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An Analysis of Political Efficacy Socialisation among Threshold Voters in the Republic of Ireland

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List of Acronyms

ANES: American National Election Study

CIVED: Civic Education Study

CSES: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems

CSO: Central Statistics Office

ECPR: European Consortium for Political Research

ESS: European Social Survey

EU: European Union

EVS: European Values Survey

FF: Fianna Fáil

FG: Fine Gael

GP: Green Party

ICCS: International Civic and Citizenship Study

IDEA: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

IEA: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

INES: Irish National Election Study

ISAPA: Irish Social and Political Attitudes Survey

ISSP: International Social Survey Programme

KMO: Kaiser Meyer Olkin

OLS: Ordinary Least Square

PD: Progressive Democrats

SE: Standard Error of the Sample Mean

SES: Socio-Economic Status

SF: Sinn Féin

SLSS: Second Level Support Service

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SRC: Survey Research Center

USCID: United States Citizenship, Involvement, and Democracy Survey

UN: United Nations

VIF: Variance Inflation Factor

VEC: Vocational Education Committees

Acknowledgements and Declaration

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Declaration by Candidate

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Signature:

Date:

Chapter 1. Introduction

This research analyses the socialisation of political efficacy among those on the threshold of political adulthood. Political efficacy relates to the perception of effect which an individual holds in respect of the surrounding political environment. The main development in political efficacy theory since Campbell, Gurin, and Miller's (1954) initial empirical study involves the distinction between an individual's consideration of political self-competence (the internal efficacy dimension), and her consideration of the responsiveness of the political system to citizens' input (the external efficacy dimension) (Balch, 1974). An ongoing concern in political efficacy literature is the measurement of political efficacy which is not compatible with the theoretical distinction between internal and external efficacy (Morrell, 2003). This persists despite widespread acknowledgement of the measurement template provided by Craig, Niemi, and Silver (1990). Their template distinguishes between the measurement of internal and external efficacy dimensions and has been the source from which much subsequent research has borrowed, and deviated (Morrell, 2003).

The conception of 'threshold voters' is an original one, which distinguishes between those in late adolescence who have yet to reach political adulthood and those who have. Voting age is a significant juncture in this conception, as voting entitlement is the central, though not solitary, means through which citizens exercise control in representative democracies (Lijphart, 1997). The political efficacy of those on the threshold of voting entitlement is primarily influenced by socialisation effects; including political and non-political learning, and non-electoral political participation (Beaumont, 2010). As they have not been conferred with electoral entitlement, threshold voters have not experienced the effect which its exercise or possession brings, positive or negative. They occupy a position of political weightlessness, relative to older, voting cohorts. In the current study 'threshold voters' are aged 15-17 years old, and in the latter part of their adolescent attitudinal development. An analysis of the socialisation of political efficacy therefore looks at how the perceptions of internal and external political efficacy develop through social and political learning.

A focus on those in early or mid-adolescence would not capture pre-adult socialisation experiences which occur across adolescence. This study facilitates the analysis of socialisation effects in real-time, as the retrospective study of adults is likely to be obscured by the transition to political adulthood, and the acquisition of a wide range of political and electoral rights and entitlements. This study considers the relationship between the threshold

voter's social environments and each dimension of political efficacy discretely. It assesses the effects of the family, school, and associational environments which have been dominant in existing literature on pre-adult socialisation (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, and Flanagan, 2010). In light of the central role played by political representatives in democratic systems, and the potential influence of related interactions for attitude formation, the effect of contact with political representatives is analysed as a discrete environment or 'agent' of socialisation.[1]

This investigation of threshold voters' socialisation is timely for two reasons. Research by Plutzer (2002) and Franklin (2004) on electoral turnout has received much attention in the political science field. They highlight the significance of factors influencing the political outlook of new electoral cohorts for individual's political engagement and participation over successive decades. As political efficacy is considered an important pre-requisite to political participation, it is important to establish which factors currently influence its development among threshold voters.

Secondly, a focus of contemporary research in democratic states has been the political engagement of those born in the latter decades of the twentieth century. The concern is that the political outlook of younger citizens differs from older citizens, due to the divergent political and social setting in which they have developed, and that this may be detrimental for democratic politics. Contributions in this area relate to: political interest (Putnam, 2000; and Dalton, 2002), social capital (Putnam, 2000), political support (Stoker, 2006), and political participation (Dalton, 2002). The driving interest in political efficacy in the political science literature is its theorised significance for political support, and in particular, political participation (Almond and Verba, 1965; Abramson and Aldrich, 1982; McCluskey, Shah, Despande, and MacLeod, 2004; and Valentino, Gregorowicz, and Groenendyk, 2009). The premise in such literature is that people who 'believe' in the possibility of their effectiveness are more likely to commit time and energy in political participation than those who do not. In democratic political systems, engagement and participation are highly valued both in terms of citizen utility and systemic functioning (Dalton, 2002). A review of the academic output on political efficacy and socialisation has guided the central research questions of this study, which are not currently served by the existing literature.

[1] 'Agent' refers to the each socialisation environment; i.e., as elements of the school environment may affect the political efficacy of threshold voters, the school is an 'agent' of political efficacy socialisation. In subsequent discussion the term 'model' refers to a cluster of variables which feature in analysis such as: demographics; socialisation agents; personal attributes; and political attributes. Therefore I refer to the demographic model, the family model, et cetera.

These are:

-Research Question 1: Is threshold voter political efficacy measurable using the conventional adult framework of political efficacy measurement?

-Research Question 2: What is the impact of political socialisation environments on threshold voter internal and external political efficacy in contemporary democracies?

As part of a case study design in the Republic of Ireland, a primary survey was used to capture threshold voters' political efficacy and their social experiences and perceptions in the Spring and Autumn of 2009. A systematic and stratified sample of *n* 849 students in post-primary schools in the Cork area forms the basis of subsequent analysis and findings. The use of a primary survey facilitates the measurement of political efficacy in line with current theoretical understandings. The dominant approach in political science, social psychology, and communications research, is a quantitative measurement of individual perceptions of political efficacy. This study will assess the applicability of the Craig *et al.* (1990) measurement framework among threshold voters through factor and scale reliability analysis. The measures of internal and external efficacy will then be treated as dependent variables in subsequent analysis. Socialisation variables will be treated as independent variables, along with variables relating to threshold voters' demographics, personal, and political attributes. In cognisance of the dearth of existing data relating to the political attitudes of this age cohort in Ireland, a full presentation of survey variable measurement and survey response is included in the main body. The data set created in this study is a valuable contribution to the study of the overall social and political outlook of threshold voters in Ireland. The range of political attitudinal and behavioural variables captured therein will assist further study in the areas of political support, political participation, and political education which are currently emerging in respect of younger age cohorts through Ireland's recent inclusion in the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS).

A focus on Ireland is timely considering the 2010 recommendation by a parliamentary committee to lower the voting age in Ireland and the introduction of a voter education programme, as part of the senior cycle programme in post-primary schools to promote awareness of the right to vote among newly eligible voters (Oireachtas, 2010: 164). A lowering of the voting age is also one of the initial matters for the government's proposed

Constitutional Convention as suggested in February, 2012. Simultaneously, the extension of the Civic, Social and Political Education module (CSPE) from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle of post-primary education received approval from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in 2011. This move seeks to reform the formal political education offering in Ireland; which compares poorly with European neighbours (Democracy Commission, 2004).

Existing literature acknowledges the relationship between political education, political efficacy, and political participation (Langton and Jennings, 1968; Galston 2001; and Pasek, Feldman, Romer, and Jamieson, 2008). Lopes, Benton and Cleaver (2009) posit that this relationship is by 'design' of citizenship education, than by 'default'. This research will indicate the effects of socialisation on the political efficacy of those who would are the focus of such reforms.

An initial indication of the relationship between socialisation variables and each political efficacy dimension is provided by the cross tabulation of survey item response. The unique relationship between the independent variables and each efficacy dimension is assessed through multivariate regression within each environmental model analysis. In the final analysis, variables which are found to be significant predictors of threshold voters' political efficacy are brought together in a multi-model regression analysis. This methodology makes it possible to assess the discrete impact of the socialisation agents on the internal and external political efficacy of threshold voters, while taking the relevant demographic and personal/political attributes into consideration.

1.1 Conclusion

The spread of democracy in the latter part of the twenty first century has been accompanied by an increasing analysis of its performance in western democracies (Stoker, 2006; and Hay, 2007). Political efficacy is considered to be one of the key indicators of the performance of democratic politics, which espouse the ideal of popular control. The focus here is on the effects of socialisation on threshold voter political efficacy through an empirical quantitative study. Despite concerns about the political engagement of younger age cohorts in western democracies, existing research has not considered the manner in which political efficacy is socialised among those on the threshold of political adulthood. The socialisation environments assessed here are commonly investigated in the consideration of political and non-political learning among young people: i.e., the family environment; the school environment; the associational environment, and the political representative environment.

Existing research which assesses the contribution of these environs focuses on younger cohorts, and does not capture the attitudinal formation and change associated with adolescence. In other instances, studies which consider the political efficacy and outlook of those in late adolescence do not distinguish between pre-adults and adults, and therefore do not acknowledge the divergent political reality of each group. The next chapter offers a review of the academic literature in the areas of political efficacy and political socialisation, with attention given to the political circumstance of those in pre-adult stages. From this review the study's research questions emerge.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In their comparative study of political attitudes, Almond and Verba (1965: 206) considered political efficacy to be; "an index of the extent to which citizens consider their political system democratic and...closely related to many attitudes vital for understanding the nature of democratic political orientations".[2] Craig *et al.* (1990: 289) offered similar sentiment when suggesting that political efficacy "is thought to be a key indicator in the overall health of democratic systems" (1990: 289). This review details the conception of political efficacy and its evolution in the existing literature. A central part of this evolution is the dichotomy between internal and external (political) efficacy dimensions. The significance attributed to political efficacy in democratic political systems is discussed. Existing literature considers its significance from an individual and a systemic perspective (Easton and Dennis, 1967; and Dalton, 2002). The conception of democracy underlying this discussion aligns with Stoker's (2006: 20) three criteria of democratic governance: universal suffrage (i.e., the right to vote in elections for all adults); governments chosen by regular, free, and competitive election; and the presence of a set of political rights to free speech and freedom to organise in groups.

A case is made for the study of political efficacy and how it develops in pre-adult stages. To this end the role and process of political efficacy socialisation in democratic politics is located within existing literature. The particular benefit of focusing on the socialisation of those in late adolescence, i.e., threshold voters, is advanced. Reference is made to elements of the current political environment which have stimulated a renewed interest in political socialisation. The rationale for a case study of threshold voter political efficacy socialisation in Ireland is outlined in this chapter, with a focus on factors which provide impetus to the study of threshold voter efficacy. The central questions of this research arise from gaps which emerge in review of the literature, which relate to the measurement of the concept and the dearth of focus on the threshold voter demographic.

2.2 The Conception of Political Efficacy

In their seminal contribution on political efficacy, Campbell, Gurin, and Miller (1954: 187) defined it as:

> The feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, i.e., that it is worth while to perform one's civic duties. It is the feeling

[2] Almond and Verba (1965) referred to citizen and subject competence, which have been interpreted as political efficacy in subsequent literature (Madsen, 1987). Their measure will be further detailed in chapter four.

> that political and social change is possible, and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change.

Their framing of political efficacy as a perception, or psychological feeling of effectiveness, informs its definition in subsequent literature (Madsen, 1987; Stewart, Kornberg, Clarke, and Acock, 1992; and Clarke, Kornberg, and Scotto, 2010). This perception varies from individual to individual, depending on personal attitude and experience, with efficacious citizens believing that political input is not only possible but of positive utility (Weissberg, 1975: 470). For Dahl (1963) this perception when internalised as an expectation of political effectiveness becomes an individual political resource.[3]

Campbell *et al.*'s (1954) conception of efficacy deals with the issue of 'How effective do individuals feel in relation to the political system?' The related questions of: 'How effective should individuals be in relation to their political system?' and 'How effective are individuals in relation to their political system?' are rarely posited in empirical research. The distinction between these approaches was captured by Easton and Dennis's (1967) advancement of the three guises of political efficacy: the expectation of effect (the norm); the perception of effect (the psychological disposition); and the demonstration of effect (the behaviour). The perception of political effect is the guise in focus in this research.

In democratic systems which are premised on the ideal of popular control one would anticipate that a norm of political effect is cultivated among citizens. Due to the complexity of democratic politics, citizens' perception of efficacy will differ from the normative expectation (McCluskey, Deshpande, Shah, and McLeod, 2004). A feature of democratic politics is the compromise involved in collective decision making, due to the plurality of citizen interests which complement and compete with one another (Stoker, 2006). The perception of efficacy is a reflection of one's self-identity in the context of the political world (Easton and Dennis, 1967). The third guise of efficacy, the behavioural aspect, is an extension of the expectation and perception of efficacy. Those who feel that they should and can influence political decisions act to bring about change.

Some researchers on political efficacy in childhood (pre-adolescence) have focussed on the norm rather than the perception of political efficacy (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Weissberg, 1972a; and Abramson, 1972). They suggest that children's limited political exposure and sophistication mitigate the distinction between each guise. Nonetheless, the dominant focus

[3] The terms 'efficacious' and 'effective' are considered as synonymous in this piece. Moreover, the reference to internal and external efficacy is synonymous to internal political efficacy and external political efficacy.

has been on the perception of efficacy, arising from its influence on political support and participation in democracies (McCluskey *et al*., 2004; and Madsen, 1987). It is a subjective rather than an objective measure of democratic performance, as perception of political effect may not accurately reflect actual effect. The effect, or lack thereof, that one has on political affairs may be observed by others, without being evident to oneself. In this regard, McIntosh and Youniss (2010: 24) distinguished between those who are "well-integrated psychologically" and "well-integrated citizens". Those who are well-integrated psychologically may have high political efficacy, without it being tested in, or reflective of, the political environment. They affirm that as politics is a public and collective process true effect is best judged in light of direct feedback arising from engagement in public deliberation or action. This discrepancy between perception and reality does not lessen the significance of political efficacy for individuals' political outlook or for democratic functioning. As Weissberg (1975: 487) remarked all political systems require "some mythology (or golden lies) for their functioning" and perception and reality are likely to be intertwined.

The Campbell *et al*. (1954) definition suggests that the individual can play 'a part' in bringing about political change. This acknowledges that political effect is typically perceived and achieved through collective as much as through individual means (Prewitt, 1968; and Beaumont, 2010). The concept of collective efficacy refers to a shared sense of capacity to achieve goals through collective coordination, interaction, or action (Fernández-Ballesteros, Diez-Nicolás, Barbaranelli, and Bandura, 2002). In a political context, collective efficaciousness requires the individual to be efficacious to a degree in the first place, in order to avoid the inhibiting effects of self-doubt (Caprara, Vecchione, Capanna, and Mebane, 2009). While the focus in this study is on individual political efficacy, political efficacy measurement in part reflects the collective nature of the political environment.

The collective nature of the political environment dictates that the range of factors which may influence an individual's perception of political effect is necessarily broad. An individual's sense of political efficacy is based on numerous considerations. The considerations or elements identified by Easton and Dennis (1967: 29) have been reflected in subsequent theoretical and measurement approaches:

- The comprehensibility of government
- A sense of the direct political potency of the individual
- The availability of adequate means of influence
- A belief in the responsiveness of the government

- A resistance to fatalism about the tractability of government to anyone, ruler or ruled

These considerations are somewhat distinct in their focus. An individual may feel that she understands the nature of the political environment, yet may feel that the government it is not responsive to citizens. 'Government' in this case suggests decision-making aspects of the political system. Its reference will involve consideration of broader political contexts which include but are not limited to the specific institution of government (Iyengar, 1980b). The elements outlined above are manifest in the survey indicators used to measure political efficacy in the literature, with the understanding that their interaction contributes to an individual's sense of political efficacy.

There has been some variation in the terminology to describe considerations of political effect. Madsen (1987) highlighted the following: Janowitz and Marvick (1956) referred to 'political self-confidence'; Campbell *et al.* (1954) referred to 'political efficacy'; and Almond and Verba (1963) referred to 'subjective political competence'. More recently, Caprara *et al.* (2009) followed Bandura's (1986) terminology in the field of social psychology with a reference to 'political self-efficacy'. Despite this variation, the considerations of such research fall under the political efficacy umbrella.

2.3 The Dimensionality of Political Efficacy

Political efficacy was considered as a one-dimensional concept by Campbell *et al.* (1954). The theoretical discussion quickly distinguished between the consideration of whether one possesses the attributes which enable effect in the political system; and whether the political system is responsive to citizens' attempts at effect (Lane, 1959). In an earlier work, Rosenberg (1954: 354/5) captured the psychological task involved in appraising political effect:

> The individual can focus on either the subject or the object of action. On the one hand, he can focus on certain characteristics of himself; e.g., he is insignificant, powerless, or incompetent. On the other hand, he can focus on the characteristics of the objects to be influenced; e.g., political representatives pay no attention to him, political machines run things just as they please, and so on. But if his representative pays no attention to him, this may be either because *he* is too unimportant or because *the representative* is unresponsive to the political will.

While others reflected this dichotomy within political efficacy (Almond and Verba, 1965; and Easton and Dennis, 1967), it was Balch's (1974) empirical study which belatedly provided the impetus for a dimensional construct (Madsen, 1987). Madsen (1987: 572) considered this distinction as reflective of Albert Bandura's (1977) separation of perceived self-efficacy from

perceived environmental circumstance in social psychology. The distinction between internal and external dimensions has been regarded as the major advancement in political efficacy theory (Craig et al, 1990).

Internal efficacy involves the self-appraisal of one's capacity to understand and act within the political environment (Morrell, 2003). Possessing the belief that one is a capable political actor is a reflection of the individual's psychological strength (Clarke and Acock, 1989; and Beaumont, 2010). In some political science literature the term 'political competence' has been used to refer to this dimension (Lambert, Curtis, Brown, and Kay, 1986). Internal efficacy comprises self-perceptions of: political knowledge; political understanding; confidence to engage in politic matters; and capability in political matters (Craig *et al*., 1990). These perceptions of political competence are constructed within the wider frame of an individual's social competences. Internal political efficacy develops through social settings and interactions, with an emphasis on political experiences (Beaumont, 2010: 553). In social psychology literature, this dimension is termed 'political self-efficacy', and is conceived as a domain-specific aspect of a general sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Personal resources such as education, socio-economic status, and political interest are considered correlates of internal political efficacy (Lyons, 1970). Beaumont (2010: 525) observed that the sense of internal efficacy "forms a powerful nexus between our personal motivations, choices, and values, and our political interactions and behaviours".

The second dimension, external political efficacy, relates to an appraisal of the accessibility and responsiveness of the political system. Lambert *et al*. (1986: 707) noted that this dimension "refers primarily to features of government, and is only incidentally descriptive of respondents themselves". It encompasses perceptions of the capacity and responsiveness of political representatives, institutions, and procedures which constitute the political system, and is often termed 'system responsiveness' (Lambert *et al.*, 1986).

In internal efficacy, the principal considerations are of the individual's own political competences. In external efficacy, the considerations are of external agents' motivation and institutional capacity to reflect citizens' political preferences. There is a degree of nuance in external efficacy consideration, depending on the political system object in consideration. If external inefficaciousness is due to perceptions of the incumbent government, a change of government may alter the level of external efficacy (Iyengar, 1980b). If external inefficaciousness is due to a belief that the political regime by design does not allow for citizen input or effect, then a change of government will have less effect on levels of external

efficacy. Karaman (2004) distinguished between long-term efficacy sentiment toward a political regime's economic model and short-term sentiment toward a sitting government's economic policies. Socio-economic resources (Hayes and Bean, 1993; and Kenski and Stroud, (2006), social trust (Kim, Helgesen, and Ahn, 2002), institutional trust (Amna, Munck, and Zetterberg, 2004) have been considered correlates of external efficacy in the existing literature.

Craig *et al.* (1990) put forward a dichotomy within the external dimension between; regime-based efficacy and incumbent-based efficacy. Regime-based efficacy relates to the perception of system responsiveness which is facilitated by rules and procedures. Incumbent-based efficacy relates to the perception of responsiveness by those in political/ governmental office. Through this distinction they sought to establish conceptual distance between external political efficacy and political trust considerations, which are closely related in democratic political systems (Almond and Verba, 1965).

The theoretical and empirical link between internal and external dimensions should not be ignored, as both contribute to the overall sense of political efficacy (Rosenberg, 1954; Lane, 1959; and Paige, 1971). Those who feel uninformed and uncomfortable in political affairs may lack the necessary confidence to exact a response from political bodies. Similarly, if an individual considers the political system as fundamentally unresponsive, she is less likely to believe in her own political capacity (Paige, 1971).

A weakness of much of the existing literature is not a failure to make this connection between internal and external efficacy, it is to distinguish between them in data collection. The widespread theoretical support for the concept's dimensionality is frequently not accompanied by complimentary methodological frameworks according to Craig *et al.* (1990); Morrell (2003); and Beaumont (2010). Existing studies have not specified this dimensionality in their empirical analysis of the concept: Pattie and Johnston (1998); Wu, (2003); McCluskey *et al*. (2004); Becker, (2004); Pinkleton and Austin, (2004); Ikeda, Kobayashi, and Hishimoto, (2008); and Tewksbury, Hals, and Bibart, (2008). This arises in part due to methodological constraints as longitudinal studies require the use of traditional survey measures; comparative studies necessitate the use of comparable items across datasets; and analysis of a specific demographic is limited to existing datasets. The importance of capturing each dimension is due to the divergent manner in which internal and external efficacy develops and how they relate to factors such as political participation and support in democratic regimes (Caprara *et al.*, 2009).

2.4 The Democratic Significance of Political Efficacy

Much political science literature attributes significance to political efficacy in democratic politics (Baker, 1973; Acock, Clarke, and Stewart, 1985; Morrell, 2003; McCluskey *et al.*, 2004; and Clarke *et al*., 2010). It contributes to citizens' political outlook and motivation, which in turn affects the functioning of democratic systems (Easton and Dennis, 1967; and Pasek *et al.*, 2008).

Democratic political systems are intended to be a mechanism for converting citizens' will into political policy (Rosenberg, 1962). Though he recognised the inherent difficulty in achieving a politics where all citizens have a right to a say in matters that affect them, Stoker (2006: 145) identified the normative significance of political efficacy in democratic states:

> Democratic politics also needs to deliver the prospect for a redemptive capacity, the sense that popular control is achievable, on some occasions, at some point and over some issues. The great claim of democracy is that those affected by a decision should have a right to a say in it; that is its power.

Therefore, the extent to which citizens perceive a sense of effect (individually or collectively) is a critical means of evaluating democratic systems (Dalton, 2002). In representative democracies where citizens' intent is channelled through political representatives, much of the academic interest in political efficacy focuses on political support. During their research in the mid-twentieth century, Almond and Verba (1965: 191) captured this notion in stating:

> A mutually beneficial exchange occurs between the individual and the political system. One of the advantages a democratic political system is supposed to have over other systems is that those who are able to participate in decisions will thereby be more satisfied with the decisions, and will be more attached to the system than are those who cannot participate.

The link between external political efficacy and political support/trust has led to some conceptual difficulty. Easton and Dennis (1967) viewed political efficacy as a form of diffuse support, and as a resource which offsets citizens' disappointment when political outputs do not meet citizen demands. In more recent reflection, Amna and Zetterberg (2010) suggest that if elements of the political system (representative and administrative) are considered unresponsive, including perceptions of impartiality and procedural fairness, the legitimacy of the political system may be undermined. Craig *et al.* (1990) attempted to untangling the relationship between political efficacy and political support, particularly in relation to personalised aspects of both attitudes.

In particular, internal political efficacy is closely aligned to political interest and political engagement (Caprara *et al.*, 2009; and Pinkleton and Austin, 2004). With a social psychology

approach, Beaumont (2010: 532) identifies four processes through which political self-efficacy (internal efficacy) guides individuals' judgements and actions: thinking processes (involving political judgement and aspiration); motivational processes (involving political commitment, resilience, and perseverance); emotional and affective processes (involving political confidence and hopelessness); and selection and social processes (involving formative interests and relationships). In affecting the attitudinal outlook of citizens, political efficacy is a crucial determinant of political participation in democratic systems.

Citizens' participation is considered an essential element in the functioning of democratic regimes (Galston, 2001; and Stoker, 2006). In the words of Dalton (2002: 33):

> Democracy should be the celebration of an involved public. Democracy requires an active citizenry because it is through discussion, popular interest and involvement in politics that societal goals should be defined and carried out. Without public involvement in the process, democracy lacks both its legitimacy and its guiding force.

The premise in much literature is that people who 'believe' in the possibility of their effectiveness are more likely to commit time and energy in political participation and derive utility from it, than those who do not (Fernández-Ballesteros *et al*., 2002; and McCluskey *et al.*, 2004). Abramson and Aldrich (1982) and Pattie and Johnston (1998) remarked the significance of political efficacy for voting behaviour in America and the United Kingdom, respectively. Pollock III (1983: 406) highlighted that both internal and external dimensions of political efficacy are positive influences on one's perception of political participation. He found that while internal efficacy was important for political participation, external efficacy was particularly important for less educated groups in respect of voting and protest tendencies. In an explanation of aggregate electoral turnout in the latter half of the twentieth century in western democracies, Franklin (2004) emphasised the importance of the perceived utility of an election for citizens. In doing so, he indicates the importance of political efficacy as it dictates how individuals perceive elections. This is not to suggest that those who feel efficacious will necessarily follow through with activity (Di Palma, 1970; and Blondel, Sinnott, and Svensson, 1998). Baker (1973: 80) observed this distinction among German adolescents as not all of those with high political efficacy intended to be actively involved in politics.

On the other hand, a perceived lack of political effect may in some instances be a spur to political action. Di Palma (1970: 44) raised this point in relation to a lack of political support: "Why should disaffection be a deterrent to participation? On the contrary, it could be suggested, one participates in order to change things, to find redress of grievances, to improve

one's lot, or more generally, to make politics satisfying". The distinction between political support and political efficacy is relevant in this respect. Low political support in Di Palma's reading may precipitate participation. However, low political efficacy does not precipitate participation as such participation is perceived as futile. Gamson's (1968) trust/efficacy hypothesis suggested that a combination of high efficacy and low trust (a personalised form of political support) predicts political participation. Those who believe in their potential to influence political decisions, and consider an input necessary to control decision makers, are more likely to participate than those who either do not believe in their own capacity for influence, or who trust incumbent decision makers to act in their interest. Successive research (Fraser, 1970; and Hawkins, Marando, and Taylor, 1971) is not conclusive on the Gamsonian hypothesis, which Seligson (1980a) attributes to differences in the approach to measuring political participation, as between institutionalised (voting, campaigning) and non-institutionalised forms (protest behaviour).[4] Amna and Zetterberg's (2010: 60) conception of a *stand-by citizen*, characterised by a degree of interest and motivation which is only manifest in action when the perceived need arises, follows this Gamsonian thesis. In this conception, the significance of political efficacy is latent and only realised when environmental conditions dictate.[5]

In discussing the 'causal direction' between political efficacy and participation, Ikeda *et al*. (2008: 80) noted the dominance of what they refer to as the 'Michigan school' tradition originating with Campbell *et al.* (1954). This tradition adopts a social psychology theory in the study of political participation, where attitudes (including efficacy) are considered as a readiness to commit actions. Ikeda *et al*. found support for this approach in a cross-national study of twenty two countries using the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data. Finkel (1987) was the first to empirically explore the reverse causality of this relationship, where participation in political activity may affect an individual's sense of efficacy. He found that two modes of institutionalised activity; voting and particularly campaign activity, positively affect external efficacy over time. In this light, Levinson (2010: 341) described the gap between the efficacious and the inefficacious as "viciously self-reinforcing" due to its relationship with political participation and engagement. Therefore any premises on the

[4] See Abramson and Aldrich (1982: 511) for earlier studies which consider the effect of political efficacy on political participation but suffer in their opinion from conceptual and methodological inconsistency.

[5] Amna and Zetterberg (2010) forward this explanation to account for the relatively lower participatory outlook of mid-adolescent Nordic respondents (14 year olds) relative to Southern European respondents; while the reverse was observed in young adult participation data.

significance of political efficacy which relate to political participation must caveat on the direction of the effect, where it is not confirmed in study design.

As emphasis is placed on the impact of efficacy on participation, it must be acknowledged that the normative level of political efficacy and political participation in democratic systems is much debated (McCluskey *et al*., 2004: 38). The role espoused for citizens in democracies depends on one's conception of democracy (Galston, 2001: 218). There is an acknowledgement in the literature, that the collective and representative nature of democratic politics, by design, mitigates individual effect to an extent (Rosenberg, 1954; Weissberg, 1975; Stoker, 2006; Hay, 2007; and Haste, 2010). Ikeda *et al*. (2008: 78) noted that while zealous competition and antagonistic participation may once have been considered a hypothetical challenge to the stability of democratic systems (Berelson, 1952; and Almond and Verba 1963), more recent considerations focus on the challenge to democratic legitimacy which accompanies a lack of participation (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Putnam, 2000; and Dalton, 2002).

2.5 Pre-Adults and Political Efficacy

The role of the citizen in democratic political systems is relatively weak in early stages of the life cycle (Easton and Dennis, 1967). The lack of a direct relationship between the citizen and the state in early life stages has been equated to a position of non-citizenship or political dependence on the advocacy of parents and guardians (Jones, 1996). As pre-adults do not possess comparable political rights and responsibilities, they do not occupy the same democratic space as adults (Horgan and Rodgers, 2000). This is seen to reflect the social circumstance and priorities of those in early life stages. As Dalton (2002: 47) reflected, politics is remote and not engaging for many young people, as they lack the impetus which aligns with social responsibilities such as paying tax, owning a house, having children, and receiving welfare benefits. As Sherrod *et al*. (2010: 8) acknowledged; "one does not typically engage in behaviours that we define as active citizenship until adulthood".

Democratic political systems invariably do not confer voting entitlement until late adolescence. This has direct and indirect consequence for pre-adults political efficacy. Lijphart (1997: 4) captured the symbolic and substantive importance of voting entitlement for political efficacy in representative democracies in stating: "Voice and exit are often alternative ways of exerting influence, but with regard to voting the exit option spells no influence; only voice can have an effect". For pre-adults this is a sign of their relative political

impotence. Horgan and Rodgers (2000: 133) consider the consequences of this situation for political mobilisation and empowerment: "Society has for various reasons deemed children and young people as not fit or capable of having any say in our future…As a result, they can feel they are on the margins of society and feel alienated and excluded". In this setting, politics loses salience relative to areas of activity where pre-adults can play an active and influential part in proceedings.

The effect of this discrepancy on pre-adult political efficacy depends on how it is perceived by individuals. The lack of electoral input may be tempered by a lack of interest, or an acceptance that voting thresholds are legitimate and necessary. Equally, pre-adults may be satisfied to leave political decisions and power to parents and other youth advocates. Research has found that young people's expectation of social and political roles evolves during adolescence. Their emphasis on protective rights in childhood evolves to a more participative espousal of rights in mid-adolescence (Astuto and Ruck, 2010: 261). The suggestion being that this change reflects increasing personal and social freedom of participation, self-determination and expression from childhood through adolescence.

In respect of political mobilisation, citizen input and policy direction is framed by electoral competition in representative democracies. Political representatives and political parties' primary focus is on those who are electorally entitled (Lijphart, 1997; and Franklin, 2004). Rosenstone and Hansen (1993: 247) underlined this reality of political responsiveness:

> Politicians can serve either the active or the inactive. The active contribute directly to their goals: They pressure, they contribute, they vote. The inactive offer only potential, the possibility that they might someday rise up against rulers who neglect them. Only the rare politician would pass up the blandishments of the active to champion the cause of those who never take part.

In this manner voting entitlement affects how political representatives or agents relate to pre-adults. When combined with the relatively low salience of politics among pre-adults, this means that their involvement in partisan, representative, and electoral politics is small relative to that of adults (Sherrod *et al*., 2010). As involvement with political representatives and parties is a mobilising force which presents opportunities for political learning and identification through their networks and events, this has significance for political efficacy (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, and Keeter, 2003; and Caprara *et al*., 2009). Considering the relatively cursory interaction of pre-adults and the political world, they must acquire a sense of political efficacy through second-hand cues as provided through political socialisation

(Easton and Dennis, 1967). These cues from the social environment provide a bridge between young citizens and the remote political system.

2.6 The Socialisation of Political Efficacy

The early literature on political efficacy socialisation noted the role of parents, family, schools, mass media, and peers (Rosenberg, 1962; Davies, 1965; Litt, 1965; Almond and Verba, 1965; Easton and Dennis, 1967; and Langton and Karns, 1969). Flanagan and Sherrod (1998: 448) and Torney-Purta *et al.* (2010) affirmed that attention to the development of pre-adult political attitudes and identities in the 1950s and 1960s arose from concerns about the sustainability of the new democracies emerging after World War II. After a hiatus in the area during the 1980s and 1990s, they attribute the renewal of interest in political socialisation to the current concerns about democratic legitimacy.[6] Niemi and Junn (1998: 157) referred to the "near-abandonment" of political socialisation, while Conover and Searing (2000: 91) described the field of research as in a "state of disarray". While academic interest in the socialisation of political attitudes has increased over the last decade (Torney-Purta *et al*., 2010) recognised that much of the output is from: social psychology; developmental science; and communication research; rather than political science.

Political socialisation refers to processes by which citizens develop political attitudes and attributes. William Graham Sumner (the first Professor of Sociology at Yale University) initially explained the socialisation process by young people's desire to conform to others in their environs (Franklin 2004: 20). Franklin averred that subsequent political socialisation literature largely approached the process from the perspective of training by those in one's social environs, rather than the desire for conformity on behalf of the individual being socialised. The training perspective has been referred to as a 'top-down learning process' (Torney-Purta, Amadeo, and Andolina, 2010). An appreciation has developed that the 'training' perspective is a limited approach to socialisation as learning occurs in settings where individuals come together and share experiences and skills, as well as in formal environs where the intention is to teach or instruct (Torney-Purta *et al*., 2010: 503). Moreover, those being socialised may play an active role in their learning and development (Haste, 2010: 162). Consequently, the socialisation process is somewhat reciprocal as the environment is influenced in turn by the individual (Wilkenfeld, Lauckhardt, and Torney-Purta, 2010: 193).

[6] Flanagan and Sherrod (1998: 447/8) noted that only 14 of 1,000 manuscripts published in the most prominent journals of political behaviour in the mid-1980s touched on the topic of political socialisation, while publications in the developmental science literature on political socialisation were even less evident.

Political socialisation research aims to locate the roots and development of political attitudes and political behaviour (Roberts and Hogwood 1997: 40). Early political socialisation research concentrated on childhood socialisation: (Greenstein, 1960; Davies, 1965; Easton and Dennis, 1967; and Dawson and Prewitt, 1969). Two factors are seen to determine the importance of information transfer by agents of socialisation such as parents and teachers to children; children's low political interest and knowledge levels relative to socialisation agents; and the openness of children to information provided by those on whom they often rely for guidance and social protection. Greenstein (1965: 12) observed that "in general, the more important a political orientation is in the behaviour of adults, the earlier it will be found in the learning of the child". As well as developing the political capacity of the individual, political socialisation plays an important role in acquainting the citizen to regime norms and roles (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Ichilov, 1990; and Flanagan and Sherrod, 1998). McIntosh and Youniss (2010: 37) denoted the gradual nature of acquainting with political system norms in stating; "our children and youth do not suddenly become engaged citizens at age 18 when they acquire the right to vote". The importance of socialisation in respect of political attitudes is long held; in Aristotelian terms "it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated in us from early childhood; on the contrary, it makes a considerable difference, or, rather, all the difference" (cited in Benninga, 1997: 77).

In theorising the development of political efficacy, early contributors emphasised a pro-system or system maintenance role for socialisation (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Weissberg, 1975; Kasschau, 1976; and Madsen, 1978). Political socialisation theory tends to focus on the "intergenerational stability in political loyalties" (Flanagan and Sherrod, 1998: 448). Riemers and Cardenas (2010: 157) positioned this in a cultural context:

> Once political understandings and practices become shared in the form of a dominant political culture, a number of social institutions, including political and social organizations, families, and schools, may engage in practices that reflect and reproduce those values and practices.

Looking at the effects of political socialisation among younger cohorts therefore provides an insight of the effects of contemporary political environments on attitudinal development. Socialisation is the frame in which political attitudes and behaviours are constructed; the nature of attitudes socialised depends on the nature of the information transferred and the receptivity of the recipient. To this end, Franklin (2004: 22) affirmed that socialisation theory itself does not explain adult political behaviour it simply moves the lens to an earlier stage in life when attitudes and habits were formed which affect current behaviour.

Lee (2006, citing Buehler, 1975) outlined three perspectives on political efficacy socialisation: cultural determinism; structural determinism; and pluralism. Cultural determinism relates to the effects of social group influence, including family and peer effect, whereby an individual's perception of efficacy is influenced by the collective perception. McIntosh and Youniss (2010: 34) spoke of the influence of 'perspective taking' on young people's political outlook, which arises from discussion with significant figures in one's environs. The structural determinism explanation relates to the consequences of economic and social status for perceptions of political influence. Such status is inherited by young citizens, and determines aspects of their social and political learning and priorities. The pluralism explanation relates to the effect that political participation and direct experience may have on efficacy. Growing up in politically engaged households; in politically discursive and open classroom environments; and participation in school communal activities, provide opportunities for social learning (Sherrod *et al*., 2010). Reflecting on political learning pathways in such social environs, Beaumont (2010: 526) emphasised the importance of mastery experiences, the observation of role models, the provision of social encouragement, and positive interactions as means through which a sense of political competence can develop. These pathways relate to the development of psychological strength through non-political, social contexts (Waltz, 1990; Verba, Brady, and Schlozman, 1995; and Anderson, 2010).

Within pre-adulthood, the opportunities for long-term social and political learning evolve as an individual moves from childhood to adolescence (Weissberg, 1972b; and Finlay, Wray-Lake, Flanagan, 2010: 278). Adolescence is a period of adjustment in social and political identity as one gains more personal and social freedom, with consequent privileges and responsibilities (Pinquart, Silbereisen, and Juang, 2004; and Metzger and Smetana, 2010).

Peer and social groups become more important as agents of socialisation during adolescence, as the level of interaction therein increases (Roberts and Hogwood, 1997: 40; Franklin, 2004: 20; and Wilkenfeld *et al.*, 2010). Involvement in communal activities, in particular civic activities, informs adolescents of their relationship to public and political institutions, and provides insight as to how involvement may influence institutions or decisions (Metzger and Smetana, 2010: 241). Group membership and involvement during adolescence have been found to influence civic involvement in adulthood (Verba *et al.* 1995; and Youniss, McLellan, and Yates, 1997).

Existing research indicates a developing political persona from early to late adolescence with an increase in news consumption, discussion of political issues with friends, and discussion of

more controversial social issues with parents (McLeod, Shah, Hess, and Lee, 2010: 374). Broadcast and internet media have become increasing important as a source of political information, relative to other agents such as family, peers, and community interactions (Feeney, 2004: 231). For Stoker (2006), young people's selection from an increasing array of mediatised channels of political information dilutes the traditional influence of party political, religious and parental cues.

In mid to late adolescence political opportunities are more likely to present themselves from which young people can learn directly about their political power and influence. While only a minority of adolescents may be active in political campaigns, student government, or consumer advocacy activities, these activities are considered the precursors of adult citizenship (Sherrod *et al*., 2010: 8). Direct engagement with political representatives or parties provides a medium through which the political world can be interpreted (Dalton, 2002; and Stoker, 2006). In Ireland from the age of sixteen onward adolescents can join political parties or their youth equivalents. These engagements provide social interactions which are opportunities for political learning (Caprara *et al*., 2009). Literature in recent decades has identified a turning away from party-centric activities as the mainstay of citizens' attention and as a means of affecting the political process (Beedham, 1996; and Norris 2002). Adolescents' political contact is not necessarily limited to representative and electoral agents (Weissberg, 1972b). Interactions with political and public officials provide an opportunity for citizens to appraise and reappraise: their understanding of the political system; their role within it; or the system's responsiveness. Wilkenfeld *et al.* (2010: 198) characterised the socialisation process in such reflective terms:

> Reflection plays an important role in both directly reinforced learning and observational learning...As students reflect on the impact that they personally have or have observed in a certain situation, they may feel more efficacious in similar situations. Alternatively, critical reflection may contribute to a lack of efficacy through cynicism or frustration.

Adolescents alter their cognitive structure to accommodate new information which is not easily assimilated into a pre-existing cognitive structure (Metzger and Smetana, 2010: 228). Reflection on accumulated social and political experiences is aligned to an increase in political sophistication during adolescence, in individual's consideration of the role, power, and interaction of political institutions (Metzger and Smetana, 2010: 227, citing Connell, 1971). The consideration of one's political effect therefore develops through non-political as well as political interactions and reflection.

2.7 The Permanence of Pre-Adult Socialised Efficacy

In cognisance of the evolving sophistication and influences on attitudes over time, the durability and significance of early political socialisation has been questioned (Dennis, 1968; Kavanagh, 1972; Weissberg, 1972a; Searing, Wright, and Rabinowitz, 1976; Iyengar, 1980b; and Franklin, 2004). Though they espoused the significance of political efficacy socialisation in childhood and early adolescence, Easton and Dennis (1965: 56) recognised that "a process of changing understanding and feeling must go beyond these years. And later experiences may upset these earlier formed images". Indeed, Niemi and Junn (1998) suggested that the hiatus in academic interest in political socialisation arose from the failure of earlier research to demonstrate a link between childhood attitudes and adult attitudes, though they make a claim for the linkage between older youth and adult attitudes.

Hess and Torney (1967) found that political efficacy remained stable throughout adolescence. Others have observed a change in political efficacy during early to mid-adolescence (Langton and Karns, 1969; and Baker, 1973). Searing *et al.* (1976: 91) opined that the increase in control which one experiences in personal situations from childhood to adolescence contributes to an increase in political efficacy. Iyengar's (1980b) analysis spanned a two year period and observed changes in political efficacy among Indian adolescents (age 10-18). He partly attributed this to partisan affiliation during adolescence, as the study was contextualised by civil and political unrest leading to a change of party in national office at that time. However he does find a degree of durability in political trust and political efficacy attitudes from the first to the second wave of assessment. In a more immediate setting, Schulz (2005) found divergent effects of aging through mid-adolescence in a comparative study.[7] He identified an increase in internal efficacy from lower to upper age group (which he related to political interest, political discussion, and media use) and a decrease in external efficacy from lower to upper age group (which he related to political trust and perceptions of the classroom environment).

2.8 The Relevance of Studying Threshold Voter Political Efficacy

Existing literature suggests that a focus on those in late adolescence gives a greater indication of the long term consequence of pre-adult socialisation. Bynner, Romney, and Emler (2003: 329) affirmed that much of the political and social identity of citizens is present toward the

[7] Schulz's analysis is based on data from lower-secondary (14/15 year olds) and upper-secondary students (17/19 year olds). The design involves separate samples in the ten countries assessed, rather than repeated sampling of the same respondents over time. The countries analysed were: Cyprus, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Slovakia, Sweden and Estonia.

end of adolescence, in relation to: political engagement; moral conservatism; economic conservatism; tolerance; and environmentalism. Pinkleton and Austin (2004: 334) cited the relative stability of political cynicism, apathy, and efficacy in adulthood as grounds for the investigation of media effects on political attitudes among those in mid-late adolescence. The interest in this age group is contingent on a degree of attitude stability from late adolescence. Galston (2001: 232) suggested that "it becomes a matter of more than academic interest to understand better the forces that shape the political outlook of young adults" as he notes the continuity of political attitude from pre-adulthood to adulthood. The empirical research of Plutzer (2002) and Franklin (2004) on political participation emphasised the long term significance of the political outlook of those entering political adulthood. Franklin (2004: 216) made a strong claim for the importance of the demographic in late adolescence and early adulthood:

> The third thing we have learned is something that we keep learning and keep forgetting: The future lies in the hands of young people. Young people hold the key to the future because they are the ones who react to new conditions. Older people are, on the whole, too set in their ways to be responsible for social or political change, so most long-term change comes about by way of generational replacement.

It is for this reason that Hay (2007: 53) emphasised the contribution which an analysis of young people's political outlook would make to understanding contemporary political trends in adult opinion and participation. This enforces the significance of understanding the political efficacy of those in late adolescence. In cognisance of the interactive role which this age group play in their own political learning and socialisation, Kassimir and Flanagan (2010: 92) asserted that this age group be seen not as 'citizens in formation' or citizens in waiting, but as 'citizens in the present'.

Existing literature therefore recognises the significance of attitudinal development by late adolescence. A focus on those in late adolescence, who have yet to reach political adulthood and electoral entitlement, makes it possible to assess socialisation effects discretely from the effect caused by the transition to political adulthood. Finlay *et al*. (2010: 279) denoted that the political context of late adolescence is different from young adulthood as adolescents spend the majority of each day in school and are grounded in family and friend networks which are not as socially heterogeneous as those encountered in early adulthood. Moreover, adolescents have not yet attained legal rights and responsibilities that accompany adulthood such as eligibility: to vote; to serve on a jury; to join the military; and to independently sign legal and financial contracts.

Amna and Zetterberg (2010) observed that attitudinal change not only occurs across adolescence, but that it follows divergent paths according to political tradition. Southern Europeans appeared to have a greater disposition for political participation at the age of 14 than their Nordic contemporaries in respect of confidence in political institutions and social network resources associated with participation. However, by early adulthood such attributes were more common in Nordic, than in Southern European countries. They suggest that the difference in political socialisation trajectories across region reaffirms the importance of capturing socialisation effects which occur during adolescence. Their finding also serves as a caveat against a universal approach to socialisation, as the variety in political context across state is an important consideration.

In light of these considerations, this study considers the impact of political efficacy socialisation among threshold voters (15-17 year olds), who have yet to reach political adulthood. The use of the word 'voter' is not to suggest that those on the threshold of political adulthood place a high or uniform significance on electoral entitlement. While the entitlement may be considered important from a symbolic point of view, the choice of wording refers to entitlement rather than to the exercise of the franchise.

2.9 The Contemporary Socialisation of Political Efficacy

The political socialisation which threshold voters receive in their social environments is a reflection of the surrounding political climate. In recent decades political scientists have cited a changing dynamic in citizen-state relations in western democracies (Beedham, 1996; Inglehart, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Dalton, 2002; and Hay, 2007). In reflection on a Council of Europe report on democracy in Europe (2004), Stoker suggests that the report identifies two broad types of discontent among citizens: "fear that they lack the skills to intervene effectively in politics" and the belief that "politics no longer offers real choices to them, or that governments simply lack the capacity to intervene effectively because of the power of 'big business' and the impact of globalization" (2006: 39). Young citizens reaching adolescence at the start of the twenty-first century have developed socially and politically "in an era of global change that has affected social organization and identity formation in fundamental ways" (Bennett, Freelon, and Wells, 2010: 396). Educational opportunity and accessibility of political information have increased through technological advances in industrialised countries since World War II (Westholm, Lindquist, and Niemi, 1990; and Dalton, 2002). Civic and political education programmes have been introduced with the "explicit aim of preparing citizens for democracy" (Westholm, Lindquist, and Niemi, 1990:

175). In relation to the interaction of citizens and political representatives this may have a status leveling effect; as "the ordinary man no longer feels, as his grand-father felt, that his representative is a genuinely superior fellow" (Beedham, 1996: 3). Similarly, Dalton (2002) suggested that easier accessibility of information, and an increased capacity of citizens to process such information through education, has lead to the 'cognitive mobilization' of citizens, with the potential for citizens to become more knowledgeable, discerning, and sophisticated.[8]

Young citizens have increasing control over their search for social and political information through aggregation technologies, such as internet search engines, and social media sites, somewhat replacing the old gatekeepers of information such as journalists, teachers, and officials (Bennett, Freelon, and Wells, 2010: 397). For some, these developments have precipitated an increasing awareness of political rights and pursuit of an individualistic type of politics (Beedham, 1996; Hogwood, 1997; Inglehart, 1999; Dalton, 2002; and Stoker, 2006). The increasing salience of environmental issues, human rights advocacy, and consumer politics is considered to be a symptom of these developments (Bennett *et* al, 2010: 396). Young citizens develop their understanding of political affairs within their proximate social environs. These developments are likely to influence citizens' appraisals of their capacity and the role which they ascribe for themselves politically. They relate to political interest and information acquisition which influence internal efficacy. Putnam (2000: 36) identifies a decline in political knowledge, interest, and voting turnout, among younger generations, relative to older generations in America. [9] On the other hand, Dalton (2002: 23) cites the "unmistakable" increasing trend in political interest in advanced industrial democracies, and cautions about the extrapolation of American findings to a western democratic setting.

The cognitive mobilization of citizens and increasing individualisation of politics also has consequence for the manner in which external efficacy is perceived. Inglehart's (1997, 1999) postmaterialist thesis positioned the decline in support for political authorities within a wider decline in support for traditional public institutions such as the police, the army, and the church in post-industrial societies. Inglehart's thesis was grounded in the effects of pre-adult political socialisation on value priorities, which reflects family and wider political and

[8] See Inglehart (1990) and Dalton (2002) for an extensive discussion of the nature and scope of 'cognitive mobilization'.

[9] Others who have addressed the voter decline hypothesis have suggested it is due to structural rather than citizen factors including; constitutional eligibility (McDonald and Popkin, 2001) and lowering of voting age (Franklin, 2004). Finlay *et al*. (2010: 284) cited that youth voting (age 18-24) in the last two American Presidential elections rose by 11% (2004) and 2% (2008), which serve as a caution on broader claims of disengagement.

economic conditions in society (1981: 881). He (1999: 250) proposed that this change of values:

> brings new, more demanding standards to the evaluation of political life; and confronts political leaders with more active, articulate citizens…Mass publics are becoming increasingly critical of their political leaders...A Postmaterialist emphasis on self-expression and self-realization becomes increasingly central.

In this way, the democratising effect of new technologies and cognitive mobilisation of citizens have simultaneously provided a challenge for the responsiveness of the political system (Norris, 2002; and Haste, 2010). The traditional channels of representation; political parties, interest groups, elections and parliaments; are perceived by younger citizens as increasingly unsuited to current modes of effect seeking (Beedham, 1996; Hogwood, 1997: 311; Norris, 2002; and Stoker, 2006). The increased difficulty faced by political parties in mobilising support among younger people entering the political system is noted by (Norris, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Stoker, 2006; and Hay, 2007). Party membership in the long-established democracies of Western Europe fell to five per cent of the population in 2000, compared to a figure of nearly nine per cent a decade or so earlier (Stoker, 2006: 38).

Reflecting on the levels of political engagement in western democracies, Bynner *et al*. (2003: 319) identified a "growing gulf between politics as conventionally conducted and the political concerns of younger generations...Particularly the young, we are told, no longer think of political divisions in terms of the old ideological polarities". In the United Kingdom, Henn, Weinstein and Hodgkinson (2007: 467) framed abstention from recent elections among young voters within skepticism, rather than apathy; finding that young people's sense of political efficacy lags behind their level of political interest and satisfaction with the democratic process. Henn *et al.*'s (2007) study is based on young adults facing their first electoral opportunity, which they referred to as 'attainers' as they had recently attained electoral entitlement. Hay (2007: 121) suggests that political parties reaction to value changes have perpetuated the perception: "If political parties behave like rival businesses competing for market share, and they appeal to voters as atomistic consumers" this risks turning the rational voter in to a self-filling hypothesis. In citing a propensity for political elites to divest themselves of responsibility to non-elected entities, Hay (2007) also suggested that this undermines citizens' belief in the effectiveness of representative politics.

A more exacting appraisal of political system responsiveness, has led to increasing skepticism of its responsiveness (Teixeira, 1992; and Norris, 1999). Stoker (2006: 1) cited a worldwide opinion survey of 50,000 people in sixty-eight countries published in 2005, revealing that

most people believe that their government does not act according to their wishes; 75% in former Soviet bloc states; 64 per cent in European states and 60 per cent in North America. This challenge relates to the change in citizen expectations of democracy. Stoker posited some of the contemporary citizen discontent as a consequence of the rise of market-based consumerism and individualism, which make collective decision making in democracies appear more cumbersome (Stoker, 2006: 69). This accentuates a sense of futility as citizens' experience with political representatives is framed within expectations and experiences in commercial setting, such as online or text voting and consumer grievance resolution in commercial areas (Coleman *et al*., 2008: 785).

This political setting which Norris (2002) conceived as leading to the emergence of the 'critical citizen' in western democracies, is the inheritance of the current crop of threshold voters. The political cues and information presented by agents of political socialisation to developing citizens is likely to reflect such sentiment. Adolescents now inhabit a globalised political landscape where a variety of political realities (often conflicting) are brought to their daily attention. This environment is the springboard from which they derive their political understandings, and frame the extent of their political effectiveness.

It appears that there are conditions conducive to citizens bolstering their informational base and understanding of the political system, to become more internally efficacious. However, it is possible that the cognitive mobilisation of citizens brings about a greater sense of dissatisfaction in respect to government responsiveness, as the traditional means of citizen influence and institutional machinery of political systems struggle to keep pace with citizens' expectations. A growing diversification of issue publics, policy specialisation, and increasing globalisation may have contributed to a sense of futility in controlling political effect at a state level (Dalton, 2002; and Hay, 2007). In this setting political actors have to demonstrate competence in an increasingly complex environment, where the espousal of values is no longer adequate to build credibility (Stoker, 2006: 67). These factors potentially undermine the external political efficacy of citizens at the local, national, and international level.

2.10 The Relevance of Studying Threshold Voter Political Efficacy in Ireland

Over the last decade, a concern has been articulated about the political engagement of young people in Ireland. In 2003, the then Minister for Youth Affairs spoke of the increasing "alienation of young people from institutional politics and from other social institutions" (Department of Education and Science, 2003: 1). The themes outlined in the preceding section

appear to have resonance in Ireland. Despite a slight increase in the last two parliamentary elections, falling election turnout over the preceding two decades was construed as evidence of youth disengagement from politics (FitzGerald, 2003). A Central Statistic Office (2003) survey of turnout in the 2002 general election reported turnout of 40% among 18/19 year olds; 53% among 20-24 year olds; 66% among 25-34 year olds; and 80% among older age groups. In the absence of a more recent survey on voting behaviour among young people a National Youth Council of Ireland (2009) study found that only 64% of respondents aged 18-21 years were registered to vote. This increased to 83% for respondents aged 22-25 years. Non-participation and non-engagement among younger cohorts in politics during the period of economic affluence (1995-2007) was seen as symptomatic of a broader social disengagement arising from such affluence (Whelan, 2003)[10].

More long standing themes such as partisan disengagement among younger citizens in Ireland have also been raised (Sinnott, 2003)[11]. Sinnott cited failures of political facilitation (i.e. developing a sense of understanding of the issues) and political mobilisation (i.e. convincing citizens that it matters which parties win or lose) as important sources of electoral abstention among younger people. Such factors are parallel to considerations of internal and external political efficacy. In recent decades, the main political parties in Ireland have found it increasingly difficult to engage and attract young citizens (Marsh, Sinnott, Garry, and Kennedy, 2008). The 'coalitionability' of Irish political parties has been forwarded as a contributory factor in this regard (Mair, 1999). The coalitionability of parties, i.e., their entrance into interchangeable coalition governments, makes it difficult for young citizens to see a difference between parties. This undermines the development of a distinctive party loyalty, and may lead to an impression that "they are all the same". The Democracy Commission (2004: 5) also identified a "perception of drift towards the middle so that it is hard for people newly interested in politics to find a party that best suits their interests", along with a perceived impermeability of existing parties to new ideas and new influences.[12] The effect of party disengagement on young peoples' voting was observed by Buckley (2000) who noted the effect of socialisation in the home for partisan attachment and electoral behaviour.

