) o £100,001 - £150,000 (9) o Above £150,000 (10)

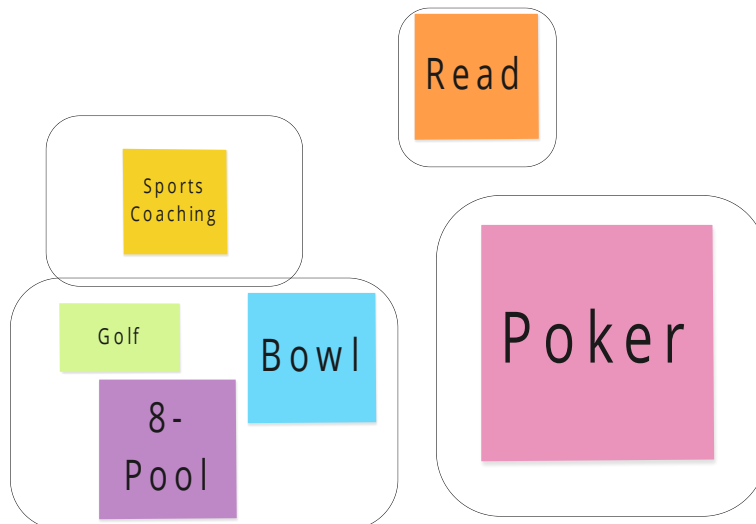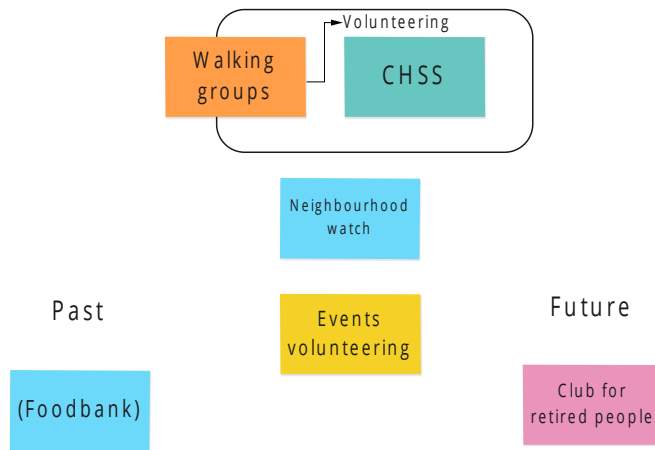| CONTACT | Thank you for taking part in this survey!If you are interested in taking part in the second part of this study, which would include a one-to-one interview about your social life and the group activities you engage in, please provide your name and email address or telephone number below. If not, just leave it blank and continue. |
| | Name: ___ |
| | Email or telephone number: ___ |

Appendix 5: Miro boards

Burt (M/62, Glasgow):

| Skiing organisation | Skiing | Hill walking | Mountain Biking |

Litter picking

| Mental health lobby group | Youth Employment | Young Entrepreneurship |

Set up local political branch

Paul (M/60, South Ayrshire):

Retirement organisation

Guitar lessons

Health charity

Shopping, phone calls, Zoom calls

Dog walking guide dogs

Tai-chi

Wine-tasting club

Family history

Political Party

Long-distance walking | Karate training

Hill-walking | Gym

Pals thursday nights

Whisky-tasting club

Foodbank

Greig (M/20, South Ayrshire):

Read

Sports Coaching

Golf

Bowl

8-Pool

Poker

Geoff
(M/69,
Glasgow):

Volunteering

Walking groups

CHSS

Neighbourhood watch

Past

Events volunteering

Future

(Foodbank)

Club for retired people

Alice (F/51,
Glasgow):

Food shopping/ Medicine delivery

Youth mentoring

Friends

Outdoor activities

Dita (F/31,
South
Ayrshire):

Youth panel

Oxfam

Admin

Adult tutoring

Laura
(F/28,
Glasgow):

Improv

Mutual aid

Work social
group

Citizen's
advice

Zero-waste
co-op

Mairi (F/65,
South
Ayrshire):

Through family

Retirement
club

On committe

Spanish
classes

Book
group

Bridge

Want to engage in:

Adult litteracy/
numeracy

Friendship

Political
Party

Trade
unions

Women's
Aid

Max (M/36,
South
Ayrshire):

Community
sport club

Semi-formal
cycling

Football
(for the kids)

Volunteering?
has led to social activities

Anne (F/60,
Glasgow):

Govanhill Baths
Community
Trust

Tai-chi

Yoga

Crafts class

Advisory board
Hidden Gardens

Accountancy
for arts charity

Supporting
older people

Food shopping
(dog walking
before)

Gym

Cooking
courses

Appendix 6: Coding framework

Global theme	Organising themes	Basic themes
What engagement looks like	Types of engagement	Link AL and VOL
		Activity-AL
		Activity-VOL
		Informal-AL
		Service provided-VOL
		Solitary activities-AL
		Informal volunteering
		Uniqueness of Vol
		Vol NOT being AL
		Mutual aid
	Organisational perspective	Hybrid organisation
		Civil society
		Professionalisation-VOL
	Motivation and routes in	Motivation-AL
		Motivation-VOL
		Route in-AL
		Route in-VOL
		Recruitment-AL
		Recruitment-VOL
		One leading to another-AL
		One leading to another-VOL
		Expressive-Instrumental
		Personality traits
		Skills from elsewhere-VOL
	Benefits and skills	Benefits-AL
		Benefits-VOL
		Building skills-AL
		Building skills-VOL
Family and friends	Upbringing	Upbringing
		Parents' relation to AL-Vol
		Siblings
	Family life	Children
		Engaging with other families
		Family as barrier
		Family as facilitator
	Friends	Friends from AL-Vol
		Informal - with friends
		Overlap of people
		Work
	Peers and engagement	Socialising-AL
		Socialising-VOL
		Overlap of people-AL
		Overlap of people-VOL
External factors	Societal structures	Gendered aspects
		Community
		Diversity
		Social economic circumstances
	Barriers and enablers	Barriers-VOL
		Barriers-AL
		Adverse experiences
		COVID
		Facilitator-AL
		Facilitator-VOL
		Sickness
		For future-AL
		For future-VOL
		Use of technology
	Space and location	Physical space
		Moving
		Location
	Life course	Adolescent
		Adult
		Retired
		Generational differences