[10] Whelan, N. (2003), 'Democracy Commission Must Get Over Its Own Democratic Deficit', Article in *Irish Examiner*, 26/06/2003.
[11] Sinnott, R. (2003), 'Survey Shows Non-Voters Alienated From Politics, Not Political System', Article in *The Irish Times*, 06/05/2003.
[12] The Democracy Commission was an independent body initiated through TASC and Democratic Dialogue (social action think tanks) to investigate factors affecting civic and political engagement in Ireland. Its work was largely consultative, inviting submissions from individuals and agencies, while also generating data from citizen consultations.

She ascribed a high sense of political distrust among (18-24 year olds) to the damaged credibility of politics arising from increasing exposure of political scandals and allegations of corruption in Ireland (2000: 57).

Reflecting on the political sentiment of younger cohorts, the Democracy Commission raised the issue of political responsiveness:

> Phrases such as 'engaged sceptic' resonate suggesting that young people are interested in the issues but mistrustful of politicians'…Young people are not impressed with the quality of elected representatives at present, with a majority expressing the sentiment that politicians are in it for themselves (2004: 6).

Elements of concern to those researching contemporary attitudes and political efficacy in western democracies such as cognitive mobilisation; partisan dealignment; and an increasingly critical disposition of citizens, are also evident in the Irish case. An analysis of the political efficacy socialisation in Ireland would therefore provide insight of the effects of environmental factors on the development of political efficacy among contemporary threshold voters.

However, researchers involved in the field of political attitudes in Ireland have tended to focus on attitudes toward partisanship, political support, and political participation, rather than political efficacy. A limited range of political efficacy items were included in the Irish Election Study (2002-2007). Ireland was also included in comparative studies on political efficacy at a systematic level, arising from inclusion in the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) dataset (Karp and Banducci, 2008). Such research focused on adult age groups and did not distinguish between political efficacy dimensions in measurement. The European Social Survey has collected data in recent rounds from 16 year olds and upward in Ireland. However, the small number of pre-adults in the dataset is a limitation on age-specific analysis.

Ireland's inclusion in an International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study has increased our understanding of youth political attitudes in Ireland. The IEA's International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) surveyed 3,400 students (Spring 2009) on measures of civic knowledge and related civic attitudes, including a two item measure of internal political efficacy.[13] The age of participants (mean age of 14) is younger than the current focus on threshold voters. There is evidently a dearth of data and

[13] The ICCS created an Irish student sample from 144 participating schools, along with respondents from 22 other European Union (EU) countries, and 13 non-EU countries. Ireland was not included an earlier wave of the study in 1999.

analysis on the development and socialisation of political efficacy among threshold voters in Ireland.

Aside from the theoretical rationale of researching political efficacy, this study is timely in Ireland on two grounds: the proposed lowering of the voting age in Ireland from 18; and the ongoing debate on extending political education to senior cycle of post-primary education. A recent report from the Oireachtas (Parliamentary) Committee on the Constitution (2010) recommended lowering of the voting age from 18 to 17 years of age. This coincides with a sustained campaign by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) on the extension of voting rights to 16 year olds for national elections. The parliamentary committee also recommended the introduction of a voter education programme, as part of the senior cycle programme in post-primary schools to promote awareness of the right to vote among newly eligible voters (Oireachtas, 2010: 164). The committee acknowledged the importance of the socialisation environment of young citizens and the long-term significance of participatory habits which develop among new entrants to political adulthood, citing Franklin (2004). This research will indicate the effects of socialisation on the political efficacy of the age cohort who would benefit from the proposed changes.

Secondly, since the introduction of the Civic, Social and Political Education module (CSPE) in Ireland at post-primary level (Junior Cycle) in 1999, its extension to Senior Cycle has been under consideration. The absence of a formal module of political education is perceived as deficient in the political socialisation of adolescents in Ireland. The Democracy Commission suggested that:

> Our failure to offer social and political subjects on the senior cycle, even as an option, places us 'seriously out of line' with most of our European neighbours. In modern democracies citizenship lacks depth as people feel alienated from politics and disconnected from society. The challenge lies in the promotion of active citizenry; citizen education is one method through which this can be achieved (2004: 10).[14]

This sentiment reflects similar lines of argument relating to internal and external efficacy captured by Galston (2001), Walker (2000), and Kahne and Westheimer (2006) in other states. This research will highlight the effects of the current educational offering on the political efficacy of those entering the political system. This is in anticipation of the introduction of a 'Politics and Society' module in Senior Cycle in the next year or two, which received approval from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in 2011.

[14] For an analysis of the education of civic and political education in the Republic of Ireland see: Harris, 2005; Coleman, Gray, and, Harrison, 2004; Gleeson and Munnelly, 2004; and NYCI, 2004.

2.11 Conclusion

Political efficacy is one of the most researched variables in political science. Its significance in existing literature relates to its theoretical and empirical association with political interest, political support and political participation. Citizens' political efficacy is considered indicative of their wider political outlook and participatory tendencies. It is of particular relevance in democratic political systems which espouse citizen engagement and governance by popular control. In this regard, it also serves as an indicator of the performance of a political system against the system's theoretical ideals. While initially conceived and measured as a unitary concept, the work of Balch (1974) is credited with confirming the distinction between considerations of the self (internal efficacy) and considerations of the system (external efficacy) in the assessment of political effect.

Those who examined the socialisation of political efficacy detail how it develops through political and non-political learning. In the groundswell of early efficacy literature attention was placed on pre-adult socialisation, on the basis that attitudes developed early in life retain significance for political attitude and behaviour over the life-cycle. A concern in this field is to establish the enduring significance of these attitudes.

In this review of the existing literature on political efficacy socialisation two issues emerge for further investigation. These become the two central questions to be addressed by the empirical element of this research.

- Research Question 1: Is threshold voter political efficacy measurable using the conventional adult framework of political efficacy measurement?
- Research Question 2: What is the impact of political socialisation environments on threshold voter internal and external political efficacy in contemporary democracies?

2.11.1 Research Question 1

An evident and consistent concern in existing political efficacy literature is the use of a measurement frame to reflect the concept's internal and external dimensions. Balch's (1974) empirical confirmation of the dimensionality of political efficacy is cited as 'the' major development in political efficacy research since Campbell *et al.*'s (1954) initial empirical work. Almost four decades after Balch's finding, the measurement issue has not gone away. The challenge to empirically measure concepts in line with evolving theoretical understanding is an inherent aspect of academic research. However, the ongoing concern in political efficacy literature is that the universally accepted theoretical dimensionality of the concept is frequently ignored in empirical research. The intent here is to assess the applicability of a

measurement framework which is generally applied to adults, among those who have not yet reached political adulthood, i.e., threshold voters. Threshold voters, along with all pre-adult citizens, occupy a different position to adults in respect of political status in democracies. This research uses the Craig *et al.* (1990) measurement framework, a popular source from which survey items are selected but rarely replicated in full.

If this provides confirmation of the flexibility of the Craig *et al.* framework among threshold voters, it will be further evidence of the necessity to measure political efficacy in line with its theoretical bases. The current ad-hoc selection of items and measurement approach, which often obscures the concept's dimensionality, has stymied the comparability of research findings and the advancement of political efficacy.

2.11.2 Research Question 2

Academic interest in pre-adult political socialisation is enjoying something of a renaissance. The socialisation of political efficacy had long been one of the mainstays of academic research in this area. Three aspects of existing research limit its utility: the failure to reliably and discretely measure internal and external efficacy dimensions; a focus on age groups which do not optimise the understanding of pre-adult political socialisation; and a non-strategic approach to controlling relevant factors when assessing the impact of socialisation environments. This research seeks to overcome such shortcomings. It uses the dominant framework of efficacy measurement as provided by Craig *et al.* (1990). It focuses on threshold voters to capture socialisation experiences at the critical juncture of entry to political adulthood. It encompasses family, school, social, and political representative environment socialisation, which will allow for the relative significance of each factor and elements thereof to be assessed. The analysis will control for demographic effects, and personal and political attributes, when assessing the relationship of socialisation variables on each efficacy dimension. Research Question 2 is the mainstay of analysis in this study.

The intention here is to assess socialisation affects in a contemporary setting. Much of the existing pre-adult political socialisation literature looks at pre-adolescent or early adolescent efficacy and is dominated by American based research from the 1960s and 1970s. Sherrod *et al.* (2010) suggest that the re-ignition of interest in political socialisation arises from a concern that democratic functioning is threatened by the evolving outlook of younger generations. There is a concern in current literature that the contemporary political climate is not conducive to the socialisation of efficacious and engaged citizens. By assessing the

significance and effect of socialisation environments on threshold voter political efficacy, the effect of the contemporary political climate on those entering political adulthood will be better understood. Discrete analysis of the effects of socialisation environments on internal and external political efficacy make it possible to identify what factors promote each dimension.

The analysis of these research questions will be addressed by a project-specific primary survey, due to the dearth of data on threshold voter political efficacy in Ireland. Conducting this research in Ireland is timely considering the proposed extension of the voting franchise to younger age groups and the proposed expansion of civic education to the Senior Cycle of post-primary education in Ireland. Existing research suggests that trends in Irish political and social attitudes are reflective of developments in other western democracies. Findings from this research will therefore have relevance beyond the geographical setting of the empirical study. Attention now turns to the design of the empirical study and the methodological approaches applied in the development of the survey instrument.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This research takes a case study approach to the analysis of political efficacy among threshold voters in Ireland. On the merit of state level analysis, Dalton (2002: 3) suggests that "each nation produces a 'natural experiment' in which general theories of political behavior can be tested in different political context". Perceptions of political efficacy in Ireland have been captured in existing research designs, namely: the European Social Survey; the Irish National Election Study; and the International Civic and Citizenship Study. Before looking at the methodological design of this study, it is useful to outline existing data in this area to assess their applicability for the current purpose.

Data on political efficacy in Ireland arises from its inclusion in recent rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS). The ESS provides a comparative dataset through face-to-face questionnaire survey of random samples within participating countries (31 countries participated in Round 4, 2008/9). Political efficacy was measured using the following survey items in Round 4:

1. How often does politics seem so complicated that you can't really understand what is going on?
2. How difficult or easy do you find it to make your mind up about political issues?[15]

By including respondents over 15 in the sample frame, ESS data does include threshold voters. For the current purpose, the limitation of this dataset arises from the lack of an external efficacy measure, and the small number of pre-adults surveyed. While 1,764 Irish respondents were included in the Round 4 dataset, only 41 respondents were younger than the age of voting entitlement.

At a national level, the Irish National Election Study (2002) included questionnaire items on political efficacy in a representative sample of 2,663 respondents. The efficacy items included were:

1. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on
2. I think I am better informed about politics and government than most people
3. The ordinary person has no influence on politics

[15] The response options to the first item were: Never, Seldom, Occasionally, Regularly, and Frequently; and for the second item were: Very Difficult, Difficult, Neither Difficult nor Easy, Easy, and Very Easy. The questionnaire and survey design detail can be found at the European Social Survey website: [http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/round4/]

4. So many people vote, my vote does not make much difference to who is in government
5. So many people vote, my vote does not make much difference to which candidates are elected
6. It doesn't really matter which political party is in power, in the end things go on much the same
7. In today's world, an Irish government can't really influence what happens in this country [16]

The first two items were traditionally used American National Election Study (ANES) items of internal efficacy and the third item of external efficacy. The remaining items focus on external efficacy considerations with a focus on: voting; the party system; and the state's capacity to respond to the concerns of citizens. While the inclusion of these items is testament to a recognition of the importance of political efficacy, two factors limit the use of such data here: the items were not included in one element of the study's methodology (the drop-off questionnaire); and more importantly the sample consists entirely of adults.

The International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS), which is a project of the IEA, measures political efficacy among pre-adults.[17] Issues relating to civic and citizenship education were surveyed in 38 participating countries, with Ireland included in the latest survey round. The following areas were focussed on with a representative sample of 3,400 post-primary students:

- How much do students know about civic concepts and processes?
- What are their rates of participation in civic and citizenship-related activities?
- What beliefs and attitudes do students hold on a range of civic and citizenship issues?

The survey included items on student's citizen self-efficacy:

1. How well would you argue your point of view about a controversial political or social issue?
2. How well would you organise a group of students in order to achieve changes at school?

It also included items on internal political efficacy:

1. I have a good understanding of the political issues facing this country

[16] Response options to these items were on a seven point disagree-agree scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Neither Disagree nor Agree, Slightly Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. For detail of the INES survey and questionnaire see: Marsh *et al.* (2008)

[17] For detail of the Irish section of the ICCS, see the Irish report by Cosgrove, Gilleece, and Shiel (2011). Further reference to the ICCS results in this thesis relates specifically to the Irish report.

2. I know more about politics than most people my age[18]

Respondent's external political efficacy is not measured in the study. The survey sample consisted of those in early to mid-adolescence, in the second year of post-primary education (mean age 14.3 years old). The age cohort of the study's respondents limits the applicability of this data for the current attempt to capture the effects of socialisation at the latter end of adolescence, and at threshold of entry to political adulthood.

A primary survey of 'threshold voters' was required to fulfil the research intent. Though the assessment of attitudes and behaviour in social science is a complex, and inevitably arbitrary task; "the development of scientific public opinion surveys provides a valuable tool for researchers" (Dalton, 2002: 2). As methodological decisions in empirical research are critical to the nature of subsequent analysis, results and findings, this chapter presents the following key elements of survey design: survey method; survey technique; survey frame; survey location; political context of the survey; and presentation and conduct of the survey instrument. In a quantitative design which aims to generalise from the survey sample, and the experimental nature of this design, the following are also relevant; sample size, sample stratification, respondent selection, and case exclusion. The construction of a measure of political efficacy in the survey questionnaire, which is central to this study, is discussed separately in Chapter 4; after this discussion on the wider survey design.

3.2 Survey Method

The traditional fault-line between qualitative and quantitative methods has thinned in recent years in political efficacy research. The combination of both methods is evident in some existing research on political efficacy. Almond and Verba's (1965) measure of political competence was based on structured interviews, with results presented in a quantitative fashion, and supported by qualitative material (i.e., respondent quotations). Waltz (1990) analysed the political efficacy of Tunisian women using a qualitative interview approach of 12 women. The principle strength of the qualitative method is it allows for a greater depth of data on a survey topic (or survey variable) to be gathered. In this regard the meaning of concepts such as political efficacy can be explored at an individual or group level (O' Toole, Lister, Marsh, Jones, and McDonagh, 2003; and Henn *et al.*, 2002). Coleman *et al.* (2008: 774) collected qualitative data from focus groups to assess the relationship between media use and political efficacy. Acknowledging that this departs from the traditional political science

[18] The response options to the citizen self-efficacy items were: Very Well, Fairly Well, Not Very Well, and Not Well At All. The response options to the internal political efficacy items were: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

approach to efficacy they assert that their approach is appropriate for letting respondents define the political context, and to understanding how people "come to make judgements about social life as they find it and how such subjective orientations can be acted upon". The authors acknowledge that the small numbers associated with their focus groups "do not readily allow the emergence of patterns, indicative of complex sets of relationships, as opposed...to patterns of opinion relating to, say, party political preferences" (2008: 776).

Becker, Amundson, Anderson, Wenzel, Yakubova, Sajaia, and Frannea (2009) use semi-structured interviews to assess the motivations of citizens who participated in the 2008 American Caucuses. In finding efficacy to be a central reason for participation, the authors acknowledge the specific nature of their findings given the small sample size of their qualitative approach (*n* 37). The qualitative method is most useful to acquire data on in-depth 'why' type questions. The opportunity for the research participant to define concepts and variables for analysis in her own terms, rather than being prescribed by the researcher, allows her to set the context of discussion and the analytical parameters of the research design. These benefits are of some relevance for the current task. Those involved in research on role-taking by adolescents in society espouse the use of focus group discussion to generate common understandings: Horsley and Costley (2008) in Australia; and Wood (2009) in New Zealand.

Nonetheless, the standard method of measuring the perception of political efficacy in existing empirical research has been a quantitative one. Survey items included in the original University of MichiganAmerican National Election Study (ANES) efficacy index have been the basis for research in America, and have subsequently guided undertakings in other states. This has influenced a quantitative approach to the attitudinal measurement of political efficacy.[19] Those looking at pre-adult political efficacy have followed this quantitative approach (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Kasschau, 1976; Amna *et al*., 2004; and Schulz, 2005). The latter two authors use the ICCS dataset a time before Ireland's inclusion.

The central research questions in this study are of 'what' rather than 'why' variety:

- What is the applicability of adult-oriented political efficacy measures for threshold voters?
- What is the impact of socialisation on threshold voters' political efficacy in contemporary Ireland?

[19] American National Election Studies have been conducted since 1948. Structured interviews on the years of national elections with agency administered questionnaires have provided time-series data on electorate opinion and behaviour. For more information on methodology and dataset see: [http://electionstudies.org/OurStudies/OurStudies.htm]

Therefore, the attitudinal perspective of the threshold voter population is at issue, rather than an in-depth understanding of the why certain socialisation variables affect those attitudes. The intention to generalise findings from the survey sample to the survey frame requires a sample size of sufficient statistical size, which is facilitated by the quantitative approach (Bryman, 2004: 77). Dalton (2002: 2) maintained that with a carefully selected sample, the survey approach provides a reliable basis for making claims about the distribution of attitudes in a population, with the possibility for analysis of diversity among subgroups.

While the primary methodology is a quantitative one, qualitative techniques were used in the development of the survey instrument (a written questionnaire). Focus group discussion and semi-structured group consultations were conducted to assess the comprehension of the survey variables, their indicators, and the respondent task, as advocated by Bryman (2004: 279). The benefit of mixing quantitative and qualitative methods to better analyse child and adolescent development has been highlighted (Torney-Purta *et al*., 2010: 507).

3.3 Survey Technique

Quantitative approaches to political efficacy are often based on the administration of closed ended questionnaire items. A range of survey techniques are possible: a self-administered survey (hard or soft-copy); an interviewer administered face-to-face survey; and an interviewer administered telephone survey. The task is to balance the strengths and weakness inherent in each technique. The particular advantage of self-administered techniques in measuring pre-adults' political attitudes is the minimisation of an interviewer effect. Young respondents may not feel confident in publicly expressing their political views and competencies within a group, or to somebody with whom they are not accustomed. Self-administration gives respondents the opportunity to abstain from certain questions with the benefit of anonymity and confidentiality. This lessens the risk of social desirability or acquiescent response biasing the data (De Vaus, 2002: 107). In cognisance of the salience of politics for many threshold voters, there is the risk that respondents may express benign or pro-subject responses in order to appear socially conscientious or informed on the survey topic, or to be seen as a helpful survey participant. In considering oral versus written formats, a written self-administered questionnaire allows more privacy for the participant to express negative or indifferent opinions (Fowler, 1993: 89). For items which may be sensitive for respondents (parental occupation, education attainment, personal competence, or political knowledge), facilitating privacy in a written format rather than an oral format was preferable.

In view of the current project's scope, written self-completion surveys are attractive in terms of financial, time and human resources involved. The response task arising from survey item design is relevant in the selection of the survey technique. The greater compliment between the chosen technique and the format of the items, the easier the respondent's task becomes. Survey items used to measure political efficacy and socialisation factors in quantitative designs involve selecting a response to a multiple response item or statement. The time taken to list item response options in a telephone or personal interview may risk respondent engagement, and thereby affect the reliability of the data. Visual representation of a multiple choice item is a more familiar template for respondents. Self-administered written techniques also confer greater opportunity for respondents to respond at their own pace, facilitating comprehension and consideration of the items, rather than telephone or interviewer administered surveys.

3.4 Piloting the Survey

An essential element of empirical research is the preparation and review of the survey instrument, the survey questionnaire in this case. A concern of this study is that survey items typically administered to adults may not have comparable meaning for pre-adults. To minimise respondent confusion, feedback on item wording and questionnaire presentation was solicited from threshold voters in the survey design process (Sarantakos, 2005). A focus group was followed by a separate pilot run of the questionnaire to refine content and presentation. The focus groups were used as a "methodological tool to sharpen the language used in survey instruments that contain mostly closed-ended questions" (Torney-Purta *et* al., 2010: 517).

The focus group was conducted with three male and two female threshold voter students in two consecutive forty five minute sessions.[20] Information on respondent comprehension of concepts such as: politics; the political system; political efficacy; political knowledge; and political support were elicited. Attention was also given to participant reaction and feelings toward a questionnaire of this type. Opinion was sourced on the prospect of being involved in an attitudinal survey in a school setting and the capacity of the survey items to capture political attitudes as intended. The order in which items appear in the questionnaire was also raised with group participants. The main findings from the focus group discussion were:

- Participants were comfortable with the wording used in the questionnaire.

[20] The focus group was conducted on 12/02/2009 in Colaiste An Chraoibhin, Fermoy. The school is a co-educational vocational type school located in a large town, which has a catchment area of the nearby town and wider rural hinterland.

- Participants were comfortable with the content sought in the questionnaire and with its design.
- Participants believed that the level of detail sought was of adequate depth and did not contain language which would suggest judgement in the selection of a particular response.
- Participants felt that the introduction to the questionnaire should explain why information on respondents' parents was sought.
- Participants recommended an alteration to personal efficacy items to include a middle response category.
- Participants noted that their political attitudes had not changed significantly in the preceding six months, though they did report an increase in interest.
- Participants noted that they would not feel judged in giving opinions on political attitude items, though they would be conscious of judgement in answering the political knowledge items.

Following the focus group feedback and associated adjustments, two pilot runs of the survey were conducted with 39 threshold voter respondents.[21] This involved introducing the questionnaire and monitoring student completion. This presented a necessary check on the timing and class conditions in advance of survey execution. When the students had completed the survey, their opinions on: survey introduction; survey content; item wording; and survey comprehension were sought. Their level of comfort with the response task was also solicited during an open question and answer session. Students were advised to write down their comments in a designated position of the questionnaire, if they so wished. Participant confidence in the anonymity of the survey responses and their ease with the level of information requested was also sought.

The tendency of respondents to use the middle category response in Likert type items, i.e., 'Neither disagree nor agree', and to avail of the 'Don't know' option or to abstain from survey items (which would create missing data) was reviewed in the pilot data. A concern that respondents may use the middle category as a stock response to avoid engaging with the survey task was allayed (Pierce, 2008). Fewer than 25 per cent of respondents opted for the middle-category response on internal and external efficacy items.

The pilot study participants expressed satisfaction with the survey length and the requirements of the respondent task. The participants were comfortable with the introduction to the research and the survey, and with the guarantee of anonymity. A rewording of the survey items relating

[21] Eighteen students were surveyed and consulted on 29/03/2009 in St. Aloysius College, Carrigtwohill. This is a single-sex girl's secondary school, with a Catholic ethos, located in a satellite town of Cork city. Enrolment comprises students from the surrounding rural hinterland, with a catchment which extend into the suburbs of Cork Borough/City. Twenty one students were surveyed and consulted on 30/03/2009 in Colaiste na mBraithre Chriostai, Charleville. This is a single-sex boy's secondary school, with a Catholic ethos, located in a middle-sized town. Enrolment comprises students from the town and the surrounding rural hinterland.

to ‘religious denomination’ and ‘contact with politicians’ resulted from the pilot study feedback. Some respondents raised the issue of responding to items on their parents’ voting behaviour, i.e., knowing whether they did or not, or who they voted for. Others mentioned that this would not be a problem. The items on parent voting were retained due to their potential use in capturing parent political participation and partisanship. While not raised as a difficulty during the pilot stage by respondents, the decision was taken at this stage to reposition background items on nationality, length or residence in country, and place of residence (residential area) toward the latter part of the survey, to allay a sense of intrusion or identification early in the response task. A practical matter arising from one of the pilot runs was the necessity for respondents to have an adequate desk area in which to complete the survey. The crowded nature of one pilot-survey classroom undermined the confidentiality of responses, and also led to student interaction during the questionnaire. The importance of separate desk area for survey completion was raised with school authorities when organising the administration of the school surveys.

3.5 Presentation of Survey Items

The manner in which the survey (questionnaire) items are presented to respondents affects the complexity of the task they face. The presentation of survey items here reflects existing practice in attitudinal surveys used in the political efficacy literature. Aspects of survey item presentation such as: ambiguous wording; the direction of item wording; and the range of response options provided with a survey item, affect the validity and reliability of the survey data (Torney-Purta *et al*., 2010: 508).

As response to items in most cases involves a selection from numerous possibilities, the range of options presented is of relevance. If too few response options are presented, this biases the data by under representing the true variation in the sample on the variable. Presenting too many options can produce the opposite effect. The approach in this case was to follow existing practices. Political efficacy items included response scales of: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither disagree nor agree, Agree, and Strongly agree. While wider and narrower item response scales to efficacy statements appear in the literature, the five item response scale is common and is used in Craig *et al.* (1990).

The inclusion of the middle ‘Neither disagree nor agree’ response option is common, but not universal, in political efficacy items. The exclusion of a middle category response aims to encourage respondents to express a distinct positive or negative attitude. Its inclusion may be

used as a ‘safe’ option where respondents feel uncomfortable with a survey topic, or wish to hide their true opinion. This introduces response bias and may improperly limit the variation of a variable, and the ability of statistical analysis to identify its relationships to other variables. However, political attitudes involve competing considerations and varied experiences. It is important to facilitate genuine medium response as a true reflection of political attitude, particularly for threshold voters, whose political opinions may not have hardened or intensified.

A related consideration is the inclusion of the ‘Don’t know’ option in response facilitation. It may be used as a shortcut through which respondents disengage from the survey task, with the loss of true variation via non-response bias. Alternatively, excluding the ‘Don’t know’ option confers a risk to data reliability as respondents may be inclined to express attitudes which they do not possess. Fowler (1993: 76) notes that “as the object of the questions gets further from their [respondent’s] immediate lives, the more plausible and reasonable it is that some respondents will not have adequate knowledge on which to base an answer or will not have formed an opinion or feeling”. The survey items on parent voting behaviour feature ‘Don’t know’ response options in this case, whereas items which ask of respondents’ political behaviour, partisan affiliation, and political attitude do not.

As ‘Don’t know’ is not presented as a response option for the political efficacy items in this survey, a possibility is that respondents may opt for middle-category response in lieu of a ‘Don’t know’ response. This is a risk to data reliability as not having an attitude (or feeling uninformed) on an issue is substantively different to possessing a neutral disposition. Pierce (2008: 149) identifies this problem with Likert scale middle-response categories and suggests Guttman scales as an alternative. A Guttman scale involves asking a series of questions to determine the intensity of a respondent’s attitude to an issue. A ‘Yes’ response to an item, leads to the next item on the scale. A ‘No’ response, indicates the point of departure of the respondent from the scale, which indicates their strength of attitude. While Guttman scales have been used in existing efficacy research (Seligson, 1980b), Likert items are more prevalent with existing analysis confirming their robustness in relation to political efficacy (Craig *et al.* 1990; and Clarke *et al*., 2010). The extent to which respondents select middle-category responses for ulterior reasons is not established in this case. However, when looking at the distribution of response to each item it will be possible to compare items on the level of middle-category response. In the pilot survey and consultations, students indicated an understanding of what the middle-category response represented, and indicated that the

absence of a 'Don't know' response for these survey items was not problematic. In using the Craig *et al.* (1990) items which are Likert items with agree-disagree response options, the approach here reflects recent practice and aims to capture respondents' strength of positive or negative attitude on each efficacy survey item.

The order in which response options are presented on a questionnaire may affect the manner in which respondents perceive them. In a vertical presentation of responses, those options lower on a list may be conceived to be of less import or value (Bryman, 2004: 138). This is a consideration for all techniques that involve respondents selecting a response from multiple alternatives. The current design minimises this possibility with the horizontal presentation of item responses and the use of reverse polarity for some item wording. The direction of item wording frames the respondents' task for Likert survey items. A mixture of positive and negative directed statements is often recommended to avoid the risk of response-set bias affecting response. However, in an attitudinal context "the rejection of a negative statement is not the same thing as affirming or committing to a positive statement about the same subject" (Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2010: 582). The Craig *et al.* (1990) internal efficacy items tend to be of positive direction, and external efficacy of negative direction. Existing studies which consider the effect of wording direction to these and similar items have not found significant wording direction biasing effects (Wright, 1975; and Clarke *et al*., 2010). The sequence of items in the survey sought to simplify the response task from item to item, with a balance between the risk of inducing response set practices, and causing confusion by an incongruent sequencing of survey items. Moreover, political efficacy variables were positioned toward the beginning of the survey and potentially sensitive items such as parent employment status and voting participation were positioned in the latter part of the survey.

3.6 Survey Location

The environment in which a survey is administered influences the efficiency and effectiveness of survey sampling. It also influences the control available to the researcher over the survey environment, which impacts on the reliability of survey response. The survey was conducted in post-primary schools. Alternatives to school surveying for this demographic are: household; public space (e.g., footpath); or through adolescent member associations. Movement patterns restrict the ability of a public space location to provide a representative or random sample. Such samples are likely to suffer from sample and response bias as they may be perceived as a disturbance to respondents in transit.

The school setting is efficient in time and human resources to access threshold voters from varied social and economic backgrounds and is the standard location for surveying pre-adults (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Kasschau, 1976; and Schulz, 2005). The percentage of Irish adolescents enrolled in post-primary education to the end of Leaving Certificate was estimated at 83 per cent for 2008/9. [22] The retention rate at the end of the fifth year of post-primary education (the year of this survey) is 87 per cent on average.[23] The school setting is more efficient, in terms of survey response, than household surveys, irrespective of the type of administration: in person; mail; or telephone. Household surveys are subject to self-selection bias affecting sample construction (Bryman 2004: 135). They are also particularly subject to behavioural patterns as conducting such surveys on a weeknight was likely to coincide with homework duties or involvement in leisure activities. Surveying at weekends would have conflicted with adolescent social and sporting activities, or been a disturbance of respondents' personal time. Henn *et al.* (2007) noted that the response rate of 23% to their postal survey of young British adults is typical of such techniques. This raises the problem of respondent self-selection, as those who are more interested or participative in nature are more likely to reply, introducing a non-response bias. All of the students who were present in the classrooms at the time of the survey participated in the questionnaire. Certain cases, as detailed in later in this chapter, were excluded from analysis as concerns arose about their level of engagement. However, the issue of non-response bias is less influential than would have been the case with household or other public locations.

The school environment conferred a degree of congruity with the tasks required by the questionnaire. Adolescents are used to reading, reflection, and writing in school settings. It is routine for students to abstain from communication with others in class activities. This would be more difficult to ensure in a home environment where the surveyor is within the respondent's living space. Though it is not possible to completely control a social environment, the effect of distractions (visual or aural) tends to be more controllable in a school than in a residential or public setting. While it is not possible to confirm that participants were not distracted by other people or extraneous factors during the survey, it is

[22] Source: Department of Education and Skills website, hosted on 26/10/2010. Information carried in a document titled: Projections of Full Time Enrolment:
[http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/stat_enrolments_2010.pdf?language=EN]
The Junior Certificate marks the end of the first three year cycle of post-primary education in Ireland. This is followed by the senior cycle (normally two years) which is punctuated by Leaving Certificate examinations, with a transition year (sometimes optional) between cycles.

[23] Source: Department of Education and Skills website, hosted on 26/10/2010. Information carried on Table 4 of document titled: Retention Rates of Pupils in Second Level Schools 1991-2001 Entry Cohorts:
[http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/stat_retention_rates_second_level.pdf?language=EN]

habitual to monitor interpersonal distractions in the school environment. Conducting the questionnaire in the company of one's peers helped to normalise the response task, and built confidence that the task was within respondent's capacity.

Conducting the survey in a school environment was beneficial for: survey response rate; survey sample verifiability; survey control; and resource requirements. It lessened the time and manpower requirements as numerous respondents were surveyed simultaneously. It equally offered the benefits of a pre-organised and controlled environment that was familiar to respondents. Critically, as threshold voter respondents are pre-adult and legally minors, organising student access and ethical consent is more systematic in a school setting than in other public settings. However, it does introduce location specific considerations. For those who do not have a pleasant school experience, there is a risk that such feelings affect survey engagement and pose a risk to data validity and reliability. While not a panacea for all concerns, limiting communication during the conduct of the survey, establishing the independence of the research, and outlining the confidentiality of survey response in advance of survey administration, attempted to minimise these risks.

3.7 Sample Frame

In the Republic of Ireland, voting entitlement for all elections is conferred at the age of eighteen, which sets an obvious upper limit for threshold voters. As social and political development is determined by life circumstance rather than age (Rossi, 2009), the determination of a lower cut-point for 'threshold voters' is necessarily subjective. The focus here on adolescents in the two years leading up to political adulthood aims to optimise the experience which respondents have of political and non-political socialisation. Existing research differentiates between childhood and adolescent populations by designing a survey frame by level of education; primary (Easton and Dennis, 1967; and Kasschau, 1976); post-primary (Amna *et al*., 2004; and Schulz, 2005); and third level education (Lee, and2006; Caprara *et al.* 2009). In an Irish setting, ICCS data is based on the second year of post-primary education capturing attitudes of early-mid adolescents (Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011).

The survey frame in this research was primarily influenced by school year. Focussing on fifth year students (in the penultimate year of Senior Cycle) was most conducive to targeting those aged between fifteen and seventeen.[24] In selecting a specific year as the survey frame, those who are aged 15-17 age in preceding and succeeding years of enrolment were excluded.

[24] This includes students in Year 1 of: the Leaving Certificate; the Leaving Certificate Applied; and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

While a focus on the sixth year of enrolment may ensure a high percentage of seventeen year olds. As the first batch of surveying was conducted toward the end of the school year, sixth year students were focussed on the upcoming Leaving Certificate examinations creating problems of access and a greater percentage of sixth year students would have reached eighteen by the end of sixth year. The fifth year was more useful than the preceding year (fourth or transition year in many schools) as the literature suggests that students will accumulate more social and political experience as they move through adolescence. While respondents in fifth year vary in age, their shared level of education may mediate the effect of age within each year. The survey was conducted during the months of April, May, September, October, and November, 2009. The initial batch of surveys was conducted with fifth year students near the end of their fifth year of post-primary education. After the intervening school break, surveying continued with the corresponding school year cohort in the early stages of their sixth year of education.

Financial and time resources rendered a nationwide geographical survey unfeasible. The Republic of Ireland is not denoted by political fragmentation based on regional territory as in other polities. The principle division in local governance is structured around county boundaries. The small geographical size and stable political experience of the state since independence almost a century ago, ensures that this division is one of administration rather than of political cleavage or culture. Setting the survey frame at a county level is evident in existing political research (Buckley, 2001; and Buckley, Collins, and Reidy, 2007). It is possible to suggest that a Cork sample of threshold voters has a political experience which does not diverge significantly from those in other Irish counties. Cork is Ireland's largest county in geographical size, has the second largest population in the state, and includes the second largest city population. According to the census data preceding the time of survey, it comprised a large city (119,418) and country (361,877) population, with a large suburban area straddling both populations (Central Statistics Office, 2011). Sampling in a restricted geographical area with qualified generalisation to a national level is evident in existing literature, due to resource and data limitations. Barker (1973) generalised about the socialisation of efficacy attitudes in Germany based on a survey of young people in the city of Cologne. Caprara *et al.*'s (2009) main Italian study is based on a third-level sample of students in Rome. American based studies have relied on survey frames designed on state or city frames from which they theorise to the national context: McCluskey *et al.* (2004)-Wisconsin; and Pasek *et al*., (2008)-Philadelphia.

The overall enrolment in Cork post-primary schools in 2008/9 (excluding Post Leaving Certificate students) was 37,268, accounting for 12.1% of the national enrolment of 307,944.[25] Dublin aside, Cork has the largest post-primary student population. As the Department of Education and Skills statistics do not offer a breakdown in each school year per county, estimating the size of the sample frame of fifth year students in the Cork area involves the application of county proportions to national figures. The national percentage for those in the fifth year of post-primary education relative to overall post-primary enrolment is 18.2 per cent. Applying this percentage to the Cork post-primary enrolment figure of 37,268, the enrolment for fifth year in Cork schools in 2008/9 is approximately 6,783, which is the sample frame (N) of this study.[26]

3.8 Limitations of Sample Frame

Conducting the survey through school environs systematically biases against the selection of participants who are either no longer in post-primary education or were absent on the day of survey. Those who have left post-primary education, or are in juvenile detention, had no possibility of being included in the survey sample. It is not unreasonable to speculate that threshold voters who have left the post-primary educational environment may express divergent political attitudes from those still attending. Some may be working full-time in the labour market which will alter their interaction with state agencies.[27] Equally, those who have had to leave post-primary education due to juvenile detention may have a different experience of state institutions. While these are a relatively small proportion, their political attitudes are not reflected in the current survey design. However, the costs and administrative approval required for expanding the survey frame are considerable in respect of those in juvenile detention.[28]

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[25] Source: Department of Education and Skills website, hosted on 26/10/2010. Source document: Education Statistics 2008/9: [http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobservlet/web_stats_08_09.pdf]

[26] From the 2006 national census, the number of sixteen and seventeen year olds in Cork county and city in 2009 was 6,224 and 6, 383 respectively. This verifies that the sample of fifth year students in post-primary education in Cork is a close estimate, considering the effect of population changes since time of census. Source: Table 10 in Census 2006: Volume II Age and Marital Status: as per 04/11/2010. [http://www.cso.ie/census/census2006results/volume_2/census_2006_volume_2.html]

[27] In a study of young adult's political attitudes in the United Kingdom, Henn *et al.* (2007: 745) were surprised to find that those with educational or work-related qualifications exhibited lower levels of political efficacy than those without such qualifications. In explanation of their finding they hypothesise that this may be due to the heightened sensitivity to political reality gained through education; or a heightened sense of political autonomy gained through occupational status and earning on behalf of those who had left education earlier.

[28] The number admitted to juvenile detention facilities in Ireland as of 1 January 2010 was 125 according to the Irish Youth Justice Service Annual Report 2010. [http://www.iyjs.ie/en/IYJS/IYJS%20Annual%20Report%202010.pdf/Files/IYJS%20Annual%20Report%202010.pdf]

Absentees from school on the day of survey are systematically excluded from the sample. They could have been facilitated with a repeat school visit. However this would only be of significance if absentees on a particular school day are hypothesised to differ from attendees. As students were not aware of the survey in advance, their absence could not have been a premeditated reaction to the survey. The representative nature of each school sample would be adversely affected if students were absent due to a school or extracurricular event. To avoid this situation, surveys were conducted on days when such events were not scheduled.

3.9 Sample Size

As inferences will be made from the survey sample (*n*) to the survey population the size and representativeness of the sample is of critical importance. Bryman (2004) holds that it is not the relative sample size, it is actual sample size, which is important for statistical analysis and negating the effect of sampling error. The level of variation in the survey variables in a survey frame and the size of that population inform decisions on what is an acceptable sample size. The original nature of this research in an Irish context does not permit an estimation of the level of variation on political efficacy variables. A projected *n* of 1,000 was proposed to ensure that subsamples within sample strata be of sufficient size for statistical analysis and an acceptable level of confidence in results. In this projected *n* it was anticipated that certain cases may need to be excluded on the grounds of: missing data; a lack of engagement; and some respondents having reached the age of eighteen.

3.10 Sample Stratification

The application of strata to the sample was a necessary element of this survey design. The three strata applied in the selection of schools (and subsequently respondents) related to school type; school location; and gender.

Post-primary education in Ireland is administered in three categories of school: secondary, vocational, and community and comprehensive. The principle distinction between school types relates to the administration and management of the school. Secondary schools are privately owned and managed, in some cases by religious bodies. Vocational schools are owned by the local vocational education committees, which are statutory bodies established by local authorities. Community and comprehensive schools are largely amalgamations of the previous two types. While the latter two school types are largely or entirely funded by the Department of Education and Skills, secondary schools also receive a range of grants and subsidies from the same department. In the past, secondary schools provided a more academic

education and vocational schools provided a more technical and manual-skills educational. However, this distinction has dissipated with all three school types now offering a range of academic, practical and vocational subjects (Citizens Information Board, 2011a). While school type may be a relevant concern for some parents in selecting a school for their children the proximity and accessibility of a school may be as important a factor. As school type is an obvious manner in which post-primary schools are categorised in Ireland, its inclusion as a survey stratum is necessary to ensure a representative sample and identify any possible effects on threshold voter political efficacy.

A second stratum introduced was school location. The Department of Education and Skills categorises schools (and enrolment numbers) according to Cork City Borough or Cork County (local authority) location. This stratum was integrated in the selection of schools to match the overall proportion of student enrolment in City Borough schools and Cork County schools. As some students attending City Borough schools reside in the Cork County area, and vice versa, this stratum does not necessarily distinguish between urban and rural residence.

While the intention was to select school on a gender enrolment stratum, i.e., male only, female only, and co-educational schools, this was not possible by and large. Attending, learning, and developing in a co-educational environment may influence social and political attitudes divergently to single-sex environments. The single-sex and co-educational distinction was only possible in the selection of secondary schools in the Cork County area. Proportionality in the selection of male and female respondents across the other school strata, and within coeducational schools was sought to reflect the gender parity in the survey frame. This was necessary as gender is a significant variable in existing political efficacy research.

The Department of Education and Skills 2008/9 enrolment list of post-primary schools in the Cork area provided a basis for school categorisation according to the design strata. A breakdown of the enrolment proportions of students in each stratum was computed. These proportions were then applied to a survey size of 1,000 to determine the number of sample respondents required in each stratum category, and the number of schools in each survey stratum was ascertained.

To insure that students in the survey frame had an equal opportunity of being selected, two steps in sample selection were critical which relate to the manner in which schools were selected within stratum, and the manner in which students were selected within each school

selected. Table 3.1 presents the breakdown of students enrolled in each stratum in post-primary schools in the Cork area in the year of survey.

Table 3.1. Cork Student Enrolment per Stratum 2008/9

School Location	**Cork County**						**Cork City Borough**					
	70.9						29.1					
School Type	**Secondary**		**Vocational**		**Comm./Comp.**		**Secondary**		**Vocational**		**Comm./Comp.**	
	33.0		25.9		12.0		23.0		2.0		4.1	
Student Gender	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**
	14.1	18.9	14.6	11.3	5.9	6.1	9.6	13.4	1.1	0.9	3.1	1.0

Figures represent the percentage of students in each stratum category in Cork post-primary schools, based on a total enrolment of 37, 268.[29]

3.11 School Selection

It was impractical to treat the survey population as one list from which to select students in a randomised process across all Cork schools. School samples of 50 students were sought where possible. This introduced a cluster element to the data; however, the samples in each school were too small to assess school effects. This school effect would not necessarily represent a geographic cluster effect, as respondents travel to schools from varied distances, depending on school bus route, parent commuting patterns, among many other considerations.

In each school, enrolment in the fifth year of education was ascertained from school authorities in advance. A sample of 50 students represented between 25 per cent and 100 per cent of fifth year enrolment in the selected schools. In many cases a sample size of 50 was not possible, due to an enrolment of less than 50 in that school's fifth year. In which case, all fifth year students present were surveyed. In the case of Cork City Borough Vocational and Community/Comprehensive schools, the intention was to select more students (and therefore schools) than proportionate to overall enrolment, to ensure a sample of sufficient size within each category to facilitate statistical analysis. The small number of schools in City Borough Vocational and Community and Comprehensive schools, made it impractical to survey exclusively in schools with more than 50 students enrolled in fifth year. The approach used

[29] These figures were sourced from the Department of Education and Skills Database Spreadsheet on 2007/8 enrolment. They exclude students of Coláiste Stiofán Náofa, Cork College of Commerce, and St. John's College as such students are enrolled in Vocational Training Programme 2, which is not post-primary education, as hosted on 03/06/2010:
[http://www.education.ie/home/home.jsp?pcategory=10917&ecategory=12016&language=EN]

ensured that students from large and small school enrolment sizes were included in the sample.

Within each stratum, schools were selected on a random basis to prevent sampling bias. The list of schools on the Department of Education and Skills spread sheet was shuffled to randomise each school's position within each stratum list. In each stratum the first school selected was in the seventh position (a random selection) on the list. If the list did not contain seven schools, the list was counted over to reach the seventh position. Subsequent schools were selected to create a systematic random sample which sought equivalence to a simple random sample (Fowler, 1993).[30] In the instance where a school was not willing to participate, the school in the next position on the list was selected. In the instance where a surveyed school did not provide sufficient students to meet target sub-sample size within each stratum sample, the next school on the list was also selected.

Six schools as selected from this process elected not to participate in the survey for various reasons. While it is not possible to establish whether the refusal of certain schools significantly biases the nature of response, the reasons for non-participation relate to time constraints and involve schools of each school type. One school which was initially selected had been approached by fifteen research groups to conduct research with students in the year of study. This risked survey fatigue and excessive student distraction from studies. In this case, the next school on the list was approached.[31]

3.12 Student Selection

The composition of the sample was discussed with the school authorities in advance of student selection. In schools with more than 50 students in the fifth year, a sample of 50 was requested. In this case the school vice-principal, principal or fifth-year head selected a number of classrooms to reach the requested number. Students were surveyed at a time when they were not based in a streamed class, .i.e., during study classes and non-examination subjects. In co-educational schools, where possible, gender proportionality was achieved. In some instances this was not possible due to the gender imbalance in the enrolment of that school year.

[30] For instance, where 3 schools were required from a list of 9 (i.e., one in three), the second school selected was three positions beneath the first selected school. In selecting secondary co-educational schools in the Cork County area: the first school selected was in 7th position on the list. I then counted through six positions on the list to select the second school, as 2 schools from 11 (i.e. one in six) were required to provide a proportionate number of students in this stratum.

[31] A list of the schools surveyed in this study is presented in Appendix 1: including school size; school year enrolment; and gender breakdown per school sample.

An attempt was made to ensure a range of academic ability and student interest in the survey sample. It was emphasised in advance discussions with the school authorities that the biased selection of classes or students which were perceived as being of greater political interest or academic inclination would undermine the purpose of the research.

3.13 Survey Timing

The seven month span between first and last survey is not ideal. It would have been preferable to survey all participants within a shorter timeframe. However, the end of year exams truncated the number of surveys conducted in the first batch. The advance in age and education of participants in the second batch or wave may have been accompanied by a change in political attitude relative to inclusion in the first wave. The five month gap means that students in the September-November batch were more likely to have been eighteen, and to have voted in the intervening Local Authority and European Parliament elections, held in June, 2009. The effect of this time interval between survey batches on response was monitored through inclusion of a survey wave variable in statistical analysis to assess and control for this effect.[32]

Data collection is contextualized by the political and economic environment from which it is extracted. Recently acquired political information is may be most recallable to a survey participant when attempting the response task. It is necessary to make reference to the political circumstances which evolved since the onset of the current economic downturn in Ireland since 2008. The political repercussions of this have been substantial in terms of public attitude, and profile of central political actors. In their latest edition on Irish politics, Coakley and Gallagher preface their analysis by cautioning of "a widespread sense that Ireland would not have 'politics as usual' for the next few years, and that existing evaluations of, for example, political culture, the party system, voting behavior…might not survive the shock of these developments" (2010: xvii). As the data collection for this project took place between April and November 2009, it occurred after the onset of economic difficulties. The political atmosphere and media coverage of politics at time of surveying was therefore more agitated than at any time in recent decades, and was epitomised by the low polling of Fianna Fáil (FF) candidates in the Local and European elections between survey waves. Representative polls (Ipsos MRBI) commissioned by *The Irish Times* around this time indicate the substantial drop in support for the main governing party, FF, the Taoiseach, and in government satisfaction in

[32] In the multiple regression analysis of variables on internal and external efficacy, the addition of the survey wave variable did not affect the pre-existing relationship, or relate to either political efficacy dimension.

the year preceding survey. Comparing poll results between May 2008 and 2009, satisfaction with government went from 48 per cent to 12 per cent; support for FF (main governing party) went from 47 per cent to 22 per cent; and satisfaction with Brian Cowen (then Taoiseach) went from 52 per cent to 20 per cent.[33] While the caveat of Coakley and Gallagher is relevant, it is notable that the political environment became more volatile in the eighteen months after the completion of data collection and preceding the general election of February 2011, which included the external International Monetary Fund/EU European Central Bank financial support mechanism of 2010.

That this research is more focussed on the construction and determinants of efficacy rather than the level of efficacy somewhat offsets the significance of these changes as such processes are likely to be more long-standing than the level of efficacy itself. From a methodological point of view, irrespective of whether the expressed attitudes were affected by recent or more long-standing processes, they have become part of the political reality for this age group and have contributed to the current political outlook of threshold voters.

3.14 Case Exclusion

The survey questionnaire was administered to 1,042 respondents in twenty four post-primary schools. One hundred and ninety three of these respondents were excluded from survey analysis. Thirteen of these respondents were excluded as it was evident in the returned questionnaire that they did not engage with the respondent task seriously. The administration of the survey ran without noticeable disruption or interruption in each school. The use of closed-ended questionnaires makes it difficult to establish the extent to which a respondent engages with a survey questionnaire. The repeated selection of a response option based on placement on the questionnaire sheet is one indicator. There is an awareness of this risk in political efficacy research (Craig *et al.*, 1990; and Clarke *et al.*, 2010). Blasius and Thiessen (2001) detected response set bias among respondents with low political interest. Spurious responses to open-ended items are an indicator of non-engagement. The exclusion of cases from analysis arises from responses given to open-ended items and cases where respondents did not respond to a majority of survey items presented. Overtly frivolous or obscene

[33] Source: *The Irish Times*, p. 8, dated 21/07/2011 which presented government satisfaction, party support (excluding undecided), and party leader satisfaction levels from May 2007 until July 2011. As two polls were conducted in May 2009, the percentages above are the mean of two polls, with a maximum difference of 3 per cent in party support level within the same month. Support for Brian Cowen in May 2008 is contextualised by his appointment to the position in April 2008. The corresponding poll in January 2008 presented a satisfaction level of 40 per cent for the then incumbent, Bertie Ahern.

responses indicated that certain respondents were not engaged in the response task. Their inclusion in the dataset would have jeopardised the quality of the analysis and findings. It is possible that their lack of engagement represents an underlying correlate such as difficulty in comprehension, or political attitude, which is not possible to establish on the basis of the responses given. Cases excluded on this basis arose across schools and strata.

Five respondents were foreign students who were resident in Ireland for less than one year at the time of survey. Their responses were therefore likely to be substantially based on political experience abroad. Their number is not of sufficient size to be useful for statistical comparison with other respondents, and they were excluded from analysis.

A further one hundred and seventy five respondents, who were aged eighteen and over at the time of survey, were removed from the dataset as they are outside the threshold voter demographic. In the sample selection process it was anticipated that a portion of fifth year students (or beginning sixth year in the second batch) would have reached voting age at the time of survey. To filter out such students at the student selection stage would have been problematic and would have resulted in unnecessary disruption of the school timetable.

The one hundred and ninety three excluded cases represent 18.5 per cent of the original survey sample. After the removal of these cases from the sample dataset, the proportion of students in each stratum category remains closely aligned to that of the sample frame. The remaining *n* (849) is of sufficient size for statistical analysis of the sample and the strata subsamples. Table 3.2 indicates the number of respondents in each strata category, with percentages in brackets. A comparison of the percentages in the survey sample and school enrolment indicate the representative nature of the survey sample. The sample closely mirrors the proportion of each stratum category in the Cork post-primary student population. [Table Overleaf]

Table 3.2. Survey Sample per Stratum

School Location	**Cork County**						**Cork City Borough**					
	(73.7)						(26.3)					
n	626						223					
School Type	**Secondary**		**Vocational**		**Comm./Comp.**		**Secondary**		**Vocational**		**Comm./Comp.**	
	(35.6)		(25.4)		(12.7)		(19.2)		(2.6)		(4.5)	
n	302		216		108		163		22		38	
Student Gender	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**	**M.**	**F.**
	(14.9)	(20.7)	(12.6)	(12.8)	(6.4)	(6.3)	(8.6)	(10.6)	(1.5)	(1.1)	(2.4)	(2.1)
n	126	176	107	109	54	54	73	90	13	9	20	18

Figures in brackets represent the percentage of students in each stratum category in the survey sample dataset, from the working sample of 849. The number of respondents in each stratum subsample is noted in the rows marked *n*.

3.15 Conduct of Survey

The school authorities were provided with a detailed overview of the research in advance of administering the questionnaire.[34] The purpose and content of the questionnaire was explained and a copy of the questionnaire, and consent form, were provided for school records.

I was present in the classroom/auditorium for each survey session, and was the sole communicator with students both in the introduction to the research and questionnaire, and during its administration. Through the survey introduction, which was read to students in advance, the purpose of the research was communicated, along with the valuable and voluntary nature of their contribution.[35] While encouraged to answer as much of the survey as possible, those present were reminded of the voluntary nature of participation. The possibility of refraining from any item according to their want was also noted.

Jackman (1970: 986) raised the possibility that respondents may view surveys as Intelligence Quotient tests, with an associated risk of response error, particularly in a classroom situation. The introduction was also used to reiterate the importance of taking one's time, while intimating that the student's own opinion or gut reaction was requested. The necessity to give an honest response to what was asked was stressed. Students were asked to not communicate during the conduct of the survey. The anonymity of their responses was assured to aid the reliability of the data returned and to ensure that respondents did not feel pressured to respond in a socially desirable fashion.

[34] The letter sent to school authorities as initial contact and introduction to the research is included in Appendix 2.

[35] The introduction and consent form relating to the survey questionnaire are presented in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.

In each school, it took students between twenty five and thirty five minutes to complete the questionnaire. Students were asked to pause silently on reaching the half-way point in the survey, until I directed them to continue en masse. This attempted to dissuade students from rushing ahead, and to ensure that most students would be finishing around the same time without pressurising those who completed it at a slower pace. The risks associated with the location of the survey including attitudes toward school and classroom dynamic, were dealt with in the introduction to the research. In the latter stages of the questionnaire, students were presented with an item relating to the ease or difficulty encountered in the response task to gauge methodological effects. More than two thirds of respondents (68.3 per cent) found the survey 'Fairly easy' or 'Very easy' to complete, with a further 22.9 per cent reported that it was 'Neither difficult nor easy'. While 8.8 per cent found the survey to be 'Fairly difficult' or 'Very difficult', only 1.3 per cent (or 11 respondents) was in the latter category (*n* 829). While the steps taken in the methodological design of the research survey do not eliminate response error, they attempt to negate its impact.

3.16 Conclusion

The original conception of the 'threshold voter' age group and dearth of existing research on this age group in Ireland, dictated the need for project-specific data collection. Existing datasets are deficient for the current purpose due to a focus on younger or older age groups, and measurement approaches. The main elements of the survey design process were outlined, along the limitations of the methods used. Quantitative methods of research dominate political efficacy literature. To capture participant understandings, qualitative techniques of focus group and pilot survey consultations were included in the survey preparation. The school environment provided many advantages for quantitative research with adolescents. The benefits outlined in this discussion relate to: sample selection; respondent facilitation; and survey conduct.

The objectives of the methodological approach in terms of acquiring a sample of sufficient size, with representative subsamples of the survey population were achieved. While the exclusion of 193 cases from the data set is regrettable, it was anticipated that some participants surveyed would be older than the threshold voter demographic.

Factors which were difficult to control in the survey environment such as participant engagement, and the reliability of data generated from a correlational (one-off) research design, serve as an on-going caveat in terms of the study's results and findings. Details of the

analytical framework and statistical analyses precede the analysis in chapter five. The next chapter details the measurement of the study's dependent variables; threshold voter internal and external political efficacy.

Chapter 4. Political Efficacy: Measurement and Scale Construction

4.1 Introduction

The survey items typically used as indicators of political efficacy in empirical research derive from the original American National Election Study (ANES) items devised by the National Survey Research Center (SRC), University of Michigan. These items have traditionally been tailored for adults (Torney-Purta *et al*., 2010: 499). The intent here is to consider the utility of existing approaches for a pre-adult and specifically threshold voter survey frame. This discussion details the primary existing approaches to efficacy measurement, before assessing the applicability of the Craig *et al.* measures. The construction of scale measures for internal and external efficacy from survey items is assessed through factor and scale reliability analysis. Exploratory factor analysis is conducted on internal and external efficacy measures. Exploratory rather than confirmatory factor analysis is used due to the experimental nature of the dataset. There is not a comparable base against which to assess a confirmatory model. The distribution of participant response to internal and external political efficacy items is presented as it offers an initial insight of the political outlook of threshold voters in Ireland.

4.2 Existing Political Efficacy Measurement Approaches

An early approach to the assessment of citizen competence and effect was provided by Almond and Verba's (1965) measure of citizen and subject competence. While their reference is to 'citizen and subject competence', their conception is analogous to that of internal and external efficacy (Madsen, 1987). Their measures required respondents to consider their behaviour and effect in a specific, yet hypothetical, situation. The following items were used by Almond and Verba:

Citizen Competence:

Suppose a law were being considered by [appropriate national legislature specified for each nation] that you considered to be unjust or harmful.

1. What do you think you could do?
2. If you made an effort to change this law, how likely is it that you would succeed?
3. If such a case arose, how likely is it you would actually try to do something about it?

Subject Competence:

Suppose there were some question that you had to take to a government office- for example, a tax question or housing regulation.

1. Do you think you would be given equal treatment- I mean, would you be treated as anyone else?

2. If you explained you point of view to the officials, what effect do you think it would have?
3. Would they give your point of view serious consideration, would they pay only a little attention, or would they ignore what you had to say?

The utility of the Almond and Verba approach lies in the freedom provided to the respondent to define the context, while simultaneously being specific on an actual event and related behaviour (Seligson, 1980b). Subsequently, Abravanel and Busch (1975) used these items to measure the two dimensions of political efficacy, which they saw as aping Converse's (1972) acknowledgement of the dimensional nature of efficacy in the Michigan SRC items.

In social psychology literature, Caprara *et al.* (2009) recently examined the applicability of a political self-efficacy scale.[36] Their approach reflects Bandura's (1997) emphasis on the measurement of self-efficacy in specific domains of activity. They concentrate on three particular citizen abilities: voicing opinions and preferences; contributing to the success of parties which convey one's ideals; and actively exerting control over political representatives' activities.

Akin to Almond and Verba's approach, the referent point of the political self-efficacy items is action oriented, though the response is one of perception. The introduction to the survey item read: 'For each of the following items, please rate how confident you are in your ability to execute the specific action or behaviour described'; with response options ranging from: 'Not at all' to 'Completely'. The Caprara *et al*. items were:

Political Self-Efficacy:

1. State your own political opinion openly, even in clearly hostile settings
2. Make certain that the political representatives you voted honour their commitments to the electorate
3. Promote public initiatives to support political programs that you believe are just
4. Maintain personal relationships with representatives of national government authorities
5. Play a decisive role in the choice of the leaders of political movements to which you belong, or to which you are near
6. Carry out an effective information campaign for the political movement or party with which you concur regarding beliefs and programs
7. Actively promote the election of political candidates in which you trust

[36] Caprara *et al.*'s (2009) analysis is based on three studies of convenience samples recruited by psychology-major students in the University of Rome (*n* 1,672; *n* 632; and *n* 1,451). Respondents were aged 18 and older. The third study included a sample of 107 politicians who were recruited through snowball sampling.

8. Promote effective activities of information and mobilization in your own community (of work, friends, and family), to sustain political programs in which you believe
9. Collect a substantial amount of money to sustain the activities of your party
10. Use the means you have as a citizen to critically monitor the actions of your political representatives

Through scale reliability and construct validity analysis, Caprara *et al.* consider their items to be comparable to Craig *et al.*'s measure of internal political efficacy. On face validity, items four, five, and ten, would seem to be related to considerations of the political environment, i.e., external efficacy. It is not possible to confirm this impression as their analysis did not include reference to external efficacy or its traditional correlates. Though their analysis is largely based on convenience samples, the specific and varied nature of their items is interesting in the evolution of efficacy measurement along action-based lines.

Despite the advantage of using action referent items, the applicability of the Almond and Verba and Caprara *et al.* approach is limited in this instance. Almond and Verba's items have not been prominent in successive literature, while Caprara *et al.*'s items are nascent in nature. The hypothetical nature of the Almond and Verba items would be exacting for those who have relatively little interaction with the political world, in comparison to older respondents. In the Caprara *et al*. measure, items two, four, and nine are also more reflective of the life circumstances of older citizens than pre-adults. The personal and electoral considerations involved are unlikely to reflect the political circumstance of threshold voters. The dominant approach to measuring perceptions of political efficacy with ANES Likert scale (agree-disagree) items offers more use for threshold voter measurement. The relative lack of political experience and electoral entitlement is less of a factor in such a framework, as the items are broader in their reference. Moreover, there is a greater understanding of the statistical and substantive relationships of efficacy dimensions measured using this framework than in the case of alternative approaches. It is informative to trace the use of items in this framework from their inception with Campbell *et al.* (1954) through to Craig *et al.* (1990) as item selection has been a source of contention in the literature (Madsen 1987).

Campbell *et al.*'s (1954) measure of political efficacy was based on five ANES agree-disagree items. Respondents were presented with statements related to the elements of political efficacy, and required to indicate their perception of political reality by expressing a level of agreement. Campbell *et al.* combined the items to form an aggregate unidimensional measure of political efficacy. The items used were: [Items Overleaf]

1. I don't think public officials care much about what people like me think (NOCARE)
2. The way people vote is the main thing that decides how things are run in this country
3. Voting is the only way that people like me can have any say about how the government runs things (VOTING)
4. People like me don't have any say about what the government does (NOSAY)
5. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on (COMPLEX)

With the exception of the second item, these items were adopted by researchers to measure political efficacy over subsequent decades. Balch's (1974) empirical finding on the concept's dimensionality led to attempts to restructure this batch of items. A common approach in subsequent literature was to split the batch of items in two; with a theorised internal efficacy measure formed from the third and the fifth item (Balch, 1974; Beck and Jennings, 1982; Craig and Maggiotto, 1982; Pollock, 1983; and Michelson, 2000). On other occasions an internal efficacy measure has been formed from the fourth and fifth item (Lambert *et al*., 1986; Madsen, 1987; Stewart *et al*., 1992; Karaman, 2004; Pasek *et al.*, 2008; and Clarke *et al*., 2010). On occasions, the first and fourth item were conceived as a measure of internal efficacy (Clarke and Acock, 1989; Acock and Clarke, 1990; Tewksbury, Hals, and Bibart, 2008), though they are more commonly considered as a measure of external efficacy (Balch, 1974; Kock, 1993; Bowler and Donovan, 2002; Lee Kaid, McKinney, and Tedesco, 2007; Valentino *et al*., 2009; and Dyck and Lascher Jr., 2009). McPherson, Welch, and Clark (1977) raise concerns about the use of the third item (VOTING); as agreement or disagreement with the item may both indicate an efficacious disposition. They also identify that response to the fifth item (COMPLEX) may be unduly influenced by social desirability, as respondents may not want to admit ignorance to those administering the survey.[37] While the use of items to reflect the dimensionality of the concept has evolved, concerns about the failure to recognise this distinction have been raised (McPherson *et al.*, 1977; Pollock, 1983; Madsen, 1987; and Morrell, 2003).

Craig *et al.*'s (1990) assessment of the ANES items represents the most notable refinement on the selection of efficacy items and the construction of measurement scales in recent decades. They attempted to resolve concerns raised by others on the consistency in item use to measure efficacy dimensions (Craig and Maggiotto, 1982; Shingles, 1988; and Acock, Clarke, and Stewart, 1985), and to create an external efficacy measure which was distinguishable from

[37] See Seligson (1980b) for a discussion of the criteria and failures of efficacy items at that time.

political trust. Craig *et al.* (1990: 290) captured the problems with efficacy measurement at that juncture:

> Traditional measures of political efficacy and trust are often maligned because of their lack of validity and reliability. Items intended to tap one type of orientation actually tap another, or else are so poorly worded that we cannot be certain what they measure; supposedly unidimensional scales turnout to be multidimensional; relationships with theoretically relevant criterion variables are weak or inconsistent; and so on.

To address these problems, they assessed the traditional items used in ANES surveys along with a set of pilot items: on face validity; scale reliability; and construct validity criteria. They recommended the following items as discrete measures of internal and external efficacy which are distinguishable from political trust, and which provide a degree of continuity with existing measurement approaches:

Internal Efficacy:

1. I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics (SELFABLE)
2. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country (UNDERSTND)
3. I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people (PUBOFFICE)
4. I think that I am as well-informed about politics and government as most people (INFORPPL)

Regime-Based External Efficacy:

1. There are many legal ways for citizen to successfully influence what the government does (WAYSINFL)
2. Under our form of government, the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in office (FINALSAY)
3. If public officials are not interested in hearing what the people think, there is really no way to make them listen (MAKELSTN)
4. People like me don't have any say about what the government does (RNOSAY)

The internal efficacy items they recommend are their piloted ones rather than the pre-used ANES items. The COMPLEX item from the original scale and the item 'I often don't feel sure of myself when talking to other people about politics and government' (RFEELSURE) also demonstrate high item-scale correlation loadings. In subsequent research, Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991: 1410) note that the COMPLEX item "falls between two stools" in neither exclusively fitting in the internal or the external dimension. The external efficacy items which they recommend are the 'regime-based' items which focus on procedural aspects of system responsiveness. They consider their other external efficacy measure, 'incumbent-based' external efficacy, which is more oriented to sentiment toward incumbent responsiveness, to be

too closely aligned to political trust for conceptual distinction. For reference, their 'incumbent-based' external efficacy measure contains the following items (1990: 307):

1. Most public officials are truly interested in what the people think
2. Candidates for office are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions
3. Politicians are supposed to be the servants of the people, but too many of them think they are the masters
4. Generally speaking, those we elect to public office lose touch with the people pretty quickly
5. I don't think public officials care much what people like me think

The Craig *et al.* recommended items on internal and external efficacy have been used in subsequent research on each dimension: Bowler and Donovan, 2002; Amna *et al*., 2004 (with 14 year olds); Morrell, 2005; Schulz, 2005 (with slight changes); Lee Kaid *et al*., 2007; Dyck and Lascher Jr., 2009; and Hoffman and Thomson, 2009.[38] Despite the emerging prominence of the items, their use is far from consistent, as some items are omitted in some designs, and other items appended on other occassions. Michelson (2000: 139) justified her approach, which uses COMPLEX and VOTING to measure internal efficacy, as it facilitates greater comparability with existing research, though she acknowledges the limitations caused by the use of the internal efficacy items. In a South Korean study, Lin and Lim (2002) used the NOSAY and COMPLEX items as a combined measure of political efficacy, as the NOCARE item loaded better with political cynicism items in their factor analysis. Tewksbury, Hals, and Bibart (2008) combined the same items (NOSAY and COMPLEX) as a measure of internal political efficacy in a study of media browsing, sociability, and political efficacy. Elsewhere, Pattie and Johnston (1998) analysed the relationship of political efficacy and voting participation, using some of Craig *et al.*'s items (IMFORMED, PUBOFFICE, COMPLEX, NOSAY, NOCARE) separately in analysis, without distinguishing between internal and external efficacy items.

The practice in much of the literature is to measure political efficacy by forming an additive scale from the coded response to items. Some have relied on a single item to measure the generic sense of political efficacy (McCluskey *et al.*, 2004; and Karp and Banducci, 2008), or

[38] In recent years the European Social Survey items on political efficacy have varied the respondent task from agree-disagree scales. Respondents are asked to give a time based response rather than an extent of agreement response. The item: 'Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on' with response on an agree-disagree format is presented as: How often do you feel that politics and government seem so complicated that a person like you can't really understand what's going on?; with response on a timescale from 'Never' to 'All the time'. For a discussion on the refinement of the standard approach to efficacy measurement in contemporary research see: Blasius and Thiessen (2001).

one item per dimension (Kenski and Stroud, 2006; and Anderson, 2010), which they attributed to the limitations of existing datasets. This was discouraged by Craig *et al.* (1990) on the grounds of the unreliability of one-item measures. They also make the case for the weighting of items in the formation of scale measures, as individual items load (or relate) to efficacy dimension scales to different extents. For this reason the measure of each dimension of efficacy here relies on factor scores which emerge from the scale construction analysis. The potential of the Craig *et al.* framework for internal and external efficacy measurement is undermined by an ongoing ad-hoc selection of items which do not assess the overall frame's applicability. The utility of their measures for capturing the political efficacy of threshold voters is now assessed.

4.3 Internal Efficacy: Item Response and Scale Construction

This section presents the results of the scale construction analysis, involving exploratory factor analysis and scale reliability analysis. The response distribution to the political efficacy items from the survey sample are presented in advance. While the intention is to use the items to form a composite scale measure, the breakdown of responses on each item informs the unity of the scale measure. In light of the middle-response issue raised in the methodological discussion, it is important to assess the extent to which it prevails in survey response. If the level of middle-category response varies greatly between items, this would raise concerns about combining items in a single scale measure. The detail on item response also provides an original insight of the internal and external political efficacy sentiments of threshold voters in Ireland.

4.3.1 Internal Efficacy Item Response

Table 4.1 presents the percentage responses to each internal efficacy item. The first four items are those recommended by Craig *et al.* (1990).[39] The fifth item in the table is an adaptation of the fourth item (INFORMAGE), which was proposed to make the relative element of the fourth item less exacting for threshold voters. The sixth item performed well in Craig *et al.*'s scale analysis, though it had a lower item-scale loading than the first four items. This sixth item (RFEELSURE) may be a more age-appropriate indicator of internal political efficacy for

[39] The internal and external efficacy items were not all presented consecutively in the survey. While the items were presented toward the beginning of the survey to avoid response set bias affecting response, the efficacy items were interwoven with other items in the first and second page of the survey. The order in which the items were presented sought to avoid the problem of acquiescent response set, as items with negatively worded statements were interspersed through items of positive direction. While Wright (1975) and Clarke *et al.* (2010) did not find significantly divergent effects of the direction of these efficacy item statements, Craig *et al.* (1990) warned of the risks associated with bunched agree-disagree formats.

threshold voters than the third item. These last two items were included in the survey to establish if the existing Craig *et al.* items required semantic alterations for use with a pre-adult cohort.

Table 4.1. Internal Efficacy Item Response

Response Percentage	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither d. nor a.	Agree	Strongly agree	*n*
1. I consider myself well able to participate in politics (SELFABLE)	17.5	34.4	24.6	18.5	5.0	844
2. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing Ireland (UNDERSTND)	9.0	30.2	16.8	38.2	5.9	849
3. I feel I could do as good a job in political office as most other people of my age (PUBOFFICE)	7.3	23.6	23.0	36.4	9.7	848
4. I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people (INFORMPPL)	26.1	41.7	23.4	6.9	1.9	846
5. I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people of my age (INFORMAGE)	19.5	32.1	23.7	21.3	3.4	847
6. (Recoded) I often don't feel sure of myself when talking to other people about politics and government [40] (RFEELSURE)	13.8	36.4	20.3	22.1	7.3	846

Firstly, to focus on the first four items, the evident variation in response confirms that while the items are used as indicators of an underlying sense of internal efficacy, they tap different elements of the construct. The percentage of respondents expressing agreement ('Agree' or 'Strongly agree') varies noticeably across items. While 44% of respondents believe that they have a good understanding of important political issues, only 9% believe they are better informed than most people about politics. This response variation is methodologically informative as it highlights the validity and reliability challenge to measures of internal efficacy which rely on response to a single item. The selection of items, even within this commonly used and tested battery of items serves a note of caution for interpreting findings across studies which do not use the same combination of items.

While it is not possible in this undertaking to explore the extent to which those selecting the middle-response category use it as a surrogate for a 'Don't know' response, it is useful to analyse the tendency of respondents to select this middle option. For each item, the

[40] The response to items prefaced with '(Recoded)' has been reverse scored in tables to allow for easier comparison of efficacious response across items. As these statements are negatively worded, the percentage in agreement in the table actually disagreed with the negatively phrased item in the survey, thereby indicating efficaciousness. A coded version of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix 5.

percentage of middle-category response is less than one in four respondents. The propensity is relatively uniform across items, ranging from 17% to 25%. If there is a tendency for respondents who find an item difficult to opt for the middle-category response by default, this is not particularly prominent in the current instance. The right hand column of the table demonstrates that the level of missing data for each item is negligible, with a working survey sample of 849 respondents.

There is evident variation in responses to the fourth item and its proposed age appropriate replacement (the fifth item). While 9% of respondents express a form of agreement ('Agree' and 'Strongly Agree') with the original item, 25% express a form of agreement with the replacement item. This demonstrates that threshold voters perceive a difference between their political capacity and that of adult citizens. The general trend of responses in both items is similar as a majority disagree to some extent ('Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree') with each statement, and a similar percentage of respondents opt for the middle-category response to each item.

The second proposed replacement to make the measure more age appropriate is to replace the third item with the sixth item. Attaining public office is neither a constitutional nor practical reality for threshold voters at present. The item may therefore be an unduly abstract consideration in terms of their political competence or internal efficacy. The replacement of this item with an item on confidence to discuss political matters may be more appropriate as it relates to their comfort and confidence in considering political issues. The items involve divergent considerations which does limits the utility of comparing responses. However, as the selected items will be used to form a composite scale, it is relevant to identify the breakdown of survey responses in each case. The consideration is not which item induces a higher expression of agreement or efficaciousness; it is which item is a more appropriate measure of threshold voters' internal efficacy. While 46% of respondents expressed a form of agreement with the initial item (PUBOFFICE), 29% expressed a form of agreement with the replacement item (RFEELSURE). A similar proportion of respondents provided middle category responses to both items. The item on public office ability is evidently not a more exacting standard of threshold voter internal efficacy than other items. That the item has been appended with a reference to 'people of my age' possibly enhances its relevance, and mitigates the problem associated with the Craig *et al.* version which intimates a relative comparison with political adults. The difference in response to both items again indicates the significance of including one or other item in the measure of internal efficacy. Factor and

scale reliability analysis will be used to determine the applicability of the Craig *et al.* measure of internal efficacy, and the potential advantage of replacing certain items with what may be more appropriate ones.

Comparing the response percentages with those of the INES, on the one shared item (item number 4); a higher proportion of INES adult respondents agree to some extent (24 per cent) that they are better informed than most people on politics and government than threshold voters here (9 per cent). In the ICCS report, the early adolescent sample were more likely to express a high level of internal efficacy, with 61 per cent responding with 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' to the UNDERSTND item. A slightly higher proportion (27 per cent) of the ICCS sample agreed to some extent with a comparable item to INFORMAGE (i.e., '*I know more about politics than most people my age*'). While those in early-mid adolescence expressed a higher level of internal efficacy than threshold voters here, it must be noted that the ICCS survey item did not contain a middle response category.[41]

4.3.2 Internal Efficacy Scale Construction

The hidden or latent sense of internal efficacy is theorised to be driving or causing response to these items. Using multiple survey items as indicators of a hypothesised underlying attitude is considered a more reliable approach than relying on one indicator (Craig *et al.* 1990, and De Vaus, 2002). Factor analysis assesses the extent to which the variation in responses to a collection of survey items is explicable by a 'common' factor (Kim and Mueller, 1978a). Principal axis factoring is used in this case as it assesses whether observed indicator variance (between survey items) is attributable to a hypothesised underlying variable (the common factor). It may be the items' variability is due to more than one underlying factor. Factor loadings of each survey item represent the linear relationship between each item and the underlying factor, which in this case is theorised to be respondents' internal political efficacy.

Scale reliability analysis is conducted on items to assess the reliability of an ensuing scale measure of internal efficacy. The scale reliability statistic Cronbach's Alpha (α) is a standard measure of the reliability of a scale, which varies between 0 and 1. Field (2009: 675) detailed that alpha is commonly interpreted as measuring the unidimensionality of a scale: "or the

[41] The ICCS also carried items on a measure which they labelled 'Student's citizenship self-efficacy', constructed from response to 'How well would you argue your point of view about a controversial political or social issue?' and 'How well would you organise a group of students in order to achieve changes in school?'. 59 per cent of respondents responded positively ('Very well' or 'Fairly well') to the first item, and 61 per cent of responded positively to the second item. Student's citizenship self-efficacy is said to capture "self-beliefs in efficacy in civil and social contexts more generally" (Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011: 65). A strong positive correlation (r =.57) was found between citizenship self-efficacy and internal efficacy in the ICCS sample.

extent to which the scale measures one underlying factor or construct. This interpretation stems from the fact that when there is one factor underlying the data, α is a measure of the strength of that factor". He also notes that an α value above .7 or .8 is generally regarded as acceptable, whereas for psychological constructs values below even .7 can be expected due to the diversity of constructs being measured. Table 4.2 presents the results of factor and scale reliability analysis of Craig *et al.*'s internal efficacy items in the survey sample.

Table 4.2. Internal Efficacy Factor and Scale Reliability Analysis

Survey Item	Factor Loading
I consider myself well able to participate in politics	.607
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing Ireland	.487
I feel I could do as good a job in political office as most other people of my age	.363
I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people	.549
Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO)	.779
Extracted Eigenvalue	2.006
Percentage of Variance Explained (%)	50.1
Cronbach's Alpha (Unstandardised)	.794
n	840

The Kaiser Meyer Olkin value above indicates that the factor analysis solution is supportable for the current sample size.[42] Principal axis factoring assumes that some of the variance in a survey item is due to the presence of a common underlying factor, and some is unique variance, which relates to the item itself and is not shared with others. The communality of each item represents the proportion of a survey item variability which is attributable to a common factor in the factor analysis solution. An aggregate measure of item communalities included in a principal axis factoring is called an eigenvalue. Eigenvalues are used as criteria for determining if an underlying factor solution is statistically supportable. The minimum acceptable value for an eigenvalue is a matter of research interpretation. In line with conventional practice (Kaiser, 1975; and Field, 2009), the minimum eigenvalue established for factor extraction was set at 1.0 in this instance (known as the Kaiser criterion). From Table 4.2, the principal axis factoring identifies one underlying factor with an eigenvalue of 2.006.

[42] The KMO value is an indication of the adequacy of a sample size for factor analysis. Values of 0.5 to 0.7 are considered mediocre, and between 0.7 and 0.8 as good indication of the ability of factor analysis to produce reliable results for the current sample size (Field, 2009: 659).

This extracted factor, which I theorise to be respondents' sense of internal political efficacy, explains 50% of the variance in the four observed survey items. As only one factor was extracted in the current analysis, the factor loadings in Table 4.2 represent the strength of the linear relationship (correlation coefficient) between the extracted underlying factor (internal efficacy) and each survey item. The values of factor loadings were each above .3. A loading below .3 would be a cause for concern as it would indicate a weak-moderate relationship between survey item and underlying factor (Field 2009: 644).

As the factor analysis provided support for the existence of a single underlying factor to explain the variance in these items, scale reliability analysis was used to assess the reliability of a scale measure constructed from these items. The resulting Cronbach's Alpha value of .794, was indication that items form a reliable scale among threshold voters.[43]

To provide further confirmation of the appropriateness of the Craig *et al.* internal efficacy measure for threshold voters, factor and scale reliability analysis was conducted with sub-samples arising from survey strata: type of school attended; school location; and gender. Similar analysis was conducted on a dichotomised age variable (15/16 versus 17 year olds) An acceptable one factor solution emerged in each stratum category. This provides further support for the utility of this framework as a measure of threshold voter internal efficacy. The replacement of the fourth item in Table 4.1 (informedness relative to other people) with the fifth item (on informedness relative to peers) did not produce a noticeable difference in item communality, factor loading, Cronbach's Alpha, or corrected item-scale correlation. The second proposed replacement of the third item in Table 4.1 (public office capacity) with the sixth item (ease in discussing politics) did produce a higher item communality, factor loading, and item-total correlation. However, the differences were substantively small and represent a negligible improvement in results.

The four initial Craig *et al.* items have been found to measure an identifiable sense of internal efficacy among threshold voters. A scale created with these items demonstrates strong reliability. The Craig *et al.* items perform comparably well in factor analysis and scale reliability analysis relative to proposed age-appropriate replacements, and are therefore used in the creation of the internal political efficacy variable for further analysis.

[43] Other results in factor and reliability analysis provide further indication of the acceptability of these items as a measure of internal efficacy: inter-item correlation coefficients greater than .3 (sig. 1-tailed, $p < .05$); and inter-item and corrected item-scale correlations greater than .3 (sig. 1-tailed, $p < .05$). The scree plot of eigenvalues is further indicative of a one-factor solution, as the point of inflexion occurred at the second point on the line graph.

4.4 External Efficacy: Item Response and Scale Construction

4.4.1 External Efficacy Item Response

The Craig *et al.* regime-based external efficacy items did not provide a satisfactory solution in factor and scale reliability analysis. In the next section, which details the construction of an external efficacy scale measure, it is evident that the four Craig *et al.* regime-based survey items did not capture a single underlying attitude. The Cronbach's Alpha value from reliability analysis suggested a scale constructed from such items would be an unreliable measure of external efficacy among threshold voters. Therefore all items presented in the survey which related to external efficacy were assessed in factor analysis. The first four rows (items 1-4) in Table 4.3 present survey response to items which emerge as an identifiable and reliable measure of external efficacy. The latter four rows (items 4-7) detail the breakdown of responses to the Craig *et al.* regime-based external efficacy items. The fourth item features in the Craig *et al* regime-based measure and the emergent measure of threshold voter external efficacy.

Table 4.3. External Efficacy Item Response

Response Percentage	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither d. nor a.	Agree	Strongly agree	*n*
1. (Recoded) The average person has no influence on politics [44] (RINFLUEPPL)	8.2	32.1	25.7	28.6	5.4	845
2. (Recoded) People like me have no influence on politics (RINFLUEME)	18.1	39.9	16.0	19.7	6.3	839
3. (Recoded) I don't think politicians care much what people like me think (RNOCARE)	19.0	45.3	20.8	12.8	2.1	846
4. (Recoded) People like me don't have any say about what the government does (RNOSAY)	24.7	35.4	14.0	18.1	7.8	847
5. There are many ways for people to successfully influence what the government does (WAYSINFL)	3.8	22.8	23.4	44.3	5.8	847
6. In democracies the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in government (FINALSAY)	11.8	32.1	24.0	22.8	9.4	842
7. (Recoded) If politicians are not interested in hearing what the people think, there is really no way to make people listen (RMAKELSTN)	16.1	34.2	11.3	29.3	9.1	839

[44] As in the case of the negatively worded internal efficacy items, survey response was reverse scored in this table for negative statements, whereby efficaciousness increases as one moves from left to right hand columns. Those in the 'Strongly agree' response category in the table, expressed 'Strongly disagree' to the item as worded in the survey item.

While the focus of items one, two, and three invoke considerations of politics in generic terms, the fourth item relates specifically to government rather than the broader context of politics. The first item has been used in exiting research as an indicator of perceived system responsiveness to the citizenry (Finkel, 1987; INES, 2007; and Hoffman *et al.,* 2009). The second item is an adaption of the first item to capture a more specific age related referent. This distinction is useful as the consideration of system responsiveness to oneself and to people in general may be nuanced for threshold voters. However, the perception of system responsiveness involves both considerations. Items three and four have been the most common items used to measure external political efficacy in the literature (Craig *et al*., 1990; Bowler and Donovan, 2002; and Dyck and Lascher, 2009). Item three featured in Craig *et al.*'s incumbent-based external efficacy measure, and item four in their regime-based external efficacy measure.

The percentage of respondents expressing a form of agreement ('Agree' and 'Strongly agree') to the first four items ranged from 15% for item four to 34% for item one. It is important to bear in mind that the scores on 'recoded' items have been reversed for uniform interpretation. Threshold voters appeared to have a low sense of external efficacy. Only 16% (per cent in 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree') believed that politicians care what people like them think, and approximately one in four (26%) believed that they have a say in what the government does. While 34% of respondents agreed to some extent that the average person has influence on politics, only 26% expressed agreement in relation to people like themselves. The variation in response indicates that the distinction between people in general and oneself is relevant for threshold voters, which possibly relates to reflections of electoral entitlement and political experience. The variation in response across the four items reiterates the caution necessary when comparing studies which do not use the same survey items, or in consideration of findings which rely on one item as a measure of external efficacy.

The percentage of respondents opting for the middle 'Neither disagree nor agree' response was relatively low and uniform across the four items, ranging from 16% to 26%. Interestingly, the item with the highest percentage of middle-category response is the one which refers to average citizen influence. Respondents may be more likely to express a definitive response to an item which is more related to themselves, which suggests that the reference point of a survey item is also a matter of consideration when selecting external efficacy measures.

Even though subsequent analysis did not support the use of Craig *et al.*'s regime-based external efficacy measure, it is interesting to consider the difference in responses to the bottom three and top three items in Table 4.3. Excluding item four, a higher percentage of respondents gave efficacious responses to the regime-based items (bottom three) than to the threshold voter external efficacy items used here (top three). Half of the respondents (50%) expressed some form of agreement with item five which was much higher than any of the four items which form the external efficacy measure. The regime-based items are more referential of systematic norms and practice, than the items which were used. The percentage of respondents who expressed an efficacious response (i.e., a form of agreement) to item five was almost double that which express a form of agreement with item four (26%). This is insightful as both items figure in the measure of external efficacy emerging from Craig *et al.* In research where the level of efficacy is of interest, the divergence emerging from responses to different items is of critical import. The absolute level of external efficacy is of secondary interest here, relative to the factors which influence it. Nonetheless, it is evident that with the strong level of inter-item variation, variables which are strongly associated with one item may not necessarily be as associated with another, which denotes the significance of item selection.

The low level of missing data arising from non-response or invalid response was also evident in relation to the external efficacy items. The next section discusses the factor and scale reliability analysis of external efficacy items, including both the Craig *et al.* regime-based efficacy items, and the items which formed the threshold voter measure of external efficacy.

Comparing the response percentages on external efficacy items with those of the INES, on the one shared item (item number 1); a slightly higher proportion of INES adult respondents agree to some extent (37 per cent) that the average ('ordinary') person can influence politics, than threshold voters here (34 per cent).

4.4.2 External Efficacy Scale Construction

As in the case of the internal efficacy items, the four Craig *et al.* regime-based external efficacy items were included in an initial factor analysis. The suggested strength of these items is that their procedural reference point helps to distinguish between a sense of external efficacy and a sense of political trust. Table 4.4 indicates the headline results of such analysis.

[Table Overleaf]

Table 4.4. Regime-Based External Efficacy Factor and Scale Reliability Analysis

Survey Item	Factor Loading	Factor Loading
	Factor I	**Factor II**
There are many ways for people to successfully influence what the government does	.425	
In democracies the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in government		.535
(Recoded) If politicians are not interested in hearing what the people think, there is really no way to make people listen	.607	
(Recoded) People like me don't have any say about what the government does	.487	
Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO)	.595	
Extracted Eigenvalue	.934	.352
Percentage of Variance Explained (%)	23.360	8.806
Cronbach's Alpha (Unstandardised)	.476	
n	828	

Principal axis factoring of Craig *et al.*'s regime-based external efficacy items produced a two factor solution. This suggests that the variance in the items was not driven by an underlying attitude, according to the criteria set in the analysis. Neither emerging factor had an eigenvalue above the Kaiser criterion of 1.0, with low levels of variance in the survey items explained by the extracted factors at 23% and 9% approximately. Reliability analysis of the four regime-based items yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of .476. This is substantially below the .6 to .7 lower region as typically sought in psychological constructs. Subsequent factor and reliability analysis of the three items in the first extracted factor (middle column in Table 4.4) did not provide a satisfactory solution, with low: inter-item correlations; item-scale correlations; and level of variance explained. It is notable that the wording of the regime-based external items is somewhat difficult to interpret in an 'agree-disagree' response format, particularly the second and third item in Table 4. There may be a difficulty arising from the distinction between normative expectations and perceptions of reality these two items due to the complexity of item wording.

A subsequent factor analysis which included all external efficacy survey items produced a factor which met the analysis criteria. The four items identified within this factor (items 1 to 4 below) were entered in a separate factor and scale reliability analysis. Table 4.5 presents the results of this analysis. [Table Overleaf]

Table 4.5. Threshold Voter External Efficacy Factor and Scale Reliability Analysis

Survey Item	Factor Loading
(Recoded) People like me don't have any say about what the government does	.665
(Recoded) The average person has no influence on politics	.649
(Recoded) People like me have no influence on politics	.841
(Recoded) I don't think politicians care much what people like me think	.473
Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO)	.737
Extracted Eigenvalue	1.794
Percentage of Variance Explained (%)	44.48
Cronbach's Alpha (Unstandardised)	.750
n	833

The KMO value (.735) indicates that results produced by principal axis factoring are reliable based on the current sample size. The factor solution yielded one factor with an eigenvalue of 1.794, which accounted for 44.48% of the observed variance in the four items. The third item had a much stronger linear relationship with the factor that the fourth item according to factor loadings.[45] However, all the items had loadings above .3, indicated by Field (2009) as a point below which concerns arise as to the relationship between an item and factor. Scale reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha (α) value of .750, indicating an acceptable level of reliability of a scale comprising these items.[46]

As in the case of the internal efficacy items, factor and scale reliability analysis was conducted to establish the dimensionality and reliability of these items as a measure of external efficacy in strata subsamples. The analysis across school type, school location, gender, and age, support the composition of a measure of external efficacy using these items. While this measure is not as strong as the internal efficacy measure, it is reliable across all the main strata sub-categories.

[45] A 'next best solution' to the current four items was analysed involving the replacement of the fourth item with the item 'There are many ways for people to successfully influence what the government does' (WAYSINFL) from the regime-based measure. This replacement did not improve the overall reliability of the solution, with lower inter-item and item-scale correlation coefficients.

[46] Other results in factor and reliability analysis provided further indication of the acceptability of these items as a measure of external efficacy including: inter-item correlation coefficients greater than .3 (sig. 1-tailed, $p < .05$); item communalities and corrected item-scale correlations greater than .3 (sig. 1-tailed, $p < .05$). A scree plot of eigenvalues provided further support for a one-factor solution with an inflection on the second point.

4.5 Combined Factor Analysis of Internal and External Efficacy Items

The factor and scale reliability analysis of internal and external efficacy items to this point were conducted separately to determine the applicability of the Craig *et al.* framework for the survey sample. To create a measure of internal and external efficacy for each survey participant which takes account of the relationship between dimensions, the eight items (four internal and four external) were entered together in a factor analysis. This analysis verifies that the items relate to one rather than both efficacy dimensions.

Table 4.6 presents the matrix of inter-item correlations. The values in the table represent correlation coefficients, which are a measure of the strength of relationship between items. The figures in smaller italic font represent relationships or correlations which are found to be not statistically significant at the α=.05 confidence level (i.e., sig. 1-tailed, p>.05).[47] The first four rows represent the internal efficacy items, and the latter four represent the external efficacy items. [48]

Table 4.6. Correlation Matrix of Internal and External Political Efficacy Items

Items	SELF.	UNDE.	PUBO.	INFO.	RNOS.	RINPL.	RIME.	RNOC.
SELFABLE	1.000							
UNDERSTND	**.533**	1.000						
PUBOFFICE	**.508**	**.379**	1.000					
INFORMPPL	**.544**	**.557**	**.438**	1.000				
RNOSAY	.099	.148	*.053*	.176	1.000			
RINFLUEPPL	.088	.100	*-.023*	.064	**.409**	1.000		
RINFLUEME	.148	.139	*.032*	.168	**.542**	**.569**	1.000	
RNOCARE	*.013*	*-.015*	-.057	*.031*	**.351**	**.273**	**.372**	1.000

The correlation matrix indicates that two separate correlation or relationship clusters exist among the items. Moderate to strong correlation coefficients are evident in the top-left and bottom-right triangle of Table 4.6, as highlighted in bold font. Inter-item correlations for the internal items are all above .3 which Field (2009: 679) recommends as a value below which consideration should be raised over an item's inclusion in a factor. Inter-item correlations between external efficacy items show similar strength, with the exception of the coefficient between RNOCARE and RINFLUEPPL (.273). This correlation is relatively close to .3, and

[47] Unless otherwise stated, the level of statistical significance used in analyses here is the α=.05 level, i.e., p<.05 for significance (1-tailed). This follows standard practice in political science literature.
[48] The column labels in Table 4.6 are the same as the row labels. They have been abbreviated for presentation.

the item's correlation with other external efficacy items were above .3 (sig. 1-tailed, p<.05). The correlations between internal and external items were all low relative to the correlations within each dimension.

In this matrix it is possible to verify the presence or absence of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity exists when two or more variables (survey items in this case) are closely linearly related. This would make it difficult to decipher the unique contribution of each item, and would mean that some items would be redundant as indicators of an underlying attitude. None of the inter-item correlations were above .8 (a criteria noted by Field, 2009) which provides confidence that multicollinearity between items in the same factor is not of concern in this case.

Table 4.7 contains the headline results of the principal axis factoring of internal and external items when entered together.

Table 4.7. Combined Internal and External Efficacy Factor Analysis

Survey Item	Factor I Loading	Factor II Loading
I consider myself well able to participate in politics	.768	
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing Ireland	.698	
I feel I could do as good a job in political office as most other people of my age	.608	
I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people	.742	
(Recoded) People like me don't have any say about what the government does		.659
(Recoded) The average person has no influence on politics		.646
(Recoded) People like me have no influence on politics		.837
(Recoded) I don't think politicians care much what people like me think		.468
Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO)	.763	
Extracted Eigenvalue	2.249	1.548
Percentage of Variance Explained (%)	28.11	19.35
n	849	

Principal axis factoring provided a clear factor solution when the eight selected efficacy items were analysed together. The first factor extracted evidently relates to internal efficacy, and the second to external efficacy, with 47.5% of the total item variance explained. The factors

were rotated (using a Direct Oblimin procedure) to improve the interpretation of their loadings. This oblique rotation facilitated the preservation of an existing relationship between efficacy dimensions. The cross factor matrix indicated a substantively modest but statistically significant correlation coefficient between internal and external factors of .166 ($p<.05$). The factor loadings in Table 4.7 are taken from the structure matrix, representing the correlations between each item and their principal factor, while taking account of the relationship between the two factors.[49]

A measure of each respondent's internal and external efficacy was created using factor scores (Anderson Rubin method). This method accounts for the loading of each item on their respective principal factor, which is cognisant of Craig *et al.*'s (1990) call for the creation of efficacy measures using weighted rather than additive procedures. As this procedure allows for a correlation between efficacy dimensions in the creation of scores, it will be necessary to control for the external efficacy variable in the analysis of socialisation effects on internal efficacy and vice versa in regression analysis.[50]

4.6 Descriptive of Internal and External Efficacy Measures

This section presents descriptive analysis of the variables created as measures of threshold voter internal and external efficacy. These are standardised measures, i.e. they were converted to a standard unit of measurement using each variables standard deviation.

Table 4.8 presents the central tendency and variability of the internal efficacy variable in the second column. For illustrative purposes, along with the factor score created variable, detail is also presented for a variable created using the summed raw scores of the four internal efficacy items in the third column.[51] [Table Overleaf]

[49] The small divergence between loadings in the pattern and structure matrix indicated that the cross loading of items from their principal factor to the other factor are low and do not provide cause for concern as to their dimensionality.

[50] In the generation of factor scores an imputation with the mean value was made for those with missing data on either internal or external dimension. This relates to nine cases who have missing data on one internal efficacy item; to thirteen cases who have missing data on one external efficacy items; and to three cases who have missing data on two external efficacy items. The small number of cases to which this method applied, limits any potential distortion involved in such an imputation.

[51] The internal efficacy summed scale comprises four items, each coded 1-5 ('Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'), with a score range of 4-20. In the 9 instances where an individual did not reply to one of the items, an imputation was made in place of the missing value. The individual's score on the three responded items was weighted by 4/3, as there are four items in total. This scale had a mean value of 11.00.

Table 4.8. Internal Efficacy Scale Descriptive

Descriptive	Internal Efficacy Variable	Summed Scale of Internal Efficacy with Imputation
Valid Cases	849	849
Missing	0	0
Mean	.0000000	10.96
Std. Error of Mean	.03087762	.117
Median	-.0494594	11.00
Std. Deviation	.89969997	3.411
Skewness (Std. Error of Skew.)	.249 (.084)	.148 (.084)
Kurtosis (Std. Error of Kurt.)	-.353 (.168)	-.422 (.168)
Minimum	-1.79933	4
Maximum	2.53488	20

As the internal efficacy variable was standardised it has a approximate mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1. The internal efficacy variable had a positive skewness value. Skewness is a measure of the symmetry of a frequency distribution. This indicated a pile up of individual scores on the left-hand side of the distribution of the variable, or the lower side of the range. As skewness values have natural limits of 0 and 1, the value (.249) is relatively close to 0, indicating that the distribution was not seriously skewed.

The kurtosis value measures the degree to which scores cluster at either end of the distribution. The kurtosis value for the internal efficacy variable was negative (-.353) indicating a flat and light-tailed distribution. The further that either of these values deviate from 0, the more likely it is that the variable is not from a normal sampling distributed (Field 2009: 138). A Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was conducted to establish if the distribution deviates from a normal distribution. The internal efficacy factor score variable appeared to be normally distributed: $D(826) = 0.031$, ($p > .05$). As the test statistic is not significantly different from 0, i.e. ($p > .05$), this indicates that the variable is not significantly different from a normal distribution.[52] This is significant as linear subsequent regression analysis is based on the assumption of normally distributed dependent variables. An inspection of the boxplots (with error bars) for the internal efficacy variable indicated that all cases (individuals) had values

[52] K-S tests were conducted across the primary strata invoked in the survey design; gender; school type; school location and age. Results across gender, school location, and age suggest a normal distribution of the factor score variable. K-S test results across school type suggests the factor score distribution is significantly different from a normal distribution D (455) = .044, $p < .05$. However, looking at the related histogram and Q-Q plot of the distribution indicated a normal distribution.

less than 3.28 standard deviations from the variable mean. The same was true for boxplots of cases within stratum categories. Such outlier cases would be problematic as they introduce bias to statistical analysis.

Table 4.9 presents the central tendency and variability measures of the external efficacy factor scores variable in column two. A variable created from the summation of the four external efficacy items is included for illustrative purposes in column three.[53]

Table 4.9. External Efficacy Scale Descriptive

Descriptive	External Efficacy Variable	Summed Scale of External Efficacy with Imputation
Valid	849	846
Missing	0	3
Mean	.00	10.31
Std. Error of Mean	.03078849	.117
Median	-.1617976	10.00
Std. Deviation	.89710274	3.41
Skewness (Std. Error of Skew.)	.344 (.084)	.289 (.084)
Kurtosis (Std. Error of Kurt.)	-.737 (.168)	-.703 (.189)
Minimum	-1.64311	4
Maximum	2.24265	19

The external efficacy variable was also standardised as it has been created from scores emerging from factor analysis. The skewness value of the external efficacy factor score variable (.344) was positive indicating a pile up of scores on the left-hand side of the frequency distribution, or on the lower side of the range. The value of skewness (.344) indicates that the distribution is not seriously skewed within a range of 0 to 1. The kurtosis value is negative and relatively high (-.737) indicating a flat and light-tailed distribution, rather than a distribution which bunches and peaks around the mean. The further the value is from 0 the stronger the extent of kurtosis. A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test suggests that the external efficacy factor score variable has a distribution which is significantly different from a normal distribution, $D(826) = 0.08$, ($p < .01$).[54] However, Field (2009) notes that in large

[53] This took a similar approach to the imputation of missing values used for 13 cases as in the internal efficacy summed variable. In a further 3 cases, respondents had missing values on more than one item and were given a missing value in the summed scale variable. While the four items were coded 1-5, the range of 4-19 illustrates that no respondent replied with a highly efficacious response to all four items. The mean of the summed measure of external efficacy was 10.31.

[54] K-S tests were conducted across the primary strata of the survey design; gender; school type attended, school location and age, mirroring the overall finding of non-normality in relation to the measure of external efficacy.

survey samples there is a propensity for normality tests to highlight slight deviations from normality. The large size of the sample here is a source of confidence that the sample distribution is reflective of the population distribution. While the results of this K-S test are to be marked in the overall reporting, the sample size here provides confidence that the distribution is representative of the sample frame. Inspection of box plots (with error bars) of the external efficacy variable indicated that there were no outlier cases with values greater than 3.28 standard deviations above or below the mean.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the steps taken in the selection of political efficacy items and the subsequent creation of the political efficacy variables to be used in subsequent analysis. The variation evident in item response within dimensions highlights the critical nature of item selection in empirical research on political efficacy. It serves a caution to the interpretation of all studies in the area, and the comparison of studies which do not use identical survey items, or which use a single item in the presentation of political efficacy measures. The variation in response across items in Craig *et al.*'s regime-based external efficacy measure, emphasise that the ad-hoc approach to selecting items from this frame inevitably limits the comparability of findings in such literature.

There was evident variation in the expression of high efficacy (those who expressed 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' to positive versions of the efficacy items. At most one-in-three respondents expressed high efficacy to an external efficacy item. While almost half of respondents expressed high efficacy on two of the internal efficacy statements, only 9% expressed high efficacy on the consideration of feeling politically informed relative to others.

The problem associated with missing data generated from non-response to items, or the lack of response variation generated by a proliferation of middle-category response, were not evident in the case of efficacy items in this study.

Principal axis factoring and scale reliability analysis indicated the presence of an underlying factor, theorised as the sense of internal political efficacy, using Craig *et al.*'s recommended items. The replacement of two Craig *et al.* items with those proposed as being more age-appropriate was considered. However, a measure constructed from such items did not demonstrate a notable improvement in factor and scale reliability analyses over existing adult items. Moreover the new items did not appear to introduce any less exacting a standard in the self-appraisal of political efficacy among threshold voters. The Craig *et al.* recommended

items for internal efficacy were therefore persisted with, though this is an area for further investigation.

Analysis of Craig *et al.*'s (1990) regime-based external efficacy did not yield a reliable factor solution. Scale reliability of the items indicated weak reliability of a scale constructed from such indicators, and factor analysis did not produce a factor with an eigenvalue to meet the Kaiser criterion. The items do not capture an identifiable sense of external efficacy among threshold voters. The suggestion here is that the wording of two of regime-based items may be convoluted for threshold voters: 'In democracies the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in government' and 'If politicians are not interested in hearing what the people think, there is really no way to make people listen'. Due to the direction of item wording, there may be a difficulty in differentiating between normative and perceptive responses, particularly on the first item. This proposal is based on the face value reading of the items, and poses an interesting avenue for further investigation. A wider analysis of external efficacy items produced a statistically reliable measure, which included two standard external efficacy items (RNOSAY and RNOCARE), one item used in existing research (RINFLUEPPL), and an adapted version of this item (RINFLUEME). Both internal and external efficacy factor solutions are supported in analysis of subsamples in the dataset reflecting the main design strata. It is evident that respondents were more positive in response to the Criag *et al.* regime-based external efficacy item than to the items used to measure this dimension.

The internal and external efficacy items to emerge in separate scale construction analysis were entered in a joint analysis to establish their dimensionality; to verify that items in each dimension did not exhibit high cross-loadings on the other efficacy dimensions. This analysis was also used to generate factor scores which were used as measures of respondents' internal and external efficacy. Distinctive internal and external efficacy dimensions emerged with a substantively weak though statistically significant correlation between them.

Analysis of the internal and external efficacy scale measures indicated that the variables are suitable as dependent variables in multiple regression analysis. Though the normality of the external efficacy variable's distribution is not supported by the K-S test result, the large sample size in this case gives confidence in the representative nature of the sample for the sample frame. The focus now turns to the main part of this analysis, to establish the effects of socialisation on each political efficacy dimension through regression analysis.

Chapter 5. Analytical Approach and the Demographic Model

5.1 Introduction

Fraser (1972: 643) categorised the factors which influence political efficacy as: social; economic; political; and attitudinal. Beaumont (2010: 530) summarised the influences from existing political science literature as relating to: (1) political participation; (2) socioeconomic status (including education levels, race, and gender); (3) civic resources (including political knowledge, skills, motivations, social networks, and experiences); and (4) political socialisation (including the learning and experiences of young people in families and schools). The following analysis will assess the impact of such influences on threshold voters' political efficacy within an environmental framework. This distinction between socialisation environments is necessary as political socialisation is "embedded in institutions and adult relationships, context matters. The process of political socialization will vary in response to the presence or absence of opportunities for youth to participate in situated-learning political activities, or simply, public life" (McIntosh and Youniss, 2010: 35). This analysis is focused on the individual and micro level, with an assessment of the effects of socialisation effects within the context of resources and political experiences. In this regard it is similar to the 'civic voluntarism model' of political participation which includes three types of influences: personal characteristics (resources); group effects; and political attitudes (Verba, Brady, and Schlozman, 1995).

In socialisation literature the reference to 'agents' of socialisation denotes the effect which the family or school setting, for example, have on political learning. The use of the word agent in this case is synonymous with environment rather than being a personified meaning of the word. While the role which parents, teachers, and friends ascribe to themselves in political learning is significant and diverse (Torney-Purta *et al*, 2010), the influence of individuals in each socialisation environment will vary according to the relationship dynamics. The suggestion by Torney-Purta *et al*. that learning in socialisation environments does not simply follow a top-down approach, infers that 'agent' may be better perceived as a 'vehicle' of socialisation. The effect of an environment on attitudinal formation is not limited to person-based interactions; it arises from structural or procedural effects which are not personalised, as involvement may be dictated by outside contexts be they political, economic, or social (Torney-Purta *et al*., 2010: 502).

Wilkenfeld *et al.* (2010: 204) in reference to Bronfenbrenner's (1989) Ecological Systems Theory, identified that the family had the largest influence in childhood development due to

its proximity, "but as children grow older and explore their surroundings they experience additional influences, including school and peers". Interactions with friends and others in social settings (formal and informal) increase as individuals develop greater independence through adolescence. Therefore, aspects of the associational environment of the threshold voter are included as independent variables to assess their effect on political efficacy.

The relatively low level of direct contact between pre-adults and political representatives was noted in the literature review. However, by late adolescence direct contact with political representatives may arise through activities in the family, school, or social environment. As elected politicians are the gatekeepers in representative democracies such contact presents a direct and potentially influential opportunity for citizens to build an impression of the responsiveness of the political system. For this reason, aspects relating to threshold voter contact with political representatives are considered discretely as an agent of political efficacy socialisation. Various contexts of contact are considered including; self-initiated contact; school-based contact, voluntary organisation contact; election campaigning, or kinship are considered.

Cross tabulation of response to survey variables and each political efficacy dimension is used to give an initial indication of the bivariate relationship between each survey variable and each political efficacy dimension. Independent survey variables based on survey items with five response categories were collapsed onto three categories; low (bottom two coded responses), moderate (middle-category response) and high (top two coded responses) values. In other instances survey variable response falls into two categories. The response to political efficacy items is presented according to respondents' categorisation on these survey variables. The two internal efficacy items with the highest factor loading on the internal efficacy dimension feature in this cross tabulation. These items are: 'I consider myself well able to participate in politics' (feel politically capable); and 'I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people' (feel politically informed). The same approach is taken for cross tabulation analysis with external efficacy items. These items used are: 'People like me have no influence on politics' (feel politically influential); and 'People like me don't have any say about what the government does' (consider the government responsive). Response to the external efficacy items was reverse scored.[55] Response to the efficacy items were collapsed into three categories for illustration: Low efficacy (bottom two coded

[55] The results of bivariate regression analysis featuring demographic, socialisation, and attribute variables (as independent variables) on internal and external efficacy (as dependent variables) are available on request.

responses); moderate efficacy (middle-category response); and High efficacy (top two coded responses). The comparison in cross tabulation is generally across independent variable categories in their likelihood to express high political efficacy.

Along with the percentage breakdown from cross tabulation, the Chi square (χ^2) value and significance statistic are reported, with an indication of the statistical significance of the relationship (two-tailed) in the population (Pollock, 2005; and Field, 2009), with statistical significance (2-tailed) reported are the α=.10 (^); α=.05 (*), α=.01(**) and α=.01(***) level. The α=.10 (^) is included for reference purposes, as is the notation of $^{(non\text{-}sig)}$ for relationships which do not meet the other p-value levels. Cross tabulation results provide an accessible and limited view of the bivariate relationship, and the effect size and significance of a relationship is best considered in the subsequent multivariate regression. In all instances the *n* of the cross tabulations was greater than 700. While these results are more readily understandable, they do not control for the effect of other variables on the relationship between an independent variable and a political efficacy dimension. Cross tabulation results are presented in instances where hypothesised effects are anticipated. Where an unanticipated relationship emerges in subsequent multivariate analysis the cross tabulation result is duly presented.

Therefore elements of each socialisation environment: family, school, social, and political representative, are included as independent variables in multivariate regression analyses on threshold voter internal and external political efficacy measures. In many instances the variables focus on the perception of threshold voters to such elements. For instance, rather than objectively gauging school authority responsiveness, parent political interest, or quality of political education, threshold voter perceptions of these factors are measured. This reflects the reflective and interactive nature of political socialisation processes.

The results of the multivariate regression analyses within each socialisation environment are the basis by which the socialisation effects on each efficacy dimension are assessed. Multivariate regression captures the unique relationship between a socialisation variable (predictor) and a political efficacy variable (outcome), while controlling for the effects of the 'third variable problem', i.e., other variables influencing a bivariate relationship (Pollock, 2005). The analysis of each agent of socialisation is referred to as a 'model'.

In assessing the effect of socialisation environments on threshold voter attitudes, it is necessary to initially assess, and control for, the effects of demographic factors. The existing literature highlights the relationship between demographic factors and political efficacy

(Verba *et* al., 1995; and Beaumont, 2010). A 'demographic' model including demographic and socio-economic variables is assessed, with variables which are hypothesised and found to be (statistically) significant then included in subsequent analysis of socialisation variables.

As individuals' political attributes are also affected by socialisation environments, they are included as a separate model of analysis, to indicate the relationship between threshold voters' general political attributes and their political efficacy. A further model of personal attributes is included as personal attributes such as personal efficacy and social trust have been found to affect political efficacy. The effects of demographic variables are again controlled in this analysis.

In the final analysis, a multivariate regression of significant variables from the socialisation models is presented, which is referred to as a multi-model. This controls for demographic, political and personal attributes, which makes it possible to look at the unique relationship between socialisation variables and political efficacy dimensions.

The following discussion presents the hypothesised effects of the demographic variables arising from existing literature, and the results of the current analysis. In existing literature, differences between demographic groups have been detected, and have been accounted for by political socialisation in part. Detail is provided of the measurement of the independent variables along with the distribution of response to these variables in the survey sample as it contextualises the relationships which are found to exist between such variables and the political efficacy dimensions.

5.2 Demographic Model: Introduction

Background variables which are hypothesised to be of relevance for threshold voter political efficacy are included in this model of analysis.[56] The variables in focus relate to: demographics; nationality; and socio-economic status. The variation between individuals is largely beyond the control of the threshold voter in respect of; age, gender, religious denomination, nationality, or parent socio-economic status. These factors influence the environmental conditions in which threshold voters find themselves. While the direct effects of such variables have been identified in adult and pre-adult research, the effects have often been more indirect, whereby intervening social or political variables mediate the effect of age or religious denomination. The focus on threshold voters limits the ability to assess certain

[56] While these variables could be termed as 'background' resources, background is not used in this case as the term is broader and could equally refer to socialisation variables.

background variables. Education has been found to be relevant in the acquisition of internal, and in some cases, external efficacy. As respondents are all at a similar stage in education, such an investigation is outside the scope of this design.

The demographic, nationality, and religious denomination type variables in this analysis include: age; gender; residential area; nationality; length of residence in Ireland; parent nationality; and religious denomination. Variables of the socio-economic type include: social class by occupation, and presence of an unemployed parent.

The hypothesised effects of demographic variables on threshold voter internal and external efficacy are presented and discussed in advance of the presentation of research results. The hypotheses indicate the anticipation of a relationship (or not), and the direction of this relationship, where evident in existing literature. As political efficacy cannot cause variation in the demographic variables, the arrow of causation intuitively runs from the predictor demographic variables to the political efficacy variables. In later models, where the logic of causal order is not as definitive, causation becomes a matter of theoretical logic, based on the existing literature and discussions therein.

5.2.1 Age: Hypothesised Effect

The effect of age on political efficacy is much analysed in adult political efficacy, as in the wider fields of political attitude research. Existing research on age and internal political efficacy suggest a positive relationship (Anderson, 2010; Finifter, 1970; and Hayes and Bean, 1993). As individuals grow older they acquire more information in respect of their social and political environs which boosts the perception of capacity to understand and act judiciously in political affairs. Yet, some research has observed a negative effect of aging on people's level of internal efficacy: (Kenski and Stroud, 2006; Bowler and Donovan, 2002; and Miller, Wilford, and Donoghue, 1999). Miller *et al*. (1999) emphasised that as their study is based in Northern Ireland, older respondent's lower level of political efficacy may be a legacy of their socialisation during the territory's period of intense political conflict, i.e., a generational effect. This echoes the explanation of Baker (1973) on socialisation in Germany among those who would have grown up during the Third Reich. These findings are contextualised by research which proposed that age effects on political efficacy may be curvilinear rather than linear (Ikeda *et al*., 2008; and Caprara *et al.*, 2009). Caprara *et al.* suggest that this would arise from a disengagement effect, whereby older age groups' withdrawal from the political sphere

is a reflection of a wider social withdrawal; and younger age groups' engagement is limited by their political interest and experience.

In relation to external efficacy, adult based studies also demonstrate mixed findings. A positive relationship is observed by Bowler and Donovan, 2002; Hayes and Bean, 1993; and Lee Kaid *et al.*, 2007. However, Kenski and Stroud, 2006; Karaman, 2004; and Semetko and Valkenburg, 1998; observed a negative effect. The effects of item selection and the political context are likely to be at issue in this regard.

Among pre-adults, Baker (1973) found an increase on a general measure of political efficacy in mid adolescence (from age 13 to 16), which he attributed to an increase in a general sense of mastery over environs which develops during adolescence (Easton and Dennis, 1967). In the emergence from childhood to adolescence an individual's sense of competence in many social and personal contexts is likely to increase. Many facets of their political environment change which relate to civic roles, interaction with public agencies, and information procurement through education and discussion. Lyons (1970) noted an increase in internal efficacy from age 10 through 14, with stabilisation in succeeding pre-adult years. In the early years of political adulthood Lee (2006) detects a positive effect of age among college students. In the cross-national ICCS data, Schulz (2005) detected an increase in internal efficacy between mid (13/14) and late (17/19) adolescence. Despite the limited age range, it is anticipated that as one moves from 15 to 17, one's sense of internal efficacy will increase, albeit due to social factors which can be untangled with the inclusion of socialisation environments in later analysis.[57]

As one moves toward voting age, one's perception of system responsiveness may increase as one's status increase in other social settings, such as the acquisition of driving rights, work rights, and liberal rights such as smoking and consensual sex. Closer proximity to voting entitlement and the acquisition of individual rights may therefore induce a greater perception of current system responsiveness. This would suggest a positive association between age and perceived political responsiveness. Lyons (1970) detected an increase in political efficacy

[57] In a study of adults (age 18-91) in Spain, Fernández-Ballesteros et al (2002) found that younger participants expressed a lower sense of general efficacy to manage "personal life circumstances (work-life, partnerships, and financial conditions) than older cohorts, but expressed a higher individual efficacy in "promoting social change" than older cohorts. The authors suggest that developmental effects and socio-political era effects are at work as older cohorts and younger cohorts are similar in their expression of efficacy to achieve social change through collective means (2002: 121).

(with a mix of general type and external efficacy items) between early (school grade 5-6), mid (grade 7-9) and late adolescence (grade 10-12).

On the other hand, the advance of age may see a roll back of the 'sheltering' effect in childhood socialisation. Greenstein (1960) identified a move away from the 'glowing political imagery of childhood' as one develops during adolescence and attributes this development to a wider reaction to social environments. He suggested (1960: 942) that; "adolescence is, at any rate, a time for felling idols and perceiving the commanding figures of one's adult environment in a more fallible light". McCluskey *et al.* (2004) characterised their negative findings of age on efficacy expectations as "consistent with the common wisdom that people become less idealistic with age", which may have started to occur by late adolescence.

Kasschau (1976: 228) highlighted the importance of the particular environmental settings, in noting the distinction between the children in her study and those in studies in the United States, Japan, and Chile; "The Mexican children increasingly exhibit depressed levels of efficacy in the later grades as they gather more politically relevant information and begin to make judgements pertaining to support or rejection of the political system". Schulz's recent research (2005) reveals a decrease in external efficacy between mid (13/14) and late (17/19) adolescence. Though he notes the decrease in external efficacy is smaller in Scandinavian countries which he attributes to their traditional democratic standing relative to the other countries under study. The narrow range in age and the parity in education level of the respondents in this survey design may limit the analysis of age effects. The following are the research hypotheses relating to threshold voter age and political efficacy dimensions.

- *Internal: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who are older are more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are younger.*
- *External: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who are older are more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are younger.*
- *External: H1a: In comparing threshold voters, those who are older are more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who are younger.*

Age: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The survey sample consisted of 15, 16 and 17 year old respondents. The age variable is scaled in months as respondents' date of birth and date of survey were gathered. Only 1.5% of respondents are 15 years old, with a further 21.3% aged 16 years old. More than three quarters of respondents (77.1 %) were within a year of transition to political adulthood.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' age and internal efficacy, 17 year olds were less likely to feel politically capable (22%) than 15/16 year olds (28%), $\chi^2(2)=3.21^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.[58] On the second internal efficacy item, the same percentage of 17 and 15/16 year olds (9%) felt politically informed, $\chi^2(2)=2.71^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' age and external efficacy, a similar percentage of 17 year olds (26%) and 15/16 year olds (25%) felt politically influential, $\chi^2(2)=0.31^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, 17 year olds were more likely to consider the government responsive (27%) than 15/16 year olds (21%), $\chi^2(2)=3.88^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

Therefore, while 17 year olds were more likely to have high internal efficacy and high external efficacy than 15/16 year olds on one item in each dimension, these differences were not statistically significant, at the $\alpha=.05$ level.

5.2.2 Gender: Hypothesised Effect

While research which has focussed specifically on gender and political efficacy is rare (Waltz, 1990), gender is frequently included as a background variable in analysis. The traditional view is that females perceive their political influence to be lower than male counterparts (Abramson, 1983; in Bowler and Donovan, 2002: 380). This is reflective of the traditionally marginalised political role of women in politics, and the on-going disparity of females in political office (Caprara *et al.*, 2009).[59] Gender differences in early political efficacy literature appeared to emerge in adult but not in pre-adult studies (Campbell *et al.*, 1954; Easton and Dennis, 1967; and Kasschau, 1976). Constraining socialisation practices which provide divergent social cues to developing females rather than males are believed to contribute to this trend (Bandura, 1997). Such effects are particularly prevalent in the socio-political arena. Fernández-Ballesteros (2002: 120) found that males expressed higher efficacy in relation to achieving social change through their actions, while male and female respondents were comparable on efficacy relating to personal circumstances (work, relationship, and finance).

Much contemporary research supports the ongoing gender divergence in respect of internal efficacy (Semetko and Valkenburg, 1998; Bowler and Donovan, 2002; Kenski and Stroud,

[58] While the cross tabulation percentages report the bivariate relationship between age and political efficacy in the sample, the significance value associated with the chi-square value indicates whether this relationship is likely to exist in the survey population (i.e., to not be the result of sampling error). As the critical significance value is set at $\alpha=.05$ in this study, bivariate relationships marked with *, **, *** can be considered statistically significant. Those marked at the $\alpha=.10$ (^) or by (non-sig) are not considered statistically significant in the population.

[59] Hayes and Bean (1993: 269) presented a collection of research from previous times which indicated the more political efficacious sentiment among males in case study and cross-national research: Campbell *et al.*, 1954; Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Almond and Verba, 1963; Olsen, 1969; Western and Wilson, 1973; and Baker, 1973.

2006; and Caprara *et al.*, 2009). Karaman (2004) attributed the lower efficaciousness of female participants in her study, in part, to the secondary position of women in Russian political culture. Other empirical studies did not find a gender effect in relation to internal efficacy (Acock and Clarke, 1990; Hayes and Bean, 1993; Miller *et al*., 1999; Lee, 2006; and Anderson, 2010). In his study of German mid-adolescents, Baker (1973) did not find a gender effect on a general measure of political efficacy. However, adolescent males displayed a greater propensity for participation than females. This is revealing as an emphasis was placed on political efficacy in the explanation of gender political participation disparities by Almond and Verba (1963) and Rosenstone and Hansen (1993).

Schulz (2005) found a significantly higher level of internal efficacy among males than females in mid-late adolescence (13/14 and 17/19 year olds). Bynner *et al.* (2003) found young females (17-20 year olds) to be less politically engaged and less generally self-efficacious than male counterparts. Henn *et al*. (2007) found that young male adults were more than twice as likely as female adults to express interest in politics, which is considered as a correlate of internal efficacy. These factors combined may explain why threshold voter females would possess a lower level of internal efficacy than males. It is possible that gender effects increase as one moves through adolescence to adulthood. The expectation here is that male threshold voters will possess a higher sense of internal efficacy than females.

The effect of gender in relation to external efficacy is less defined. As external efficacy considerations are more externally based, the socialised gender roles may be of less relevance. Despite advances in employment and equality legislation in Ireland, substantive differences remain in the proportion of male and female political representatives and senior public office holders. While the last five parliamentary elections have produced a record proportion of seats for females, the proportion still stands at only 15% of the total number. Bowler and Donovan (2002) and Karaman's (2004) findings of gender parity on external efficacy are interesting, considering they found males significantly higher than females on internal efficacy. However, the following studies did not find a gender disparity on external efficacy: (Acock and Clarke, 1990; Hayes and Bean, 1993; Lee, 2006; and Anderson, 2010). Henn *et al*.'s (2007) study among those who had just entered political adulthood did not find a significant gender effect on external efficacy. Kenski and Stroud (2006) found an inverse gender effect in relation to external and internal efficacy, with female respondents more likely to possess higher external efficacy than males. This is also true for Ikeda *et al.*'s cross-national research (2008).

In pre-adult research Schulz (2005) finds a negative effect of being female in relation to external efficacy among lower and upper secondary students in his 10 country study. As the results of existing studies are somewhat conflicting, a clear hypothesis on the effect of gender on external political efficacy does not arise

- *Internal: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who are male will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are female.*
- *External: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who are male will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are female.*
- *External: H2a: In comparing threshold voters, those who are male will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who are female.*

Gender: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The gender proportion in the sample is 53.8% female (coded 0) and 46.2% male (coded 1). This is comparable to the gender breakdown reported in Cork area post-primary schools; i.e., female (51.6%) and male (48.4%). Due to this proximity between sample and frame, a gender weight is not applied to the data.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' gender and internal efficacy, males were slightly more likely to feel politically capable (25%) than females (22%), $\chi^2(2)=1.49^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, males (13%) were more likely to feel politically informed than females (5%), $\chi^2(2)=21.47^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' gender and external efficacy, a similar percentage of males (27%) and females (26%) felt politically influential, $\chi^2(2)=0.24^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, males were more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than females (24%), $\chi^2(2)=1.66^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In respect of internal efficacy, male respondents were more likely to have high internal efficacy than female respondents on both items, with a statistically significant difference on one item. While they were also more likely to have high external efficacy on both items, this difference was not statistically significant. A higher level of internal efficacy in male respondents was also found in the ICCS among early-mid adolescents in Ireland, though the difference was again substantively small.

5.2.3 Residential Area: Hypothesised Effect

While there is little in the literature that examines the link between residential setting and political efficacy, respondents' residential setting was captured in the survey. Residential locations, rural and urban, may vary in socio-economic profile, level of community interaction and dependence on public service provision.

Anderson (2010: 60) proposed possible effects of urban social organisation on collective efficacy:

> The prevalence and density of kinship, friendship, and acquaintanceship networks and the level of participation in community based organizations fosters the emergence of collective *efficacy*, or solidarity and mutual *trust* (social cohesion) among community residents combined with shared expectations for social control-related action (citing, Browning, Feinberg, and Dietz, 2004).

In this regard, residential location may be indirectly related to political efficacy. While dated, White's (1968) study did not find a significant effect of the size of urban community in which a school was set for respondents' efficacy. There is no existing research in this area which would guide a hypothesis.

External efficacy, as it is based on a consideration of an external entity or entities may be affected by the perceived power of one's community. While the political priorities of urban and rural communities may diverge, the boundaries of such communities are much more fluid in Ireland than in previous generations due to telecommunication, transport, and lifestyle changes. Therefore, the effect of residential area as between rural and urban dwelling citizens is not anticipated.

- *Internal: H3: In comparing threshold voters, as their residential area changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H3: In comparing threshold voters, as their residential area changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Residential Area: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The survey item used to capture respondents' residential area gives an indication of the immediate geographic setting. It is crude measure of community variables which are prevalent in the area of collective efficacy research (Ananat and Washington, 2009; and Anderson, 2010). Respondents were asked to identify their residence in a rural-urban classification. Table 5.1 presents a breakdown of response, with the right hand column indicating the number of respondents to the item. [Table Overleaf]

Table 5.1. Residential Area Item Response

Response Percentage	In the countryside	In a village	In a town	In a suburb	In a city	*n*
Do you live? [60]	42.4	12.0	17.6	21.4	6.5	830

Approximately two in five respondents (42.4%) live in the country side. A majority of respondents (72%) live outside of the greater city area, with only 6.5% residing in the city itself.

5.2.4 Nationality: Hypothesised Effect

Nationality is included as a demographic variable as it plays a role in one's sense of belonging in a community, and is strongly linked to citizenship which determines political rights and electoral entitlement. However, the status and circumstance of foreign nationals in a country are diverse with differences in: reason for migration, level of integration, and socio-economic and cultural resources (Jenson, 2010: 427). Jensen (2010: 427) detected differences in civic engagement between young immigrant and native-born residents (15-25 year olds) in America, which are relatively minor when other demographic differences are accounted for. In relation to ethnicity, Metzger and Smetana (2010: 235) noted that ethnic minority youth felt less politically efficacious on a generic item.

Those who move from country to country may encounter challenges relating to linguistic, cultural and ethnic differences. Irish nationals do not have to face the challenge of acclimatising to a new, and possibly divergent social and political environment. In light of their short life span, threshold voters who have moved from one country to another may still be in a period of adjustment. They may therefore have less time or capacity to process political information about their host country, than those who have spent all their life in the one political setting. It is anticipated that Irish nationals will possess a higher level on internal efficacy than foreign nationals.

In relation to external efficacy, the link between nationality and citizenship affects individual political rights. Franchise entitlements, social welfare provisions and labour rights are delineated between both Irish and foreign nationals, as are electoral rights.[61] While these distinctions relate to adult electoral entitlement, they may be noted by threshold voters in discussion with family and peers. In a three country study (Belgium, Canada, Romania)

[60] Appendix 6. details the source of each questionnaire item from existing survey designs.
[61] In the Republic of Ireland those with Irish citizenship can vote in all elections and referenda. British citizens can vote in Dáil (parliamentary), European Parliament and local elections. EU citizens can vote at European and local elections; and Non-EU citizens can vote in local elections only (Citizens Information Board, 2011b).

Quintelier, Hooghe, and Badescu (2007: 15) found that adolescents who have citizenship status are more active in a ten point political participation index than those who do not have such status. A combination of push and pull forces may attract people to a new country, and to engage in their new social and political culture. On arrival in a country, immigrants may be faced with discrimination and social exclusion which may negatively influence their civic engagement and perception of place in the political order (Jenson, 2010: 433). Some immigrants may retain a stronger political identity to their country of origin, and be more engaged in that political environment.

Despite a growing proportion of immigrant citizens in Ireland in recent decades, the immigrant population is still a small minority at 10% in the 2006 Irish census (Central Statistics Office, 2011). While immigrant candidates have become more numerous in recent elections in Ireland, their electoral success and profile in electoral office is negligible. At the 2009 local authority elections only two 'immigrant' candidates (both non-party) were successful, while 24 political party, and 6 non-party candidates competed in the election (Fanning, O' Boyle, and Shaw, 2009). This is from of a total of 1,627 elected representatives in the election.

An alternative hypothesis is possible whereby immigrants have a higher sense of external efficacy than Irish. Residence in Ireland may be associated with greater political, economic or social independence than experienced in a foreign national's country of origin. In such instances, the perception of external efficacy is likely to include consideration of the system responsiveness in the original and current country of residence.

- *Internal: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who are Irish will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not Irish.*
- *External: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who are Irish will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are not Irish.*
- *External: H4a: In comparing threshold voters, those who are Irish will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who are not Irish.*

Nationality: Measurement, Distribution, and, Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked to identify their nationality in an open-ended manner. Due to the low frequency and diverse distribution of foreign nationalities, it is not possible to analyse on a country by country basis. The variable criterion is therefore operated on an Irish

national/foreign national basis. 94.1% of respondents classified themselves as Irish, and 5.9% (50 respondents) classified themselves as being of another nationality.[62]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' nationality and internal efficacy, Irish nationals were more likely to feel politically capable (24%) than foreign nationals (14%), $\chi^2(2)=5.08^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, Irish nationals were more likely to feel politically informed (9%) than foreign nationals (6%), $\chi^2(2)=0.53^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' nationality and external efficacy, Irish nationals were slightly less likely to feel politically influential (26%) than foreign nationals (28%). Notably, Irish nationals were more likely to feel politically un-influential (59%) than foreign nationals (46%), $\chi^2(2)=4.66^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, Irish nationals were less likely to consider the government responsive (25%) than foreign nationals (36%). Notably, Irish residents were more likely to consider the government unresponsiveness (62%) than foreign nationals (34%), $\chi^2(2)=17.53^{***}$.

While Irish nationals were more likely to have high internal efficacy on both items, this difference was not statistically significant.[63] The reverse was the case in respect of external efficacy, where foreign nationals were more likely to have high external efficacy, and this difference was statistically significant on the second external efficacy item.

5.2.5 Length of Residence: Hypothesised Effect

The length of residence in Ireland is included as a variable of analysis as the item on nationality may be limited in distinguishing the level of exposure which one has had to Irish social and political culture. Self-stated 'Irish' respondents may have lived abroad for much of their life. Moreover, in the foreign national community some respondents will have lived in Ireland for most of their life, while others may have only been in the country for a short duration. Among foreign respondents, having longer residence may provide greater opportunity to engage in social, cultural and political learning experiences that bridge the initial gap between the foreign and Irish community. Those living in the country for longer may have greater interaction with Irish nationals. Levinson (2010: 336) indicated that immigrant students who hadn't lived in the Unites States their whole lives performed

[62] Included in the Irish subsample are 22 respondents who stated their nationality as Irish and reported being born abroad. A further 17 respondents reported living abroad as some stage in their lifetime. The breakdown of foreign nationalities is: American, 1; Australian, 1; British, 7; Chinese, 2; English, 13; Filipino, 2; French, 1; German, 1; Indian, 2; Israeli, 1; Latvian, 1; New Zealander, 1; Nigerian, 1; Northern Irish, 1; Polish, 8; Russian, 2; Sierra Leonean, 1; Thai, 1; and Unstated 3.

[63] In the ICCS sample in Ireland, no significant difference was found in respect of migrant/language status and the internal efficacy measure among early-mid adolescents (Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011).

significantly worse on civic assessment tests than those who had, with scores directly relating to number of years living in the country. This trend was evident in younger and in older adolescents. While an assessment of length of residence is limited due to the relatively short length of threshold voters' lifespan, it is expected the length of residence contributes to one's knowledge of the political environment and social competence. This is expected to lead to a higher sense of internal efficacy or political competence.

In relation to external efficacy the same complexity applies as with nationality. While those who are here a shorter length of time may have less knowledge or entitlement in the political context, their considerations may be based on a relative judgement of political responsiveness in their country of origin and in Ireland. Michelson (2000) found that recently naturalised Chicago Mexicans were more efficacious in response to the external efficacy item (NOCARE) than longer naturalised Mexicans. This suggests that there may be a bounce effect from recent naturalisation among immigrants in external political efficaciousness. Michelson's findings are contextualised by the location of her study in an area where some political office holders are strongly associated with immigrant communities. It is therefore difficult to hypothesise the direction of the relationship between the length of residence and threshold voter external efficacy.

- *Internal: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who are longer-term residents will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are shorter-term residents.*
- *External: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who are longer-term residents will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are shorter-term residents.*
- *External: H5a: In comparing threshold voters, those who are longer-term residents will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who are shorter-term residents.*

Length of Residence: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked about their length of residence in Ireland. The criterion of the variable is residence of more than 10 years in Ireland, and residence of 10 years or less. This criterion represents a period slightly longer than the half-life of most respondents and is likely to distinguish between those who have resided in Ireland for the latter years of primary and all post-primary education and other respondents. 94% or respondents have lived in Ireland for more than 10 years, the remaining 6% for 10 years or less.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' length of residence and internal efficacy, longer-term residents were more likely to feel politically capable (24%) than shorter-term residents (18%), $\chi^2(2)=2.72^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, a similar percentage of longer-term (9%) and shorter-term residents (8%) felt politically informed, $\chi^2(2) = 2.99^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' length of residence and external efficacy, the same percentage of longer-term and shorter term residents (26%) felt politically influential, $\chi^2(2)=2.414^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, longer-term residents were less likely to consider the government responsive (26%) than shorter-term residents (31%). Notably, longer-term residents were more likely to consider the government unresponsive (61%) than shorter-term residents (40%), $\chi^2(2)=13.69^{**}$.

Similar to the bivariate relationship on nationality, those who were longer-term residents were more likely to have high internal efficacy and low external efficacy than shorter-term residents, with the external efficacy differential being statistically significant on the second item.

5.2.6 Parent Nationality: Hypothesised Effect

The nationality of respondents' parents is relevant due to its connection with respondent nationality and identity. In light of the hypothesised role of family and parents as agents of political efficacy socialisation, parent nationality is a notable demographic variable. For foreign threshold voters, parental nationality may influence the political cues which are transmitted between parent and child. Respondents who have been raised in Irish society may be exposed to divergent cultural and political identities, depending on whether their parents are Irish or not. The extent to which this affects political attitudes depends on the political outlook of one's parents and whether the threshold voter absorbs information cues provided. Factors such as the length of time parents have been in the country; the number of Irish parents, and the similarity of political culture or political regime from which they originate complicate this relationship. To the extent that a relationship may exist, it is expected that those born to Irish rather than foreign parents may have a greater sense of internal efficacy.

The limited political entitlement of foreign parents, relative to Irish parents, may inform a threshold voter's perception of system responsiveness. Sigel's (1965: 7) citation of the conservative effect of political socialisation is relevant for the divided identity of immigrant parents: "Political socialization, in other words, is essentially a conservative process facilitating the maintenance of the status quo by making people love the system under which

they are born". If parents tend to associate within their immigrant community networks, then considerations of the status of this reference group may reinforce a feeling of minority status powerlessness. While there may be an effect, it is therefore difficult to hypothesis the direction of this effect, as it may involve a host of extraneous factors relating to parent nationality, citizenship and experiences in the country of origin and Ireland.

- *Internal: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more Irish parents will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have fewer Irish parents.*
- *External: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more Irish parents will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have fewer Irish parents.*
- *External: H6a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more Irish parents will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have fewer Irish parents.*

Parent Nationality: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked to report their parents' nationality separately. Each parent's nationality is therefore categorised on an Irish/foreign basis. 25 different parent nationalities were reported, with small frequencies in each foreign country noted. The combination of both parents' nationality presents the following distribution: Both Irish (86.4%); One Irish (7.5%); and Neither-Irish (6.1%).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' parent nationality and internal efficacy, those with two Irish parents were more likely to feel politically capable (25%) than those with one or none (17%), $\chi^2(2)=5.37^{\wedge}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with two Irish parents were more likely to feel politically informed (9%) than those with one or none (6%), $\chi^2(2)= 1.23^{(\text{non-sig})}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' parent nationality and external efficacy, those with two Irish parents were slightly less likely to feel politically influential (26%) than those with one or none (28%), $\chi^2(2)=5.70^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, those with two Irish parents were less likely to consider the government responsive (26%) than those with one or none (33%). Notably, those with two Irish parents were more likely to consider the government unresponsive (62%) than those with one or none (47%), $\chi^2(2)=9.26^{*}$.

Threshold voters with two Irish parents were more likely to have high internal efficacy, and low external efficacy than those with one or no Irish parent. The difference was statistically significant in respect of the second external efficacy item.

5.2.7 Religious Denomination: Hypothesized Effect

Religious denomination is one of the principal cleavages used to categorise populations. The centrality of religion (and the Catholic Church) in Irish political life is stronger than in many other western democracies (O' Leary, 2004). There is much debate on the relevance of religious denomination for politicisation (Wu, 2003). The focus in this model of analysis is on religious denomination. Religious participation and involvement are included in a subsequent associational environment model.

Wu (2003, citing Harris, 1994) highlighted differences in politicisation among denominations in America; finding that Jews were more politicised than Catholics, who in turn were more politicised than Protestants. To account for this, he raised the significance of differing group identification (Verba and Nie, 1972), group cohesions (Milbrath and Goel, 1977) and religious instruction (Lipset, 1981) for individual socialisation. In terms of denomination there are little grounds to suggest an effect on internal political efficacy in Ireland. Ireland's population is relatively homogenous in religious denomination. The 2006 Census reported a breakdown of: Catholic (87%); Church of Ireland (incl. Protestant) (3%), with other stated religions at 1% or less each (Other Christian; Presbyterian; Muslim; Orthodox; Methodist; Other), while 4% of respondents replied with 'No Religion'.[64] The small size of minority religion subsamples makes it difficult to assess an effect in the current instance.

In relation to external efficacy, threshold voters from minority denominations may be sensitive to the traditional connection of the state to the Catholic Church. Though political representatives are predominantly of Catholic denomination, as reflects the denominational proportions in the population, the relationship between church and state has abated in recent decades (Coakley, 2010). It is expected that religious denomination will not influence threshold voters' external efficacy.

- *Internal: H8: In comparing threshold voters, as their religious denomination changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H8: In comparing threshold voters, as their religious denomination changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

[64] Source: Central Statistics Office website, in the section headed: Census Statistics, as hosted on 05/07/2011, [http://www.cso.ie/statistics/popnclassbyreligionandnationality2006.htm]

Religious Denomination: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked of their religious denomination in an open-ended manner. It was not anticipated that respondents would express themselves as Christian, which a number of them did. This presents a difficulty in deciphering if those who replied 'Christian' were Catholic, Protestant, or of another Christian denomination.

Table 5.2. Religious Denomination Item Response

Response Percentage	Catholic	Protestant	Christian	Other denomination	None	*n*
What religion are you?	79.0	5.4	8.3	1.8	5.5	794

Approximately four in five respondents (79%) identify themselves as Catholic, which if appended by those who identify themselves as Protestant or Christian, bring the Christian proportion to 92.7%. The 'Other denomination' category comprises those who reported as being Muslim, Hindu, or Scientologist. Those who replied as being atheist, agnostic or of no denomination comprise the 'None' category. A dichotomous variable for those who report as being Catholic (79%) or of other response (21%) was created to simplify the ambiguity arising from the open-ended nature of the item, which makes it possible to assess if Catholic denomination affects political efficacy dimensions.

The cross tabulation analysis of religious denomination did not reveal a significant relationship with either internal or external efficacy as hypothesised.

5.2.8 Parental Socio-Economic Status: Hypothesised Effect

Socio-economic status (SES) is a central demographic variable in political efficacy literature due to its influence on social and political interactions. Socio-economic status refers to the generic social status and economic well being of individuals. At the state level, Madsen (1978) observed that the aggregate sense of political efficacy was higher in countries that were more advanced in economic development. In the conception of socio-economic status Newhagen raised Hyman's (1942) distinction between objective and subjective social status; whereby "objective status is determined simply on achieving group membership, measured by income, education, and profession. But subjective status is a psychological state, determined by the perception of the individual" (1994: 387). Socio-economic status was considered important for efficacy related variables such as political engagement, political participation, and political partisanship (Campbell *et al.* 1954; and Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995) demonstrated that one's political efficacy increased in relation to income, with the poorest individual's efficacy almost a full standard deviation lower than

the wealthiest (Levinson 2010: 341). In an American study by Wu (2003), socio-economic status was theorised to provide a bridging effect in political efficacy across the disparities associated with race. Beck and Jennings (1982) found a stronger effect of parental socio-economic status, than parental orientations and behaviour on young people's political participation.

Caprara *et al.* (2009: 1004) focussed on the social dynamic of SES on political efficacy suggesting:

> People of low socioeconomic status, for example, are less likely to feel politically efficacious, given their disconnection from the major sources of social influence. In contrast, people with high educational and occupational status are better informed and integrated in the community (Cohen, Vigoda, and Samorly, 2001), and have more social, financial, and cognitive resources to meet the challenges of politics (Harder and Krosnick, 2008; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993).

Fernández-Ballesteros et al (2002: 117) observed a positive link between socioeconomic status and personal efficacy, individual social efficacy and collective social efficacy. Their explanation emphasised the connections to social systems of influence which arise from educational and occupational status.

SES encompasses many constituent parts such as educational attainment, economic affluence, and occupational classification. Koch (1993: 311) distinguished between education and income effects within SES dimensions.[65] In his discussion Koch (1993: 311) noted Converse's (1972) assertion that the relationship between educational attainment and political efficacy is spurious, with hierarchical influence as the latent and real cause. Converse suggested that educational gains were based on one's place in the social 'pecking order', which also informs the perception of personal political effectiveness. Easton and Dennis (1967: 36) earlier theorised this effect on young citizens of family SES:

> The child whose share of social resources is larger is there by in a more favourable position to receive relevant information, communications, and reinforcement for adherence to this standard. His position and that of his family in the social structure expose him more frequently to events and interests congruent with this sense. His parents are more likely themselves to be interested and participate in politics and to have a higher sense of political efficacy. The consonance of such a milieu of efficacy and involvement, for the child's own acquisition, is therefore apparent.

Beaumont's (2010: 531) focus on the effects of civic resources and networks on cognitive, informational, motivational, and cultural resources echoed this line of discussion by Easton

[65] Earlier research by White (1968) and Finifter (1970) affirmed that the SES effect was largely attributable to the educational element, which was often latent and unspecified in study designs.

and Dennis. The IEA study of those in mid-adolescence also supports this sentiment as parents' education was found to have a strong association with student's conceptual knowledge of democracy across nations (Metzger and Smetana, 2010: 230). In their study of 'attainers' in the United Kingdom, Henn, *et al*. (2007) found that those from middle-class (managerial/professional occupation) households were more interested in politics than those from working-class households (manual/unskilled occupation).

Kenski and Stroud (2006) observed a positive effect of education and income on internal political efficacy. A notable study which did not observe an SES effect on internal efficacy is provided by Hayes and Bean's (1993) four country study (Australia, Great Britain, America, and West Germany). Hayes and Bean used a measure of social class by occupation which is similar is the current approach. Lee (2006) did not find an SES effect among college students which he suggests may be due to the narrow SES range of respondents in a university sample. In an analysis of cross national data, Schulz (2005) observed a weak but positive effect of parental education and cultural background on adolescent internal efficacy. The expectation here is of a positive SES effect on internal political efficacy.

Existing research also points to a positive relationship between SES and external efficacy. This may be a reflection of the workings of the political system, where those who have more influence and exact more response, correctly perceive this effect (Waltz, 1990). Hayes and Bean (1993) observed a positive effect of SES by occupational class across their four country study. In their American study, Kenski and Stroud (2006) observed a positive effect of education and income, as did Ikeda *et al.* (2008) in a comparative, twenty two country study. Some studies have not observed an SES effect on respondent external efficacy: Lee (2006); Karaman (2004); and Henn *et al.* (2007). Lee (2005) noticed a negative effect in respect of education in Hong Kong, with more educated respondents being more negative about system responsiveness, than the less educated. He suggests that this is related to the political climate in the country.

Research findings on pre-adult research are largely based on generic measures of political efficacy, which do not distinguish its dimensions. Key (1961) found father's occupation to be a positive influence on children's efficacy. In a follow up study, White (1968) did not find this hypothesised effect. Baker's (1973) findings are illuminating as he found that political efficacy rises between 13 and 16 across socio-economic categories, with those whose parents are in higher occupational classes, higher in initial political efficacy than others. However, at age 16, those in higher occupational classes did not demonstrate as high an increase in sense

of political efficacy as those in other occupational classes. Kasschau (1976: 225) identified a similar trend over age and social class (based on occupation) in Mexico, which she attributed to those in higher social classes being more aware of their parents' political frustrations in the political context prevailing at the time of study.[66] Schulz's (2005) study of mid adolescents did not observe an effect of parental educational and cultural background on external efficacy. In line with adult based studies, the expectation here is of a positive effect of SES on threshold voter external political efficacy.

- *Internal: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher socio-economic status will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have lower socio-economic status.*
- *External: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher socio-economic status will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower socio-economic status.*

Socio-Economic Status: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

SES measures vary in existing literature between educational, financial, social and occupational focus. Measuring SES among pre-adults is complicated by their lack of economic independence. The socio-economic status of respondents' parents is the conventional approach in adolescent research. The difficulty in acquiring information about family income from children or adolescents was highlighted by Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, and Schulz (2001) and Wu (2003), with a significant risk of missing and unreliable data. The quantification of the number of books or rooms in the homestead is the approach taken in recent undertakings with adolescents (Quintelier *et al*., 2007; and Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011). Beaumont (2010) used parent educational level as a proxy for socioeconomic status among an undergraduate college cohort. Alternatively, a subjective item which asks respondents to gauge their relative social status faces validity and social desirability problems.

The reporting of parents' occupations and employment status is a useful alternative. Parents' occupations are likely to relate to both their income and their educational attainment in a broad sense. It is felt that those in the mid-late stages of adolescence have detailed knowledge of their parents' occupations. Respondents were presented with separate open-ended items on each parents' occupation, with a facility to provide three lines of information for description. The level of information returned was varied in detail. This information was coded to create a variable on social class by occupation. This information was used in conjunction with

[66] For this reason Kasschau (1976) echoed Weissberg's (1972) earlier observation that the relationship between socio-economic status and efficacy may be more complicated than a simple linear one, it may be curvilinear.

responses to an employment status item following the approach of Smyth and Hannan (2002) who also use the Irish Census 'social class by occupation classification'.[67] The use of parent occupation as an indicator of threshold voter SES is premised on the financial dependence of threshold voters on their parents.

One parent was used as a classification of respondents' social class by occupation. If only one parent is employed full-time, the full-time parent was utilised for determining social class. If both parents were full-time employed, the parent whose occupation was placed in a higher position in the Irish Census 'categorisation' is used for measurement. Bynner *et al.* (2003) use a similar strategy to determine family social class (based on the United Kingdom Register General's classification for father's occupation). Table 5.3 presents the breakdown of responses after occupations have been categorised.

Table 5.3. Social Class by Occupation Item Response

Response Percentage	Unknown other gainfully employed	Semi-skilled manual	Skilled manual	Non-manual	Managerial and technical	Professional worker	*n*
Social class by occupation	3.6	7.1	22.8	13.9	41.0	11.3	803

The most prominent social class by occupation in the sample was managerial and technical (41%), with approximately half of respondents (52.3%) in the top two rank categories. In subsequent regression analysis those in the unknown and otherwise gainfully employed category (29 respondents) were excluded from analysis, due to the difficulty of ranking the category. This parental social class by occupation is handled as an ordinal variable, with semi-skilled manual in the bottom rank, and professional worker in the top rank.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' socio-economic status and internal efficacy, those with parents in the professional occupational class were most likely to feel politically capable (35%), followed by: managerial/technical (25%); non-manual (23%); skilled manual (21%); and semi-skilled manual (16%), $\chi^2(8)=18.51^*$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with parents in the managerial/technical occupational class were most likely to feel politically informed (13%), followed by: professional (8%); skilled manual (8%); non-manual (6%); and semi-skilled manual (4%). Notably, those with parents in the professional occupational class

[67] The classification of occupation types follows that of the Irish Census 2006. Appendix 5 of the Standard Reports on Methods and Quality provides the metric for occupational classification: as hosted on the Central Statistics Office website on 15/05/2011:
[http://www.cso.ie/surveysandmethodologies/standard_reports_methods_quality.htm]

were less likely to feel politically uninformed (65%) than those with parents in the semi-skilled occupational class (82%), $\chi^2(8)=15.91^{*}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' socio-economic status and external efficacy, those with parents in the professional occupational class were most likely to feel politically influential (38%), followed by, managerial/technical (28%); non-manual (22%); skilled manual (21%); and semi-skilled manual (20%), $\chi^2(8)=13.50^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, those with parents in the professional occupational class were most likely to consider the government responsive (33%), followed by: managerial/technical (29%); skilled manual (22%); non-manual (21%) and semi-skilled manual (21%), $\chi^2(8)=9.74^{(\text{non-sig})}$.

In the bivariate cross tabulation, those with parents in higher occupational classes were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy than those in lower occupational classes. This difference was statistically significant in relation to both internal efficacy items. A positive correlation between socioeconomic status and internal efficacy was also evident in the ICCS sample of those in early-mid adolescence in Ireland.

5.2.9 Unemployed Parent: Hypothesised Effect

The presence of an unemployed parent in the home (who is seeking employment) is likely to influence the economic and political discussion in the threshold voter's environment. In relation to internal efficacy, it is not anticipated that this will have an effect.

In relation to external efficacy, the presence of an unemployed parent is more intuitive relevant. The tenor of discussion in the home is likely to feature a sense of frustration or futility relating to economic circumstances, which may take on political overtones. If the presence of an unemployed parent is a source of economic hardship in the home, the respondent may perceive that political decisions are in some way responsible for the parent's current unemployed status. Kassimir and Flanagan (2010: 99) noted the problem of lack of economic opportunity on political efficacy. Unemployment in their conception is aligned with a lack of adult status or household autonomy which may lead to social exclusion and political anomie (which they identify in the emergence from Communism in Latvia and Bulgaria). As the research was conducted in the earlier part of an economic downturn respondents whose parents have lost employment were unlikely to perceive the political environment as responsive to their needs if such elements are connected by them.

- *Internal: H10: In comparing threshold voters, as the unemployment status of their parents change, their internal efficacy will not change.*

- *External: H10: In comparing threshold voters, those who have an unemployed parent will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who do not have an unemployed parent.*

Unemployed Parent: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Responses to the employment status of respondents' mothers and fathers were used to create a dichotomous variable on the presence of an unemployed parent in the home. 92.1% of respondents did not report the presence of an unemployed parent, with 7.9% (66 respondents) noting that one or both parents were unemployed and seeking work.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' parent unemployment status and external efficacy, those without an unemployed parent were more likely to feel politically influential (27%) than those with an unemployed parent (14%), $\chi^2(2)=10.14^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, the same percentage of those without and with an unemployed parent considered the government responsive (26%), $\chi^2(2)=1.54^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

Threshold voters with an unemployed parent were almost twice as likely to have high external efficacy on the first item, and statistically so, while there was not differential evident on the second external efficacy item.

5.3 Assessing Multivariate Relationships with Political Efficacy Dimensions

In recognition of the experimental nature of this research, the relationship between all the survey variables and each of the political efficacy dimensions were assessed in multivariate regression. In the case of some variables, the hypothetical expectation is of a lack of relationship, or a relationship with one of the efficacy dimensions, but not the other. The inclusion of all variables makes it possible to discover unanticipated relationships which may not feature in the existing literature with other demographics.

As the measures of internal and external political efficacy were scale measures (created through factor scores), ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was undertaken using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 16.0. The results of the cross tabulation of bivariate response give initial indication of the hypothesised relationship between survey measure (predictor variable) and political efficacy dimension (outcome variable). It is only in the multivariate regression, where the effects of other variables (which affect the bivariate relationship) are considered, that the unique effect or relationship between

the predictor variable and each efficacy dimension becomes clear.[68] In each case, the standardised regression coefficient (β) is used as a measure of the relationship. These values measure the change in respondent internal or external efficacy, for a one unit change in the predictor variable. As the efficacy measures derive from standardised factor scores, the standardised regression coefficient values represent the change in respondent efficacy in standard units (standard deviations), for a one unit change (in standard deviation) of a predictor variable.[69]

The statistical significance of regression coefficients is indicated by the superscript attached. In line with existing political science practice, values which are significant at the α =.05 level of significance (i.e., p<.05), are regarded as statistically significance in this analysis. The following notation is used to indicate significance levels: ^ significant at α =.10; * significant at α =.05; ** significant at α =.01; and *** significant at α =.001. If superscript is not attached, a relationship at these levels of significance between predictor and outcome variable was not observed in analysis. Coefficients which are statistically significant at the ^ level (i.e. α =.10) are noted for informative purpose. The use of 'significant' or 'statistically significant' in further discussion unless stated refers to a relationship at the .05, .01, or .001 level.

As regression models are statistical creations which attempt to model what is occurring in the dataset, an indication of the fit of the regression model between the survey variable and efficacy variable is represented by the R (Pearson coefficient). The R square value is used as an indication of the amount of variation in threshold voter political efficacy which is attributable to variation in the predictor variable in bivariate regression (or predictor variables in multivariate regression). The Adjusted R Square value, which takes account of the number of variables in the analysis and the sample size, is emphasised in the presentation of multivariate regression results, rather than R Square.

In the multivariate regression, variables were entered in blocks using the forced entry method. The entry of variables in blocks makes it possible to assess the effects of the introduction of a variable on existing relationships between predictors and each political efficacy dimension. While the multivariate regression tables present results of the final two blocks detailing regression with all variables in the model (penultimate column), and controlling for the other

[68] The specific measurement of each predictor variable used in regression analysis is presented in Appendix 6 with the detail of the survey items which are involved in the measures.
[69] The standard errors (SE) of the regression coefficients, which represent the estimated variety in the β-values if based on the survey population, are not presented in order to streamline table presentation. An expanded version of the tables (including SE values) is available on request.

political efficacy dimension (right hand column), notable changes which arose in the earlier models will be outlined. Listwise deletion of cases was used, whereby an individual with missing data on any variable in the multivariate regression model was excluded from analysis.

The assumptions of the linear regression method were assessed in each multivariate model in this analysis. The following is the manner in which these assumptions were assessed here in line with Field's (2009) assessment of model requirements. Unless stated in the course of discussion, the following criteria were assessed and met by the regression models undertaken.[70]

- Durbin Watson: Indicates the level of autocorrelation of errors in the regression model. The assumption of non-autocorrelation is likely to be met if the Durbin Watson value is close to 2 (and between 1 and 3).
- Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance: Indicates the level of collinearity between regression predictor variables. A VIF value greater than 10 is a cause for concern, or an average VIF value substantially greater than 1, may indicate a biased regression. A tolerance value (which is 1/VIF) below 0.1 indicates a serious problem, and a tolerance value below 0.2 indicates a potential problem.
- Casewise diagnostics highlight the presence of outlier cases which may bias the model. The standardised residual indicates the deviation of an observed value which a respondent has for an outcome variable, and the value predicted by the regression model in standardised units. In a sample taken from a dataset with a normal distribution of residuals: 95% of the cases are expected to have standardised residuals within +/-1.96; 99% of the cases should lie within +/- 2.56; and no case should lay 3.29 from 0 (i.e., the standardised mean). Such an outlier case may influence the regression model, and its coefficients. Even if a case is an outlier (i.e., standardised residual greater than 3.28), its influence value may indicate that it is not affecting the regression model, though it would be a case for further inspection.
- Casewise diagnostics highlight the presence of influential cases, which are not necessarily outliers), that may have undue influence on the model. A Cook's distance value greater than 1 indicates that a case is having an undue influence, even if it is not an outlier. The Mahalanobis distance also indicates the influence which a case is

[70] Results of all regression model assessment are available on request and were not included here for the purposes of presentation and parsimony.

having on the model, for large samples (500) a crude check is to look for values above 25.

- A graph of the standardised residual values against the standardised predicted values should look like a random display of cases, with an even dispersion around 0. A funnel effect visible in the graph is suggestive of heteroscedasticity in the data, which would break the assumption of invariance across levels of the predictor variables. A curve in the graph would indicate a non-linear relationship, which suggests the assumption of linearity is broken.
- To test the normality of model residuals, the histogram and normal probability plot of the data were examined, whereby a normal distribution (bell-shaped distribution around zero) in the histogram and lack of deviation from normality (straight sloped line) in the probability plot are suggestive of a normal distribution.
- Partial plots display the residuals of the outcome variable and each of the predictor variables when both variables are regressed separately on the remaining predictors. Outliers in a partial plot suggest cases which may have undue influence on the predictor's regression coefficient. Non-linearity in predictor outcome relationships and heteroscedasticy are also detectable through these plots.

5.4 Internal Efficacy: Multivariate Analysis of the Demographic Model

The results of the multivariate regression of all the demographic variables on internal efficacy are presented in Table 5.4. The first column presents the standardised regression coefficients (βs) of predictor variables on internal efficacy when all demographic variables are included in analysis. The second column presents βs of predictor variables when respondent external efficacy is included (and controlled) in the analysis. [71]

Looking at the first column, in line with the hypothesised expectations gender and socio-economic status (as measured by occupational social class) related positively to internal efficacy. Male threshold voters appeared to have a higher appraisal of their political competence than female counterparts. Respondents who had parents in the three lower occupational categories possessed a significantly lower sense of internal efficacy than those in the top two categories. A third variable, village, was positively related to internal efficacy at

[71] The R Square Change value indicates the change in R Square (proportion of internal efficacy explained) associated with the addition of variables from one regression block to the next. The superscript indicates whether the addition of more variables significantly increases the amount of internal efficacy variance explained. As regression analysis is a predictive statistical technique, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) F values indicates the usefulness of a regression model (with included variables) in predicting internal efficacy, rather than using the sample average of internal efficacy to predict a respondent's internal efficacy value.

the α=.10 level of significance.[72] While this effect was not hypothesised, it is possible that village-dwelling, which aligns with close-knit communities, affords developing citizens social learning opportunities which boost an individual's interest in collective and social engagements. These may contribute to a feeling of social and political competence. The lack of population density in countryside residence, and greater diversity of larger urban environments may not as readily provide such community learning opportunities.

The substantive size of the observed effects was small, with the socio-economic status effect much greater than either gender or residential area. For instance, a one unit (standard deviation) change in gender results in a 9% change in standard deviation units in internal efficacy. These effects persist in the right hand column, when respondent external efficacy is controlled for, illustrating that the effects were direct on internal efficacy, rather than indirect through a relationship with external efficacy.

Despite the hypothesised expectations, age, respondent nationality, length of residence in Ireland, and parent nationality were not significantly related to threshold voters' internal efficacy. The age effect which Lyons (1970) and Baker (1973) found among adolescents may be more prevalent at earlier stages of adolescence. Equally, Schulz (2005) had a wider age gap with 13/14 and 17/18 year old respondents being compared. The age range of respondents in the sample is relatively small, and respondents were in the same educational cohort which may be as important for one's sense of political understanding. While the coefficients for respondent nationality, length of residence in Ireland, and parent nationality are not statistically significant, they suggest that those who are foreign residents; those of shorter-term residence; and those who have less Irish parents have a lower sense of internal efficacy.

The Adj. R Square value (.024) in the first column indicates that 2.4% of the variation in threshold voter internal efficacy is explained by demographic variables. This is substantively small suggesting that the vast majority of variation in threshold voter internal efficacy is attributable to other factors. [Table Overleaf]

[72] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' residential area and internal efficacy, village residents were most likely to feel politically capable (29%), followed by: city residents (26%); countryside residents (25%); suburban residents (23%); and town residents (19%), $\chi^2(8)=14.42^{\wedge}$. On the second internal efficacy item, village residents were also most likely to feel politically informed (13%), followed by: city and countryside residents (9%); suburban residents (8%); and town residents (7%), $\chi^2(8)=12.36^{(\text{non-sig})}$. In this current forced entry regression method the sig. value of the village coefficient is p=.067. The Village variable was also statistically significant in the final solutions of alternative regression methods: stepwise regression method coefficient β=.086*; and backward regression method coefficient β=.086*.

Table 5.4. Demographic Model Internal Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β
Constant (Beta) [73]	.074	.240
AGE	.015	.008
GENDER	.090*	.088*
Village[74]	.071^	.070^
Town	-.032	-.025
Suburb	-.017	-.030
City	-.030	-.028
IRISH	-.032	-.024
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE	-.065	-.066
One Irish Parent[75]	-.008	-.012
No Irish Parent	-.092	-.094
CATHOLIC	.014	.016
Managerial/Technical[76]	-.077	-.065
Non-Manual	-.122*	-.102*
Skilled Manual	-.166**	-.142*
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.131**	-.114*
PARENT UNEMPLOYED	.040	.050
EXTERNAL EFFICACY		.152***
n	740	740
R	.212	.259
R Square	.045	.067
R Square Change	.002[77]	.022***
Adjusted R Square	.024	.045
ANOVA F	2.129**	3.048***
Durbin Watson		1.921

[73] This row presents the value of the constant for reference purposes. The constant represents the Y-intercept of the regression equation; i.e. the estimated value of efficacy in the model, when no predictor variables are included.

[74] Multi-nominal responses to the residence survey item were used to create four dummy variables, with 'Countryside' as the unspecified base category. The residence variables included are dichotomous; i.e., for the village variable respondents are coded 0 (not residing in a village) and 1 (residing in a village).

[75] Responses to the item on parent nationality were used to create two dummy variables, with 'Both Irish' in the unspecified base category.

[76] Responses to the item on social-class by occupation were used to create four dummy variables, with 'Professional' in the unspecified base category occupation.

[77] The significance of the change in R Square indicates the change from the previous model or entry, which is excluded from presentation in most tables here. The entire tables are available on request, which give a better indication of the R Square change sig. value. In the majority of instance, the significance of the regression coefficients is an indication of the significance of R Square Change.

5.5 External Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Demographic Model

The results of multivariate regression of demographic variables on external efficacy are presented in Table 5.5. As in the case of internal efficacy, the first column presents regression coefficients of predictors when all variables are included in the model. In line with the hypothesised expectations, the relationship between socio-economic status and external efficacy is evident in this analysis. This is in line with the cross-national work of Hayes and Bean (1993) and Ikeda *et al.* (2008) among adult groups. Threshold voters whose parents have occupations in the lower three occupational categories possessed a significantly lower sense of external efficacy than those in the upper two categories. When the effect of internal efficacy was controlled, there is also a significant effect of having an unemployed parent in the home. Those who had an unemployed parent in the home possessed a lower impression of political responsiveness than those who do not.

The relationship between suburban residence and external efficacy emerges in multivariate analysis.[78] While this is not attributably to socio-economic status as currently measured, as the effect of SES is controlled in this analysis, it suggests that elements of suburban living bolster developing citizen's impression of political responsiveness. In large part, Cork suburbs are identifiable communities, which are marked by relative affluence and active community groups.

The effect of socio-economic status weakened slightly as evident by the lessening in standardised regression coefficient when internal efficacy is controlled. However, all effects retained statistical significance and in the case of suburb and unemployed parent show negligible increase.

The positive effect of age in cross tabulation was not evident when the effects of other variables are controlled. While it is significant at the α=.10 level on initial entry to the first block (with gender), when residential area is entered in the second block it lost statistical significance, though remains positive.

The nationality variables were not significant predictors of threshold voter external efficacy. The crude measurement of citizenship and nationality may limit the detection of such effects

[78] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' residential area and external efficacy, village residents were most likely to feel political influential (31%), followed by: suburban residents (29%); countryside residents (25%); town residents (22%); and city residents (21%), $\chi^2(8)=5.66^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, suburban residents were most likely to consider the government responsive (36%), followed by: countryside respondents (26%); village respondents (23%); town respondents (26%); and city respondents (13%). Notably while 51% of suburban residents considered the government unresponsive, 59% of countryside respondents, 64% of town respondents, 66% of village respondents, and 76% of city respondents did so, $\chi^2(8)=20.31^{**}$.

in this study, as reasons for immigration, citizenship status, and connections with migrant and Irish society are not captured in this study.

As in the case of internal efficacy demographic variables accounted for little variance in threshold voter external efficacy: 2.4%. Socio-economic status was much more important in accounting for external efficacy than each of the other two significant predictors; parent unemployment or suburban residence.

Table 5.5. Demographic Model External Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β
Constant (Beta)	-1.105	-1.116
AGE	.046	.044
GENDER	.016	.002
Village	.007	-.004
Town	-.046	-.041
Suburb	.088*	.090*
City	-.018	-.013
IRISH	-.049	-.044
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE	.006	.016
One Irish Parent	.024	.026
No Irish Parent	.015	.029
CATHOLIC	-.010	-.012
Managerial/Technical	-.079	-.068
Non-Manual	-.136**	-.118*
Skilled Manual	-.158**	-.133*
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.109*	-.090*
PARENT UNEMPLOYED	-.066^	-.072*
INTERNAL EFFICACY		.152***
n	740	740
R	.212	.259
R Square	.045	.067
R Square Change	.004^	.022***
Adjusted R Square	.024	.045
ANOVA F	2.130**	3.049***
Durbin Watson		2.003

5.6 Conclusion

The effects of demographic characteristics are prominent areas of interest in the existing adult literature on political efficacy. The study design precludes an analysis of education level effects, and other variables are restricted in measurement in threshold voters (socio-economic status and age). Nonetheless, the influence of some demographic factors is evident.

As hypothesised, religious denomination did not display a significant effect on threshold voters' internal or external efficacy. Moreover, aspects of respondents' national identify such as Irish status, length of time in Ireland and parent nationality, are not significant predictors on either efficacy dimension. This is an encouraging finding as threshold voters from immigrant backgrounds, which have grown substantially in number in the last two decades, are not significantly less efficacious than Irish respondents when other demographic factors were controlled.

Socio-economic status, which was measured with social class by occupation of the 'prime' parent, demonstrated a significant and positive effect on both dimensions of political efficacy. The evident distinction occurs between those whose parents are employed in professional and managerial/technical occupations, and those whose parents are employed in non-manual, skilled manual, and semi-skilled manual occupations. As hypothesised the presence of an unemployed parent in the home is negatively related to external efficacy, but is not related to internal efficacy. Considerations of political system responsiveness are therefore sensitive to short and medium-term economic considerations in the home. Socio-economic status is the main driver of variance in internal and external efficacy dimensions.

Gender is found to be a significant indicator of internal efficacy, as male respondents are more confident in their competence to understand and act in political matters. This effect has been noted among adults, but was not observed in existing studies with those in pre- and early-adolescence.

While an effect of residential area on either dimension was not hypothesised, a positive effect of village residence for internal efficacy, and suburban residence for external efficacy is evident in cross tabulation and multivariate regression analysis. The effect of residential area has not been tackled directly in existing political science research. Some studies have looked at community effects, in particular at the effect of dwelling in deprived communities. The positive finding for village residence may be accountable by the integrated nature of small-town communities, where opportunities for social engagement and networking tend to be high, and often unavoidable. Likewise, the positive effect of suburban residence on external efficacy may be a consequence of the relatively affluent and active community settings associated with suburbs in the Cork area. Such neighbourhoods have the population densities which make them potent electorally in terms of engaging political response. Moreover, they retain an identifiable community identity which may not be the case in city areas. This

speculation is worthy of further consideration and analysis to assess which aspects of residential settings influence the political efficacy of citizens.

The different effects of the demographic variables on each efficacy dimension indicate the necessity to distinguish conceptually and methodologically between efficacy dimensions, even at this stage in the life cycle. These relationships between the demographic traits of respondents and each efficacy dimension hold when the other efficacy dimension is considered, indicating that that the relationships were direct rather than indirect within this model. Static type factors such as demographic variables account for little (2.4%) of the observed variation in internal or external efficacy, indicating that threshold voter political efficacy is more attributable to dynamic environmental factors. This demonstrates the necessity of assessing socialisation effects among this age group, as the effects of socio-economic status may be mediated by conditions in the social environs of developing citizens. Such resources determine the opportunity and role afforded to individuals in their social and political environments. The significant predictor variables from this model will be included (and thereby controlled) in subsequent socialisation model analyses.

Chapter 6. The Family Socialisation Model

6.1 Introduction

The role of the family and in particular parents has featured in political efficacy and political attitude research since the early political socialisation research (Easton and Dennis, 1967; Baker, 1973; and Jennings and Niemi, 1974). The dominant position of the family in childhood, and dependence on the family unit for economic and social needs, confers it with significance for attitude formation. Davies (1965: 11) captured this succinctly in stating; "The family provides the major means for transforming the mentally naked infant organism into the adult, fully clothed in its own personality". Through childhood and adolescence the family may affect adolescent attitudes by promoting values, by network mobilisation, or by shared socio-economic status (Quintelier *et al*., 2007: 4).[79] Wilkenfeld *et al.* (2010: 198) observed evidence of political modelling in the development of young people's political attitudes; "including findings that children's and adolescent's civic behaviour and attitudes tend to be consistent with their parents' behaviour and attitudes" (citing, Andolina *et al*., 2003; and Hart, Atkins, Mackey and Youniss, 2004). In one of the few studies which attempts to quantify comparable effect size on pre-adults political efficacy, Langton and Karns' (1969) influential study noted that family accounted for four times more movement along the political efficacy scale than school or peer group, and was the only agent to effect low-efficacy, medium-efficacy, and high-efficacy adolescents. They found a divergent role played by socialisation agents, depending on respondents' socio-economic status. While the family played a greater role for lower and middle class respondents than school or peers; among upper class respondents, peer influences played a greater role. Consequently, the family environment is considered to be of prime interest in looking at socialisation effects on threshold voter political efficacy.

Tedin espoused that the extent of each socialisation agent's influence is context dependent. He acknowledged Connell's (1972) critique that family socialisation may work to provide the outer limits of the "range of acceptable attitudes", while other agents such as peers will be more influential on the specific approach, depending on the issue under consideration (Tedin 1980: 151). The transmission of broad partisan orientation is an instance where family attachments if strong can be transmitted during childhood before the individual is exposed to more diverse information sources. Adolescence is a period when individuals may begin to

[79] Quintelier *et al*. (2007: 4) identified political attributes which were affected by family influence: partisanship (Hess and Torney, 1967; and Jennings *et al.* 1968); party identification (Banks and Roker, 1994); voting (Jennings and Niemi, 1981); and voting preferences (Westholm and Niemi, 1992).

explore non-family sources of political information as a sign of their independence (Hoffman and Thomson, 2009). The role played by the family changes throughout the lifecycle, and changes in respect of wider societal changes over time (Franklin, 2004). In particular, the increasing capacity and proliferation of the media in information provision is considered to dilute the traditional influence of the family in socialisation (Feeney, 2004).

Interaction with non-parent family members may also be formative in development of social and political outlook. While the home environment may consist of siblings and grandparents, the main attention in this study is on parental effects. The role attributed to parental influence stems from their organisational and agency role relative to other family members. Parent effects on political socialisation may diverge between mother and father. Existing research suggest a greater role for fathers in the socialisation of political attitudes. Fraser (1972) noted the particular role of the father rather than the mother on adolescent political efficacy, while Davies (1965) noted the positive effect of a father-dominated home environment in boosting early adolescent efficacy. A subsequent study by Rodgers (1974) did not find a parent effect. Such effects may be confined to another era, or another political culture. Nonetheless, they point to the intricacies of socialisation effects on political efficacy in the home environment.

Two variables included in this model measure parallel considerations of internal and external efficacy in the home environment: the tendency to attempt change in response to parental decisions; and perceptions of parental responsiveness. Political variables relating to the family include: home politicisation; parent political interest; parent voting participation; and parent partisanship. These variables capture the political engagement of respondents' parents not objectively, but through the threshold voter's perception.

Takei and Kleiman (1976: 381-382) found that participation in the family and school environs had little effect on their student group under study, suggesting a distinction between the home, school and the political arena. In explanation of the discrepancy of the lack of family (and school) effect in their study and the effect of participation in home decision-making and tendency to express grievances suggested by the Almond and Verba (1965) study, Takei and Kleiman make two interesting points: Research based on retrospective recall of past behaviour may be vulnerable to selective recall depending on respondents' current attitudes; and the level of attitudinal continuity is likely to be influenced by the nature of the wider political climate; i.e., its level of heterogeneity or complexity (Dawson and Prewitt, 1969).

6.2 Parent Responsiveness: Hypothesised Effect

The decision making structure in the home is a template from which to learn about collective decision making. It provides a learning opportunity on the nature of power distribution, and the role which one has in decisions which affect life circumstance. Perception of family decision making and the consideration which parents (or guardians) confer on the threshold voter may become a normative standard against which collective processes in the wider social world are approached. In an adult context, the empirical evidence is that greater democratisation in environments such as the workplace lead to higher perceptions of political efficaciousness (Bowler and Donovan 2002: 373, citing Elden, 1981). While the work environment may be the central daily environment in later stages of life, for the threshold voter the home environment is likely to be more central in terms of experience. The opportunity to participate in decision making processes may be developmental for the individual's sense of influence, with opinion being modified in line with experience (Pateman, 1971). Those who feel that their parents are responsive to their input are likely to experience a boost in self-esteem and assumed responsibility. The effect of having a say may nurture the idea that one is competent in adult environments, which may increase one's sense of internal political efficacy. However, a threshold voter's recognition of the divergence between the nature of home and political environs will limit the likelihood of this occurrence. The expectation is that there will not be a direct effect of the perception of parent's responsiveness and internal political efficacy.

The home environment is a training ground in the responsiveness of adults to teenagers' opinions and input. Those who perceive their parents as considerate when making decisions may form a positive view of the responsiveness of adults, applying this expectation to a wider range of adult decision makers in the social and political environments. This was encompassed by Langton and Karns' (1969: 814) suggestion that: "Some individuals project their early status in the family to the political arena". Takei and Kleiman's (1976: 398) male specific study did not observe such an effect among mid-adolescents. In their explanation they cited Hess and Torney's (1967) reflection that adolescent efficacy may emerge from observing parents' participation and expression of political efficacy, rather than transference from experience of effectiveness in family decisions. However Takei and Kleiman's measure of political efficacy did not distinguish between internal and external dimensions, and the political context and time of the study (1968, Western Malaysia) were somewhat different. The expectation here aligns with Pateman and Elden's line of argument above that experience

of responsiveness in a non-political environment may transfer to feelings of system responsiveness.

- *Internal: H1: In comparing threshold voters, as their perception of parent responsiveness changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who perceive higher parent responsiveness will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who perceive lower parent responsiveness.*

Parent Responsiveness: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked to consider the extent to which their parents consider their views when making family decisions.

Table 6.1. Parent Responsiveness Item Response

Response Percentage	None at all	Only a little	Some	A good amount	A lot	*n*
When your parents at home are making decisions that affect you, how much consideration do they give to your views?	4.6	6.7	14.2	40.5	34.0	832

Almost three quarters of respondents (74.5%) stated that their parents' give 'A good amount' or 'A lot' of consideration when making decisions that affect them, with approximately one in ten (11.3%) responding with the lower perception of 'None at all' or 'Only a little'.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of parent responsiveness and external efficacy, those who perceived high parent responsiveness were more likely to feel politically influential (26%) than those who perceived low parent responsiveness (19%), $\chi^2(4)=3.59^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who perceived high parent responsiveness were more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those who perceived low parent responsiveness (16%), $\chi^2(4)= 8.64^{\wedge}$.

Threshold voters who perceived high parent responsiveness in the sample were more likely to have high external efficacy on both items, though these differences did not reach the critical level of statistical significance in the population.

6.3 Reaction to Home Decisions: Hypothesised Effect

The home decision making environment also provides adolescents with a platform on which to imprint their preference on collective decision making processes, and thereby test and assess their own competence in such matters. The threshold voter gains an appreciation of how to effect change, and of their ability to affect change. As parents (or guardians) tend to be the primary decision makers, adolescent participation often involves trying to repeal decisions

made which they do not agree with. This reflects an inclination or tendency to react to decisions within the individual. Self-confidence and esteem is a valuable resource in this process. Depending on one's experience, and the dynamic of power in the home environment, this instinct may be carried beyond the hall door, and applied to social, and more specifically, political circumstance. Bowler and Donovan (2002: 373) recognised the human results of involvement in a participatory process for internal political efficacy which include increased self-confidence for individuals and acquisition of skills that are necessary for citizen participation (citing, Pateman, 1970). While Pateman was referring to social forums such as work, the home environment may be a more proximate testing ground for the threshold voter. The expectation is that the sense of confidence and inclination to react which one displays in the home environment will be projected to a sense of competence in relation to internal political efficacy.

One's actions are likely informed by the perceived malleability and responsiveness of the environment. Demonstrations of competence in the home may therefore reflect perceptions of parent responsiveness. The tendency to react to decisions within the home is context specific. The effect which this could have on perception of another set of decision makers is therefore tenuous and context dependent. An anticipated relationship between the inclination to act on decisions in the home as an indicator of perceived home competence, and sense of external political efficacy is not anticipated.

- *Internal: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who are more reactive to home decisions will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are less reactive to home decisions.*
- *External: H2: In comparing threshold voters, as their reaction to home decisions changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Reaction to Home Decisions: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked about the likelihood of trying to effect change on a decision that is made by their parents that they did not like. This item is an attempted parallel of the consideration involved in the internal political efficacy dimension, and involves the perception of competence in interpersonal relations in the home, on an individual or collective basis. [Table Overleaf]

Table 6.2. Reaction to Home Decisions Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all likely	Not very likely	Neither u. nor l.	Fairly likely	Very likely	*n*
If a decision is made that you do not like by your parents at home, how likely is it that you, acting alone or together with others, would try to do something about it?	2.5	8.9	13.3	38.9	36.4	828

Three in four respondents (75.3%) believed it is 'Fairly' or 'Very likely' that they would try to act on undesirable decisions; while only approximately one in ten (11.4%) considered it unlikely that they would act.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' reaction to home decisions and internal efficacy, those who tended to react to home decisions were slightly more likely to feel politically capable (25%) than those who did not tend to react (23%), $\chi^2(4)=3.50^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who tended to react to home decisions were less likely to feel politically informed (9%) than those who did not tend to react (13%). However, those who tended to react were slightly less likely to feel politically uninformed (68%) than those who did not tend to react (70%), $\chi 2(4)=6.12^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

The cross tabulation of both internal efficacy items does not reveal substantial or significant differences between threshold voters who had a high tendency and a low tendency to react to decisions in the home.

6.4 Home Politicisation: Hypothesised Effect

The homestead is a source of political information and an environment of political exchange (Baker, 1973). Participation in political discussion within the home has been considered as an important type of situated learning activity, with adolescents who frequently talk about politics and current affairs with their parents more versed in political knowledge and engagement. Andolina *et al.* (2003) averred the lasting significance for young adults who grow up in households involving regular political discussions:

> For example, among young people who are eligible to vote, 38% of those from homes with frequent political discussions say they always vote, compared to 20% of those without such dialogue. Similarly, more than one-third (35%) of those who often heard political talk while growing up are regular volunteers, compared to just 13% of those raised in homes where political talk never occurred. By talking about politics, families teach their children that it is important to pay attention to the world around them-and to take the next step of doing something (2003: 277).

Quintelier *et al*., (2007: 1) similarly found that family discussion/interaction strongly affected adolescent political participation, particularly in higher socio-economic status families. They

found this effect more prominent in stable democracies (Belgium and Canada), than in a newly emerging democracy (Romania).

The transfer of information from parent to offspring is not necessarily an intentional form of indoctrination, though it may be on occasion. The level of politicisation in the home is likely to be largely determined by parents or elder family members, in respect of: the frequency of political content in family discussion; the consumption of mediatised political information in the home or in transit; or the attendance at social, community, or political events. Haste (2010: 164) reflected that dialogue with parents, teachers, and peers "scaffolds development, and is also the crucible for debate and negotiation. Even more important, it determines what is *comprehensible* within any cultural context". Adults in the homestead frame the manner in which politics is approached in: the selection of a daily or weekly newspaper; the selection of broadcast channels; and the selection of news type. These factors frame the proximate political environs of the adolescent (Tedin, 1974; Putnam, 2000; Hooghe, 2002, cited in Quintelier *et al*, 2007: 7; and Chaffee and Yang, 1990). In this manner, the family plays a role as an ever-present, though often a 'low-key and haphazard' agent, which sets the political context (Jennings and Niemi, 1974: 330; and Austin and Pinkleton, 2001: 222). Political discussion is considered to increase an individual's 'argument repertoire' and is a platform on which people can better understand their own and others' views about politics (Ikeda *et al.*, 2008: 80). As the frequency of political discussion relates to the refinement of political information and attitudes, there is an anticipated positive effect on internal efficacy.

A greater frequency of political discussion in the home is also likely to induce more frequent consideration of the responsiveness of the political system. The manner in which the political system is perceived arising from such discussion depends on its content and tone rather than the propensity to engage in discussion. As the tone of household political discussion may be negative or positive, the hypothesised effect of family discussion on external efficacy is therefore non-directional.

- *Internal: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion with family will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have less frequent political discussion with family.*
- *External: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion with family will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have less frequent political discussion with family.*

- *External: H3a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion with family will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have less frequent political discussion with family.*

Home Politicisation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked of their frequency of political discussion with family on a time basis. The item did not provide an indication of the confluence or dissonance which arises in parent and threshold voter political discussion, or the salience attached to it by the threshold voter. It also did not capture the intensity of such discussion, which may be a factor in the transfer of political attitudes, aside from the frequency of discussion (Quintelier *et al*., 2007: 24). It attempted to capture the generic home environment, rather than specifying discussion with each parent or siblings. A caveat in the interpretation of this item is that the item wording does not detail who is the instigator of the discussion. It may therefore be a measure which indicated respondent political interest, as much as an indicator of the level of politicisation of the home environment.

Table 6.3. Home Politicisation Item Response

Response Percentage	Never	Less than once a week	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day	*n*
In general, how often do you talk about political issues with family?	27.0	28.6	15.0	24.9	4.6	849

The proportion of weekly discussion involving respondents in the family home was relatively low. A minority (44.5%) discussed political issues once a week or more frequently, while less than one in twenty (4.6%) did so on a daily basis; and more than one in four (27%) never did so. The proportion of respondents who infrequently or never discussed politics with family serves as a caveat on items which involve respondent perceptions of parent interest and voting behaviour. Response to a similar item in the ICCS ('How often are you involved in talking with your parent(s) about political or social issues?') indicates a lower level of discussion among early-mid adolescents in Ireland. Only 25 per cent of respondents responded 'Weekly' or 'Daily' (Cosgrove *et al*., 2011).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' home politicisation and internal efficacy, those who had more than weekly political discussion with family were more likely to feel politically capable (45%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (13%), $\chi^2(4)=135.00^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had weekly political discussion with family were more likely to feel politically informed (25%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (2%). Notably, those who had more than weekly political discussion with family were less

likely to feel politically uninformed (38%) than those who had less than weekly (83%), $\chi^2(4)=187.10^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' home politicisation and external efficacy, those who had more than weekly political discussion with family were more likely to feel politically influential (38%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (19%), $\chi^2(4)=32.53^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had more than weekly political discussion with family were more likely to consider the government responsiveness (35%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (20%), $\chi^2(4)=21.72^{***}$

It is evident in the bivariate cross tabulations that those who had more weekly discussion of politics in the home were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy. These differences were statistically significant on all items assessed.

6.5 Parent Political Interest: Hypothesised Effect

The political interest of parents or guardians influences the frequency of political discussion and salience of politics in the home. The presence of a politically interested parent may stimulate the politicisation of other family members, including spouses and children. Politically engaged or interested parents may instil their developing children with a sense of the importance of politics (Beck and Jennings, 1982). A more passive development may arise from young people's adoption of parental interests as a means of connecting, emulating, or outwitting them. Beaumont (2010: 543) attested that the level of political self-efficacy can be influenced through observing the engagement of others such as peers, parents, and teachers. In this manner, parent political interest is expected to positively influence threshold voters' internal political efficacy. In regard to external efficacy, it is the tone of political interaction and the political disposition of the adult as transmitted from adult to emerging citizen which would direct their perception of political responsiveness (Almond and Verba, 1965). The linkage between parent political interest and adolescent external efficacy is not evident in the literature and is not anticipated in this regard.

- *Internal: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those with fathers with higher political interest will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those with fathers with lower political interest.*
- *External: H4: In comparing threshold voters, as their father's political interest changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

- *Internal: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those with mothers with higher political interest will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those with mothers with lower political interest.*
- *External: H5: In comparing threshold voters, as their mother's political interest changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Parent Political Interest: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked of the political interest of each parent or guardian. While items on parent attention to political issues or consumption of current affairs media would add depth to the socialisation environment, it is likely to be more vulnerable to reliability issues than the perception of their political interest. The indirect way in which parent interest in politics was measured is problematic as respondents may have attributed a higher level of political interest to parents who are positive about political developments, and disinterest to parents who they perceive as negative or cynical of political developments. There is an also a risk that the respondents attributed parent political interest as a reflection of their own interest.

Table 6.4. Parent Political Interest Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Neither u. nor i.	Fairly interested	Very interested	*n*
How interested do you think your father is in politics?	3.3	10.1	14.8	50.8	20.9	809
How interested do you think your mother is in politics?	3.2	11.3	20.2	52.5	12.8	825

Approximately two thirds of respondents thought that their parents were 'Fairly' or 'Very interested' in politics. The perception of father's interest was slightly higher than that of mother's; as evident in the percentage of fathers (20.9%) in the 'Very interested' category as opposed to mothers (12.8%).[80]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' father political interest and internal efficacy, those with a politically interested father were more likely to feel politically capable (28%) than those with a politically uninterested father (18%). Notably, those with a politically interested father were less likely to feel politically incapable (45%) than those with a politically uninterested father (69%), $\chi^2(4)=34.89^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with a politically interested father were more likely to feel politically informed (11%) than those

[80] These two items when entered in scale reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha (.736) and inter-item correlation coefficient of .583, ($p<.01$). This indicated that perceptions of each parent's political interest are strongly related. They were kept separate in this research to assess parent effects at the most refined level possible.

with a politically uninterested father (6%). Notably, those with a politically interested father were less likely to feel politically uninformed (62%) than those with a politically uninterested father (85%), $\chi^2(4)=32.45^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' mother political interest and internal efficacy, those with a politically interested mother were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those with a politically uninterested mother (16%), $\chi^2(4)=17.02^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with a politically interested mother were slightly more likely to feel politically informed (10%) than those with a politically uninterested mother (8%). Notably, those with a politically interested mother were less likely to feel politically uninformed (63%) than those with a politically uninterested mother (82%), $\chi^2(4)=23.24^{***}$.

In the internal efficacy cross tabulations, those with politically interested fathers and mothers were more likely to have high efficacy. These differences were all found to be statistically significant in the bivariate case.

6.6 Parent Voting Participation: Hypothesised Effect

Parent attitude and activity have potentially different effects on threshold voters' socialisation. In their analysis of parental effects on political socialisation, Hess and Torney (1967) assigned more importance to parent's political participation than to the nature of decision making in the home. Observing parents' engagement in political activities is informative of the merit associated with attempting to influence the political environment. Beck and Jennings (1982: 106) considered the intergenerational transfer of political attitudes as a 'pathway to participation' and a sign of the importance of political socialisation. They found that parental civic orientations (political interest, political knowledge, internal political efficacy) and to a lesser extent parental political participation, related positively to adolescent civic orientations. Subsequent analysis of the same respondents as young adults indicated a continuing positive relationship between initial parent civic orientations and young adults' civic orientations and political participation. In their study, parental civic orientations appeared to have a more direct influence on offspring's civic orientations, and parental political participation appeared to have a more direct influence on offspring's participation. Though there is a lacuna of existing research findings to work from, the expectation is that parental participation, (when limited to voting behaviour in the current study), will not affect threshold voter internal efficacy.

While considering voting turnout of those who recently attained electoral entitlement, Plutzer (2002) identified the positive effect of parent political engagement (and knowledge) in politics. He positioned parental engagement as a mediating factor, over other static parental variables (parental socio-economic status and education), in the influence of electoral turnout among the recently franchised. The anticipation is therefore of a positive effect of parent voting participation on threshold voter's external efficacy. The act of voting epitomises how individual input is facilitated in representative politics. Participation in elections is a manner in which citizens attempt to make the system more reflective and responsive to their interests and political outlooks. Irrespective of whether voters are subsequently disappointed with the behaviour and responsiveness of those in office, participation in the voting process suggests that the system is considered to be responsive to citizens to an extent. Observation of parents' abstention from voting may stand as an indication of the futility of participation.

- *Internal: H6: In comparing threshold voters, as their father's voting participation changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a voting father will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have a non-voting father.*
- *Internal: H7: In comparing threshold voters, as their mother's voting participation changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H7: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a voting mother will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have a non-voting mother.*
- *Internal: H8: In comparing threshold voters, as their parent's voting participation changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H8: In comparing threshold voters, those who have two voting parents will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have a non-voting parent.*

Parent Voting Participation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

While a measure of voting behaviour was a restricted measure of parents' political activities, the current survey design precluded gathering a wider measure of political participation directly. Respondents were asked to report whether their parents voted in the previous Irish parliamentary election (2007). Where respondents may not have been aware of their parents' voting behaviour on the day of election, conversation with parents in the intervening period may have informed them of parental electoral participation. This measure, as in the case of all secondary accounts of voting behaviour, was vulnerable to the risk of social-desirability biasing response. A 'Don't know' response was included in the item to facilitate the likelihood that some respondents would not know whether their parent voted or not.

Table 6.5. Parent Voting Participation Item Response

Response Percentage	Yes	No	Don't know	*n*
The last general election in Ireland took place in 2007. Do you think your father voted in that election?	78.3	11.3	10.4	816
The last general election in Ireland took place in 2007. Do you think your mother voted in that election?	83.4	9.0	7.6	831

A similar proportion of respondents reported that their mother and father voted in the particular election. At approximately 80% for each parent, this was notably above the national turnout in that election (67%).

A variable on the criteria of both parents having voted or not was created from these items. Those who replied with 'Don't know' to either parent, or no response on either item are attributed a missing value for this combined measure of parent voting. Where the item is not-applicable for one parent, due to death or reported lack of contact, the behaviour of the remaining parent is extrapolated to both.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' father voting participation and external efficacy, those with a voting father were slightly less likely to feel politically influential (25%) than those who with a non-voting father (27%), $\chi^2(2)=0.29^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those with a voting father were less likely to consider the government responsive (26%) than those with a non-voting father (35%), $\chi^2(2)=4.06^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' mother voting participation and external efficacy, those with a voting mother were more likely to feel politically influential (26%) than those with a non-voting mother (20%), $\chi^2(2)=3.59^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those with a voting mother were less likely to consider the government responsive (26%) than those with a non-voting mother (35%), $\chi^2(2)=3.86^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

While those with a voting father were less likely to have high external efficacy these differences were not statistically significant. In respect of mothers' voting participation the relationship is reversed between items, with again no statistically significant difference on the items.

Table 6.6. Combined Parent Voting Participation Item Response

Response Percentage	Neither	One	Both	*n*
Number of parents voting	6.2	9.0	84.8	730

It is evident that in the vast majority of instances (84.8%), respondents believed that both their parents voted in the previous national parliamentary election. 6.2% of respondents reported that neither parent voted in the election.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' parent voting participation and external efficacy, those with two voting parents were slightly more likely to feel politically influential (26%) than those with a non-voting parent (24%), $\chi^2(2)=0.81^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those with two voting parents were less likely to consider the government responsive (26%) than those with a non-voting parent (35%), $\chi^2(2)=4.33^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

When the combined parent voting variable was cross tabulated with threshold voters' external efficacy, a different relationship is found between items, though neither difference was found to be statistically significant.

6.7 Parent Political Partisanship: Hypothesised Effect

Party politics and partisan representation in parliament and government is a feature of representative democracies. The extent to which partisan considerations pervade the home political environment will depend on the level of parent partisan leanings. Its influence may arise from subtle and subconscious representation of current political events such as government performance, or political representatives' attributes. Parents may consciously filter the information they transmit to their children, in order to socialise them with the same partisan outlook. While bearing in mind the particularly strong duopoly system which pertains in America, Dalton (2002: 176) noted the congruence between parent partisanship and 16-20 year old party identification; 70 per cent of children of Democratic parents were themselves Democrats, and 55 per cent of those with Republican parents were themselves Republican; with less than 10 per cent of respondents favouring the party in opposition to their parents. Pointing to similar trends in German and British data, he apportioned a "strong formative influence" of parents in children's partisan values, ever before they become active politically. Plutzer (2002: 54) identified the lasting effect of parental partisanship on electoral participation, after other parental variables such as education, voting, and knowledge, had waned in influence. In this light, he opined that declining partisanship in households may have a long term consequence for electoral participation.

The effect of parent partisanship on a threshold voter's attitudinal development will depend on the intensity of the partisanship and intra-family dynamics. In some instances, parent partisanship is readily accepted and adopted by younger family members. In other instances,

parent party affiliation may be rejected; perhaps as a means of asserting one's independence or as part of intergenerational or interpersonal divergence. Like other topics of discussion, politics may be available as "an object of protest" between generations (Davies, 1965). Whether the adolescent rejects the particular partisanship of the parent is not the central issue, it is that parent partisanship raises the profile of politics in the home environment, which leads to greater information flow. Parental partisanship may also offer a coherent take on myriad political events (Dalton 2002: 176), thereby increasing the impression that the political world is understandable. Consequently, the expectation is that the presence of a strongly partisan parent is expected to increase one's sense of internal efficacy.

The presence of a strongly partisan parent itself may be less significant, than the particular party preference, for considerations of external efficacy. The importance of winners and losers in electoral competition and attainment of power, as framed through partisanship, is deemed important for external political efficacy (Iyengar, 1980b). Karp and Banducci (2008) noted the positive effect which strong partisan attachment can have on political efficacy, and consequently on political participation.

The specific partisan identity of the parent (and the perceived power of same) may be of more relevance for perception of external efficacy, rather than the presence of a strongly partisan parent. The expectation here is that the presence of a strong partisan parent will not affect threshold voter external efficacy per se.

- *Internal: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those with a partisan father will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those with a non-partisan father.*
- *External: H9: In comparing threshold voters, as their father's partisanship status changes, their external efficacy will not change.*
- *Internal: H10: In comparing threshold voters, those with a partisan mother will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those with a non-partisan mother.*
- *External: H10: In comparing threshold voters, as their mother's partisanship status changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Parent Political Partisanship: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Parent partisanship is not asked directly in the survey questionnaire, it was acquired through the item on voting participation. Those who responded that their parents voted in the previous parliamentary election were asked to identify the party or type of candidate chosen by each parent. Ireland's electoral system (Proportional Representation by Single Transferrable Vote) allows voters to preferentially rank candidates rather than selecting one candidate. The

manner in which the items were presented created difficulty in deciphering party identification of parents, as many respondents selected multiple parties. The measure of partisanship is minimalist with parents classified as partisan if respondents only selected one party for each parent in voting behaviour. The measure is therefore an indication of strong and undifferentiated parent partisanship. Respondents who select multiple parties, report non-voting, or do not know parent voting behaviour are placed in the base category, as these selections are indicative that the respondents are not aware of a strong parent partisanship as manifest through voting preference.

Table 6.7. Parent Political Partisanship Item Response

Response Percentage	Yes	No	*n* [81]
Father Political Partisan	44.5	55.5	767
Mother Political Partisan	43.1	56.9	773

The percentage of strong partisans as measured here was comparable for mother and father. A large minority (44%) identified their parents as having voted for one party, which is a proxy for strong partisanship.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' father partisanship and internal efficacy, those with a partisan father were more likely to feel politically capable (28%) than those with a non-partisan father (20%), $\chi^2(2)=6.73^{*}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with a partisan father were more likely to feel politically informed (13%) than those with a non-partisan father (6%), $\chi^2(2)=15.54^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' mother partisanship and internal efficacy, those with a partisan mother were more likely to feel politically capable (28%) than those with a non-partisan mother (20%), $\chi^2(2)=6.46^{*}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with a partisan mother were more likely to feel politically informed (14%) than those with a non-partisan mother (5%), $\chi^2(2)=22.82^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of father and mother partisanship, threshold voters who reported single voting parents were more likely to have high internal efficacy than those who did not. These differences were found to be statistically significant in the bivariate case.

[81] Survey participants who responded 'Don't know' to the voting behaviour item, are excluded from this analysis, as are those for whom such an item is not applicable, either through parent mortality or lack of contact.

6.8 Parent Party Identification: Hypothesised Effect

Literature that looked at systemic effects on political efficacy, refer to the relevance of partisanship related 'winner and loser' effects for political efficacy (Karp and Banducci, 2008: 331). Those who support (or have voted for) strong parties (which have a chance at holding political power) or successful parties (which currently hold political power) are distinguishable from those who support peripheral parties (which have less chance of holding political power) or unsuccessful parties (who currently do not hold political power). This consequence of party identification appears more directly relevant for perceptions of system responsiveness (external efficacy) rather than perception of political competence (internal efficacy). Threshold voters whose parents' identify with strong or successful parties may be exposed to more positive information about the responsiveness of the political system, or the responsiveness of governmental incumbents.

The operation of this measure was based on identification with the dominant party in Irish politics since the party's foundation (Fianna Fáil). At the time of survey, Fianna Fáil had held office for 58 of the previous 77 years (Weeks, 2010), and was the dominant coalition partner in national governmental office for the preceding twelve years.[82] They are therefore a useful basis on which to assess the winner and loser effect of partisanship, in looking at effects of parent partisanship on threshold voter political efficacy. The expectation is therefore a positive effect on external efficacy of parent's identification with Fianna Fáil. However, there is a caveat that while parent's perception of external efficacy may be affected by party allegiance, this may or may not be shared by the threshold voter. As Kim *et al*. (2002: 322) suggested; "The society that we hold dear and that we have built for ourselves and for our children can be perceived as a prison by our children; created by adults and imposed upon them".

- *Internal: H11: In comparing threshold voters, as their father's Fianna Fáil partisanship changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H11: In comparing threshold voters, those with a Fianna Fáil partisan father will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those without a Fianna Fáil partisan father.*
- *Internal: H12: In comparing threshold voters, as their mother's Fianna Fáil partisanship changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*

[82] This status has changed in the intervening period. While signs of electoral change were evident with Fianna Fáil's drop in first-preference votes in Local Government (-5.4%) and European Parliament (-6.4%) elections in 2009, this decline intensified in the 2011 parliamentary election (-23.2%). Source: Coakley and Gallagher (2010) *Appendix 2b, 2e and 2f*; and Radio Telefis Éireann website, under the heading 'Election Summary 2011', as hosted on 26/06/201: [http://www.rte.ie/news/election2011/results/index.html].

- *External: H12: In comparing threshold voters, those with a Fianna Fáil partisan mother will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those without a Fianna Fáil partisan mother.*

Parent Party Identification: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The variable on support for Fianna Fáil is based on those who report parent voting exclusively for Fianna Fáil in that election, as opposed to all other replies. This measure is restricted in not deciphering between those who voted singularly for other parties, or didn't vote at all, given the manner in which the survey item was presented. Those who reported a parent voting singularly Fianna Fáil was coded 1, and others were coded 0, with the exception of those who did not know if parents voted or have a deceased/estranged parent who were excluded from analysis.

Table 6.8. Parent Party Identification Item Response

Response Percentage	Yes	No	*n*
Father Fianna Fáil Partisan	22.9	77.1	767
Mother Fianna Fáil Partisan	24.3	75.7	773

Approximately one in four respondents measured in the party identification item, expressed parent identification with Fianna Fáil through voting; fathers (23%) and mothers (24%).[83]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' father Fianna Fáil identification it must be noted that the lack of distinction between non-partisan fathers, and non-Fianna Fáil partisan fathers in this variable limits its significance, until the relationship is controlled for with the partisanship status of parents in multivariate analysis. In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' father Fianna Fáil partisanship and external efficacy, those with a FF partisan father were slightly more likely to feel politically influential (27%) than those without a FF partisan father (25%). However, those with a FF partisan father were more likely to feel politically uninfluential (63%) than those without a FF partisan father (57%), $\chi^2(2)=6.24^*$. On the second external efficacy item those with a FF partisan father were slightly more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those without a FF partisan father (26%). However, those

[83] The manner in which parental partisanship was measured in this survey made it difficult to clearly establish if there was confluence or dissonance between parent identification. The majority of respondents identified more than one party as voted for by each parent. A measure of dissonance was constructed for respondents who identified one or two parties for each parent did not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with internal or external efficacy dimension in bivariate analysis, and is not included in the main text due to the limited manner in which the concept was measured and the limited *n* (304) of the variable.

with a FF partisan father were more likely to consider the government unresponsive (63%) than those without a FF partisan father (59%), $\chi^2(2)=4.38^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' mother Fianna Fáil partisanship and external efficacy, those with a FF partisan mother were more likely to feel politically influential (28%) than those without a FF partisan mother (25%). However, those with a FF partisan mother were more likely to feel politically un-influential (61%) than those without a FF partisan mother (57%), $\chi^2(2)=4.17^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, a similar percentage of those with a FF partisan mother (27%) and without a FF partisan mother (26%) considered the government responsive. However, those with a FF partisan mother were more likely to consider the government unresponsive (63%) than those without a FF partisan mother (58%), $\chi^2(2)=3.75^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

The pattern of results in respect of mother and father's FF partisanship do not indicate a notable relationship in respect of external efficacy. In many instances the percentage breakdowns within item show divergent relationships, bearing in mind that the efficacy variables were divided into three categories, high, moderate, and low.

6.9 Internal Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Family Socialisation Model

The multivariate regression results of variables in the family socialisation model are presented in Table 6.9. The inclusion of the significant demographic variables in the first variable entry block (gender, village residence, and socio-economic status) ensures that the effect of family socialisation is assessed discretely from background demographic effects.

In line with theoretical expectations, home politicisation (as measured by the frequency of political discussion at home) was positively related to threshold voters' internal efficacy. Interestingly, while father's political interest was positively related to internal efficacy, the relationship between mother's political interest and internal efficacy was positive, but not statistically significant. The introduction of external efficacy resulted in a minute decrease in significant regression coefficients. The effect of home politicisation was substantially bigger when compared to father's political interest. It will be necessary to trace the effects of these variables when political attributes such as political interest are controlled for in multi-model analysis. The parent voting participation and partisan variables were not found to significantly relate to threshold voter internal efficacy, in multivariate regression.

Contrary to expectations, the inclination to react to home decisions was not related to a sense of internal efficacy. While significant at the $\alpha=.05$ level when introduced in the first block of

analysis (with parent responsiveness), when home politicisation was introduced its relationship with internal efficacy, diminished and lost statistical significance. This trait may be more important in social conditions such as school and in organisations, than in the familiar home environment which is less socially exacting.

The significant and negative correlation between parent responsiveness in the home and internal efficacy was not anticipated.[84] There are little grounds to theorise that parent unresponsiveness fosters a sense of political competence, or that the experience of parent responsiveness undermines one's sense of political competence. It is possible that the causal arrow of this relationship runs in the opposing direction, whereby those who are competent and confident (including in political affairs) are more likely to be dissatisfied with the level of input they have when decisions are made that affect them.

Looking at the change in regression coefficients for demographic variables, it was evident that irrespective of family socialisation as currently measured, village residence was still a positive predictor of threshold voter internal efficacy. While significant (at different levels) on initial entry, the effects of socio-economic status lose significance when home politicisation is included in the analysis. This suggests that the effects of socio-economic background are abridged by politicisation in the home environment (and possible political interest). The positive effect of being male was still somewhat evident when family socialisation was accounted for, though it loses effect size, and was not significant at the α=.05 level, rather at the α=.10 level. The divergence in the regression coefficient values of the demographic variables on entry to this model, and in the previous demographic model is due to the effect of sample size change in this analysis, as the Listwise deletion of cases with missing values on any variable was applied.

Looking at the change in Adjusted R square between the first and second column, it is evident that the proportion of variance in internal efficacy explained jumped from 2.1% to 38%, when family socialisation variables were added to significant demographic variables. This was substantially due to the home politicisation variable.[85] [Table Overleaf]

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[84] This relationship was not evident in the cross tabulation of the two selected internal efficacy items: In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of parent responsiveness and internal efficacy, the same percentage of those who perceived high and low parent responsiveness (24%) felt politically capable, $\chi^2(4)=7.13^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who perceived high parent responsiveness (9%) were slightly more likely to feel politically informed than those who perceived low parent responsiveness (7%), $\chi^2(4)=1.55^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

[85] While the R Square change value is not significant in the second column, as this column is related to the sixth regression block entry in the analysis, the R square change value represents the effect of the preceding entry of partisan variables which were non-significant. Between demographic variable entry and this block with all variables entered, the inclusion of home politicisation and father's political entry in the third and fourth block produced a significant R square change value.

Table 6.9. Parent Socialisation Model Internal Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.102^	-1.186***	-1.150***
GENDER	.087*	.056^	.056^
Village	.068^	.080*	.083**
Non-Manual	-.080^	-.023	-.020
Skilled Manual	-.108**	-.033	-.027
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.080*	-.007	.000
PARENT RESPONSIVENESS		-.076*	-.080*
REACTION HOME		-.002	-.006
HOME POLITICISATION		.563***	.556***
FATHER POL. INTEREST		.105*	.100*
MOTHER POL. INTEREST		.006	.008
FATHER VOTING		-.034	-.027
MOTHER VOTING		-.033	-.030
PARENT VOTING		.075	.065
FATHER PARTISAN		.002	.015
MOTHER PARTISAN		.062	.054
FATHER FF		-.054	-.054
MOTHER FF		-.009	-.008
EXTERNAL EFFICACY			.067*
n	621	621	621
R	.171	.629	.633
R Square	.029	.396	.400
R Square Change	.029**	.003	.004*
Adjusted R Square	.021	.379	.382
ANOVA F	3.703**	23.270***	22.321***
Durbin Watson			2.010

6.10 External Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Family Socialisation Model

The results of the multivariate regression of family socialisation variables on external efficacy are presented in Table 6.10. The first column presents regression coefficients of the significant demographic variables: suburban residence; the socio-economic status variables (the three lower occupational categories); and the parent unemployed variable.

The hypothesised positive effect of perceived parent responsiveness was not significant when all the family socialisation variables were considered. Though it showed a significant effect at the α=.10 level when initially introduced (with school responsiveness), the effect lost size when home politicisation was introduced.

The positive effect of home politicisation persisted throughout the model, until internal political efficacy was introduced. This demonstrates that the effect of home politicisation was

due to its relationship with the internal efficacy dimension. It indicates that greater frequency of political discussion in the home bolstered threshold voters' view that the political system is amenable to citizen influence, in a manner which involves the perception of one's internal efficacy.

As expected, respondent reaction to decisions in the home environment was not significantly related to external efficacy, when the effect of parent responsiveness on the relationship was controlled.

As anticipated while father's political interest was positively related to internal political efficacy, neither the mother or father political interest variable demonstrated an effect on external efficacy. Parent voting and parent support for the traditional governing party of the state (Fianna Fáil) do not relate to threshold voter perceptions of political responsiveness. In the latter instance this may be due to the limited manner in which parent party identity was measured in this study. Parent voting is a minimal measure of parent political participation. The inclusion of measures which include more demanding political activity may capture the effects of parent engagement on threshold voters' political efficacy.

The significant effect of father partisanship on respondents' external efficacy was not anticipated.[86] While parent support for Fianna Fáil was assessed (and found to not be significant), the significance of a strong partisan father may be due to the absence of a more refined measure on father partisanship or party identity. It is possible that for those who demonstrated strong partisanship (through single party voting) this voting behaviour was a manifestation of their dissatisfaction with the current responsiveness of the political system, which may have in turn been transmitted to their children.

When family socialisation factors are accounted for, the demographic variables included in the model retained significance. The socio-economic status differential was between parents in the lower two occupational categories and upper three categories. This is not likely to be a family socialisation related change, as the significance of the coefficient changed before the entry of such variables, and was due to the divergent sample associated with Listwise deletion when a large range of variables were included in analysis. Those who had an unemployed parent in the home were still significantly lower in external efficacy, than those who did not,

[86] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' father partisanship and external efficacy, the same percentage of those with a partisan and non-partisan father (25%) felt politically influential. However, those with a partisan father were more likely to feel politically uninfluential (62%) than those with a non-partisan father (56%), $\chi^2(2)=6.49^*$. On the second external efficacy item, the same percentage of those with a partisan and non-partisan father (26%) considered the government responsive. However, those with a partisan father were more likely to consider the government unresponsive (64%) than those with a non-partisan father (57%), $\chi^2(2)=6.28^*$.

when family socialisation factors are considered. This suggests that family socialisation cannot mitigate the effect of socio-economic status on threshold voter external efficacy.

Moreover, suburban residents were still significantly more externally efficacious than those from other residential areas in the final model. The addition of family socialisation variables to the significant demographic factors increased the percentage of variance in threshold voter external efficacy explained from 3.2% to 6%. This was a substantively small increase.

Table 6.10. Parent Socialisation Model External Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.060	-.472^	-.355
Suburb	.109**	.089 *	.092*
Non-Manual	-.069^	-.054	-.051
Skilled Manual	-.105*	-.087*	-.084*
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.110**	-.092*	-.090*
PARENT UNEMPLOYED	-.080^	-.083*	-.086*
PARENT RESPONSIVENESS		.059	.066
REACTION HOME		.047	.048
HOME POLITICISATION		.117**	.058
FATHER POL. INTEREST		.061	.050
MOTHER POL. INTEREST		-.028	-.028
FATHER VOTING		-.131	-.129
MOTHER VOTING		-.067	-.065
PARENT VOTING		.175	.168
FATHER PARTISAN		-.186**	-.187**
MOTHER PARTISAN		.124^	.118^
FATHER FF		.000	.006
MOTHER FF		-.011	-.010
INTERNAL EFFICACY			.104*
n	621	621	621
R	.198	.293	.304
R Square	.039	.086	.092
R Square Change	.039***	.015*	.007*
Adjusted R Square	.032	.060	.065
ANOVA F	5.038***	3.320***	3.395***
Durbin Watson			2.009

6.11 Conclusion

The role of the family in the development of political efficacy has been a topic of research since Easton and Dennis's (1967) thesis on the socialisation of regime norms. The home

environment was found to have influence on both dimensions of political efficacy of threshold voters.

Politicisation in the home was positively linked with internal and external efficacy dimensions. While the effect was direct (and potent) for the internal dimension, it was indirect in the external dimension. Nevertheless, this demonstrates that those who have more political discussion in the home not only felt more competent in political matters, they were also more likely to have positive sentiment in terms of system responsiveness.

The positive effect of father's political interest, along with the non-significance of a mother interest effect, may indicate that patriarchal effects are still evident in political socialisation as found the long-standing study of Langton and Karns (1969). This is interesting as gender is controlled in the case of internal efficacy, and so applies for both male and female threshold voters.

When family socialisation variables were included in this model with significant demographic predictors, the effect of socio-economic status was mediated in the case of internal efficacy, but not external efficacy. This indicates that political socialisation within the home can overcome the effect of being from a lower socio-economic class in relation to internal efficacy. Of course it also may indicate that the effects of socio-economic status may be manifest in the interaction between parents and children which characterise socialisation processes. The effects of gender on internal efficacy are somewhat mitigated by family socialisation factors, although it remains significant at a lower level of statistical confidence α=.10. The respective residential area effects remained significant throughout the inclusion of family socialisation variables, it will be interesting to note if such effects persist throughout all socialisation models of analysis.

The negative effects of parent responsiveness on internal efficacy, and father partisanship on external efficacy, were not anticipated. It is likely that the former result is due to reverse causation from internal efficacy to perception of parent responsiveness. In the case of a negative father partisanship, this is likely to be a consequence of the manner in which partisanship was measured in this study design (through single party voting). This is a crude measure of parent partisanship, and ideally measures of parent partisanship should have been acquired in a more direct manner. More to the point, measures of the perceived tone of parent discussion with threshold voters and measures of their political efficacy would be valuable additions for further study, particularly in respect of external efficacy. Unfortunately, while an attempt was made to capture dissonance between parent political attitudes, the manner of its

operation (through a restricted measure of parent voting) did not make it possible to assess the effect of a congruent or divergent political outlook among parents or guardians in the home.

In socialisation literature there is an appreciation of the evolving influence of each agent as individuals move through childhood and adolescence and as cultural environments evolve from generation to generation. If the potency of socialisation is a desire for individuals to conform to the attitudes and behaviours of those around them (rather than as a training process) as Franklin (2004:20) states; "the declining ability of the family to govern the behaviour of children has nothing to do with the effectiveness or otherwise of parental efforts at training them and everything to do with the decline in the sizes of families and the increasing amount of leisure time for children who thus find both the need and the means to gain companionship elsewhere". The increased proportion of variance explained in both dimensions of political efficacy by the inclusion of family socialisation variables is mainly due to the home politicisation variable, which itself may be related to political interest, as controlled in the political attributes model.

The focus now turns to another central agent of adolescent socialisation literature: the school environment. While aspects of the home environment are likely to affect the role of the school environment (Andolina *et al.* 2003; Quintelier *et al*., 2007; and Flanagan *et al*., 2010), school socialisation will first be assessed discretely, with subsequent multi-model regression analysis uncovering effects across socialisation environments.

Chapter 7. The School Socialisation Model

7.1 Introduction

Adolescents spend a substantial portion of their time in school environs. In this setting, they partake in various formal and informal learning activities, and form influential relationships with teachers and fellow students. Early socialisation research recognised that politicisation in the school environment contributes to an individual's "view that politics is amenable to their personal manipulation" (Langton and Karns, 1969: 814). In their study, Langton and Karns observed that the school environment, which they described as broader and less intimate than the family environment, was particularly influential in moving students from low to medium levels of general efficacy. The repetitive nature of school experiences, and the close ties which emerge from this environment, provide students with developmental indications of collective existence. It is the collective environment in which adolescents spend most time, which led Flanagan *et al*. (2010: 312) to refer to them as *mini polities*.

Many aspects of the school environment contribute to and scaffold young citizens' political development be it the discussion of political events, participation in student governance, or participation in school community endeavours (McIntosh and Youniss, 2010: 34). When assessing how school activities should be orchestrated to influence student's political engagement and efficacy, Amna *et al.* (2004: 21), identified four school dynamics which affect political learning and civic capacity: creating incentives for mobilisation; fostering civic skills; supplying resources for political mobilisation; and influencing processes of political learning and patterns of political belief.

Variables included in this environmental model vary from wide to narrow in focus. School type is included in analysis, as it was a stratum in the survey sample design. Akin to the family socialisation items, the perception of school authority responsiveness and respondent's tendency to react to school decisions were also included in this analysis.[87] Such considerations are relevant as the lessons in school which inform youth civic culture and political values extend beyond the school curriculum to the social environment of the school (Reimers and Cardenas, 2010: 157). Items relating to participation in school are included which relate to voting and standing in school elections, and campaigning within the school. Beck and Jennings (1982: 106) observed the direct effects of a high-school activity model on

[87] 'School authority' is intended to refer to those in positions of power who interact with students in the school environment, including: teachers; other educational assistants; and vice-principals/principals who may be involved in student discipline and organisation of educational provision.

later political participation. As student councils provide an apprenticeship in collective representation and negotiation, items on involvement in student councils and perceptions of their responsiveness were included. The long-term benefits of experiences in student government and classroom deliberation are noted in the existing literature, with a suggestion by McLeod *et al*. (2010: 38) that their effect may be directly observed in adult political news consumption.

Post-primary education in Ireland includes curricula with specific (Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)) and generic (History; Business Studies; Geography; and Social, Personal and Health Education) relevance for political learning. Higgins D'Alessandro (2010: 567) affirmed that the central avenues of citizenship education in school are civics courses and experiential civic engagement. Therefore, the level of politicisation in the classroom environment was included in this analysis. Civic education variables measured: the perceived importance of political education and the perceived effectiveness of CSPE by the threshold voter. A variable on the grade received in the CSPE Junior Certificate examination was also included as specific educational attainment may influence political outlook. It is important to note that parent socialisation predates the influence of post-primary school socialisation, and also determines many aspects of the school experience such as the school attended, the importance placed on education, and the opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities (Flanagan *et al*., 2010).

7.2 School Type: Hypothesised Effect

The principal demarcation in post-primary schools in Ireland is between secondary, vocational, and community/comprehensive schools. The Department of Education and Skills categorise schools on this distinction, and the survey sample was representative of the proportions enrolled in each school type. Traditionally the ethos in secondary schools and the other two types diverged, with students in the latter schools receiving a more applied and manual skills-based education. In recent decades the difference in educational offering across school types has atrophied. The amalgamation of schools and the expansion of curricula across school types have eased this deviation (Citizens Information Board, 2011a).

The effect of school type on political efficacy to the extent that it exists, is likely to be caused by underlying socio-economic conditions that affect enrolment. Secondary school students may have a higher sense of internal efficacy, though this is likely to be a socio-economic status rather than a school type effect. Levinson (2010: 346), in an American context, noted

the distinction in civic education which reflects school-level differences, with students in poor and non-white community school receiving less civic education. In one of the few research pieces which looked at the effects of socio-economic status on school enrolments in respect of political efficacy, Schulz's (2005) cross national analysis did not find a consistent effect of between school mean socio-economic status and student's political efficacy. Many features of the school environment which affect political efficacy such as authority structures, politicisation of the school environment, and extra-curricular participation, are likely to vary from school to school, rather than solely across school type. An effect of school type was therefore not hypothesised.

- *Internal: H1: In comparing threshold voters, as their school type changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H1: In comparing threshold voters, as their school type changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

School Type: Measurement and Distribution

The Department of Education and Skills categorises three types of post-primary school. The survey sample comprised: 465 (54.8%) secondary school students; 238 (28%) vocational school students; and 146 (17.2%) community and comprehensive school students. These percentages were comparable to the breakdown in the sample frame as evident in the Methodology chapter.[88]

7.3 School Authority Responsiveness: Hypothesised Effect

While initial observations of power relations may arise in the home environment, the school setting offers a more socially diverse context in which to appraise one's role and influence (Torney-Purta *et al.*, 2001; and Amna *et al.*, 2004: 21). In many instances, the adolescent tends to be on the receiving end of decisions rather than the decision maker in both environs. The school environment may be more relevant for considerations of political efficacy as it is reflective of the public, collective, and diversified nature of the political environment. A sense of agency can be fostered or hindered in schools, based on the responsibility which is granted to students to guide their learning and the direction of their group activities therein. As Fox *et al*. (2010: 678) opined: "Becoming a valued member of a school community is a crucial step toward growing a strong thread in the vibrant tapestry that extends far beyond the boundaries

[88] In the initial conception of school environment effect on political efficacy, it was hoped to capture the effect of a co-educational or single-sex school environment in the study design. However, it was not possible to assess such an affect as Vocational and Community and Comprehensive schools in the Cork County and City Borough were co-educational, with one exception. In the City Borough area, with two exceptions, all Secondary schools were single-sex.

of the school, city, state, and country". However, they did caveat that the norms which apply in one classroom or school domain in terms of deliberation and mutual respect may not transfer to other classrooms or in other school and community environs.

The extent to which school authorities are perceived to be responsive to the needs of the student is of little ostensible influence on one's sense of internal political efficacy. While the experience of school authorities' responsiveness when making decisions, may contribute to one's sense of self-worth and confidence in social settings, a direct effect is not anticipated for internal efficacy.

In relation to external efficacy, the perception of school authorities' responsiveness is an example of the institutional use of power. Wilkenfeld *et al*. (2010: 197) and Bandura (1997: 491) emphasised the significance of young peoples' experiences of attempting influence on the behaviours of adults in immediate social environs (schools, community centres, and religious institutions) for the development of their political efficacy. Experiences with teachers and other local adult authorities may do more to inform young citizens' perceptions of political system responsiveness, rather than relations with "distal relationships to elected leaders in government" (Flanagan *et al*., 2010: 313). To the extent that there is transmission from the educational to the political context, the expectation is that those who found school authorities to be considerate of one's opinions are likely to convert this to a higher sense of external efficacy (Schulz, 2005: 3/4).

- *Internal: H2: In comparing threshold voters, as their perception of school authority responsiveness changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who perceive higher school authority responsiveness will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who perceive lower school authority responsiveness.*

School Authority Responsiveness: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The measure of perceived school authority responsiveness was similar to the home environment item, with a focus on the consideration of one's opinion in decision making. The item let respondents define school authorities in their own terms. The expectation is that the responses will be guided by reference to school agents who interact directly with students, such as teachers and vice-principals/principals, rather than by reference to boards of directors or management. While this is not a direct measure of the classroom atmosphere or the openness of debate therein their responses may encompass such considerations. [Table Overleaf]

Table 7.1. School Authority Responsiveness Item Response

Response Percentage	None at all	Only a little	Some	A good amount	A lot	*n*
When school authorities are making decisions that affect you, how much consideration do they give to your opinion?	13.3	21.3	34.8	25.6	5.0	827

In response to the item, fewer than one in three respondents (30.6%) perceived that school authorities attributed 'A good amount' or 'A lot' of consideration to their views when making decisions. At the other end of the scale, only 13.3% believed that such authorities were completely unresponsive. Comparison with response in the ICCS among early-mid adolescents is limited due to the divergence in item wording and response options. When asked 'How much are students' opinions taken into account when decisions are made about; school rules, the way classes are thought, and teaching/learning material', similar proportions: 34 per cent, 29 per cent, and 33 per cent responded positively ('Moderately extent' or 'Large extent') (Cosgrove *et al*., 2011).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of school authority responsiveness and external efficacy, those who perceived high school authority responsiveness were more likely to feel politically influential (33%) than those who perceived low school authority responsiveness (18%), $\chi^2(4)=17.07^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who perceived high school authority responsiveness were more likely to consider the government responsive (35%) than those who perceived low school authority responsiveness (19%), $\chi^2(4)=22.48^{***.}$

In respect of both external efficacy items, threshold voters who perceived high school authority responsiveness were more likely to have high efficacy, with a statistically significant difference in both cases.

7.4 Reaction to School Decisions: Hypothesised Effect

The school may also be a more relevant setting than the home in which to assess the effect of one's social competence. The school environment is more formal and more socially diverse, with less of a bond of dependence than the home environment. Higgins-D'Alessandro (2010: 565) observed that the experience in the literature is mixed as to the effect of a positive and participative school culture on citizenship outcomes. Amna *et al.* (2004: 25) referred to a measure of school efficacy as an important indication for students "of the role the school system has taught them to play in society, which in turn may influence their civic identity". The items they used to measure school efficacy which they found to influence adolescent

internal efficacy included; students' reported willingness to act on behalf of an unfairly treated schoolmate; interest in discussing school issues; and self-estimation as to whether they have any say when school questions are discussed. The expectation is of a positive relationship between a tendency to challenge a school decision and a sense of internal political efficacy.

It is possible that the tendency to react to and mobilise on a decision made is a reflection of the perception of the responsiveness of the decision maker. In this case the relationship between the tendency to react to decisions in school and external efficacy would be attributed to the previous variable of school consideration. As in the case of reaction to decisions in the home environment, there is not an anticipated relationship with the external dimension of political efficacy.

- *Internal: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who are more reactive to school decisions will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are less reactive to school decisions.*
- *External: H3: In comparing threshold voters, as their reaction to school decisions changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Reaction to School Decisions: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked if they would attempt to change a decision which they did not personally agree with within school. The item referred not only to the tendency to mobilise on one's own; it includes the possibility of collective mobilisation, which is possible in a school or political setting.

Table 7.2. Reaction to School Decisions Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all likely	Not very likely	Neither u. nor l.	Fairly likely	Very likely	*n*
If a decision is made by the authorities in your school that you do not like, how likely is it that you, acting alone or together with others, would try to do something about it?	5.4	19.0	28.5	35.5	11.6	826

A minority of respondents (47.1%) demonstrated a tendency to react to undesirable school decisions, i.e., believed that it was 'Fairly' or 'Very likely' that they would try to do something about the decision. Only one in twenty respondents (5.4%) felt it completely unlikely that they would attempt redress in such a situation.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' reaction to school decisions and internal efficacy, those who tended to react to school decisions were more likely to feel politically capable

(27%) than those who did not tend to react to school decisions (20%). Notably, those who tended to react to school decisions were less likely to feel politically incapable (46%) than those who did not tend to react to school decisions (62%), $\chi^2(4)=15.82^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, the same percentage of those who tend to react to school decisions and do not tend to react (9%) felt politically informed. However, those who tended to react to school decisions were less likely to feel politically uninformed (66%) than those who did not tend to react to school decisions (75%), $\chi^2(4) = 8.08^{\wedge}$.

Threshold voters who were more inclined to react to decisions in the school environment were more likely to have high internal efficacy, with a statistically significant difference on the first internal efficacy item.

7.5 School Participation: Hypothesised Effect

The school arena encompasses many opportunities to participate in collective processes. In some instances, engagement in these activities reflects one's own personal inclination and preference. In others, participation in school events and activities is dictated by school requirement or parental wishes. For developmental theorists such engagement encourages greater engagement in other collective structures, including the political (Finlay *et* al., 2010: 278; and Beck and Jennings, 1982: 101). The latter asserted the importance of the extracurricular element of schooling for adult political participation, with the positive affect of extracurricular participation on internal efficacy central to their thesis. As the adolescent cannot participate in national political elections, participation in student elections and campaigning within school offers an alternative. Participation in such processes informs the young citizen of the requirements of collective decision making. Beck and Jennings (1982) found that past engagement in school activities exerted a greater influence on young adult's political participation than parental socioeconomic status, parent civic orientations, or parent participation. Glanville (1999: 280) and Beaumont (2010: 548) contended that such activities provide students with the opportunity to develop personal connections and interdependence with others, while seeing themselves as capable actors within wider social settings.[89] Glanville (1999) found that participation in instrumental type activities (but not expressive

[89] Glanville distinguished between instrumental and expressive extracurricular activities. Instrumental activity was measured through participation in: 1) school newspaper, magazine, yearbook, annual; 2) student council, student government, and political clubs; 3) debating and drama; 4) vocational education clubs; 5) youth organisations in the community; and 6) Junior Achievement. Expressive activity was a measure of involvement in 1) varsity athletic teams; 2) other athletic teams, in or outside of school; 3) cheerleading, pep clubs, and majorettes; 4) subject-matter clubs, such as science, history, business, and art; 5) band and orchestra; 6) chorus and dance; 7) hobby clubs such as photography, model building, hot rods, electronics, and crafts; and 8) honorary clubs.

activities) during school years directly increased adult political participation, and indirectly increased it by boosting participation in adult social organisations. In line with Beck and Jennings' (1982) observation, he suggested that engagement in extracurricular activities may reduce the gap between political participation levels which arise from differences in socio-economic status. Certain activities such as standing for student election and campaigning for changes to school regulations may be more engaging than voting in student elections. The issue of causality warrants a mention in this respect. It is possible that the causal arrow goes from general (or political efficacy) to school participation, as those who are more confident about their social/political competence may be more inclined to participate in activities in the school environment.

The linkage between school participation and a sense of external efficacy is not as evident. Finkel (1985: 902) found that voting and campaign participation influences external efficacy positively, particularly among those with less formal education. Using measures of external efficacy, Clarke and Acock (1989: 553) suggested that "information about election outcomes, rather than campaign activity or patterns of voting behaviour, was all that was required for elections to influence political efficacy...These findings indicate that elections, not electoral participation, influence political efficacy" (Clarke and Acock 1989: 561). Bowler and Donovan (2002: 389) placed more emphasis on the outcome of participation than on participation per se in observing that; "being on the losing side of candidate elections tends to make citizens have less positive attitudes about their political abilities and have less positive attitudes about governmental responsiveness" (2002: 389). However, these studies consider the effect of political participation on perceptions of political responsiveness. Nonetheless, Bandura proposed that during adolescence the "development of control beliefs in the area of politics might be influenced partially by the experiences with student activities in order to influence school matters" (Bandura, 1997: 49). In the absence of a measure of the perceived outcome of such participation, it is not possible to hypothesise the direction of the relationship.

- *Internal: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who have voted in a school election will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have not voted in a school election.*
- *External: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who have voted in a school election will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have not voted in a school election.*

- *External: H4a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have voted in a school election will be less likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have not voted in a school election.*
- *Internal: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who have stood in a school election will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have not stood in a school election.*
- *External: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who have stood in a school election will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have not stood in a school election.*
- *External: H5a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have stood in a school election will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have not stood in a school election.*
- *Internal: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who have campaigned in school will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have not campaigned in school.*
- *External: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who have campaigned in school will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have not campaigned in school.*
- *External: H6a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have campaigned in school will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have not campaigned in school.*

School Participation: Measurement and Distribution

The indicators included in the survey related to a limited range of 'political' type activities in the school environment. The items on voting and standing for class or school election encompassed student-oriented activity in student councils or special interest school groups such as debating societies or enterprise groups. The item on candidacy in a school/class election may relate to a deeper level of commitment and involvement than voting participation. An item on participation in a campaign within school was included. Such campaigns may be led by students, teachers, or parents and are communal-type initiatives. The context created by the wording of each item was necessarily broad as experiences and activities will vary in structure and type across school settings.

Table 7.3. School Participation Item Response

Response Percentage	No	Yes	*n*
Voted in a class or school election	8.1	91.9	849
Stood for election in a class or school election	62.4	37.6	849
Participated in a campaign to change a rule within school	73.9	26.1	849

The percentage of threshold voters who participated in school activities varied substantially across the items. The vast majority of respondents (91.9%) had experience of voting in a class or school election and more than one third (37.6%) had stood for a class or school election. Participation in a campaign to change a school rule was much less prevalent, with (26.1%) reporting such experience.[90] Comparing these responses with those of the early-mid adolescent group in the ICCS report, it is evident that opportunities and participation develops in the interval. A lower proportion of the ICCS sample reported voting in student elections (76 per cent) or standing in a school election (25 per cent) than threshold voters here (Cosgrove *et al*., 2011).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' school voting participation and internal efficacy, those who had voted in a school election were more likely to feel politically capable (25%) than those who had not voted in a school election (12%), $\chi^2(2)=7.80^{*}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had voted in a school election were slightly more likely to feel politically informed (9%) than those who had not (7%), $\chi^2(2)=0.58^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' candidacy in a school election and internal efficacy, those who had contested a school election were more likely to feel politically capable (32%) than those who had not contested a school election (18%), $\chi^2(2)=24.39^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had contested a school election were more likely to feel politically informed (13%) than those who not contested a school election (6%), $\chi^2(2)=18.75^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' campaigning in school and internal efficacy, those who had campaigned in school were more likely to feel politically capable (33%) than those who had not (20%), $\chi^2(2)=21.06^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, a similar percentage of those who had campaigned in school (10%) and had not campaigned in school (9%) felt politically informed, $\chi^2(2)=0.89^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' internal efficacy and school participation, those who participated in each activity were more likely to have high internal efficacy than those who did not. These differences were statistically significant on the first internal efficacy item for each activity, and were statistically significant for both items in respect of candidacy in a school election.

[90] The possibility of combining the three items into a single index of school participation was explored with scale reliability analysis. With a Cronbach's Alpha value of .340, there were little grounds to combine these variables as a scale measure. This reflected the substantively different focus and nature of each engagement.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' school election participation and external efficacy, those who had voted in a school election were more likely to feel politically influential (27%) than those who had not voted in a school election (19%), $\chi^2(2)=2.35^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy, those who had voted in a school election were more likely to consider the government responsive (27%) than those who had not voted in a school election (17%), $\chi^2(2)=2.81^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' candidacy in a school election and external efficacy, those who had contested a school election were more likely to feel politically influential (32%) than those who had not contested a school election (23%), $\chi^2(2)=12.41^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had contested a school election were more likely to consider the government responsive (29%) than those who had not contested a school election (24%), $\chi^2(2)=2.07^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' campaigning in school and external efficacy, those who had campaigned in school were more likely to feel politically influential (32%) than those who had not campaigned in school (24%), $\chi^2(2)=6.38^{*}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had campaigned in school were more likely to consider the government responsive (29%) than those who had not campaigned in school (25%), $\chi^2(2)=1.10^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

Threshold voters who participated in each of the selected activities in school were more likely to have high external efficacy. These differences were statistically significant in respect of the politically influential item and school election candidacy and school campaigning.

7.6 Student Council Involvement: Hypothesised Effect

The expansion of student councils in post-primary schools in Ireland and elsewhere in recent decades is recognition of the role of non-curricular social learning. Student councils have the potential to operate as mini-democracies, providing opportunities for individual contributions to collective decision making processes; engendering representation, negotiation, and lobbying (McIntosh and Youniss, 2010). Andolina *et al.* (2003: 275) denoted the greater effect of involvement in student-led organisations, rather than service learning curricular experiences for later civic engagement. The benefit of student council involvement in some instances will be a function of the pre-existing resources and leadership capacity of students. While all students may benefit from such involvement, there is a possibility that the advantage of such platforms for developing civic capacity to participate in political and community affairs perpetuates the difference between citizens (Levine and Higgins-

D'Alessandro, 2010: 118). A positive relationship between involvement in a student council and internal efficacy is anticipated.

The significance of this involvement for external efficacy is likely to be more dependent on the outcome of one's experience than involvement per se. Involvement in student council activities could induce feelings of emancipation or frustration as personal interests and those of others, such as school authorities are funnelled in a collective process. The impression of involvement is assessed separately in this instance. A relationship between simply being involved in a student council and one's sense of external efficacy is therefore not anticipated.

- *Internal: H7: In comparing threshold voters, those who are involved in their student council will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not involved in their student council.*
- *External: H7: In comparing threshold voters, as their involvement in student councils changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Student Council Involvement: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Student councils were present in all of the schools surveyed. The item on student council involvement captured considerations of belonging and participation. It therefore covered the attitudinal and behavioural elements of engagement. The introduction to the survey item read: 'People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups and associations. For each type of group, please indicate whether you'.

Table 7.4. Student Council Involvement Item Response

Response Percentage	Never belonged	Used to belong	Belong but don't participate	Belong and actively participate	*n*
A Student Council in School	74.2	15.6	1.4	8.8	845

The level of current involvement in a student council reported by respondents was low, with 8.8% reporting current active participation and another 1.4% reporting a passive form of belonging. Three quarters of respondents never belonged to the student council in their school. The response to this item was used in the creation of a dichotomous variable on the criterion of whether the respondent reported currently being a current active participant or otherwise in the student council. This step was taken due to the unrefined nature of the survey item, which did not indicate the activity level of previous involvements.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' involvement in a student council and internal efficacy, those who were involved in a student council were more likely to feel politically capable (37%) than those who were not involved (22%), $\chi^2(2)=8.88^*$. On the second internal

efficacy item, those who were involved in a student council were more likely to feel politically informed (19%) than those who were not involved (8%), $\chi^2(2)=18.10^{***}$.

Threshold voters who were active in their student council were more likely to have high internal efficacy on both items, with statistically significant differentials.

7.7 Student Council Responsiveness: Hypothesised Effect

Beyond the level of involvement, the perceived responsiveness of such councils is of relevance. Threshold voters are likely to have an impression of the effectiveness of such councils, irrespective of their own involvement. Aside from the lessons arising from involvement, an impression of the council's responsiveness is instructive of the potential of representative entities to look after collective welfare and respond to stakeholders. The perception of student council responsiveness relates to system responsiveness rather than personal competence considerations. The student council is one of the first and most proximate representative/elective bodies with which adolescents can engage. It therefore has great potential to affect their outlook toward such bodies. Schulz (2005: 4) articulated the likely effect of such experiences in school:

> Adolescents - who are generally not able to vote or run for office in "adult politics" - may experiment to what extent they have the power to influence the ways schools are run. The sense of students to which they have a say when acting together could be seen as the counterpart of (external) political efficacy. Democratic practices in schools have the potential to serve as a model for the students' perception about the usefulness of political action and the development of feelings of *school efficacy* might influence control beliefs with regard to the democratic system and have effects on later political participation.

In noting that student councils are a recent entity in the Irish educational landscape, Smyth, McCoy, Darmody, and Dunne (2007: 151) detected problems in their facilitation at post-primary level. They suggest that school councils were being consulted with, rather than incorporated as an active agent in policy-making. This echoed findings among post-primary students by Cosgrove *et al*., (2011) who observed that the comparatively low perceived influence in decision-making in school is of concern given the theoretical emphasis placed on such emancipating groups. A relationship between the perception of student council responsiveness and threshold voters' sense of internal political efficacy was not anticipated. A positive relationship between perceived responsiveness of student council and external efficacy was anticipated.

- *Internal: H8: In comparing threshold voters, as their perception of student council responsiveness changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*

- *External: H8: In comparing threshold voters, those who perceive higher student council responsiveness will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who perceive lower student council responsiveness.*

Student Council Responsiveness: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The item on student council responsiveness focussed on the representative nature of the council.

Table 7.5. Student Council Responsiveness Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Neither i. nor e.	Fairly effective	Very effective	*n*
How effective do you think the student council is at representing you?	13.1	25.1	14.8	34.9	12.0	839

A minority of respondents (46.9%) considered their student council to be 'Fairly' or 'Very effective' in the representation of their interests. At the other end of the scale, 13.1% of respondents considered the student council to be 'Not at all effective' in doing same. This seems to echo the findings of Cosgrove *et al.*'s. (2011) research on the role of student councils in Ireland, in respect of student attitudes toward their effectiveness.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of student council responsiveness and external efficacy, those who perceived high student council responsiveness were slightly more likely to feel politically influential (26%) than those who perceived low student council responsiveness (24%), $\chi^2(4)=8.36^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who perceived high student council responsiveness were more likely to consider the government responsive (27%) than those who perceived low student council responsiveness, (24%), $\chi^2(4)=2.28^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In respect of student council responsiveness, while those who had a perception of high responsiveness were more likely to have high external efficacy, these differentials were not statistically significant.

7.8 Class Politicisation: Hypothesised Effect

Political discussion in the classroom setting includes both formal discussion of module content with teachers and classmates, and casual discussion of current affairs or historic political events. Formal class discussion or debate on a political topic or current affairs may arise as part of course work, as directed by a teacher. The classroom environment in this instance becomes a forum for political expression, perspective taking, and information gathering. Those who considered the benefits of deliberative experiences noted the positive effect on political efficacy (Sohl and Karlsson, 2010; and Stoker, 2006). The latter suggested

that; “Many studies of deliberative experiments show that political efficacy measurably grows among the participants in the deliberative exercise” (2006: 159).

The more engaged a student is in political discussion in a school setting, the more versed she is likely to feel in political affairs. To develop a sense of agency, young citizens require those around them, who have greater political experience, to break complex political situations down into accessible components. As this is the traditional role of teachers in non-political interactions, they are potentially potent in relation to political discussion and interactions (Beaumont, 2010: 540). In American research, there is a belief among some academics that political engagement and discussion is sidelined by some schools and teachers to avoid controversial issues, to avoid being accused of indoctrination or causing disharmony (Westheimer and Kahn, 2004; and Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2010). The frequency of political discussion may not be determined by the individual as teachers may set the topic and content of conversation, however, this does not preclude the adolescent from contributing and thereby benefitting. It is possible that for some students a discussion of politics in class is not self-directed and may lead to a feeling of incompetence and unease. However, on the whole, a positive relationship between politicisation in class and one’s sense of internal efficacy is anticipated.

As in the case of familial discussion, it is the content and dynamic of discussion rather than the frequency of discussion which is likely to impact on external efficacy. Discussion of current affairs or of curricular material may inform the adolescent on the role of the citizen in a state; of her democratic entitlement; and of the political responsiveness of aspects of the system. Such discussion may take on negative as well as positive impressions of political responsiveness and political merit. Therefore, the nature of the effect on external efficacy is difficult to hypothesise.

- *Internal: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion in class will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than will those who have less frequent political discussion in class.*
- *External: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion in class will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than will those who have less frequent political discussion in class.*
- *External: H9a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion in class will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than will those who have less frequent political discussion in class.*

Class Politicisation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The item on class politicisation reflects a time based measure of discussion of political issues in class. The wording of the item was generic to include political interaction with teachers and classmates, in formal or in non-formal discussions.

Table 7.6. Class Politicisation Item Response

Response Percentage	Never	Less than once a week	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day	*n*
In general, how often do you talk about political issues in class?	32.7	37.5	16.3	12.3	1.3	848

Fewer than one in three respondents (29.9%) discussed political issues in class on a weekly or more than weekly basis. Approximately a third of respondents (32.7%) reported never talking in class about political issues. Comparing these percentages with the home politicisation measure, the home environment appears slightly more prevalent as a location of political deliberation as 45% of respondents discuss politics on a weekly or more than weekly basis, with 30% doing so a few times a week or every day.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' class politicisation and internal efficacy, those who had more than weekly political discussion in class were more likely to feel politically capable (43%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (19%), $\chi^2(4)=42.80^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had more than weekly political discussion in class were more likely to feel politically informed (14%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (7%). Notably, those who had more than weekly political discussion were less likely to feel politically uninformed (49%) than those who had less than weekly political discussion (73%), $\chi^2(4)=28.04^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' class politicisation and external efficacy, those who had more than weekly political discussion in class were more likely to feel politically influential (36%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (24%), $\chi^2(4)=8.63^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had more than weekly political discussion in class were more likely to consider the government responsive (33%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (23%), $\chi^2(4)=8.70^{\wedge}$

Those who discussed politics on a more than weekly basis were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy than those who discussed politics less than weekly in class. However, the relationships were only statistically significant in respect of the internal efficacy items.

7.9 Importance of Political Education: Hypothesised Effect

Formal political education (CSPE) was introduced to Ireland (1999) at a later stage than in most other EU countries. Prior to this, domestic and international political material featured in other curricula, such as history and geography. The CSPE curriculum comprises the following strands of focus: rights and responsibilities; human dignity; democracy; stewardship; interdependence; development; and law. The content includes information about the principles of democratic politics, the structure and role of its constituent parts, and the role of the citizen therein.[91] It therefore links strongly to efficacy related considerations. Lopes *et* al. (2009: 3) suggested that citizenship education "aims to, 'by design' rather than 'by default', enhance young people's participation in civic and political life and a growing body of evidence indicates that citizenship education can indeed have an impact on young people's participation". [92]

The current absence of a political science module beyond the Junior Cycle of post-primary education has been perceived as a deficiency in the political development of adolescents in Ireland (Democracy Commission, 2004; and O' Leary, 2011).[93] As aforementioned Democracy Commission (2004: 10) emphasised the weak comparative position of Ireland in respect of political education at Senior Cycle level.[94]

One of the stated objectives of CSPE is to equip Irish adolescents with a capacity to operate effectively in the political environment. Its introduction along with a Social, Personal, and Health Education subject has "extended the school's formal role in the fostering of personal and social skills among young people" (Smyth *et* al., 2007: 149). Cosgrove *et al*. (2011) reported that Ireland ranked 7th out of 36 countries on post-primary students' (14 year olds) civic knowledge in the ICCS, which was positively associated with students' political interest and internal political efficacy.

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[91] Detailed information on the background and content of CSPE in post-primary education is provided by the Second Level Support Service (SLSS): [http://cspe.slss.ie/index.html]

[92] Lopes *et al.* (2009) positioned curriculum changes in the United Kingdom, the introduction of statutory citizenship education for 11-16 year olds in 2002, within wider initiatives which sought to enhance the profile of political education in western states, including: the Council of Europe's 'Education for Democratic Citizenship' Project in 1997; and the designation of 2005 as 'the European Year of Citizenship through Education'.

[93] Comments made in interview on Radio Telefís Éireann's Late Late Show by journalist and political commentator Olivia O' Leary, hosted on 21/01/2011.

[94] For analysis on the education of politics and civics in the Republic of Ireland see; Gleeson and Munnelly, 2004; Coleman, Gray, and Harrison, 2004; National Youth Council of Ireland, 2004; and Harris, 2005.

The effects of formal political education on political attitudes received much attention in American literature in the 1960s and 1970s. Langton and Jennings' (1968) influential study in the United States on civic education found small effects on 12th graders' (approximately 18 years old): political knowledge; political engagement (interest, news attention, and discussion); political efficacy; and their disposition toward political participation. The positive effect of civic education for internal political efficacy was observed in the literature (Pasek *et al*., 2008). Galston (2001: 21) saw the importance of classroom civic education in its ability to raise political knowledge, which thereby leads to democratic support and participation. Galston (2001: 226) opined that;

> Recent findings…begin to provide insight into both the overall effects of civic education on political knowledge and the specific pedagogical strategies that effectively foster political understanding.

The effectiveness of civic education depends on the manner in which it is perceived and received by students who are its focus. Its effectiveness; whether delivered through the curriculum, school activities, or in the wider community must not be assumed as it competes with experiences which young people have in their communal life (Lopes *et al.*, 2009: 3). Galston (2001: 230) affirmed that both types of citizenship education; traditional classroom-based and service learning; are more effective in the late high school years, as students are better able to position new information into a frame where the interweave of politics and society is meaningful, which is not as clear in earlier years. The perception of the importance of political education is therefore an important consideration when assessing the effect of citizenship education on internal efficacy. Adolescents' perception of the importance of political education may also be a reflection of the salience of politics for them. A positive relation between perceived importance of political education and internal efficacy is anticipated.

In an open democracy, political education provides information on: citizens' rights; citizens' responsibilities; the diversity of citizen interests; and the structure and organisation of the political system. As considerations of the importance of political education reflect the individual's acknowledgement of political education, it is therefore not expected to relate to external political efficacy.

- *Internal: H10: In comparing threshold voters, those who place higher importance in political education will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who place lower importance in political education.*

- *External: H10: In comparing threshold voters, as their perception of political education importance changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Importance of Political Education: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The item relating to political education was broadly defined to capture the perception of political education in theory. It is not specific to the existing curriculum which threshold voters would have received, though it may have had a bearing on their considerations.

Table 7.7. Importance of Political Education Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all important	Not very important	Neither u. nor i.	Fairly important	Very important	*n*
How important do you think it is for people to have political education in school?	1.5	7.7	11.6	51.9	27.3	846

Approximately four fifths (79.2%) of the respondents believed it was 'Fairly' or 'Very important' for people to have political education in school. More than one in four (27%) felt that it was 'Very important', with only 1.5% suggesting it to be 'Not at all important'.

In cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of political education importance and internal efficacy, those who placed high importance in political education were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those who placed low importance in political education (9%), $\chi^2(4)=24.46^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who place high importance in political education were more likely to feel politically informed (10%) than those who placed low importance in political education (3%). Notably, those who placed a high importance in political education were less likely to feel politically uninformed (64%) than those who placed a low importance on political education (87%), $\chi^2(4)=24.52^{***}$.

In respect of both internal efficacy items, those who perceived high importance for political education were three times more likely to have high efficacy than those who perceived low importance for political education, with both bivariate relationships being statistically significant.

7.10 Perceived Effectiveness of CSPE: Hypothesised Effect

Academic literature has emphasised the role which political education can play in offsetting trends of political disengagement (Langton and Jennings, 1968; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Galston, 2001; and Kahne and Westheimer, 2006). Those who have completed a module of political education are likely to distinguish between the importance of political education and their impression of the education they received. Elements in the delivery of the curricula or the

content of the curricula itself may not match the expectations of students. The evolving nature of citizen expectations and needs poses a challenge for political education. Changing political, economic and social circumstances tend to induce a revision of citizenship education programmes (Lopes *et al*., 2009: 1; and Galston, 2001). Galston (2001: 218) highlighted the complexity involved in the design of civic education:

> What balance is to be struck between representation and direct participation; between self-interest and public spirit; between rights and responsibilities; between liberty and equality; between reasoned deliberation and passionate mobilization; between secular and faith-based foundations of civic discourse and action; between unity and diversity; between civic loyalty and civic dissent?

For many scholars, the central objective of political education is the development of citizen competence to exercise rights and responsibilities which align with political entitlement (Langton and Jennings, 1968; Pasek *et al.*, 2008; and Levinson, 2010).

Existing assessments of CSPE in this regard are somewhat critical. Cosgrove *et al.* observed that the examination of the CSPE curriculum focuses more on the recall of knowledge, rather than on reasoning or analytic processes, in comparison to other countries' educational equivalents. The non-examination (Action Project) element of the subject offers the opportunity to increase reasoning and analytic processes. In practice, according to Cosgrove *et al*. (2011: xv), the projects "appear to be at odds with the subject's emphasis on active participatory citizenship, though it could be related to the limited amount of instructional time allocated to the subject and may be interpreted within the wider context of the examination-focused structures of the Junior Cycle". The focus is therefore not on a service-learning approach, which Galston (2001) observed to have gained profile in American curricula.[95]

Political education aims to increase civic competence, rather than to dictate the tone of students' political attitudes. While loyalty to the political system is in some ways encouraged, in democratic political systems, the intent is not to suspend the critical faculties of developing citizens. In an analysis of America civic education, Walker (2000) and Kahne and Westheimer (2006: 293) identified what they saw as a bias in the intent of curriculum and pedagogical approach, which they suggest offers a limited understanding of political engagement:

[95] Galston indicated the extent to which service learning has been incorporated into the American curriculum, from 46% of high schools in 1998 in comparison to 9% in 1984. He defined service learning in line with the National Center for Educational Statistics in the United States, as "Curriculum-based community service that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities" (2001: 229).

> What is particularly troubling about this dynamic is that educators often are making this choice—emphasizing curricular strategies that develop internal efficacy but that obscure many issues related to external efficacy. For example, a great deal of curriculum fails to ask about the ways governments and other institutions respond to various individuals and social problems (2006: 293).

They affirmed that little attention paid to the political, social and economic obstacles which hinder system responsiveness, and to the role of political power in dictating response to interest groups. While civic education in Ireland is expected to provide theoretical information on democratic principles and institutional objectives, information on the performance of political incumbents is also likely to feature in discussion of curriculum content. However, a relationship between the perceived performance of political education and sense of external efficacy is not anticipated due to the focus of the measurement item used in this survey.

- *Internal: H11: In comparing threshold voters, those who perceive higher CSPE effectiveness will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who perceive lower CSPE effectiveness.*
- *External: H11: In comparing threshold voters, as their perception of CSPE effectiveness changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Perceived Effectiveness of CSPE: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The wording of the survey item on the perception of CSPE effectiveness referred to political competence. Schulz (2005:14) observed that an item on openness in discussion in civic-related subjects is more apposite for considering effect on external efficacy. The current item did not facilitate an analysis of this effect. While the concern here is on formal civic education, it is important to reiterate that all educational attainment is likely to boost political knowledge and attainment (Galston, 2001: 219).

Table 7.8. Perceived Effectiveness of CSPE Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all effective	Not very effective	Neither i. nor e.	Fairly effective	Very effective	*n*
How effective was CSPE at increasing your political competence?	14.7	27.3	13.9	34.3	9.8	846

A minority of respondents (44.1%) believed that the CSPE module was effective (‘Fairly’ or ‘Very effective’) at increasing political competence. This is interesting as 79.2% of respondents considered such education to be ‘Fairly important’ or ‘Very important’.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter’s perception of CSPE effectiveness and internal efficacy, those who perceived high CSPE effectiveness were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those who perceived low CSPE effectiveness (20%), $\chi^2(4)=7.08^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On

the second internal efficacy item, those who perceived high CSPE effectiveness were slightly more likely to feel politically informed (10%) than those who perceived low CSPE effectiveness (8%). Notably, those who perceived high CSPE effectiveness were less likely to feel politically uninformed (62%) than those who perceived low CSPE effectiveness (72%), $\chi^2(4)=11.42^*$.

Respondents who perceived high effectiveness of their CSPE education were more likely to have high internal efficacy than those who perceived low effectiveness for the current offering. This relationship was statistically significant on the second internal efficacy item.

7.11 CSPE Grade Attainment: Hypothesised Effect

As curricular political education is subject to examination, there is the possibility that this examination process and subsequent grading has an impact on one's sense of internal political efficacy. This item's inclusion is a necessary control on the responses to the perceived importance and effectiveness of political education. Attainment of a high grade, or satisfaction with grade attained may precipitate a feeling of competence in political matters. In a study of Tunisian women, Waltz (1990) underlined the positive effect of general academic achievement on political efficacy through self-validation.

In early studies of political socialisation, Easton and Dennis (1967) and White (1968) observed the effect of intelligence on a general sense of political efficacy in pre-adolescence. They attributed the effect of intelligence on efficacy to a greater capacity and ease in the consideration of abstract and complex situations, and a stronger sense of self-competence (Pinquart *et al.*, 2004). Rodgers (1974) did not observe an intelligence effect on a general sense of efficacy. White's (1968) findings have been questioned by Jackman (1970) on methodological grounds (for not reporting regression coefficients). Nonetheless, a positive relationship between the CSPE grade received and internal efficacy is anticipated. In relation to external efficacy, a relationship is not anticipated.

- *Internal: H12: In comparing threshold voters, those who attain a higher grade in CSPE examination will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who attain a lower grade in CSPE examination.*
- *External: H12: In comparing threshold voters, as their CSPE grade attainment changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

CSPE Grade Attainment: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

This item on CSPE Junior Certificate grade attainment was presented as an open ended question to limit the possible social desirability effect of item presentation. As the

examination would have taken place two years or a year previously, there was the possibility of recall difficulty, though the profile of the examination, as the only state examination taken by time of survey should aid recollection. The 37 respondents who selected the 'Don't recall' option as provided are excluded from the response breakdown in the Table 7.9.

Table 7.9. CSPE Grade Attainment Item Response

Response Percentage	E	D	C	B	A	*n*
If you can recall, what grade did you receive in the Junior Certificate CSPE examination?	0.1	1.4	14.7	47.4	36.4	808

A high percentage of respondents (83.8%) reported receiving an 'A' or 'B' grade in the CSPE examination. More than one third reported receiving an A grade, with a further 47.4% reporting receipt of a B grade. According to the CSPE Chief Examiner's Report 2009, the national breakdown of CSPE student grade attainment in the 2007 Junior Certificate Examination, which corresponded with respondents' examination year, was: A (23%); B (40.3); C (25%); D (8.9%); E; (1.7); F (1.0%) No Grade (0.2%).[96] Respondents reported attainment is well above the national figures. This indicates that the sample's attainment is higher than the national equivalent, and may indicate that a social desirability effect influenced response to the item.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' CSPE grade attainment and internal efficacy, those who attained an A grade were more likely to feel politically capable (33%) than those who attained B (18%) or C/D/E grade (18%), $\chi^2(4)=29.27^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who attained an A grade were more likely to feel politically informed (13%) than those who attained a B grade (7%) or C/D/E grade (5%). Notably, those who attained an A grade were less likely to feel politically uninformed (60%) than those who attained a B grade (70%) or C/D/E/ grade (78%), $\chi^2(4)=18.60^{**}$.

Both internal efficacy items reveal a statistically significant relationship between the CSPE grade which threshold voters attained and their likelihood of having high internal efficacy.

7.12 Internal Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the School Socialisation Model

The results of the multivariate regression of school socialisation variables on internal efficacy are presented in Table 7.10. Various aspects of threshold voters' participation in the school environment and their experience of political education were positively related to their

[96] Source: Chief Examiner's Report 2009 on the SLSS website under the CSPE section, as hosted on 20/06/2011: [http://www.examinations.ie/archive/examiners_reports/JC_CSPE_2009.pdf].

internal political efficacy. Participation in school elections as a candidate and involvement in student council activities were positively related to threshold voters' internal political efficacy. School voting did not significantly predict internal political efficacy. Likewise, experience of campaigning in school, which may be a cursory involvement in some cases, was not significantly related to internal efficacy at the α=.05 level, though it was significant at the α=.10 level.

Class politicisation and the perceived importance of political education were both positive predictors of threshold voters' internal efficacy. Therefore those who have opportunities to discuss politics in a formal educational environment, and who value such an experience, demonstrate a greater sense of political competence in the wider political arena, than those who do not. Furthermore, threshold voters' grade attainment in their political education module was positively associated with their sense of internal efficacy.

These relationships remained substantially unaltered by the inclusion of the external efficacy variable, suggesting that they were direct, rather than indirect. An initial positive effect of the reaction to school decisions variable lost coefficient size and significance when the school participation variables were introduced in the fourth block of analysis.

Those from community/comprehensive schools displayed lower internal efficacy (at the α=.10 level, i.e., p=.054), when controlled for socio-economic status and other school environment variables. While the effect is substantively small, it suggests that there is something in the community/comprehensive school environment which is not on par with other school types in respect of threshold voters' political capacity.[97]

The negative relationship between perceptions of student council responsiveness and internal efficacy was not anticipated and may indicate a reversal of the direction of causation. It is likely that those who have a high sense of political capacity and competence have more exacting standards for the performance of representative bodies.[98]

[97] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' school type and internal efficacy, those who attended a secondary school were more likely to feel politically capable (26%) than those who attended a vocational school (22%), or a community/comprehensive school (19%), $\chi^2(4)=4.55^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who attended a secondary school were more likely to feel politically informed (11%) than those who attended a vocational (6%) or community/comprehensive school (6%), $\chi^2(4)=8.64^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.
As the school type variable was related to internal efficacy at a significance level close to the α=.05 level, it will therefore be included in subsequent multi-model analysis, with other variables which are statistically significant at the critical level.

[98] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of student council responsiveness and internal efficacy, those who perceived high student council responsiveness were less likely to feel politically capable (20%) than those who perceived low student council responsiveness (27%), $\chi^2(4)=6.03^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who perceived high student council responsiveness were less likely to feel politically informed (6%) than those who perceived low student council responsiveness (10%), $\chi 2(4)=7.79^{(p=.10)}$.

Irrespective of the school socialisation factors included in this analysis, male respondents and village residents possessed a higher sense of internal efficacy. As in the case of family socialisation, the effects of socio-economic status on threshold voter internal efficacy appeared to be largely mitigated by one's political socialisation in school.

The change evident in the Adjusted R Square value indicates that the proportion of variance in threshold voter explained increased from 2.7% to 24.8% when family socialisation factors are added to the significant demographic predictors. Respondents' perception of the importance of political education was the strongest predictor of internal efficacy, which along with class politicisation, was much more active in boosting internal efficacy than the other related variables. The negative effect of attending a community/comprehensive school was small relative to the other noted effects.[99]

[Table Overleaf]

[99] One case (#5) had a standardised residual of 3.30, which suggested that it may be an outlier in respect of the survey data in this analysis. However as all Cook's Distance values were less than 1, (less than .021) there is cause for confidence that this case is not a source of significant bias in the regression model.

Table 7.10. School Socialisation Model Internal Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.026	-2.257***	-2.138***
GENDER	.094*	.129***	.125***
Village	.090*	.094**	.095**
Non-Manual	-.068^	-.041	-.035
Skilled Manual	-.104**	-.065^	-.058^
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.090*	.006	.013
Vocational School		-.034	-.035
Community/ Comprehensive School		-.062^	-.066^
SCHOOL RESPONSIVENESS		-.003	-.019
REACTION SCHOOL		.043	.036
SCHOOL VOTING		.044	.040
SCHOOL CANDIDACY		.105**	.104**
SCHOOL CAMPAIGNING		.058^	.057^
STU. COU. INVOLVEMENT		.113**	.107**
STU. COU. RESPONSIVENESS		-.110**	-.110**
CLASS POLITICISATION		.199***	.191***
POL. EDU. IMPORTANCE		.241***	.240***
POL. EDU. EFFECTIVENESS		.065^	.056^
CSPE GRADE		.114**	.112**
EXTERNAL EFFICACY			.093**
n	721	721	721
R	.183	.517	.524
R Square	.033	.267	.275
R Square Change	.033***	.153***	.008**
Adjusted R Square	.027	.248	.255
ANOVA F	4.931***	14.221***	13.998***
Durbin Watson			1.975

7.13 External Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the School Socialisation Model

Table 7.11 presents the results of the multivariate regression of school socialisation variables on the external dimension of political efficacy, controlling for significant demographic variables. As anticipated the perception of school authority responsiveness was positively related to threshold voter external efficacy. While parent responsiveness was not found to be significant in the multivariate regression of family socialisation, the school environment offers greater potential for respondents to develop impressions of responsiveness in a wider social setting (Amna *et al.*, 2004).

The effect of class politicisation on external efficacy was indirect in nature, as evidence by its loss of statistical significance when respondents' internal efficacy was controlled in the third

column of analysis. It is clear that greater experience of political discussion in a formal educational setting such as the classroom boosts not only sense of political competence but is also positively related to the perception of system responsiveness.

The positive relationship between perceived political education effectiveness and external efficacy was not anticipated.[100] This indicates that political education is important in developing pro-system sentiment among those who feel most empowered by their educational experience. As expected the type of school which one attends did not affect their perception of political system responsiveness. Engagement in school activities does not significantly affect political efficacy in either direction. Moreover, involvement in the student council was not significantly related to threshold voters' external efficacy, when other factors were considered.[101]

The positive effect of residing in a suburb retained significance, when school socialisation factors were considered. While the effects of socio-economic status appeared to be moderated and lessened with a decrease in regression coefficient size, there remained differences between the bottom three categories through much of this analysis. Those whose parents were in semi-skilled occupations were significantly less positive about political responsiveness, even when internal efficacy was controlled. Those who had an unemployed parent in the home were not significantly different on external efficacy, than those who do not, in this model of analysis.

The increase in the value of the Adjusted R Square value when school socialisation variables are included with demographic variables (2.8% to 9.2%) indicated a degree of importance in considering school socialisation when assessing threshold voter external efficacy. The main driver of this increase in variance explained was the perception of school authority responsiveness. [Table Overleaf]

[100] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of CSPE effectiveness and external efficacy, those who perceived high CSPE effectiveness were more likely to feel politically influential (31%) than those who perceived low CSPE effectiveness (20%), $\chi^2(4)=19.13^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who perceived high CSPE effectiveness were more likely to consider the government responsiveness (29%) than those who perceived low CSPE effectiveness (24%), $\chi^2(4)=3.96^{(\text{non-sig})}$.

[101] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' involvement in a student council and external efficacy, those who were involved in a student council were more likely to feel politically influential (38%) than those who were not involved (25%), $\chi^2(2)=6.35^{*}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who were involved in a student council were more likely to consider the government responsive (42%) than those who were not involved (24%), $\chi^2(2)=14.30,^{**}$. As this relationship loses statistical significance at the critical level in the final analysis, and is not significant in alternative (stepwise and backward variable entry) regression methods, it was not included in further multi-model analysis.

Table 7.11. School Socialisation Model External Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.062	-1.197***	-.970**
Suburb	.108**	.109**	.111**
Non-Manual	-.096*	-.071^	-.066^
Skilled Manual	-.103**	-.074*^	-.066^
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.097*	-.075*	-.074*^
PAR UNEMPLOYED	-.055	-.061^	-.065^
Vocational School		.014	.019
Community/ Comprehensive School		.049	.057
SCHOOL RESPONSIVENESS		.174***	.175***
REACTION SCHOOL		.072^	.068^
SCHOOL VOTING		.033	.027
SCHOOL CANDIDACY		.005	-.008
SCHOOL CAMPAIGNING		.004	-.004
STU. COU. INVOLVEMENT		.062^	.047
STU. COU. RESPONSIVENESS		-.008	.011
CLASS POLITICISATION		.084*	.061
POL. EDU. IMPORTANCE		.004	-.025
POL. EDU. EFFECTIVENESS		.108*	.099**
CSPE GRADE		.010	.000
INTERNAL EFFICACY			.122**
n	721	721	721
R	.185	.339	.356
R Square	.034	.115	.126
R Square Change	.034***	.021**	.011**
Adjusted R Square	.028	.092	.103
ANOVA F	5.080***	5.077***	5.342***
Durbin Watson			1.914

7.14 Conclusion

As threshold voters are still rooted to the school environment its significance as a source of political and social information is evident. Variables from the school environment included in this analysis related to: school decision making; school activity engagement; political education; and an assessment of the effect of school type.

The positive effects of formal political education variables for threshold voters' internal political efficacy relate to class politicisation, perception of political education, and grade attainment. The significance attached to civic education among political scientists is evident, as perception-based and concrete outcomes of such education provides a fillip to the political confidence of those entering political adulthood (Galston, 2001). This is of critical

importance, considering the relative standing of this age group in political affairs. Though a majority of respondents supported a role for political education in the wider educational offering, they are much less confident in the ability of the current curriculum to enhance their civic competence.

The effect of participation in student councils and other activities such as candidacy in school elections (and to a less significant extent campaigning) was positive and reaffirming for threshold voters' perception of social and political competence. The effects of school socialisation and engagement in the existing literature are seen to undergo a sleeper period in early political adulthood, only to re-emerge in later stages of the lifecycle. The findings of Jennings and Stoker (2001) and Plutzer (2002) echoed the existence of this sleeper period as the latter did not find significant effects of high-school variables, an index of activity in student politics and student organisations, such as running for office or a leadership role, on turnout among those facing their first electoral opportunity.

As anticipated the level of responsiveness which one perceives from school authorities in decision making has a positive effect on one's external efficacy. Though not hypothesised the perceived performance of political education showed a stronger positive effect on threshold voter external efficacy, rather than internal efficacy. This will be further explored in the multi-model regression analysis, as it may be indicative a tendency toward sanguine appraisals of agencies.

The negative relationship between perceived effectiveness of student council and internal efficacy was not anticipated. A possible explanation of this is a reversal of causal order: i.e., those who feel more competence in political matters may exact more critical and exacting standards from their student representative bodies than those who feel less sure about political matters. The second surprising result in this analysis was the negative consequence of attending a community/comprehensive school on internal efficacy. This persisted when socio-economic status of respondents was considered. Explanations of this effect are a matter of conjecture as it may be due to the restricted measurement of socio-economic variables and community level variables in this design. There may be aspects of school interaction in such schools which undermine the political competence of the developing citizen. This is an area for further study for those interested in systematic educational effects on civic engagement, which Kahne and Middaugh (2008) have considered in an American context.

In analyses of internal efficacy, the positive effects of gender and residential area remain after controlling for school socialisation variables, which largely parallels the family socialisation

results. Socio-economic status effects are mediated in the case of internal efficacy, and mediated somewhat in the case of external efficacy. This suggests that differences in political efficacy associated with demographic background may be mitigated by the different type of socialisation which young citizens receive in school as well as at home.

The contribution of the variables included in the school socialisation model to the understanding of threshold voter political efficacy is more evident in relation to internal rather than external efficacy (largely due to class politicisation variable). Attention now turns to the more varied and less institutionalised associational environment.

Chapter 8. The Associational Socialisation Model

8.1 Introduction

As they enter late adolescence, many threshold voters will have amassed a variety of associational linkages which influence their attitudinal development alongside their familial and school experiences. The role of social engagements in respect of the political outlook of citizens has been championed by Putnam's (2000) focus on the political dimension of social capital. Social capital has been defined as "the social networks between individuals as well as the trust, shared norms and reciprocities that underpin and in turn arise from such connections" (Henn *et* al., 2007: 467). Factors under consideration in this model of analysis relate by and large to the structural side of social capital, relating to formal networking, rather than the attitudinal side of social capital which will be assessed in Chapter 10. As involvement in associations may rely on an underlying sense of social trust, it will be important to contextualise observed relationships here, by inclusion of social trust in later analysis (Amna and Zetterberg, 2010: 50).

Existing research has indicated that participation in youth organisations during adolescence is a positive predictor of participation in political and community organisations in adulthood (McIntosh and Youniss, 2010, 31); and of one's attitude toward future political participation during adolescence (Hart and Gullan, 2010: 74). In their discussion of political engagement, Valentino *et al.* (2009: 307) noted the dominance of resource-based theories to explain the higher political engagement of people in mid life rather than in early life stages (Verba *et al*., 1995; and Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). These theories posit that inter-group and intra-group connections amassed in work, professional or community associations increase the incentive for political participation. In pre-adult stages such connections may develop through organisational involvement, which involves interaction with both contemporaries and older age groups. Information received and group norms observed in these interactions will compliment or conflict with the norms and attitudes acquired in other environs. Community organisations are settings in which young people may have opportunities to express themselves, and to negotiate paths of understanding and agreement with fellow members while assuming the responsibility that accompanies membership activity (Sherrod *et al*., 2010: 6).

As in the case of the home and school environments, a measure of decision maker responsiveness and threshold voter inclination to react to organisational decisions were included in this analysis. Depending on personal interests and environmental opportunities

adolescents may be involved in a number and diversity of organisations. Measures of involvement in generic type organisations were included to capture the structural networking of respondents. While such settings may have a political dimension, in many organisations politics as a topic of conversation will be avoided to avoid group conflict and division. In this case group involvement may be a boost to social capital, but not necessarily a direct influence on political capital or political competence (Stoker, 2006: 159).

Flanagan and Sherrod (1998: 453) highlighted that the role of associational involvements was not discrete from those of other socialisation environments. Participation in community service or organisations can inform school discussion by building citizens' competencies and collective enterprise. Such involvement may stimulate adolescents' civic or political consideration in framing "the kinds of people they want to become and the kind of society they want to create" (1998: 453).

Analysing the effect of organisational membership and network centrality on political engagement among adolescents, rather than older age groups, may be difficult. The organisational and occupational ties of those in late adolescence are likely to be less developed than at later stages in the life cycle, which limits the ability to assess their affects (Bynner *et al.*, 2003). Nonetheless, Quintelier *et al*. (2007: 6) suggested an increasing influence of schools, peer groups, or voluntary associations on adolescent values, relative to parent influences, as young people progress from early life stages.

Measures of religiosity were also included in this model. While religious denomination is likely to be predetermined by parent denomination, the extent to which one identifies with and participates in a denomination is likely to be more reflective of one's personal engagement in religiosity. Religious organisations offer similar opportunities as other social organisations, vis-à-vis perspective taking, group identification, and social interaction.

Organisational involvement relates to the participation of respondents in somewhat formal social environments. This involvement is positioned within a broader, less formal social environment with family, classmates, friends, and acquaintances. In cognisance of the emphasis placed on peer relations (Quintelier *et al*., 2007; and Wilkenfeld *et al*., 2010), items on the politicisation of friends were included in this model. Though the measures of peer politicisation and political interest were limited in scope, they provide an insight to the politicisation of the threshold voters' closest and possibly most malleable social environment.

8.2 Organisation Authority Responsiveness: Hypothesised Effect

The effect of non-political decision making on threshold voters' sense of political efficacy has been hypothesised in the family and school environment. Organisations and associations encompass decision making and power distribution processes. These in turn affect the perceived utility of such involvement by members.

The perception of associational decision-maker responsiveness is related to external rather than internal efficacy considerations. The level of decision maker responsiveness which adolescents perceive in organisations may influence their perception of wider social networks and structures. As such organisations are public in nature they may resemble the diversity of the political world more closely than the family environment, which would increase their significance for attitude formation. Associations have been considered as schools of democracy which generate positive reflections on political institutions and on one's sense of political efficacy (Amna and Zetterberg, 2010: 50). Those who feel ignored or inhibited by organisational decision makers may develop an impression that collective social structures are not responsive to individual interests and input. While, the power structure will vary within and between organisations, the anticipation is of a positive relationship between the perception of associational responsiveness, and that of the political system.

- *Internal: H1: In comparing threshold voters, as their perception of organisation authority responsiveness changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who perceive higher organisation authority responsiveness will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who perceive lower organisation authority responsiveness.*

Organisation Authority Responsiveness: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The item on organisational responsiveness was akin to that of parent and school authorities. The item referred to 'organisers in associations', and was therefore generic in reference. While it is likely that this responsiveness will vary across different associations, it was the generic perception of organisational responsiveness which was at issue.

Table 8.1. Organisation Authority Responsiveness Item Response

Response Percentage	None at all	Only a little	Some	A good amount	A lot	*n*
When organisers in associations that you join are making decisions that affect you, how much consideration do they give to your views?	7.3	9.3	30.5	37.3	15.6	809

While a slight majority of respondents (52.9%) perceived higher responsiveness (i.e., 'A good amount' or 'A lot') when making decisions; only 15.6% responded with the latter. Fewer than

one in ten respondents (7.3%) perceived a complete lack of organisational responsiveness. Looking across socialisation environments, it appeared that threshold voters were more likely to consider their parents to be responsive when making decisions (70.5%), than organisations (52.9%) or school authorities (30.6%).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' perception of organisation authority responsiveness and external efficacy, those who perceived high organisation authority responsiveness were more likely to feel politically influential (30%) than those who perceived low organisation authority responsiveness (17%), $\chi^2(4)=12.40^*$ On the second external efficacy item, those who perceived high organisation authority responsiveness were more lightly to consider the government responsive (28%) than those who perceived low organisation authority responsiveness (25%), $\chi^2(4)=3.24^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of external efficacy items, those with a high perception of organisation authority responsiveness were more likely to have high external efficacy, with a statistically significant relationship in the case of the first external efficacy item.

8.3 Reaction to Organisation Decisions: Hypothesised Effect

The tendency to challenge and seek input on decisions is likely to reflect one's self-assertiveness in structured social settings. Attempting to influence an organisational decision may be a more exacting and rewarding experience for adolescents due to its public nature, with a possibly greater diversity of actors involved, relative to home and school environs. If response is based on past behaviour, this indicates the resolve which one has demonstrated when faced with other challenging social or political environs. The tendency to engage in such behaviour in an organisation may therefore be more developmental for one's feeling of social or political competence, than the tendency of doing the same within the home and school environments. The anticipated relationship is of a positive relationship between the tendency to react to undesired organisational decisions and threshold voters' political efficacy.

The tendency for an individual to attempt redress of an organisational decision is likely to influence appraisals of the self and is therefore more related to the internal rather than external dimension of efficacy. The tendency to mobilise against a decision may be reflective of the perceived responsiveness of the agent involved. This effect is captured in the previous item and will be controlled in multivariate analysis, a direct relationship between threshold voters'

tendency to react to associational decisions and their sense of external political efficacy is not anticipated.

- *Internal: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who are more reactive to organisation decisions will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are less reactive to organisation decisions.*
- *External: H2: In comparing threshold voters, as their reaction to organisation decisions changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Reaction to Organisation Decisions: Measurement, Distribution and Cross Tabulation

It is accepted that the tendency to react to decisions made will vary across associations depending on: the level of involvement; the significance of membership; the organisational structure; and the nature of the organisation. However, a generic tendency to mobilise against undesired decisions was at issue in this instance, as this may inform one's generic sense of social and political competence.

Table 8.2. Reaction to Organisation Decisions Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all likely	Not very likely	Neither u. nor l.	Fairly likely	Very likely	*n*
If a decision is made that you do not like, how likely is it that you, acting alone or together with others, would try to do something about it?	5.7	10.9	26.4	42.5	14.5	811

A majority of respondents (57%) reported it as 'Fairly' or 'Very likely' that they would do something about an organisational decision which they did not like. Fewer than one in five respondents (16.6%) suggested that they were 'Not at all' or 'Not very' likely to ask redress. Looking across the tendency to react in social settings, threshold voters appear to be more reactive to decisions in the home (75%), rather than in organisations (57%), or in school 47%).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter's reaction to organisation decisions and internal efficacy, those who tended to react to organisation decisions were more likely to feel politically capable (28%) than those who tended not to react (23%). Notably, those who tended to react to organisation decisions were less likely to feel politically incapable (47%) than those who tended not to react (58%), $\chi^2(4)=14.97^{**}$.

Threshold voters who were inclined to react to decisions in the organisational environment were more likely to have high internal efficacy. This relationship was significant in respect of the first internal efficacy item. Substantial or significant difference was not evident in respect of the second internal efficacy item.

8.4 Organisational Involvement: Hypothesised Effect

Items relating to belonging and participation in youth, religious, sports, leisure, cultural, voluntary and charitable organisations were presented to respondents. The items were intended to capture the wider social engagement, which Punam (2000) describes as the 'joiner' tendency in his social capital theses. Participation in and involvement with organisations is likely to be a reflection of the sociability or extroversion of the individual, as those who feel adept in social interaction search out for opportunities for same (Anderson, 2010). For others, involvement in organisations is a challenge which may be undertaken due to family or school commitments. Whatever the underlying reason, participation in such organisations will contribute (positively or negatively) to one's level of confidence in varied social environments. Such organisations have a mediating function as they connect citizens across age and social backgrounds to each other, and provide young citizens with a space to develop their civic skills (Putnam, 2000; Kassimir and Flanagan, 2010: 93; and Finlay *et* al., 2010: 291). Organisational involvement also raises the potential for encounters with community or civic leaders which can be a source of inspiration in forming civic identities among young people (Finlay *et al*., 2010: 296).

Glanville (1999: 280, citing Verba *et al.*, 1995) noted the role of organisational membership on political participation through its impact on individuals': political attitudes; political knowledge; social networking; participative disposition; and civic skills. In similar vein, Koch (1993: 309) affirmed that: "groups personalize politics, affecting citizens' sense of subjective political competence and their willingness to contribute to the provision of collective goods".

In specific relation to political efficacy, a positive effect of group engagement on young adolescents' generic sense of political efficacy was been observed in early American socialisation research (White, 1968). In a more contemporary comparative work, Amna *et al*. (2004) did not detect a significant effect of social capital or associational involvement on either dimension of political efficacy. However, organisational involvements appear to provide opportunities for the four pathways that Beaumont (2010: 526) identified as vital for instilling a sense of political competence: mastery experiences; observation of role models; provision of social encouragement; and positive interpersonal interactions. The young person who joins a team because they like a particular sport, will simultaneously gain experience and skills in interpersonal relations; in collective decision-making; and an insight to the circumstances of others in the surrounding community which they may not garner otherwise.

The type of organisational involvement is likely to feature different types of activities and provide different learning environments. Studies in the United Kingdom and the United States indicate that participation in volunteering activities enhanced students' sense of political efficacy (Wilkenfeld *et al*., 2010: 213). There may be a distinction between organisations such as youth and community-based organisations which offer avenues to practice adult civic roles, and sporting organisations which may not be as civically focussed (Finlay *et al*., 2010: 289). While one's sense of efficacy can be enhanced or lowered depending on the kinds of groups which one belongs to, and on the feedback and social persuasion which one receives from them (Beaumont, 2010: 546), a positive relationship is hypothesised between organisational involvement and internal efficacy.

The nature of the experiences, rather than the level of involvement, is likely to be more significant for perceptions of external political efficacy. In pre-adult stages, their associational memberships are not as likely to take on political overtones as may arise in adult or professional networks. Therefore, a relationship is not anticipated between involvement in organisations and threshold voters' sense of external political efficacy.

- *Internal: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who are involved in youth organisations will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not involved in youth organisations.*
- *External: H3: In comparing threshold voters, as their involvement in youth organisations changes, their external efficacy will not change.*
- *Internal: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who are involved in religious organisations will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not involved in religious organisations.*
- *External: H4: In comparing threshold voters, as their involvement in religious organisations changes, their external efficacy will not change.*
- *Internal: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who are involved in recreational organisations will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not involved in recreational organisations.*
- *External: H5: In comparing threshold voters, as their involvement in recreational organisations changes, their external efficacy will not change.*
- *Internal: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who are involved in voluntary organisations will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not involved in voluntary organisations.*
- *External: H6: In comparing threshold voters, as their involvement in voluntary organisations changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Organisational Involvement: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The survey items used to measure organisational involvement captured involvement in: youth; recreational (sporting, leisure, and cultural); religious; and voluntary/charitable organisations. There is an evident overlap between some of the items, as some youth organisations may have a religious function, and some cultural organisations may have a charitable function for instance.

The measures of organisational involvement are not deep or refined in this analysis. The aim is to assess the effect of involvement, and organisational type. The items combined the concept of belonging and participating as aspects of involvement. The effect of involvement in organisations will depend on contextual and personal considerations. The items appear to be more related to the formal membership end of the spectrum. The response options to these items, which distinguish between current and past involvement, are somewhat restricted in not delineating the level of activities in organisation in which one was once involved, as was the case for involvement with a student council. The introduction to these survey items read; 'People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups and associations. For each type of group, please indicate whether you'.

Table 8.3. Organisational Involvement Item Response

Response Percentage	Never belonged	Used to belong	Belong but don't participate	Belong and actively participate	*n*
A youth organisation	31.8	47.0	4.4	16.7	842
A church or other religious organisation	29.8	16.1	29.0	25.1	841
A sports, leisure or cultural group	4.8	30.5	3.0	61.8	842
A voluntary/charitable organisation	50.7	32.3	4.2	12.9	843

In comparison of item response it is evident that current and active participation was more common in recreational organisations (61.8%), with a large gap to the next active membership of religious organisations (25.1%). While approximately one in five respondents (21.1%) reported belonging to a youth organisation, almost half (47%) noted that they 'used to belong' to a youth organisation. Similarly, while 17.1% of respondents report current belonging to a voluntary/charitable organisation, 32.3% report that they 'Used to belong'. In respect of voluntary organisations, a similar proportion (50 per cent) of early-mid adolescents in the ICCS reported being involved at one time or another (Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011).

Dichotomous variables from each item were created on the criterion of whether the respondent was an active participant in each organisation type or not at the time of survey. As it was not possible to distinguish the level of activity in former involvements due to item wording, this approach is to assess the effect of contemporary rather than historic or amassed group connectedness.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter's involvement in a youth organisation and internal efficacy, those who were involved in youth organisations were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those who were not involved in youth organisations (23%), $\chi^2(2)=2.40^{(non-sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, the same percentage of those who were involved and not involved in youth organisations (8%) felt politically informed. Notably, those who were involved in youth organisations were less likely to feel politically informed (55%) than those who were not involved in youth organisations (70%), $\chi^2(2)=17.02$ ***.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' involvement in a religious organisation, those who were involved in a religious organisation were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those who were not (23%), $\chi^2(2)=1.85^{(non-sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy variable those who were involved in a religious organisation were more likely to feel politically informed (11%) than those who were not (8%), $\chi^2(2)=2.39^{(non-sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' involvement in a recreational organisation and internal efficacy, a similar percentage of those who were involved (24%) and were not involved (23%) in a recreational organisation felt politically capable, $\chi^2(2)=0.93^{(non-sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, a similar percentage of those who were involved in a recreational organisation (9%) and not-involved (8%) felt politically informed, $\chi^2(2)=2.00^{(non-sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' involvement in a voluntary organisation and internal efficacy, those who were involved in a voluntary organisation were more likely to feel politically capable (38%) than those who were not involved in a voluntary organisation (22%), $\chi^2(2)=14.65^{**}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who were involved in a youth organisation were more likely to feel politically informed (15%) than those who were not involved (8%), $\chi^2(2)=11.36^{*}$.

In relation to various organisational involvements, while those who were actively involved were more likely to have high internal efficacy, the relationship was only significant in the case of voluntary organisation involvement (both items) and youth organisational involvement (second internal efficacy item).

8.5 Number of Organisational Involvements: Hypothesised Effect

In their analysis of the psychological and normative sense of political efficacy, McCluskey *et al*. (2004) found that a sense of community attachment had a positive relationship with the general perception of political efficacy. Anderson observed that it is the sense of community rather than the number of contexts or involvements which one had, which was important for feelings of internal efficacy. Being involved in more contexts was only important if individuals felt a moderate sense of attachment to community settings (Anderson 2010: 71). Similarly, Lee (2005) found that while the level of social connection is positively associated with internal efficacy, the impact of involvement depends on the weight which citizens attach to it.

Dalton (2002: 7) avowed that associational engagements in general are becoming more spontaneous, and less institutionalised with membership ties become more fluid, with an increasing complexity and diversity of social networks. There is a suggestion in the contemporary literature that young peoples' preferences nowadays are for more loosely tied affiliations rather than formal memberships (Bennett *et al*., 2010: 417). Nonetheless, the more numerous one's social involvement is, the more opportunity one has to become proficient in varied social environs. Therefore involvement in a greater number of organisations may increase ones' social and political competence. The anticipated effect is of a positive relationship between number of involvements and sense of internal political efficacy.

In relation to external efficacy, Anderson (2010) found that it was the level of community attachment, rather than the outright number of contexts which was of import. In their study of young adults, Henn *et al*. (2007: 474) do not find an effect of organisational membership on feelings of external efficacy. A relationship between the number of organisational involvements the threshold voter has and her external efficacy is not hypothesised.

- *Internal: H7: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more organisational involvements will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have fewer organisational involvements.*
- *External: H7: In comparing threshold voters, as their number of organisational involvements change, their external efficacy will not change.*

Number of Organisational Involvements: Measurement and Distribution

An index of organisational involvement was created from the addition of active involvements ('Belong and actively participate') reported by respondents. A maximum of 4 organisations

were listed with broad categories as noted above.[102] As the index is created on the basis of 'active involvement' in each item, it was an exacting measure of associational involvement.

Table 8.4. Number of Organisational Involvements Item Response

Percentage Response	0	1	2	3	4	*n*
Number of associations	27.5	40.2	23.0	7.2	2.0	846

From the above table it is evident that more than two thirds of respondents (72.5%) were involved in one or more of the organisations highlighted, with approximately one in three (32.2%) involved in two or more contexts.

8.6 Organisational Participation: Hypothesised Effect

As in the case of student councils in school, participative and interactive undertakings in organisations may provide character building experiences. Many organisations involve candidate selection, campaigning, and officer elections which imitate the precepts of representative democratic politics. They may therefore bolster threshold voter's sense of political competence from a social and a technical perspective. Caprara *et al*. (2009: 1004) detailed the cognitive developments associated with participation in such processes, suggesting that when people participate:

> …they are aware, although in various degrees, that they are contributing to a collaborative enterprise in which individual choices are turned into collective outcomes. In this regard, the case of electoral participation is particularly informative.

Participation in non-political elections (voting and candidacy) is a demonstration of the collaborative and collective nature of associational membership. In particular, the act of standing for election in an association provides an opportunity to develop one's competence in social and electoral environs. It may be testament to one's self-confidence in social environs.

As in the case of school participation, it is the outcome of such participation rather than the participation itself, which is likely to be critical for the sense of external efficacy. For instance, standing for election within an association may have an effect on external efficacy by revealing the complex nature of representative office. Alternatively it may alert individuals of the futility of electoral office in attempts to be responsive to a diverse range of interests. As

[102] If engagement in these organisations is an indication of an underlying 'joiner' personality, a variable which combines these engagements would be more accurately positioned in the personal attribute model of analysis, rather than in this model. Principal Axis Factoring did not provide evidence of such an underlying dimension, and scale reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha of (.397), nor significant corrected item-total nor inter-item correlation coefficients of .3 or greater.

a measure of the perceived outcome of organisation participation through voting and candidacy is not included in this analysis, the direction of the hypothesis of participation and external efficacy is not specified.

- *Internal: H8: In comparing threshold voters, those who have voted in an organisation election will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have not voted in an organisation election.*
- *External: H8: In comparing threshold voters, those who have voted in an organisation election will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have not voted in an organisation election.*
- *External: H8a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have voted in an organisation election will be less likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have not voted in an organisation election.*
- *Internal: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those who have stood in an organisation election will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have not stood in an organisation election.*
- *External: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those who have stood in an organisation election will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have not stood in an organisation election.*
- *External: H9a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have stood in an organisation election will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have not stood in an organisation election.*

Organisational Participation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The items on associational participation related to voting participation and standing for office. The items were specific to organisational participation outside of the school setting. While the items were limited in focus, they represent the types of associational participation which closely imitate political activities.

Table 8.5. Organisational Participation Item Response

Response Percentage	No	Yes	*n*
Have you ever voted in the election of an association, club or organisation outside of school?	59.2	40.8	846
Have you ever stood for election in an association, club or organisation outside of school?	86.5	13.5	846

Two in five respondents (40.8%) had participated in an organisational election, whereas approximately one in eight (13.5%) had stood for election in organisations.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter's organisational participation, those who had voted in an organisation were more likely to feel politically capable (31%) than those who had not voted (18%), $\chi^2(2)=20.28^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had voted in an

organisation were more likely to feel politically informed (14%) than those who had not voted (5%), $\chi^2(2)=28.54^{***}$.

Those who had stood in an organisational election were more likely to feel politically capable (37%) than those who had not stood (22%), $\chi^2(2)=13.01^{*}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had stood in an organisational election were more likely to feel politically informed (15%) than those who had not stood (8%), $\chi^2(2)=8.46^{***}$.

In respect of internal efficacy, those who participated in organisational elections were more likely to have high internal efficacy than those who did not participation. These relationships were statistically significant for both voting and election candidacy.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter's organisational voting participation and external efficacy, those who had voted in an organisational election were slightly more likely to feel politically influential (27%) than those who had not voted (25%), $\chi^2(2)=0.56^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had voted in an organisational election were more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those who had not voted (24%), $\chi^2(2)=1.73^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter's candidacy in an organisational election and external efficacy, those who had stood in an organisational election were more likely to feel politically influential (31%) than those who had not (25%), $\chi^2(2)=1.86^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had stood in an organisational election were more likely to consider the government responsive (27%) than those who had not stood (26%), $\chi^2(2)=1.56^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

Threshold voters who voted and contested in organisational elections were more likely to have high external efficacy on both items than those who did not vote or contest. However, there was not a statistically significant relationship in either instance.

8.7 Religious Participation: Hypothesised Effect

In relation to religiosity, the traditionally strong ties of the Catholic Church in Ireland have weakened in recent decades (O' Leary, 2004). While weekly church attendance fell by almost 10 per cent between 1986 and 1996; in the subsequent decade it fell by over 30 per cent (Coakley 2010: 46). According to O' Leary (2004: 102) this has forced contemporary Irish citizens to take more control of their social environment:

> We're escaping from the oppression of church influence, but we're also losing the vast network of services and spaces, the community focus that the church provided. We now

> have to provide that ourselves, for the first time to start owning our own state, to become adults rather than the adolescents we've been trained to be over the years.

This pattern is relevant for political considerations in Ireland, as the Catholic Church and state have been conventionally intertwined since the state's independence, with the church traditionally playing a significant role in political issues (Coakley, 2010).

While religious denomination is usually determined by an individual's parents, as one moves through the latter stages of adolescence a distinct sense of religiosity and religious attachment may develop. Wu (2003: 736) identified elements of religious association which may influence an individual's political considerations: group cohesion arising from religious activity; identification arising from affiliation; and instruction provided by religious teachings. The religious aspect of one's life provides opportunities for collective learning as is the case in other organisations. Engagement in religious practice may influence the appraisal of individual or group potency. Following earlier findings on the civic training potential of religious institutions (Verba *et al.* 1995), Andolina *et al.* (2003: 279) observed that the frequency of attendance at religious services among young adults in America was associated with more active involvement in civic and electoral participation. In explaining the opportunities which arise from religious involvement they proposed that attendance at religious services creates encouragement for communal identification, and opportunities for political participation through interpersonal contacts.

Religious identification may aid the understanding of political affairs, if used as a moral compass on ethical matters and in forming political opinions. Regular attendance at religious services is likely to bolster perceptions of social capacity, social connectedness, and mutual understanding, which bolster internal political efficacy. These effects are related to internal rather than external efficacy. There is not a hypothesised effect of religious attendance on external efficacy.

- *Internal: H10: In comparing threshold voters, those who are more frequent attendees at religious services will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are less frequent attendees at religious services.*
- *External: H10: In comparing threshold voters, as their frequency of attending religious service changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Religious Participation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The measure of religious participation was focussed on attendance at religious service. While this did not account for the differential emphasis on attendance at religious service across denominations, the item reflects the standard measure in existing national surveys. A caveat

on the use of this item is that regular attendance at religious services at this stage in life may not be an accurate indicator of one's engagement or participation. In some instances it may reflect passive attendance or parental pressure.

Table 8.6. Religious Participation Item Response

Response Percentage	Never	Less Frequently	Once a year	Several times a year	Once a month	2 or 3 times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	*n*
How often nowadays do you attend religious services?	14.6	6.1	10.8	19.5	5.3	9.8	32.9	1.1	817

The breakdown of response on religious attendance was quite dispersed across the response options. One in three respondents (34%) attended religious services on a weekly basis or more often, with approximately half of the respondents (49.1%) attending service on a monthly basis or more frequently. The response to this item was used to create a dichotomous variable on the criterion of whether the respondent attends religious service at least weekly (34%) or less often. The split involved in this variable appears intuitive given the weekly practice of religious services in many denominations. Response to a similar item in the ICCS indicates a lower level of attendance among threshold voters than those in early-mid adolescence. 39 per cent of the ICCS sample who responded reported attending religious services on a weekly basis or more often, and 63 per cent attending services on a monthly basis or more frequently (Cosgrove *et al*., 2011).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter's religious participation and internal efficacy, those who were weekly attendees were slightly more likely to feel politically capable (25%) than those who were not weekly attendees (23%), $\chi^2(2)=0.89^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who were weekly attendees were more likely to feel politically informed (11%) than those who were not weekly attendees (8%), $\chi^2(2)=5.79^{\wedge}$.

Threshold voters who attended religious service on a weekly basis were slightly more likely to have high internal efficacy in respect of both internal efficacy items, though these relationships were not statistically significant.

8.8 Religious Affinity: Hypothesised Effect

As attendance at religious services may not be due to personal volition, and may be the function of aforementioned parental pressure, an item was also included on threshold voters' self-reported affinity to their religious denomination. This makes it possible to distinguish between effects arising from the emphasis which one places on religious affiliation and

religious attendance. In line with the hypothesised relationship with religious participation, the effect of religiosity appears to be more intuitive for considerations of internal political efficacy rather than external efficacy in this instance. Those who feel closely aligned to a religion are likely to feel a strong sense of identification with fellow members of the congregation. As religious themes are often based in collective social processes and contexts, strong identification with a religious creed, may enhance an individual's perception of the dynamics and nature of social and political communities.

- *Internal: H11: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher religious affinity will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have a lower religious affinity.*
- *External: H11: In comparing threshold voters, as their religious affinity changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Religious Affinity: Measurement and Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The measure of religious affinity was based on a standard item which focussed on a sense of proximity to one's denomination. The response options to the item were broad in reference. The 44 respondents who were included in the 'None' category on the religious denomination item, were included in the 'Not very close' category here.

Table 8.7. Religious Affinity Item Response

Response Percentage	None/ Not very close	Somewhat close	Very close	*n*
How close do you feel to that religion or denomination?	41.2	44.1	14.7	818

Almost three in five respondents (58.5%) considered themselves 'Somewhat' or 'Very close' to their religious denomination. A sizeable minority reported little or no sense of religious affinity.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' religious affinity and internal efficacy, those who had high religious affinity were most likely to feel politically capable (32%), followed by: those who had low affinity (23%); and moderate affinity (22%), $\chi^2(4)=5.22$ $^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high religious affinity were more likely to feel politically informed (15%) than those with a moderate or low political affinity (8%), $\chi^2(4)=7.90$ $^{\wedge}$.

In relation to religious affinity, threshold voters who had high religious affinity were more likely to have high internal efficacy than other respondents, though these differentials were not statistically significant.

8.9 Friend Politicisation: Hypothesised Effect

The extent of political interest and discussion among threshold voters and their friends is likely to inform individual and group perceptions of the political world. The effect of peer influence on political efficacy is contextualised by the importance of political matters for this age group. Group encouragement toward politicisation is likely to be low relative to older age groups (Plutzer, 2002). For some, the low salience of politics among pre-adults informed that peer influence is less influential than other socialisation agents such as family or school (Sibliger, 1977: 14). Tedin (1980: 136) captured what he considered to be a paradox associated with peer political socialisation. As individuals emerge into adolescence they are less dependent on the socialisation of school and family. However, increasing interaction with peers occurs at a time when there is "little left to teach in a field which has largely been pre-empted by earlier socialisation". While a direct measure of friends' efficacy would be a valuable for analysis, the current methodology does not permit this, as it would have involved a much more demanding survey design.

In the peer environment, while each member may choose topics of conversation, the group is likely to be mutually enforcing in respect of what is discussed and of interest. In cognisance of this group reinforcement effect, the more frequently politics is discussed among friends, the more comfortable and competent an individual will feel in relation to the political world. An individual's understanding of the political world, can be vindicated through the group, or reviewed in line with the confluence of opinions. Wells and Dudash's (2007: 1282) findings noted that while young people may source information through various media, they "gain a great deal of their political knowledge through their political talk with others".

Among adult age groups, the positive relationship between political discussion and internal efficacy has been observed (Kenski and Stroud, 2006). In observing the effects of interpersonal communication on internal rather than external efficacy among adults, Lee Kaid *et al.* (2007: 1107) called for a greater understanding of this area hypothesising that; "young voters may be particularly susceptible to the influences of interpersonal communication because of the importance of peer pressures". In their study of adolescent students in America, Langton and Karns (1969: 822) found a positive effect of the frequency of political discussion with friends on a generic measure of political efficacy. This relationship was particularly prominent among those who reported a high sense of political efficacy. In his

study of adolescents, Schulz (2005: 14) found a consistently strong effect between political discussion and feelings of internal efficacy. However, he points to the likely reciprocal effects involved as "discussing politics may require certain levels of confidence in one's own ability to do so".

As is the case with other socialisation agents, the frequency of political discussion is not indicative of how politics is discussed, which is not captured in this study. While Kenski and Stroud (2006) observe a statistically significant positive effect of political discussion with family and friends on external as well as internal efficacy, it is the tone of discussion rather than the frequency which will dictate the nature of this relationship.

- *Internal: H12: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion with friends will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have less frequent political discussions with friends.*
- *External: H12: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion with friends will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have less frequent political discussion with friends.*
- *External: H12a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have more frequent political discussion with friends will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have less frequent political discussion with friends.*

Friend Politicisation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The item on frequency of political discussion with friends provided a time-based measure of this variable. This approach to friend politicisation did not capture the intensity of discussion, or the significance attached to such discussion by the respondent. Moreover, the focus of the item was on 'political issues' which is necessarily broad.

Table 8.8. Friend Politicisation Item Response

Response Percentage	Never	Less than once a week	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day	*n*
In general, how often do you talk about political issues with your friends?	50.9	30.0	9.0	8.6	1.5	849

Fewer than one in five respondents (19.1%) reported talking to friends about political issues on a weekly basis or more frequently. The friend environment was evidently less politicised than the school (29.9%) or home (45%) environment in terms of weekly political discussion. More interesting was the proportion of respondents who never talk to friends about political issues (50.9%). The proportion of respondents who were not engaged in political discussion with peers was much greater than was the case in the school (32.7%) and home (27%) environment.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' friend politicisation with internal efficacy, those who had more than weekly political discussion with friends were more likely to feel politically capable (47%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (19%), $\chi^2(4)=54.54^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had more than weekly political discussion were more likely to feel politically informed (29%) than those who had less than weekly discussion (5%), $\chi^2(4)=91.85^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' friend politicisation with external efficacy, those who had more than weekly political discussion with friends were more likely to feel politically influential (36%) than those who had less than weekly political discussion with friends (23%), $\chi^2(4)=18.91^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had more than weekly political discussion with friends were more likely to consider the government responsive (39%) than those who had less than weekly political discussion with friends (23%), $\chi^2(4)=17.76^{**}$.

In the case of friend politicisation, threshold voters who had more than weekly political discussion with friends were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy on all items. Moreover these relationships were statistically significant in the bivariate analysis.

8.10 Friend Political Interest: Hypothesised Effect

Friends are not necessarily a homogenous group in terms of political interest, political disposition, or political partisanship. However, they are likely to be a sounding board on which adolescents test their priorities and attitudes. The power structure in a peer relationship may be less hierarchical than in the family and school contexts and thereby offers greater potential for more two-way rather than one-way socialisation (Tedin, 1980).The initiation of political participation among young people is often due to peer involvement, i.e. social motivations, based on moral support from others on a particular cause (Haste, 2010: 173). Alternatively, the group dynamic may limit the considerations and activities which an individual would otherwise tend toward, which Rosenberg (1954) referred to as a 'negative group norm' effect.

Campbell (1980: 325, citing Festinger, Schacter and Back, 1950), identified two avenues through which peer groups may affect political attitudes: group valence; and means control. Group valence refers to the social anchor which is provided by the group. Individual identities and attitudes are affected by group affirmations. Means control refers to the mediating effects which a group has on the goals of its members. In his own analysis of racial and political

attitudes among adolescents Campbell (1980: 324) deduced that peer influence was weak. He outlined conditions under which such influence would increase: when an attitude has high visibility; when peers are politically involved; and when the individual's political involvement is either high or low. It is anticipated that a positive relationship exists between a threshold voters' peer political interest and their level of internal political efficacy.

The degree of peer political interest is not informative of their political perspective, i.e., whether they are positive or negative on political matters. The anticipation is that the level of peer political interest will not directly affect perceptions of threshold voter external political efficacy.

- *Internal: H13: In comparing threshold voters, those with more politically interested friends will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those with less politically interested friends.*
- *External: H13: In comparing threshold voters, as their friends' political interest changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Friend Political Interest: Measurement and Distribution

The measure of friends' interest in politics relied on respondent relay rather than a direct sourcing of such information. This indirect relay risks response being dictated by the respondent's reflection of her own interest on her immediate social circle.

Table 8.9. Friend Political Interest Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Neither u. nor i.	Fairly interested	Very interested	*n*
How interested would you say your friends are in politics?	25.6	42.9	19.4	11.8	0.2	839

Approximately one in eight respondents (12%) reported that their friends were 'Fairly' or 'Very interested' in politics. At the other end, one in four (25.6%) reported that their friends were 'Not at all interested' in politics. It is evident that many respondents who reported 'Never' discussing politics with friends were able to suggest a level of political interest on their friends' behalf. While this may indicate a weakness of the friend interest measure, it is more likely to highlight that individuals interact on political matters which they do not necessarily consider political when asked about their level of political discussion. For instance an impression of a friend's political interest may be formed by observing her choice of school

subjects, the books she reads, her level of attention to current affairs, while not necessarily discussing politics with her.[103]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' friend political interest and internal efficacy, those with politically interested friends were more likely to feel politically capable (33%) than those with politically uninterested friends (20%), $\chi^2(4)=36.70^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with politically interested friends were more likely to feel politically informed (16%) than those with politically uninterested friends (7%). Notably, those with politically interested friends were less likely to feel politically uninformed (55%) than those with politically uninterested friends (74%), $\chi^2(4)=29.77^{***}$.

Threshold voters with friends of high political interest were more likely to have high internal efficacy in respect of both items, than those who had friends of low political interest. These bivariate relationships were also statistically significant.

8.11. Internal Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Associational Socialisation Model

The results of multivariate regression of associational environment variables are presented in Table 8.10.[104] In this analysis, respondents' reactions to organisational decisions were found to positively relate to internal efficacy when demographic factors were controlled. However, when other organisational variables were considered, this relationship lost strength and statistically significance. As anticipated, perceived organisational responsiveness was not significantly related to threshold voters' internal efficacy.

Of the various organisational involvements considered, involvement in a voluntary organisation was the only one which was significantly related to threshold voter internal efficacy. It appears that engaging in such organisations is a boost to internal efficacy. While the positive relationship between candidacy in an organisational election and internal efficacy lost statistical significance when peer effects were controlled, the experience of voting in an organisational election remained a positive predictor of internal efficacy.

The measures of the peer political environment demonstrate positive relation with threshold voter internal efficacy. The level of friend politicisation (as measured by political discussion

[103] Threshold voters' tended to ascribe higher political interest to themselves than to their friends. While almost a third of respondents (32%) expressed a high level of political interest ('Fairly' or 'Very interested) this is nearly three times the percentage who suggested the same for their friends.

[104] The variable on involvement in a recreational organisation (Sport/Leisure/Cultural) was not included in the multiple regression analysis, as its inclusion leads to a problem of multicollinearity between predictor variables. This arose as the 'number of organisational involvements' variable is an additive scale of the various organisational engagements. As it did not have a significant relationship with internal efficacy in bivariate regression, its omission is not likely to be of substantive significance.

with friends) and their perceived political interest were statistically significant predictors. As in the case of family and school environments, the friend politicisation variable demonstrates a strong positive effect. All of these relationships held when respondent external efficacy was controlled, as evident in the right hand column of Table 8.10.

Aspects of respondent religious engagement and religious affinity did not appear to be significantly related to threshold voter internal efficacy, when other associational factors were controlled. Moreover, the number of organisational involvements was not found to be a significant predictor of internal efficacy.[105]

The effect of gender and village residence on threshold voters' internal efficacy remained significant, after controlling for associational factors. When aspects of organisational involvement were controlled, the socio-economic status variable lost effect, i.e., the difference between higher occupational categories and lower occupational categories became insignificant. This demonstrates that the effect of static elements on one's life, such as socio-economic status, can be mediated by one's involvement in social learning environments which provide experiences of one's social and collective capacity.

While the Adjusted R Square value increased substantively from 2.8% to 23.2% when associational variables are considered along with demographics, this was largely due to the friend politicisation variable, as also pertained in the family and school models of analysis. The effect size of this relationship was much greater than that of voluntary organisation involvement; organisational voting; or friends' political interest.

[Table Overleaf]

[105] A multivariate analysis was conducted without this 'number of organisational involvements', which did not reveal any difference in the stated relations of other variables. This also pertained for the multiple regression of associational variables on external efficacy.

Table 8.10. Associational Socialisation Model Internal Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.065	-.936***	-.889***
GENDER	.078*	.077*	.076*
Village	.091*	.092**	.092**
Non-Manual	-.080*	-.049	-.041
Skilled Manual	-.107**	-.044	-.036
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.107**	-.054	-.048
ORG. RESPONSIVENESS		-.031	-.036
REACTION ORG.		.050	.046
YOUTH ORG. INVOLVEMENT		.040	.038
RELIGIOUS ORG. INVOLVEMENT		.064	.063
VOLUNTARY ORG. INVOLVEMENT		.120**	.120**
NUMBER ORG. INVOLVEMENTS		-.095	-.090
ORG. VOTING		.104**	.105**
ORG. CANDIDACY		.059	.059
WEEKLY REL. PARTICIPATION		.029	.027
Moderate Rel. Affinity [106]		-.005	-.007
High Rel. Affinity		.039	.037
FRIEND POLITICISATION		.348***	.341***
FRIEND POL. INTEREST		.097**	.090*
EXTERNAL EFFICACY			.083*
n	716	716	716
R	.187	.502	.508
R Square	.035	.252	.258
R Square Change	.035***	.151***	.006*
Adjusted R Square	.028	.232	.238
ANOVA F	5.146***	13.027***	12.752***
Durbin Watson			1.993

8.12 External Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Associational Socialisation Model

The results of the multivariate regression of associational variables on respondent external efficacy are presented in Table 8.11. The perception of organisational authorities' responsiveness was not significantly related to external efficacy, when the effects of demographic variables were controlled.

As anticipated, reaction to organisational decisions and all variables relating to organisational participation and involvement were not significantly related to respondents' external efficacy,

[106] The religious affinity variable was used to create two dummy variables, with 'No religion/Not very close' respondents in the base (unspecified) category, with those who answered 'Fairly close' as referent group in the Moderate Rel. Affinity variable, and those who replied 'Very close' as the referent group in the High Rel. Affinity variable.

including measures of religious involvement and affinity. The hypothesised effect of organisational candidacy was also not evident in the analysis. The only variables in this model which demonstrated a significant relationship with external efficacy were the measures of friend politicisation, and friend interest (at the α=.10 level). These positive effects are substantively small. The relationship between friend politicisation and threshold voter external efficacy was partly due to the relationship of both variables to internal efficacy. The relationship lost strength and statistical significance when respondent internal efficacy is controlled in the third column of Table 8.11. The positive relationship between perceived friend political interest and external efficacy was not anticipated. The lack of a measure capturing the tone of political outlook of friends would clarify the particular cause of this relationship, albeit it was a relatively small one, which is not significant at the α=.10 level.[107]

The effect of demographic variables on external efficacy was not affected by the consideration of associational aspects of the threshold voter. The inclusion of associational variables with demographic variables in an explanatory model of threshold voter external efficacy had negligible consequence. The adjusted R. Square value indicated an increase from 3% to 4.6% of external efficacy variance explained. This in itself was not surprising as the variables included in analysis were more related to the internal dimension of efficacy.

[Table Overleaf]

[107] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' friend political interest and external efficacy, those with politically interested friends were more likely to feel politically influential (39%) than those with politically uninterested friends (21%), $\chi^2(4)=26.55^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those with politically interested friends were more likely to consider the government responsive (42%) than those with politically uninterested friends (21%), $\chi^2(4)=25.09^{***}$.

Table 8.11. Associational Socialisation Model External Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.062	-.583***	-.497**
Suburb	.106**	.105**	.104**
Non-Manual	-.116**	-.106**	-.102**
Skilled Manual	-.106**	-.086*	-.082*
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.096*	-.073^	-.067^
PARENT UMEMPLOYED	-.054	-.060	-.060
ORG. RESPONSIVENESS		.043	.047
REACTION ORG.		.053	.049
YOUTH ORG. INVOLVEMENT		.025	.021
RELIGIOUS ORG. INVOLVEMENT		.011	.006
VOLUNTARY ORG. INVOLVEMENT		-.006	-.016
NUMBER ORG. INVOLVEMENTS		-.035	-.030
ORG. VOTING		-.016	-.027
ORG. CANDIDACY		.004	-.002
WEEKLY REL. PARTIC		.028	.025
Moderate Rel. Affinity		.029	.030
High Rel. Affinity		.026	.022
FRIEND POLITICISATION		.095*	.059
FRIEND POL. INTEREST		.081^	.072^
INTERNAL EFFICACY			.103*
n	716	716	716
R	.192	.264	.279
R Square	.037	.070	.078
R Square Change	.037***	.021***	.008*
Adjusted R Square	.030	.046	.053
ANOVA F	5.417***	2.906***	3.092***
Durbin Watson			1.986

8.13 Conclusion

The variables included in the associational model of socialisation related to formative social learning contexts of the threshold voter. It was hypothesised that involvement and participation in social organisations, including religious organisations, provide the threshold voter with opportunities to test her social capacities. As such entities are likely to be less familiar and more socially diverse than the home and school environs, they represent may represent unique settings for the development of a sense of oneself socially and politically. Controlling for the significant background variables, active participation in a voluntary/charitable organisation and voting in an associational election were found to have positive effects on a threshold voter's internal efficacy. They were not found to relate to

threshold voter external efficacy. Beyond the participation of threshold voters in formal social organisations, an examination was made of the relationship if any arising from their impression of decision making therein. When the social factors which were captured in this study were taken into consideration, the impression of organisational responsiveness in decision making or the inclination to affect change in organisations did not significantly relate to threshold voters political efficacy. This pertains despite cross tabulation results which supported the hypothesised relationships before the other social variables were considered.

Religious participation and affiliation are not found to relate to either internal or external dimension of efficacy. While religious participation has been found relevant in the case of political participation in existing studies, this may be an indication of the diminished role of religion in political considerations among young Irish citizens. It is possible that religious affinity and participation in later life stages would provide a greater indication of political outlook, as the variation in religiosity may become more apparent in those stages. Moreover, the effects of religion are often found in studies of policy preference or participation. The analysis here while related to participation is somewhat tangential.

The dynamics of young people's peer groups are considered important for attitude formation. The level of political discussion with friends (as a measure of the politicisation of the group) was found to positively relate to internal and external efficacy (albeit indirectly). The relationship is particularly strong in the internal efficacy dimension. Friend's political interest is also positively related to internal efficacy (and external efficacy though below the critical level of statistical significance). To assess the significance of this relationship, it will be important to control for respondents own political interest with is likely to affect these factors. However, the relationships suggest that engagement with peers on political matters is not only associated with a higher sense of political competence, but appears to have pro-system resonance.

The effect of gender on internal efficacy and residential area effects on both dimensions remained statistically significant after associational factors were considered. However, in the case of socio-economic status while its role in internal efficacy appeared to be mitigated through associational socialisation, this was not the case in relation to external efficacy.

Considering the nature of the variables included in this model, it is not surprising that this analysis proved more powerful in accounting for threshold voter internal rather than external efficacy. However, in both instances a wider account of threshold voter organisational experience appears warranted to assess the role of socialisation in formal and informal social settings.

Chapter 9. The Political Representative Socialisation Model

9.1 Introduction

The institutional design of a state influences the manner in which citizen's political involvement is structured. The more encompassing the political system is of various political identities, the more likely it is that young people will develop in a civic culture where their parents' political values are represented somewhere in the system. This led Amna and Zetterberg (2010: 48) to suggest that children's as well as parents' political engagement may be promoted by political system design.

Ireland's Proportional Representation by Single Transferable Vote (PRSTV) electoral system is somewhat unique as a parliamentary means of converting public preference into political representation.[108] In a geographically small country, where local government has not developed significant financial independence from central government (Weeks and Quinlivan, 2009), the experience has been a particularly high level of involvement of parliamentarians (including government ministers) in constituent and local affairs. Representatives and candidates who vie to differentiate themselves, oftentimes from party colleagues, focus on building prominent local profiles through direct personal contacts. In this context the opportunity for developmental interactions with political representatives on individual and community grounds are prevalent (Marsh *et al*., 2008: 144; and Sinnott 2010: 128).

The relationship between political representatives and adolescents has been highlighted in the Literature Review. Lee Kaid *et al.* (2007: 1094, citing Freyman and McGoldrick, 2000) described this relationship as one of mutual neglect: "Candidates ignore young citizens who do not constitute a very significant or powerful voting bloc, and this segment of the electorate disengages because candidates largely ignore it and its interests". Interactions with elected representatives are unlikely to be regular for the majority of pre-adults. However, political representatives may be prominent as a symbolic and practical edifice of the system to that age group (Litt, 1963a). The experience and impression of an interaction with a representative may be formative as it represents a rare encounter with the political system. To capture the nature of interaction with political representatives, the variables included in this analysis relate to: experience of contact; contact satisfaction; and type/purpose of contact.

[108] Malta is the only other state to use PRSTV for elections to the lower house of national parliament.

9.2 Political Representative Contact: Hypothesised Effect

Contact with a politician may provide an opportunity to receive more information about the political system. Encounters with politicians may inform the citizen of the nature of the political world, and of their role within it. Considering their expertise and acumen in political matters, political representatives may also serve as role models for young citizens in this domain, similar to the mantle identified by Beaumont (2010) in wider social contexts. A positive relationship is therefore anticipated between contact with political representatives and internal political efficacy.

Experiencing or not experiencing contact with a political representative is not likely to determine the perception of political efficacy in its own right. It may be that that simply experiencing contact with a politician is proof of their accessibility to adolescents. However, the perception of system responsiveness is more likely to arise from the content of the interaction, and threshold voters' impression of it. As contact satisfaction is measured discretely in this analysis, a relationship between contact with political representatives and a sense of external efficacy is not hypothesised.

- *Internal: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who experienced contact with a political representative will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who did not experience contact with a political representative.*
- *External: H1: In comparing threshold voters, as their experience of contact with a political representative changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Political Representative Contact: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The focus of the item on interaction with political agents was specific to elected representatives. While a wider focus could encompass contact with civil servants and other officials, elected representatives are a more obvious reference point at this stage of the life cycle. The item on interaction with elected politicians relates to (but is undifferentiated between) local, parliamentary, and European Parliament representatives. In anticipation that some respondents would not be sure whether they had contact with such a representative, a 'Don't know' response was provided for respondents. As the variable in subsequent analysis relates to the experience of known contact with political representatives, those who responded with 'Don't know' (58 respondents- or 6.8% of respondents) are located in the No category here. [Table Overleaf]

Table 9.1. Political Representative Contact Item Response

Response Percentage	No	Yes	*n*
Have you ever met or had contact with any TDs, MEPs, Senators, or Local Councillors?	30.8	69.2	848

More than two-thirds of the respondents (69.2%) reported having had contact with an elected politician. In a National Youth Council of Ireland (2009) study only 14% of 18-21 year old respondents responded 'yes' when asked 'Have you ever had any personal communication with your local T.D./councillor?' The figure was higher (25%) for respondents aged 22-25 years.[109]

In cross tabulation of threshold voters' experience of contact with a political representative and internal efficacy, those who had contact with a politician were more likely to feel politically capable (28%) than those who did not have contact (13%), $\chi^2(2)=38.13^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had contact with a politician were more likely to feel politically informed (10%) than those who did not have contact (5%). Notably, those who had contact were less likely to feel politically uninformed (64%) than those who did not have contact (77%), $\chi^2(2)=13.95^{**}$.

In respect of internal efficacy, those who had experienced contact with a political representative were more likely to have high efficacy than those who did not experience such contact. This differential was statistically significant for both internal efficacy items.

9.3 Satisfaction with Representative Contact: Hypothesised Effect

If interactions with political representatives are opportunities to socialise adolescents to the world of politics, the impressions created from such encounters are of relevance for how the threshold voter perceives the political system and her influence within it. As interactions with political representatives are relatively infrequent at this stage of the life cycle, meeting representatives may help to make politics more tangible and manageable if they appear as relatively ordinary and accessible people (Beaumont, 2010: 544). A positive experience from such meetings may therefore increase the comprehensibility of the political world.

Those who are satisfied with their interaction may take this as an indication of the responsiveness of the system responsiveness. In their analysis of new media interactions,

[109] In response to a survey item on self-initiated contact with TDs , Councillors or Senators in the preceding 5 years; only 28 per cent of INES (adult) respondents reported doing so. However, when asked if they had ever spoken to the candidate to whom they gave their first preference vote in the preceding election, 69 per cent responded in the affirmative (Marsh *et al*., 2008: 256).

Coleman *et al.* (2008: 786) denote the centrality of interactions with political representatives for perceptions of political efficacy: "A widespread lack of trust in the consequences of interactivity, often inspired by bitter experience, led participants to doubt the value of sending messages to representatives who would not respond to them". The more accessible the internet made politicians and political institutions, the more distant their non-responsiveness made them appear and the more political efficacy atrophied.

The significance of the impression created from an interaction with political representatives, is likely to vary depending on the type of meeting. Satisfaction with an interaction with a politician during a school visit or during a canvass may be less significant, than satisfaction relating to a self-initiated contact on a matter of concern to the individual. The expectation is that those who are satisfied with their contact with political representatives will express a higher level of internal and external political efficacy.

- *Internal: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who experienced a satisfactory contact with a political representative will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who did not experience a satisfactory contact with a political representative.*
- *External: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who experienced a satisfactory contact with a political representative will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who did not experience a satisfactory contact with a political representative.*

Satisfaction with Representative Contact: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with their contact with a political representative. The survey item was specific to satisfaction with 'attention' paid by the political representative. The measure focussed on considerations of the interaction itself, rather than on considerations of wider outcomes which followed from the interaction, such as the resolution of problems, though they are likely to factor in response.

Table 9.2. Satisfaction with Representative Contact Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Neither u. nor s.	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	*n*
If yes, were you satisfied with the attention which he or she gave you?	9.0	13.8	30.3	34.2	12.6	587

A minority of respondents (46.8%) were satisfied ('Fairly' or 'Very satisfied') with the attention given by political representative in contact. At the other end of the spectrum, only 9% reported being 'Not at all satisfied'. A dummy variable was created from this item on the

criterion of whether the respondent reported a satisfactory encounter with a political representative or not. Those responding with 'Fairly satisfied' and 'Very satisfied' were placed in the referent category (coded 1), and all others (including those who did not report a meeting with a political representative) were included in the base category (coded 0). The variable is a measure of whether or not the respondent reported a satisfactory interaction with a political representative. The cross tabulation is therefore insensitive to whether the respondents experiences an unsatisfactory contact or did not experience any contact. The relationship will be better viewed in the multivariate regression, which controls for experience of contact.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' experience of satisfactory contact with a politician and internal efficacy, those who had a satisfactory contact were more likely to feel politically capable (31%) than those who did not have a satisfactory contact (20%), $\chi^2(2)=15.38^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had a satisfactory contact with a politician were more likely to feel politically informed (11%) than those who did not have a satisfactory contact (7%). Notably, those who had a satisfactory contact were less likely to feel politically uninformed (63%) than those who did not have a satisfactory contact (70%), $\chi^2(2)=5.34^{\wedge}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' experience of satisfactory contact with a politician and external efficacy, those who had a satisfactory contact were more likely to feel politically influential (31%) than those who did not have a satisfactory contact (24%), $\chi^2(2)=6.13^{*}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had a satisfactory contact with a politician were more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those who did not have a satisfactory experience with a politician (24%), $\chi^2(2)=2.72^{(\text{non-sig})}$.

Threshold voters who experienced a satisfactory contact with a political representative were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy than those who did not have experience of a satisfactory contact with a political representative. This differential was statistically significant in respect of the first internal and external efficacy item.

9.4 Type of Representative Contact: Hypothesised Effect

Threshold voters have many opportunities to encounter or contact political representatives. Many post-primary schools in the course of formal civic education incorporate a visit from a political representative. This presents a formal environment for interaction, where the focus is ostensibly on education and information transfer. Outside of the formal curricula, contact with

representatives may arise through school functions, extracurricular activities, or school activities in the community.

Interaction with threshold voters will also arise in the course of politicians' electoral campaigning. Contact during political campaigns, when politicians visit residential or public areas, are likely to focus on the merits of the candidate, or candidate manifestos. On such occasions politicians may be more interested in talking to parents and those of voting age than engaging with those who have yet to reach voting age. This contact therefore represents a different dynamic to the educational-type school encounter. Among a university cohort, Lee (2006: 419) distinguished between the effects of passive and active interactions, finding that while the passive receipt of political messages had no relationship with internal efficacy, sending such messages had a positive relationship. While the causal order of this relationship may run in either direction, their findings indicate the potential importance of the context of contact. In certain instances, pre-adult individuals may be the initiators of contact with politicians in relation to political, personal, or community issues. Beyond such self-initiated and formal encounters, contact may arise in casual settings where politics is not of overt consideration, such as having a relative who happens to be a political representative.

School based political contacts are likely to increase awareness and comprehension of political matters. Self-initiated encounters indicate a certain level of political confidence and comprehension of political matters. Irrespective of the outcome, the experience of this contact is likely to be self-affirming and enhancing of one's political competence. The presence of a relative who is involved in politics may result in a higher level of familial discussion about politics or issues relating to the political world. All contacts with political representatives, however ad-hoc, are likely to increase the sense of competence which one possesses on political matters, as politics and the political system is personalised and made more tangible.

In relation to external efficacy, the impression arising from the interaction may be of greater significance. School encounters where the threshold voter is the focus of attention have the potential to enforce the attentiveness and responsiveness of the politician. Self-initiated contacts further offer the potential to increase external efficacy, as the fact that a contact arose infers a level of responsiveness or accessibility. However, the impression created of the political representative and of politics from contact may be more critical than experiencing contact in itself. The divergent effects arising from good or bad interactions with political agents were raised by the findings of Katz, Gutek, Kahn, and Barton (1975), as cited in Madsen, (1987: 575): "Those who had good experiences rated public bureaucracy no better

than did those who had no contact whatsoever. However, those who had bad experiences rated the bureaucracy substantially below the average for the uninvolved". Lee (2006) did not find an effect of passive political contact (receiving political paraphernalia) on university students' external efficacy, though he did observe a positive effect of more active contact (sending political messages) on individual's external efficacy. With contact satisfaction controlled in this model of analysis, the expectation is that there will not be a relationship between different types of contact with political representatives and threshold voters' external efficacy.

- *Internal: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who experienced contact with a political representative in their school will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who did not experience contact with a political representative in their school.*
- *External: H3: In comparing threshold voters, as their experience of contact with a political representative in school changes, their external efficacy will not change.*
- *Internal: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who experienced self-initiated contact with a political representative will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who did not experience self-initiated contact with a political representative.*
- *External: H4: In comparing threshold voters, as their experience of self-initiated contact with a political representative changes, their external efficacy will not change.*
- *Internal: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who experienced canvassing contact political representative will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who did not experience canvassing contact with a political representative.*
- *External: H5: In comparing threshold voters, as their experience of canvassing contact with a political representative changes, their external efficacy will not change.*
- *Internal: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who a political relative will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who do not have a political relative.*
- *External: H6: In comparing threshold voters, as the presence of a political relative changes, their external efficacy will not change.*

Type of Representative Contact: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The information on contact with political representative was indicated using two survey items. Having responded to the item on their contact with political representatives, respondents were asked how contact was made with politicians with response options of: 'Email'; 'Letter'; 'Phone'; 'In person'; and 'Through school'. Many respondents selected multiple responses to this item. Subsequently, respondents were asked in an open-ended item to describe their reasons for contact or meeting, and were encouraged to give detail of more than one

encounter if applicable. Responses to the two items were used to categorise the nature of contact in respect of the following contact types: school related; self-initiated; canvass related; and relative related.

In the creation of these variables, the criterion is whether the respondent has experienced that type of contact or not. Those who did not report a specific type of contact, including those who responded with 'No' and 'Don't know' to the initial contact experience item were placed in the base category (coded 0).

Table 9.3. Type of Representative Contact Item Response

Response Percentage	No	Yes	*n*
School related representative contact	66.1	33.9	840
Self-initiated representative contact	89.0	11.0	840
Canvass related representative contact	79.2	20.8	840
Relative related representative contact	98.3	1.7	840

Responses to the variables were not mutually exclusive to one another, in that some of those who have encountered politicians by means of kinship, have also met politicians in school, or have initiated contact with politicians over an issue et cetera. School related contact was the most common type with approximately one third of respondents (33.9%) reporting contact through school. While one fifth of respondents experienced canvass related contact (20.8%), a smaller proportion (11%) have initiated contact with political representatives, with only 1.7% reporting a familial relationship with a representative. These variables will be entered in further analysis as separate dichotomous variables. Cross tabulation in this case is not a good initial indicator of the relationship between each type of political contact and internal efficacy, as those who did not meet a politician, or met a politician through another means are undifferentiated. Multiple regression analysis which includes the experience of contact with a politician will clarify the relationship.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' experience of school contact with a politician and internal efficacy, those who experienced contact with a politician in school were more likely to feel politically capable (28%) than those who did not experience contact with a politician in school (22%), $\chi^2(2)=7.56^*$. On the second internal efficacy item, there was neither a substantially nor a statistically significant differential.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' experience of self-initiated contact with a politician and internal efficacy, those who experienced self-initiated contact with a politician were more

likely to feel politically capable (40%) than those who did not experience self-initiate contact (22%), $\chi^2(2)=17.56^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who experienced self-initiated contacted with a politician were more likely to feel politically informed (17%) than those who did not experience self-initiate contact with a politician (8%), $\chi^2(2)=11.18^{*}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' experience of canvass contact with a politician and internal efficacy, those who experienced canvass contact were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those who did not experience canvass contact (23%), $\chi^2(2)=4.48$ (non-sig). On the second internal efficacy item, those who experienced canvass contact were slightly more likely to feel politically informed (10%) than those who did not experience canvass contact (8%). Notably, those who experienced canvass contact were less likely to feel politically uninformed (59%) than those who did not experience canvass contact (70%), $\chi^2(2)=7.39^{*}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voter' contact with a political relative and internal efficacy, those who experienced contact with a relative who is a politician were more likely to feel politically capable (50%) than those who did not experience such contact (23%), $\chi^2(2)=6.13^{*}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who experienced contact with a relative who is a politician were more likely to feel politically informed (36%) than those who did not experience such contact (8%), $\chi^2(2)=13.23^{***}$.[110]

In the case of all types of contact with political representatives, those who had experienced a contact were more likely to have high internal efficacy than those who did not experience a contact. In the case of self-initiated contact and relation related contact there differentials were statistically significant for both internal efficacy items. For the other types of contact, the differentials were significant in the case of one internal efficacy item, but not the other.

9.5 Internal Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Representative Socialisation Model

Table 9.4 presents the results of the multivariate regression analysis of variables in the political representative socialisation model. In line with hypothesised expectations the experience of contact with a political representative was positively related to threshold voters' internal efficacy. With the experience of contact controlled, in the assessment of different types of contact with representatives, it appears that the experience of self-initiated contact and relation related contact were specifically positive influences on threshold voter internal efficacy. The other types of political contact; school and canvass related contact were not

[110] In both of these cross tabulation 33.3% of cells (i.e., 2 cells) have expected counts less than five, which may limit the power of a χ^2 test. However the lowest expected count was greater than 1 in both instances.

significantly related to internal efficacy at the α=.05 level, though the relationship with canvass related contact was significant at the α=.10 level. The impression which threshold voters took from their contact with representatives, as measured by satisfaction with attention paid, was not significantly related to respondents' internal efficacy.

When all representative socialisation variables were included in analysis (in the second column of regression coefficients), it is evident that the effects of demographic variables: gender, village residence; and socio-economic status, remained significant. When representative contact is introduced to the analysis (in the second block, which is not presented in Table 9.4) the effects of socio-economic status were slightly weakened, though the relationship remained relatively stable as other considerations of representative socialisation were added to the analysis. It is evident that the effect of demographic factors on internal efficacy were somewhat weakened, when respondents' external efficacy is controlled for (third column).

In accounting for threshold voter internal efficacy, the addition of representative socialisation variables to demographic variables increases the percentage of variance explained from 3% to 9.6%. The addition of political contact alone adds 4% in the second block of entry (not reported in Table 9.4). However, as outlined in the second column, when all the variables are entered in the model, the effect of self-initiated contact is slightly higher than simply having experienced contact with a political representative.

[Table Overleaf]

Table 9.4. Representative Socialisation Model Int. Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.040	-.289***	-.290***
GENDER	.102**	.108**	.106**
Village	.077*	.080*	.083*
Non-Manual	-.086*	-.067^	-.055
Skilled Manual	-.106**	-.080*	-.068^
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.102**	-.088*	-.077*
POL. REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT		.108*	.108*
SATISFACTORY CONTACT		.024	.023
SCHOOL CONTACT		.066	.057
SELF-INITIATED CONTACT		.149***	.140***
CANVASS CONTACT		.076^	.076^
RELATION CONTACT		.070*	.069*
EXTERNAL EFFICACY			.127***
n	763	763	763
R	.190	.330	.353
R Square	.036	.109	.125
R Square Change	.036***	.025***	.016***
Adjusted R Square	.030	.096	.111
ANOVA F	5.653***	8.354***	8.902***
Durbin Watson			1.945

9.6 External Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Representative Socialisation Model

The results of the multivariate regression of representative socialisation variables on external efficacy are presented in Table 9.5. The hypothesised positive relationship between respondent satisfaction with representative contact and external efficacy was extremely small and did not reach significance in the multivariate model of analysis. In line with expectations simply experiencing political contact did not have a significant relationship with external efficacy. Moreover, the specific types of contact as captured in this design were not significant predictors of respondent external efficacy. While self-initiated contact has a positive regression coefficient when all representative socialisation variables are included, when respondent internal efficacy is controlled (in the third column of Table 9.5), this relationship lost significance, and in fact changed polarity.[111] While the effects were weak and

[111] In cross tabulation of threshold voters' experience of self-initiated contact with a politician and external efficacy, those who experienced self-initiated contact with a politician were more likely to feel politically influential (38%) than those who did not experience such contact (24%), $\chi^2(2)=8.02^*$. On the second external efficacy item, those who experienced self-initiated contact with a politician were slightly more likely to consider

not statistically significant, it is interesting to note that when respondents' internal efficacy was controlled, school and relation contact were positively related to external efficacy, whereas self-initiated and canvass contact were negatively related to external efficacy.

The effect of socio-economic status, while slightly weakened in effect size by the addition of representative socialisation variables, remained significant. While the parent unemployed variable was not significant when introduced to the model, when respondent internal efficacy was controlled, its negative effect becomes significant at the α=.10 level. Irrespective of socialisation through contact with political representatives, those from suburban backgrounds remained significantly higher in external efficacy than those from other backgrounds.

Considering the lack of significant effects of variables of political representative interaction, it is not surprising that their addition to demographic factors negligibly increased the explanation of threshold voter external efficacy. The Adjusted R Square value indicated an increase from 2.9% to 3.1%. [Table Overleaf]

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the government responsive (28%) than those who did not experience such contact (26%). Notably, those who experienced self-initiated contact were less likely to consider the government unresponsive (48%) than those who did not have such contact (62%), $\chi^2(2)=9.88^{**}$.

Table 9.5. Representative Socialisation Model Ext. Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.060.	-.015	.012
Suburb	.111**	.109**	.109**
Non-Manual	-.103**	-.100**	-.090*
Skilled Manual	-.098**	-.093*	-.082*
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.090*	-.087*	-.073*
PARENT UNEMPLOYED	-.058	-.056	-.062^
POL. REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT		.003	-.014
SATISFACTORY CONTACT		.009	.006
SCHOOL CONTACT		.060	.054
SELF-INITIATED CONTACT		.067^	.047
CANVASS CONTACT		-.006	-.017
RELATION CONTACT		.006	-.004
INTERNAL EFFICACY			.140***
n	763	763	763
R	.187	.212	.250
R Square	.035	.045	.062
R Square Change	.035***	.007	.018***
Adjusted R Square	.029	.031	.047
ANOVA F	5.509***	3.202***	4.165***
Durbin Watson			1.937

9.7 Conclusion

Given the relative lack of political involvement and mobilisation of threshold voters, direct contacts with political representatives are potentially formative experiences; experiences through which citizens can explore their understanding of political matters and appraise the accessibility and responsibility of the political system. The results of the multiple regression analyses here did not detect a substantial role for such interactions among threshold voters at present. The contact variables included in this model were more robust in accounting for variation in internal efficacy than in external efficacy. In relation to internal efficacy the three variables which demonstrate positive relationships with threshold voter internal efficacy are the experience of having contact with a political representative, and beyond such contact, two specific types of contact: self-initiated and relation contact. It is possible that the direction of causation is reversed from internal efficacy to the contact related variable in the case of the self-initiated contact variable, as taking it upon oneself to contact a politician is demonstrative of a degree of political self-confidence to start with. In relation to external efficacy, the

measures included here do not suggest an effect between political representative socialisation and external efficacy.

The effects of demographic variables on internal and external efficacy retain significance after the effects of socialisation through political representative contact are included in analysis. The relative lack of political interaction between threshold voters and the political system is considered important in political socialisation research. First-hand contact with politicians would therefore have been expected to have had an effect on threshold voters' impressions of the system, i.e. external efficacy. The cursory nature of many of the contacts detailed by respondents suggests that threshold voters are not subject to intensive mobilisation which could affect their sense of political effect. The principal theorised political socialisation agents have been analysed with statistically significant effects found in most models on each efficacy dimension. The next section looks at the effects of personal attitudes on political efficacy dimensions.

Chapter 10. The Personal Attributes Model

10.1 Introduction

Beyond the effects of socialisation environments threshold voters' efficacy is likely to be influenced by aspects of their personality, i.e. their personal attributes. Such personal attributes are likely to be influenced by the socialisation process of political efficacy, as well as influencing the socialisation of efficacy in these environments. Social learning (non-political and political) accumulated in interactive environments affect the broad personal development of the individual. The extent of this interaction will be assessed in multi-model regression analysis in Chapter 12. This model looks at the relationships between personal attributes which are considered to be of relevance for the development of internal and external political efficacy.

In some instances such as life satisfaction it is possible to hypothesise a significant effect on internal and external political efficacy dimensions, in other instances an effect is anticipated in relation to one dimension. Variables in the model include: personal efficacy; life satisfaction; social trust; institutional trust; and normative youth influence in decision making processes. As was the case in socialisation agent analyses the effect of demographic variables is controlled in the multivariate regression analyses.

10.2 Personal Efficacy: Hypothesised Effect

Personal efficacy or the general self-perception of potency by an individual is central to how she interacts in social settings. In assessing the effects of personality traits on political engagement Rosenberg (1962: 210) noted how perceived 'interpersonal threats' and 'lack of confidence in interpersonal impact' served to undermine individuals' political engagement; "It appears to be that the psychological problems of the person with low self-esteem tend to turn his interests *inward*". These factors are of particular importance in an environmental setting which is unfamiliar to individuals, and populated with others who appear to be relatively more experienced, as in the case for most young people and politics. The sense of mastery and comfort which one brings to bear in social encounters is of relevance in consideration of political contexts.

Research which looks at internal efficacy in political science (Karlsson and Sohl, 2010) and political communications literature (Pinquart *et al.*, 2004), acknowledged Bandura's (1977, 1995, 1997) conception of general and domain-specific efficacy. Bandura (1997) theorised that individuals have a general sense of self-efficacy which they carry in various areas of life.

Nonetheless, he clarified that assessing the effects of self-efficacy is best considered using domain-specific measures as individuals' perceptions will vary according to context. In his discussion of the political science definition of 'political efficacy' and the social-psychology definition of 'political self-efficacy', Morrell (2005: 56) highlighted the nuance in terminology across disciplines:

> The similarities are so remarkable that I would argue that self efficacy and political efficacy are both aspects of the same concept, the main differences being that political efficacy is less general than self-efficacy and that political scientists have developed the two separate components of internal and external efficacy. These separate components, however, both relate to the idea of self-efficacy since they indicate the beliefs people have about their ability to influence politics.

In their study of those in mid-adolescence, Bynner *et al.* (2003: 321) observed a weak, yet positive, correlation between personal efficacy and political engagement, which is generally associated with internal political efficacy. Anderson (2010) and Pinquart *et al.*, (2004) identified the positive effect of personal efficacy on political efficacy, while Pinquart (2004: 97) *et al.* emphasised the value of boosting adolescents with low personal self-efficacy beliefs in order to cope with evolving political demands. A positive relationship between levels of personal and internal political efficacy is therefore anticipated.

One's sense of self-efficacy or assurance is a self-reflection and in its nature it is not a reflection on the external political environment. Lopes *et al.* (2009) found a strong relationship between personal efficacy and student efficacy among 13-14 year olds in the United Kingdom. This finding has significance on two fronts: the general sense of efficacy which an adolescent possesses may be carried into the various environments in which they operate including the political; it is necessary to consider respondent's personal efficacy when analysing the effect of home, school, or organisational socialisation in this current analysis. While an individual's personal competence may lead to a perception of responsiveness of all external decision makers, this effect is likely to be indirect, and based on the relationship with internal political efficacy. Therefore a relationship between personal efficacy and external efficacy is not hypothesised.

- *Internal: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher personal efficacy will be more likely to have higher internal political efficacy than those who have lower personal efficacy.*
- *External: H1: In comparing threshold voters, as their personal efficacy changes, their external political efficacy will not change.*

Personal Efficacy: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The items presented on personal efficacy were those featured in Schwarzer and Jerusalem's (1995) general self-efficacy scale. The items were presented in two separate clusters in the questionnaire to lower the risk of response set bias as the items are all positively worded statements. While some of the items tend to be close to the content and consideration involved in others, the entire range of items were included in the questionnaire.

Table 10.1. Personal Efficacy Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all true	Not very true	Neither u. nor t.	Fairly true	Very true	*n*
1. I manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	0.8	4.0	7.5	65.4	22.2	848
2. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events	1.1	12.3	17.0	53.3	16.3	846
3. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations	2.6	13.1	28.7	46.0	9.6	847
4. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort	0.8	3.4	9.1	62.3	24.4	848
5. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	3.8	14.9	18.4	49.5	13.4	848
6. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions	2.1	13.8	25.2	48.1	10.7	848
7. I can usually handle whatever comes my way	0.9	8.8	21.1	54.7	14.4	848
8. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	0.7	6.2	19.3	57.6	16.1	849
9. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want	2.3	15.2	29.3	43.4	10.0	844
10. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals	2.8	20.2	20.0	45.6	11.4	843

A majority of the respondents agreed with each of the personal efficacy items, though there is evident variation in the proportion of those who expressed high personal efficacy across statements ('Fairly' or 'Very true'). The items were used to construct a scale measure of personal efficacy, as in the existing research.[112]

[112] This measure was constructed using factor scores from principal axis factoring of the items. Eight items are included in this measure, as the latter two items in Table 10.1 did not load on the same factor as other items, and did not produce a clear factor on their own. A factor extracted using the first eight items in the table had an eigenvalue of 2.842, and explained 35.5% of item variance. All item communalities and item loadings were above .3 ($p<.05$), as were inter-item correlation coefficients and corrected item-total correlation coefficients. Scale reliability of these eight items produced an unstandardised Cronbach's Alpha value of .810, based on 841 respondents. Multicollinearity of items was not evident from the inter-item correlation coefficients, which were all below .8 ($p<.05$, sig. 1-tailed). These scores were created using a regression method, with Listwise deletion of cases, where those who have missing values on one item were not assigned a value for the personal efficacy variable.

In the cross tabulation of personal efficacy, the item with the highest factor loading was used, which is item seven in Table 10.1. In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' personal efficacy and internal political efficacy, those who had a high belief that they can handle things in general were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those who had a low belief that they can handle things in general (11%), $\chi^2(4)=19.02^{***}$. On the second internal political efficacy item, those who had high belief that they can handle things in general were more likely to feel politically informed (10%) than those who had low belief that they could handle things (1%). Notably, those who believed that they can handle things in general were less likely to feel politically uninformed (66%) than those who did not believe they could handle things in general (81%), $\chi^2(4)=11.03^{*}$. The relationship is evidently statistically significant for both internal efficacy items.

10.3 Life Satisfaction: Hypothesised Effect

The general outlook which an individual has on life and their general sense of satisfaction are likely to influence perceptions of oneself and perceptions of one's surroundings. In respect of internal efficacy, the satisfied individual, who possesses a sanguine impression of life, is likely to feel more confident in her ability to act in social settings, irrespective of context. While concentrating on internal political efficacy, Beaumont (2010: 550) observed that beliefs in abilities depend on: "rational evaluations of the effects of our actions and on our emotional states and perceptions. When we feel stressed, depressed, frustrated, or despondent, for example, we are likely to feel less self-efficacy". To the extent that these are transferrable to the realm of politics, the hypothesised relationship between life satisfaction and internal efficacy is therefore positive.

Those who feel generally satisfied are more likely to perceive the agents in their environment as benign. A positive relationship between a sense of satisfaction with life and a perceived sense of political system responsiveness is also anticipated.

- *Internal: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher life satisfaction will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have lower life satisfaction.*
- *External: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher life satisfaction will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower life satisfaction.*

Life Satisfaction: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The measure of life satisfaction was based on an standard survey item which referred to a generic sense of happiness in life circumstances.

Table 10.2. Life Satisfaction Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Neither u. nor s.	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	*n*
All things considered how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?	2.7	8.5	10.6	54.0	24.2	848

More than three quarters of the respondents (78.2%) were satisfied with their life to some extent ('Fairly' or 'Very satisfied'). While one in four (24.2%) reported being very satisfied, just over one in ten respondent (11.2%) expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with their current life circumstances, i.e., responding with 'Not at all satisfied' or 'Not very satisfied'.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' life satisfaction and internal efficacy, the same percentage of those with high and low life satisfaction (24%) felt politically capable, $\chi^2(4)=3.18^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high lift satisfaction were less likely to feel politically informed (8%) than those with low life satisfaction (11%),$\chi^2(4)=3.97^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' life satisfaction and external efficacy, those who had high life satisfaction were more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those with low life satisfaction (19%), $\chi^2(4)=8.16^{\wedge}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high life satisfaction were more likely to consider the government responsive (27%) than those who had low life satisfaction (23%), $\chi^2(4)=3.66^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

While those with high life satisfaction were more likely to have high external efficacy than those with low life satisfaction, the differential was small in respect of the internal items, none of the differentials in respect of respondents' life satisfaction were statistically significant.

10.4 Social Trust: Hypothesised Effect

In a study with Danish and South Korean adults, Kim *et al.* (2002) found a positive relationship between social trust and a measure of political efficacy which combined internal and external political efficacy items. One's belief in the benign or malignant nature of others is less likely to relate to the perception of self-competence and ability to understand political events. The hypothesised effect of social trust therefore relates to external efficacy rather than internal efficacy. Henn *et al.* (2007) did not find a significant relationship between social trust

(measured with similar items) and a measure of political efficacy among British 'attainers', however their item also comingled elements of internal and external efficacy considerations.

Social trust is central to the perception of the responsiveness of representative politicians and of the political systems. The tendency of one to be trusting of the motives and activities of others frames how social and political systems are approached. Hay (2007: 161) captured the importance of social trust for political efficacy and engagement:

> Politics is a social activity, and like most social activities it works best in situations of co-operation and trust. If we assume that others cannot be trusted, or we assume (as in the precautionary principle) that they must first demonstrate themselves trustworthy before we will reciprocate, then we foreclose the very possibility of deliberation, co-operation and the provision of collective goods. In short, we disavow politics.

For those who are not socially trusting, the path to having political effect is much more arduous, than for those who believe that people can be trusted by and large to behave as promised. Anderson (2010: 65) noted Putnam's (2000) distinction between interpersonal trust and political trust, which relates to external efficacy: "Interpersonal trust...relies on trusting other people in a way that is very different from trusting government. It requires giving people– even those we may know very little about– the benefit of the doubt" (Putnam, 2000). For those who have little political exposure or interest, social trust may be used as a short cut when considering the virtues of political actors. A positive relationship between social trust and external efficacy is anticipated.

- *Internal: H3: In comparing threshold voters, as their level of social trust changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher social trust will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower social trust.*

Social Trust: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The two items presented to respondents were the standard items used in the European Social Survey (ESS) to measure social trust. The nuance of the negative wording involved in both items involves a somewhat exacting standard of social trust. The item relating to the number of people which one can trust is referred to as 'network trust' in this case for presentation purposes. The second social trust item on the likelihood of others taking advantage is referred to as 'interpersonal trust' also for clarity. [Table Overleaf]

Table 10.3. Social Trust Item Response

Response Percentage	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither d. nor a.	Agree	Strongly agree	*n*
(Network Trust) There are only a few people I can trust completely[113]	1.5	11.0	9.6	42.6	35.2	840
(Interpersonal Trust) If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you	1.5	3.7	12.1	43.7	39.0	843

The responses to both items indicated a low level of social trust among threshold voters. Approximately four in five of the respondents (77.8%) were only trusting of a small cadre of people ('Agree' or 'Strongly agree') on the network trust item. An even higher percentage (82.7%) believed that other people would take advantage of them if they were not careful in respect of the interpersonal trust item.[114] In response to a generic item on 'trust in people', a higher proportion of those in early-mid adolescence (64 per cent) responded with 'Completely' or 'Quite a lot' (Cosgrove *et al*., 2011). The divergence in item wording and focus is again a limitation on a comparison of response between groups.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' network trust and external efficacy, the same percentage of those who had high network trust and low network trust felt politically influential (25%). However, those who had high network trust were less likely to feel politically uninfluential (55%) than those who had low network trust (60%), $\chi^2(4)=7.39^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external efficacy item, those with high network trust were more likely to feel politically influential (29%) than those with low network trust (25%), $\chi^2(4)=4.91^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' interpersonal trust and external efficacy, those who had high interpersonal trust were more likely to consider the government responsive (33%) than those with low interpersonal trust (25%), $\chi^2(4)=16.36^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, the same percentage of those who had high interpersonal trust and low interpersonal trust considered the government responsive (25%). Differences in the middle category of interpersonal trust in this instance drive a statistically significant relationship, but are not grounds for indicating a relationship from this item $\chi^2(4)=13.57^{**}$.

[113] The coding of these items was reversed when included in later regression analysis, so that higher value codes indicate a greater degree of social trust.

[114] These items are generally used in the construction of a combined social trust measure (sometimes with a third item) (Anderson, 2010; and Henn *et al*., 2007). Scale reliability analysis indicates that the two items have a low measure of scale reliability: Cronbach's Alpha of .449 and a moderate inter-item correlation coefficient of .293 ($p<.01$). While the measure does not appear to be a robust measure of social trust as in existing studies, in cognisance of the moderate inter-item correlation effect, it will be retained in subsequent analysis.

While the bivariate relationship suggests that those who have high social trust are more likely to have high external efficacy, these differentials are not statistically significant. In relation to external efficacy, the differential on the first interpersonal item was statistically significant, while the second item relationship is determined by the middle category response differentials.

10.5 Institutional Trust: Hypothesised Effect

Flanagan *et al*. (2010: 320, citing Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000) noted that trust "implies that individuals believe in the reliability, competence, and security of an institution to carry out its tasks and to serve their collective interests". To that end the authors asserted that it encourages attachment, engagement, and loyalty to an institution. Public institutions regulate and thereby influence many aspects of an adolescent's environment. They do so as agents of the state, financed through public monies, though they are not necessarily perceived as political institutions. The experience and impression which one develops in relation to such institutions may inform one's perceptions of public and political bodies. Weissberg (1972b: 800) noted that interactions with public bodies such as teachers, police officers, court officers, and bureaucratic officers were central to pre-adult political learning. He furthers that these interactions can be potent as they are more frequent and proximate than interactions with political representatives. An individual's institutional trust is likely to relate to the external rather than the internal dimension of efficacy, as it is specific to how one perceives elements of the political system (Craig *et al.* 1990; and Caprara *et al.* 2009). However, Amna *et al.* (2004: 21) observed a positive correlation between trust in schools and internal efficacy. Amna *et al.* highlighted the political influence of such perceptions in describing school trust as; "an overall evaluation of...individual experiences of probably the most significant political institutions in which they have come in contact". In a recent study in the United Kingdom, local community experiences with public officials (school teachers, police officers, and local authority officials) were found to be influential for building political efficacy (Coleman *et al*., 2008). As non-political and political institutions are both public institutions, there is a likely spill over in perceptions of trust and associated responsiveness. For this reason, a hypothesised positive relationship between one's sense of institutional trust and one's sense of external efficacy is expected.

- *Internal: H4: In comparing threshold voters, as their level of institutional trust changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*

- *External: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher institutional trust will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower institutional trust.*

Institutional Trust: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

A range of items on trust in non-political institutions were included as indicators of threshold voter institutional trust. In some instances these bodies were non-political public institutions: police authorities (known as the Gardaí in Ireland); courts; and school authorities/teachers. While not directly political, such institutions are public in nature and are high in profile. Items relating to other institutions were included, while they are neither political, nor 'public' in administration, they are high-profile and powerful fixtures in the public space; the media; religious leaders; and big companies. These institutions have been included in ongoing Eurobarometer and Latinobarometer surveys.

Table 10.4. Institutional Trust Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all trusting	Not very trusting	Neither u. nor t.	Fairly trusting	Very trusting	*n*
The Gardai	9.0	12.1	13.8	49.2	15.8	841
The Courts	5.2	12.5	27.2	46.5	8.6	841
Teachers/ School authorities	5.6	7.6	17.2	56.1	13.5	842
The Media	29.6	38.7	22.8	8.4	0.6	838
Religious leaders	20.0	20.2	30.6	24.9	4.4	841
Big Companies	16.7	34.2	38.2	9.9	1.0	842

Trust in the 'public' administered institutions, the top three items in the table, was notably higher than in the non-public ones. A majority of respondents report as being 'Fairly' or 'Very trusting' of: the Gardai (65%); the Courts (55.1%); and more so Teachers/School authorities (69.6%).[115] The media and big companies were the least trusted with (9%) and (10.9%) of respondents 'Fairly' or 'Very trusting' of them.

Response by the early-mid adolescent sample of the ICCS indicated a greater level of trust than the threshold voter sample here, though the wording and response option divergence limits comparability. 48 per cent of the ICCS sample trusted media ('Completely' or 'Quite a lot'), and 75 per cent trusted schools to the same degree (Cosgrove *et al*, 2011).

The respondents' trust across public institutions was anticipated to relate to an underlying tendency to be trusting, irrespective of institution. In existing research some of these items

[115] The level of trust express among the threshold voter sample is slightly less than response in the ICCS where 71% of the sample responded that they trust the Garda Síochána 'Completely' or 'Quite a lot'.

have been combined to form a scale measure of institutional trust. Principal axis factoring and scale reliability analysis did not identify a strong one factor solution in this case, as the media and big companies items loaded on a different factor to the first three institutions, and the religious leader item did not load on either factor solution. A rerun of the analysis with the public institution items included (Gardaí, Courts, and Teachers/School Authorities) provided evidence of an underlying sense of trust in public institutions. The comparable levels of trust in each of these institutions, while not identical, also supported this combination of items.[116] A separate analysis of the other three institutions did not support a combination of response to those items.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' institutional trust and external efficacy, those who had high trust in the Gardaí were more likely to feel politically influential (29%) than those who had low trust in the Gardaí (22%), $\chi^2(4)=8.25^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high trust in the Gardaí (29%) were more likely to consider the government responsive than those who had low trust in the Gardaí (21%), $\chi^2(4)=5.76$ (non-sig).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' level of trust in the courts and external efficacy, those who had a high trust in the courts were more likely to feel politically influential (28%) than those who had low trust (22%), $\chi^2(4)=5.86$ (non-sig). On the second external efficacy item, those who had high trust in the courts were more likely to consider the government responsive (30%) than those who had low trust (24%), $\chi^2(4)=11.18^{*}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' level of trust in teachers/school authorities and external efficacy, those who had high trust in teachers/school authorities were more likely to feel politically influential (29%) than those who had low trust in teachers/school authorities (25%), $\chi^2(4)=16.34^{***}$. On the second external efficacy, those who had high trust in teachers/school authorities were more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those who had low trust in teachers/school authorities (16%), $\chi^2(4)=7.46$ (non-sig).

In the case of each public institution, threshold voters who had high trust were more likely to have high external efficacy than those who had low trust. The only differential which was

[116] Principal axis factoring of the three public institution items produced a one factor solution (eigenvalue 1.155), which accounted for 38.5% of item variance. Inter-item correlations and corrected item-total correlation coefficients were all above .3 ($p<.05$). Scale reliability analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha value of .642. Factor scores arising from factor analysis were used as a measure of respondents' institutional trust. These scores were created using a regression method with Listwise deletion, where those who have missing values on one item were not assigned a value on the institutional trust variable.

statistically significant related to trust in teachers/school authorities and feeling politically influential.

10.6 Normative Youth Influence: Hypothesised Effect

In cognisance of the age profile of respondents, an important consideration is the role which they espouse for their peer-group in all decision making processes, not just political. This stage of the life cycle is characterised by a relatively limited range of decision making power in formal social settings. The extent to which this is accepted or rejected by the adolescent may be of relevance for considerations of political efficacy. In their study on political efficacy, McCluskey *et al*. (2004) focussed on the consequences of the gap between normative expectation and perceived assessment of individual influence. The focus here is on normative expectations of influence at a broad level. Those who believe that young people should have a role in decision making are likely to focus on the capacity and capability which young people possess. To the extent that the threshold voter identifies herself within this peer context, this would suggest a positive relationship with internal efficacy.

The expectation of a role for young people in decision making environments is juxtaposed with the reality of electoral impotence and a relatively inferior role in comparison to older age groups in political affairs. Those who possess higher regard for young peoples' say in decision making are therefore more likely to be frustrated by this political reality, relative to those who do not possess such an expectation. If this is the case, a negative relationship is anticipated between the threshold voters' normative sense of youth influence in decision making and their perception of the current responsiveness of the political system.

- *Internal: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher expectation of youth influence in decision making will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have a lower expectation of youth influence in decision making.*
- *External: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher expectation of youth influence in decision making will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have a lower expectation of youth influence in decision making.*

Normative Youth Influence: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The measure of normative youth influence referred to a general role for young people, with an expectation that the respondent would consider the item in terms of themselves and their peers. This item referred to 'plans that are made that affect them', invoking normative considerations in one's immediate life situation.

Table 10.5. Normative Youth Influence Item Response

Response Percentage	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither d. nor a.	Agree	Strongly agree	*n*
Young people should have a say when plans are being made that affect them	0.5	1.7	5.7	34.4	57.8	841

The vast majority of respondents (92.2%) agreed to some extent ('Agree' or 'Strongly Agree') with this statement, demonstrating a strong expectation of youth influence in decision making. A very small proportion of respondents (2.2%) disagreed to some extent with the item.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' sense of normative youth influence and internal efficacy, those who had a high normative expectation of youth influence were more likely to feel politically capable (25%) than those who had a low normative expectation of youth influence (22%), $\chi^2(4)=7.26^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those with a high normative expectation of youth influence were more likely to feel politically informed (9%) than those with a low normative expectation of youth influence (6%), $\chi^2(4)=2.32^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.[117]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' sense of normative youth influence and external efficacy, those who had a high normative expectation of youth influence were less likely to feel politically influential (26%) than those who had a low normative expectation of youth influence (39%), $\chi^2(4)=20.35^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had a high normative expectation of youth influence were slightly less lightly to consider the government responsive (26%) than those who had a low normative expectation of youth influence (28%), $\chi^2(4)=1.05^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

In relation to the expectation of influence in decision making, a divergent pattern is evident on internal and external efficacy items. Threshold voters who had a high expectation of influence on decision making were more likely to have high internal efficacy than those who did not have a high expectation of influence, though these relationships were not statistically significant for either item. In respect of external efficacy, those who had a high expectation of influence were less likely to have high external efficacy than those with more modest expectations of influence. This bivariate relationship was statistically significant for the first external efficacy item.

[117] In cross tabulation of normative youth influence with internal and external efficacy dimensions, the expected counts were less than 5 in 22% and 33% of cells, however the minimum expected count was more than 1 in each case. This was due to the distribution of the response in the higher categories of the normative youth influence variable.

10.7 Internal Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Personal Attributes Model

The results of the multivariate regression of variables in the personal attributes model on threshold voter internal efficacy are presented in Table 10.6. As in the case of the socialisation models, the effects of significant demographic variables were controlled with their entry in the initial block of regression.

As anticipated a sense of personal efficacy was positively related to threshold voter internal political efficacy. This relationship has been observed in existing literature, and is evident in the suggestion by Bandura (1997) that one's general self-efficacy is manifest in specific domains of engagement, i.e., political in this case.

Threshold voters' normative expectation of influence was also positively related to their internal political efficacy. Assessing the order of causality in this relationship is particularly difficult, as those who feel confident in their abilities are likely to believe that their peer age group should have input in decisions making. Likewise, those who believe that young people should have input in decision making processes have an interest in demonstrating that they are capable of meeting such requirements.

As expected, respondents' institutional trust was not significantly related to their internal political efficacy. The negative relationships between social trust and internal efficacy, and life satisfaction and internal efficacy were not anticipated.[118] It is difficult to see how a greater trust of people leads to a lesser opinion of one's personal competence, or how a greater satisfaction with life leads to lower sense of political competence. However, the relationship may be that for those who are less socially trusting their perception of competence is boosted, as they feel they are on the inside track of social and political reality, which would serve as a justification of their lack of trust. Such effects all held after respondents' external efficacy was controlled in the analysis.

The effects of demographic variables on internal efficacy remained evident, if somewhat weakened in the case of socio-economic status, when personal attributes were taken into account. The inclusion of personal attribute variables to demographic factors explained a further 10% in threshold voter internal efficacy. However, this was still a relatively small

[118] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' social trust and internal efficacy, those with high network trust were less likely to feel politically capable (21%) than those who had low network trust (24%), $\chi^2(4)=10.97^{*}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high network trust were less likely to feel politically capable (3%) than those who had low network trust (10%), $\chi^2(4)=6.77^{(\text{non-sig})}$. There is neither substantial nor significant difference in feeling of political capability or informedness across categories of the interpersonal trust variable. Alternative regression methods also produced negative standardised regression coefficients for life satisfaction (stepwise method -.092**; and backward method -.087*) and social trust (stepwise method -.075*; and backward method -.078*) on internal efficacy.

proportion of the overall variance in the measure. This increase was mainly due to the personal efficacy coefficient which was almost three times greater than the normative youth influence coefficient.

Table 10.6. Personal Attributes Model Internal Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.051	-.178	-.155
GENDER	.096**	.119**	.118**
Village	.073*	.057^	.061^
Non-Manual	-.087*	-.064^	-.054
Skilled Manual	-.111**	-.095**	-.084*
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.099**	-.082*	-.070*
PERSONAL EFFICACY		.286***	.273***
LIFE SATISFACTION		-.087*	-.093*
SOCIAL TRUST		-.062^	-.080*
INSTITUTIONAL TRUST		.031	.016
NORMATIVE Y. INFLUENCE		.107**	.112**
EXTERNAL EFFICACY			.148***
n	749	749	749
R	.187	.375	.401
R Square	.035	.140	.161
R Square Change	.035***	.010**	.021***
Adjusted R Square	.029	.129	.148
ANOVA F	5.403***	12.039***	12.843***
Durbin Watson			1.956

10.8 External Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Personal Attributes Model

Table 10.7 presents the results of the multivariate regression analysis of personal attribute variables on external efficacy, while significant demographic variables were controlled.

In line with existing research social trust and institutional trust were both positively related to respondent's external efficacy.[119] As anticipated the effect of personal efficacy on threshold voter external efficacy was not a direct one, which is evident in the loss of statistical significance when internal political efficacy was introduced in multivariate regression.[120]

[119] In bivariate regression of the constituent variables of Social Trust; both Network Trust (.113**) and Interpersonal Trust (.122***) are positively related to external efficacy as evident in regression coefficients.
In bivariate regression of the constituent variables of Institutional Trust: Police Trust (.117**); Court Trust (.100**); and School Trust (.074*) are positively related to external efficacy as evident in regression coefficients.

[120] In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' personal efficacy and external political efficacy, a similar percentage of those who had a high belief (27%) and low belief (26%) that they could handle things in general felt politically influential, $\chi^2(4)=1.50^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second external political efficacy item, those who believed

The negative relationship between normative youth influence as evident in cross tabulation did not reach the level of statistical significance in multivariate analysis. The hypothesised positive link between life satisfaction and external political efficacy was also not significant when demographic and other personal attributes were considered.

The divergence between respondents on external efficacy arising from residential area and socio-economic status were slightly weakened, but remained significant when personal attributes were considered. The unemployed parent variable did not demonstrate a significant effect on introduction to the analysis, which is due to the change in *n*, from the initial demographic model of analysis.

The addition of personal attribute variables to demographic factors increased the percentage of external efficacy variation explained from 2.8% to 5.9%. This small increase was primarily due to social trust, and is a substantially small increase.

Table 10.7. Personal Attributes Model External Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.050	-.142	-.145
Suburb	.115**	.101**	.103**
Non-Manual	-.098*	-.076*	-.066^
Skilled Manual	-.095*	-.072^	-.057
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.088*	-.076*	-.060^
PARENT UNEMPLOYED	-.058	-.047	-.052
PERSONAL EFFICACY		.079*	.031
LIFE SATISFACTION		.033	.047
SOCIAL TRUST		.118**	.126**
INSTITUTIONAL TRUST		.089*	.087*
NORMATIVE Y. INFLUENCE		-.038	-.053
INTERNAL EFFICACY			.162***
n	749	749	749
R	.187	.267	.307
R Square	.035	.071	.094
R Square Change	.035***	.001	.023***
Adjusted R Square	.028	.059	.081
ANOVA F	5.358***	5.678***	6.991***
Durbin Watson			1.955

that they could handle things in general were more likely to consider the government responsive (27%) than those who did not (22%), $\chi^2(4)=2.12^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

10.9 Conclusion

To assess the unique relationship between socialisation variables and political efficacy dimensions, it is necessary to control for the personal attributes of threshold voters. The significance of personal attributes such as personal efficacy for internal efficacy, and social trust for external efficacy has been established in adult based literature. The variable of normative youth influence was also included here to capture possible effects of age related expectations of influence in wider social matters.

As anticipated personal efficacy and the expectation of youth influence demonstrate positive association with internal political efficacy. The connection between personal efficacy and internal political efficacy is particularly strong. The negative effects of life satisfaction and social trust in relation to internal efficacy are counter to hypothesised expectations. In the case of social trust this negative relationship may indicate a process described by Pinkleton and Austin (1997) as the 'third person' effect. This details how individuals use negative reflections as an indication of their sophistication, as they believe they have a more astute understanding of social and political reality. This will be further detailed as there are further traces of this effect in subsequent analysis.

The initial positive effect of personal efficacy on threshold voters' external efficacy loses significance when its relation with internal efficacy is controlled. In line with the hypotheses social trust and institutional trust demonstrate positive relationships with external efficacy. The low level of social trust and its connection with external efficacy pose a challenge for the political system in countering the transmission of socially cynical attitudes to political considerations of responsiveness.

The effects of gender and social-class retain significance when respondent personality is accounted for. The village variable is not significant when personality variables are included in analysis. Moreover, the differential in external efficacy across socio-economic groups is mitigated when respondents' personal attributes are considered, with the exception of those in the middle occupational category (non-manual) who remained lower in external efficacy. The positive effect of suburban residence again retains statistical significance when the personal attributes of the threshold voter are taken into consideration.

The next chapter considers the effect of threshold voters' political persona on their political efficacy.

Chapter 11. The Political Attributes Model

11.1 Introduction

The variables in this model of analysis relate to the political character of the individual. They are attitudinal and behavioural in focus. The variables included on political engagement relate to: political interest; news consumption; and political knowledge. Other political attributes, which are central to the political science literature measure respondents': civic duty; political support; political trust; and political cynicism. Behavioural type variables which also indicate political engagement relate to political and civic modes of participation. Political partisanship may provide opportunities for political socialisation and learning; variables relating to party identification and party political involvement were therefore included. While there are established theoretical bases linking the political attribute variables with one or both dimensions of efficacy, the approach here is to assess relationships with both efficacy dimensions. It will be possible to assess the effects of political socialisation on political efficacy, controlling for the significant political attribute variables in Chapter 12.

11.2 Political Interest: Hypothesised Effect

Despite its relevance in personal life circumstance and prominence in information networks, politics is not of strong interest for many individuals. Though somewhat dated, Rosenberg's (1954: 361) explanation of the low political interest of many young people still holds relevance:

> The subject matter of politics is often not psychologically compelling. Since the political institution deals with problems of the total society, involving subjects of general interest and concern, it tends to have an abstract or impersonal quality. However much the mass media seek to concretize and personalize political matters, they still remain, for many people, dull, remote and uninspiring.

While not disputing this reality Easton and Dennis's (1967) seminal work observed that childhood and adolescence is not entirely a political void. Irrespective of age, some individuals will find politics more exciting and interesting as a matter of study or topic of social discussion. Those who are interested in political issues seek out and absorb information which increases their subjective sense of competence and familiarity. The belief in one's ability to act and understand is determined by considerations of possessing adequate information. Existing research has found a strong association between political interest and internal political efficacy (Acock *et al.*, 1985; Craig *et al.*, 1990; Niemi *et al.*, 1991; Karaman, 2004; Kenski and Stroud, 2006; Caprara *et al.*, 2009; and Amna and Zetterberg, 2010). Studies of those in mid-adolescence also found this relationship (Amna *et al.*, 2004; and

Schulz, 2005). The relationship between political interest and internal efficacy is expected to be stronger than with the external dimension (Lee, 2005).

The more interested one is in politics, the more one is inclined to believe that politics is not a futile interest, i.e., that the political system is within the control of the diligent individual. In assessing those who were indifferent about political engagement in their British study, Bynner *et al.* (2003: 327) suggested that this may not just represent an absence of interest, knowledge, or commitment to politics; it may represent an attempt to position oneself or to define oneself as averse to politics as currently construed. Therefore, a reported lack of interest by respondents may not simply reflect the absence of interest, it may be an expression of support (or lack thereof) in relation to the political world. Craig Niemi and Silver (1990) Kenski and Stroud (2006) and Schulz (2005) all found a positive linkage between political interest and external efficacy. In the latter study of adolescents the relationship of interest and external efficacy was weaker than for the internal efficacy dimension. In light of such findings we can anticipate a positive relationship with external efficacy, though the relationship is not likely to be as strong as with the internal dimension.

- *Internal: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher political interest will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have lower political interest.*
- *External: H1: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher political interest will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower political interest.*

Political Interest: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The political interest of respondents was ascertained using a standard and generic type survey item. Haste (2010: 173) drew attention to a possible underestimation of interest through such a measure: as young people were found to express less interest in politics when faced with a generic 'political interest' statement, than when asked about their interest in specific issues, e.g. environmental, social justice, or war.

Table 11.1. Political Interest Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all interested	Not very interested	Neither u. nor i.	Fairly interested	Very interested	*n*
How interested are you in politics?	22.3	28.5	17.7	26.3	5.3	849

Fewer than one in three respondents (31.6%) reported a strong political interest ('Fairly' or 'Very interested'), with 5.3% describing themselves as 'Very interested'. At the other end of

the spectrum, more than one in five respondents (22.3%) reported being 'Not at all interested' in politics.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political interest and internal efficacy, those who had high political interest were more likely to feel politically capable (52%) than those who had low political interest (8%), $\chi^2(4)=258.96^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high political interest (23%) were more likely to feel politically informed than those who had low political interest (2%), $\chi^2(4)=215.50^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political interest and external efficacy, those who had high political interest were more likely to feel politically influential (37%) than those who had low political interest (19%), $\chi^2(4)=30.05^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high political interest were more likely to consider the government responsive (34%) than those who had low political interest (19%), $\chi^2(4)=22.46^{***}$.

The cross tabulation of threshold voters' political interest and both political efficacy dimensions revealed statistically significant bivariate relations in all cases, with those who had high political interest more likely to have high internal and external efficacy than those with low interest.

11.3 News Consumption: Hypothesised Effect

An individual's interest in politics will guide the extent to which she pursues information on political issues. Due to its reciprocal nature, the relationship between political news consumption and political interest has been described as a virtuous circle (Norris, 2003). Stoker (2006: 198) subsequently suggested that the reciprocal effect may be more applicable for political activists rather than those of moderate or low political engagement. Relatively recent findings by the Democracy Commission (2004) and the NYCI (2004) identified a deficit in youth focussed political broadcasting in Ireland. From its consultations with citizens the Democracy Commission relayed the following perceived shortcomings of the Irish media in terms of its failure to adequately cover parliamentary debates with a tendency; to undermine politics by underlining trivia; to focus on personalities and sensationalism at the expense of policies and practices; and to unfair reporting (2004: 9).

Tewksbury *et al*. (2008: 263) distinguished between news browsers and news selectors. They found that newspaper browsing was significantly and positively related to political knowledge, social self-efficacy and political efficacy; while internet and television news browsing was not. The consumption of political information is considered as a particularly

important attribute among those for whom other methods of political participation are limited (Semetko and Valkenburg, 1998: 198). They observed a stronger effect of news consumption, than demographic variables such as education and socio-economic status, on a generic measure of political efficacy.[121] Findings across various media suggest a positive relationship between news consumption and generic measures of political efficacy: Lin and Lim (2002); Pinkleton *et al*., (1998); McCluskey *et al*., (2004); and Pinkleton and Austin (2004). In finding the positive role of media use for political engagement, Pinkleton and Austin (2004: 334) caveat that in cross-sectional research (one time observations) relationships were as likely to be bidirectional as one directional. Pasek *et al*., (2008: 29) echoed this possibility citing Delli Carpini and Keeter's (1996) suggestion that internal efficaciousness motivates the acquisition of political knowledge.

Hoffman and Thomson (2009: 5) noted the significance attached to media consumption as a source of political information for young people. They found that traditional news sources of political information (local variety) and non-traditional sources of political information (late-night comedy) increased adolescents' internal efficacy. The information medium used is therefore significant as further evinced by Newhagen (1994: 386) who found that the consumption of newspapers, television news programmes and political radio call-in programmes corresponded to increases in internal efficacy, while entertainment television programmes corresponded negatively with internal efficacy. Political news consumption is becoming a more selective and less passive process for adolescents (Bennett *et al*., 2010: 416). Relatedly, the benefit of news consumption for internal efficacy may not be universal. Dalton (2002: 21) identified that increased political information may seem like a "cacophony" unless the citizen's political skills make it possible to process such information. Existing research suggests that the more exposure one has to political information, the more the young person feels confident to understand and act in the political environment (Lee Kaid *et al.*, 2007). A positive relationship between news consumption and internal political efficacy is anticipated.

As in the case of political interest, the relationship between news consumption and external efficacy depends on the nature of the information received, and possibly on the political climate. Karaman's (2004) Russian study found that the frequency of following political

[121] Coleman *et al.* (2008: 773) detailed studies which found a positive relationship between forms of media use and political efficacy: Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; McLeod, Daily, Guo, Eveland, Bayer, Yang and Wang, 1996; Norris, 2000; Scheufele, 2002; Aarts and Semetko, 2003; and Moy, Torres, Tanaka, and McCluskey, 2005.

events was negatively related to a sense of external efficacy. Newhagen (1994: 386/392) found that newspaper reading negatively related to external efficacy, as did television entertainment viewing, though television news viewing did not show an effect on external efficacy in their study. Lee (2006: 420) observed that traditional media use (television news watching and newspaper reading) was not related to respondent external efficacy, but internet use was. The direction of this internet effect was negative with the explanation that dissatisfaction with the quality of public web services lowered perceptions of responsiveness.[122] It is difficult to ascertain the significance of news consumption for external efficacy. Given the lack of refinement in our measurement item, considerations of external efficacy are more dependent on the content and tone of information, which are not captured in the study. It is therefore difficult to anticipate the direction of this effect.

- *Internal: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those have higher news consumption will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have lower news consumption.*
- *External: H2: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher news consumption will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower news consumption.*
- *External: H2a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher news consumption will be more likely to have lower external efficacy will those who have lower news consumption.*

News Consumption: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The measure of news consumption did not specify political issues or politics, its reference was to 'current affairs'. It therefore encompasses respondents' consideration of matters which are the stuff of politics, but which may sometimes by cited not purely political. The item did not differentiate between media. The response options were time based with weekly as the middle response category, as daily usage items (as in hours of consumption per day) which are often used to measure political attention were considered too high a marker considering the research participants of this study.

Newhagen (1994) and Pinkleton and Austin (2002: 144) noted the limitations of media use measures which solely relate to media exposure or frequency of media use. They suggested that individuals' perception of the medium itself and their reasons for consuming through this medium are also important. Moreover, time-based measures of media use are insensitive to the type of content or rationale which motivates such consumption (McLeod *et al*., 2010:

[122] For a bibliography of research which looked at the relationship between media consumption and political engagement of citizens see: Pinkleton and Austin (2002: 143).

373). The measure of news attention was limited in this instance as it did not measure the significance attributed by the respondent to different political media, or the type of content viewed.

Table 11.2. News Consumption Item Response

Response Percentage	Never	Less than once a week	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day	*n*
In general, how often do you pay attention to current affairs in newspapers, on television, on radio and on the internet?	12.7	19.8	18.0	34.3	15.2	849

When asked about the attention paid to current affairs on various media approximately half of respondents (49.5%) reported paying attention 'A few times a week' or 'Every day', with 15.2% of respondents reporting daily attention. At the other end of the spectrum, 12.7% reported that they 'Never' pay attention to current affairs.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' news consumption and internal efficacy, those who had high news consumption were more likely to feel politically capable (35%) than those who had low news consumption (10%), $\chi^2(4)=110.12^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high news consumption were more likely to feel politically informed (17%) than those who had low news consumption (1%), $\chi^2(4)=135.85^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' external efficacy and news consumption, those who had high news consumption were more likely to feel politically influential (32%) than those who had low news consumption (19%), $\chi^2(4)=19.34^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high news consumption were more likely to consider the government responsive (32%) than those with low news consumption (18%), $\chi^2(4)=27.68^{***}$.

It is evident that threshold voters who had high news consumption were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy than those with low news consumption. Moreover, these bivariate relationships were statistically significant for the efficacy items in the analysis.

11.4 Political Knowledge: Hypothesised Effect

Dalton (2002: 13) suggested that citizens need "sufficient knowledge of the working of the political system if they intend to influence and control the actions of their representatives". While this appears intuitive, there is not an objective point at which citizens can be considered as sufficiently knowledgeable. Moreover, it is possible that an individual could believe themselves to be well-informed and competent in understanding the political environment, without possessing the same level of political information (or objective knowledge) as those

who feel less competent. Berelson (1952: 318/9) captured this distinction in highlighting that: "Lack of information may be a bar to the holding of an opinion in the minds of the theorists but it does not seem to be among the electorate (where, of course, it is not experienced as lack of information at all)". While acknowledging this distinction, Weissberg (1975) suggested there is likely to be a correlation between them. Accumulation of actual political information is likely to boost one's subjective perception of political knowledge.

Knowledge of political structures/institutions and contemporary political matters enhances one's capacity for civic empowerment (Levinson, 2010: 337). The possession of political information is a fillip to participation in political discussion, consumption of political newsfeed, and comprehension of the changing dynamic of political situations (Craig, Niemi, and Silver (1990). Karaman (2004) found political knowledge rather than education as a predictor of internal efficacy. Despite its hypotheses, Schulz's study (2005: 14) did not detect an effect for civic knowledge on either internal or external efficacy. For this reason he suggested that judgements about one's political ability to act are influenced by interest rather than actual knowledge. However, the measure of knowledge which Schulz referred to was a measure of civic knowledge (civic processes and concepts such as legality and equality) rather than knowledge of facts relating to the current political system. A positive relationship between knowledge and internal efficacy is hypothesised.

The relationship between political knowledge and sense of external efficacy is more complex than with the sense of internal efficacy. Newhagen (1994: 388) noted the work of Brady and Sniderman (1985) on the attitudinal processes of low knowledge individuals and high knowledge individuals. They suggested that low knowledge individuals rely on affection or emotion to arrive at a political attitude in the absence of information for evaluative purposes; whereas high knowledge individuals rely on a more developed and constrained belief system based on acquired knowledge and reinforcement. Popkin and Dimock (1999: 134) suggested that the level of an individual's political knowledge and familiarity guides the process by which citizens assess political events and behaviour:

> More knowledgeable citizens tend to judge the behavior of public officials as they judge their own—in the context of circumstances and incentives, with due regard for innocent oversights and errors as well as sheer chance. By contrast, less knowledgeable citizens are more likely to view public officials' blunders as signs of bad character (Popkin and Dimock 1999:127–29). Moreover, low-information citizens encountering vigorous political debate with its inevitable charges and countercharges are more likely to conclude that there are no white knights and adopt a "plague on both your houses"

stance. For those who understand politics, debate can be as clear as a tennis match; for those who do not, it more closely resembles a food fight.

In line with this suggestion, in their cross-national study, Ikeda *et al*. (2008) found a positive relationship between political information and a measure of political efficacy that tended toward external efficacy considerations. Austin and Pinkleton (1995: 217, citing Lau and Erber, 1985) suggested that those with more knowledge, participation and interest have a larger bank of information on which to form attitudes, and tend to use negative information less. This is further support for an expectation of positive effect between level of political knowledge and threshold voters' sense of external political efficacy.

- *Internal: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher political knowledge will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have lower political knowledge.*
- *External: H3: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher political knowledge will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower political knowledge.*

Political Knowledge: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Five items were used to measure respondents' political knowledge. Galston (2001) highlighted the difficulty involved in political knowledge measurement, noting that knowledge of institutions and processes was significantly higher than knowledge of people and policies, due to the greater stability of institutions and processes. Levinson (2010: 337) raised the issue of what type of political knowledge is needed for effective citizenship. Identifying a divergence in the type of items used in American studies, items on institutions and structures among students, and contemporary politics among adults, he highlighted the lack of clarity which exists as to how political knowledge should be measured. As threshold voters are nearing political adulthood, the political knowledge items here related to specific contemporary information on identification of those in political office, and information on representation in parliament. Providing multiple choice responses rather than open-ended items, is the dominant approach in existing research. However, this introduced the possibility of respondents selecting the correct response by chance. Variables were created on the criterion of selecting the correct response or not to each item. Those who did not select any response option but who answered subsequent survey items were classified as incorrect on these knowledge items. Those who did not reply to these and subsequent questionnaire items were classified as missing on the knowledge variables, as they appear to have disengaged from the survey (the knowledge items were positioned near the end of the survey).

Table 11.3. Political Knowledge Item Response

Response Percentage	Incorrect	Correct	*n*
Identify the Minister for finance	22.7	77.3	833
Identify the Second Dáil party	39.0	61.0	833
Identify the Taoiseach	6.6	93.4	833
Identify the number of seats in Dáil Éireann	53.3	46.7	833
Identify Prime Minister of the United Kingdom	23.5	76.5	833

The divergence in knowledge across items was notable. While more than nine in ten (93.4%) of the respondents correctly identified the then Taoiseach (head of government), six in ten (61%) correctly identified the second largest parliamentary party, and less than half (46.7%) correctly identified the number of seats in Dáil Éireann.[123] Though there is a difference in distribution across variables, the conventional approach is to combine items in an index measure of political knowledge. The items were analysed in a Principal Component Analysis to ascertain the linear relationship between items.[124]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political knowledge, response to the survey item on correctly identifying the number of seats in Dáil Éireann was used. This seems to have been the most exacting item for respondents. In the cross tabulation with internal efficacy, those who correctly identified the parliament size were more likely to feel politically capable (28%) than those who did not correctly identify it (20%), $\chi^2(2)=10.24^{**}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who correctly identified the parliament size were more likely to feel politically informed (11%) than those who did not correctly identify it (7%). Notably, those who correctly identified the parliament size were less likely to feel politically uninformed (62%) than those who did not correctly identify it (73%), $\chi^2(2)=11.06^{**}$.

[123] Dáil Éireann is the lower house of parliament in the Irish bicameral parliament. The Seanad is the upper house of parliament. The Dáil is the main legislative institution in the state and is directly elected by citizens, unlike the Seanad.

[124] Principal Component Analysis was used in this case as the observed items were conceived as components in a newly constructed variable, rather than the case in principal axis factoring, where the emerging factor was conceived as the underlying cause of the observed variation (Kim and Mueller, 1978b). The KMO value for this analysis was .691 indicating that the sample size was adequate for the interpretation of factor analysis output. With the emergence of one factor from this principal component analysis (eigenvalue 1.819, accounting for 36% of variance in political knowledge items), a variable of resulting factor scores was used as a measure of respondent political knowledge. The Cronbach's Alpha value (.521) was low. The item on number of parliamentary (Dáil) seats shows a particular divergence from other knowledge items. As its removal did not increase the reliability of the scale significantly, it was retained in the measure. It was likely to increase the distribution across the political knowledge scale.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political knowledge and external efficacy, those who correctly identified the parliament size were slightly more likely to feel politically influential (27%) than those who did not correctly identify it (25%), $\chi^2(2)=4.26$ (non-sig). Likewise, on the second external efficacy item, those who correctly identified the parliament size were slightly more likely to consider the government responsive (27%) than those who did not correctly identify it (25%), $\chi^2(2)=1.13$ (non-sig).

While threshold voters who correctly answered the selected political knowledge question were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy than those who did not answer it correctly, the differential is only statistically significant in respect of the internal efficacy items.[125]

11.5 Civic Duty: Hypothesised Effect

Civic duty relates to a sense of obligation which the individual feels in respect of her public and political environment. The conception of democratic rights, responsibilities, and norms are fundamental information in the political socialisation of an individual and are likely to be imbued at an early stage of the life cycle (Easton and Dennis, 1967). For some threshold voters, childhood political learning which tends to be versed in democratic ideals may have an enduring influence on their political attitudes and political efficacy, as they have limited first-hand political experience (Weissberg, 1975).

The elements of civic duty which are included in this analysis relate to a normative sense of political interest and a normative sense of electoral participation. Metzger and Smetana (2010: 237) illustrated the importance of civic norms and a sense of social responsibility for political participation among younger and older age cohorts in American and European research. Young people who expressed a high sense of civic duty were more likely to intend to vote, volunteer, and join a political party. While their measure of participation was proposed action rather than previous experience, it indicated that an attachment to democratic ideals manifests in political behaviour and may bolster a sense of political effect. Dalton (2002: 39) suggested that participation by many citizens is a reflection of their sense of civic duty rather than an indicator of their expected effect or influence. Individuals who possess a high sense of civic duty believe that the citizen has a part to play in politics and a commensurate duty to play that part through participation. As a feeling of political competence is espoused in democratic

[125] The ICCS similarly found a positive relationship between knowledge and internal efficacy among early-mid adolescents in Ireland. However, the ICCS knowledge measure related to 'civic knowledge' which is more related to values and understandings than the data/factual measure in this study.

theory, threshold voters' sense of civic duty is anticipated to positively relate to their internal efficacy.

In relation to external efficacy, the sense of obligation to follow and participate in political activities rests on an ideal interpretation of democratic politics. They are therefore likely to feel that citizens ought to be interested in politics, and that the political system is responsive to citizen input. For those who are still heavily influenced by the early learning of ideals, while the current electoral offering may not reflect citizen preference, there is likely to be an enduring belief that the political system is responsive and matches espoused ideals. A positive relationship between respondents' civic duty and external efficacy is therefore hypothesised. A caveat for such assessment is the possibility that the order of causality runs from efficacy to civic duty, i.e., those who feel competent or influential in political matters may be more willing to espouse the ideals of the system than those who feel a sense of incapacity or futility in this regard.

- *Internal: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher sense of civic duty will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have a lower sense of civic duty.*
- *External: H4: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher sense of civic duty will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have a lower sense of civic duty.*

Civic Duty: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The items on civic duty focussed on respondents' sense of normative political interest and voting duty. The item on normative political interest referred to young people, which was expected to extract a peer related response. While threshold voters did not possess the right to vote at time of survey, this does not preclude them from considerations of electoral engagement within the frame of performing one's civic duties. The voting duty item distinguished between voting due to support of a candidate or expected utility from an electoral outcome, and voting due to a normative sense of participation.

Table 11.4. Civic Duty Item Response

Response Percentage	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither d. nor a.	Agree	Strongly agree	*n*
(Normative Political Interest) Young people should be interested in politics	4.0	9.5	37.2	40.2	9.1	844
(Voting Duty) Whatever I think about the parties and candidates, I think it is my duty to go out and vote in an election	3.8	8.9	26.5	36.4	24.4	841

Approximately half of the respondents (49.3%) believed to some extent ('Agree' or 'Strongly agree'), that young people should be interested in politics. While only 13.5% disagreed with the statement to some extent, a sizeable proportion (37.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, indicating the item did not solicit a cogent attitude for many respondents. Three in five respondents (60.8%) agreed to some extent ('Agree' or 'Strongly agree') that it is one's duty to vote in an election irrespective of electoral offering. Only one in eight respondents (12.7%) disagreed to any extent with the statement.[126]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' civic duty and internal efficacy, those who had high normative political interest were more likely to feel politically capable (33%) than those who had low normative political interest (9%), $\chi^2(4)=62.51^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high normative political interest were more likely to feel politically informed (14%) than those who had low normative political interest (2%), $\chi^2(4)=68.89^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' sense of voting duty and internal efficacy, those who had a high sense of voting duty were more likely to feel politically capable (30%) than those who had a low sense of voting duty (12%), $\chi^2(4)=44.95^{***}$. Moreover, on the second internal efficacy item, those who had a high sense of voting duty were more likely to feel politically informed (12%) than those who had a low sense of voting duty (4%), $\chi^2(4)=31.92^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' civic duty and external efficacy, those who had high normative political interest were more likely to feel politically influential (33%) than those who had low normative political interest (19%), $\chi^2(4)=31.32^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high normative political interest were more likely to consider the government responsive (30%) than those who had low normative political interest (21%), $\chi^2(4)=8.94^{\wedge}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' sense of voting duty and external efficacy, those who had a high sense of voting duty were more likely to feel politically influential (31%) than those who had a low sense of voting duty (17%), $\chi^2(4)=20.31^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had a high sense of voting duty were more likely to consider the government responsive (30%) than those who had a low sense of voting duty (17%), $\chi^2(4)=13.83^{**}$.

[126] Scale reliability analysis was conducted to establish the scalability of the items on an underlying sense of civic duty. The resultant Cronbach's Alpha of .605 and inter-item correlation coefficient of .438 ($p<.05$) provided support for construction of a reliability scale from these items.

The cross tabulation analysis suggests that those with a high sense of civic duty were more likely to express a high sense of internal and external efficacy than those with a low sense of civic duty. With the exception of one external efficacy item, these bivariate relationships were all statistically significant.

11.6 Political Participation: Hypothesised Effect

The strong linkage between political participation and political efficacy was noted in the Literature Review. The type of participation is a relevant consideration as existing research has found divergent effects depending on the participation being analysed. Valentino *et al.* (2009: 309) noted findings of Stenner-Day and Fischle (1992) which suggest that conventional behaviour and partisan activities boost internal efficacy, but extreme forms of political action such as protesting undermine it. In a recent comparative study using ESS data, Marien (2010) found a positive relationship between institutionalised, non-institutionalised, and electoral participation and internal efficacy.

Hay (2007: 23) has identified a change in the significance of participation types in recent times, whereby contacting media, boycotting products, and engaging in political protest, have replaced writing to politicians, or lobbying political authorities as a means of political participation, particularly among younger citizens (O' Toole *et al*., 2003). The relationship between efficacy and participation is one of the central drivers of academic interest in political efficacy. Reference was made in the literature review discussion to the role of other variables in the relationship between political efficacy and participation. The Gamsonian (1968) initiated line of research focused on the role of political trust. More recently, Pasek *et al*. (2008) focussed on the relationship of both to attentiveness, and Valentino *et al.* (2009) focussed on the role of emotions, and particularly, anger. The necessity to distinguish between efficacy dimensions is important here as existing research has found divergent effects of participation on each. Balch (1974) found a positive relationship between protesting and internal efficacy, and a negative one between protesting and external efficacy.

In relation to pre-adult empirical research, Amna and Zetterberg (2010: 50) found that proposed political participation (voting and protesting activities) were positively related to internal political efficacy in 14-25 year olds in European states (IEA and ESS data). With similar IEA data, Schulz (2005) found that political efficacy explains political participation. He clarified that respondents' sense of school related efficacy is the main predictor of electoral participation, and that internal efficacy is more important than external or school

efficacy in relation to the wider range of political activities. The IEA dataset measures participation as proposed future participation rather than report of experience of participation. Those who use this data (Amna and Zetterberg, 2010; and Schulz, 2005) therefore present the causal order of the relationship as running from political efficacy to (proposed) participation.

With the evolution of research focus in this area, an interest developed in the possible effects of participation on efficacy (Abramson, 1983; and Mendelsohn and Culter, 2000).[127] Finkel's (1987) study in Germany has proven to be a significant work in this area. While Finkel viewed his efficacy measure as one of internal efficacy, by today's context, it is better construed as a measure of general and possibly even external efficacy. He cited the developmental effects espoused by "participatory" or "citizenship" theorists (Pateman, 1970; and Thompson, 1970) which identified the potential increases in "community-mindedness, political self-competence, and satisfaction with decision-making structures, institutions, and outputs" as arising from participation. Finkel's findings bear out participatory effects on efficacy; while voting did not have an effect on efficacy, campaign activity had a positive effect, and aggressive behaviour had a negative effect. Lee (2005: 303) emphasised the particular importance of participatory effects on political efficacy in states which have recently moved toward democratisation as efficaciousness will not have been pre-established in childhood socialisation.

As the range of 'formal' participation is narrow for adolescents, instances of participation may take on increased significance for attitudinal development. Undertaking activities is viewed as an emancipating experience. In reference to participation in discussion forums Gastil (2000: 158) found that the effects diverge between perception of political self–efficacy and group efficacy; with a positive effect on the perception of self-competence, and negative effect on the effectiveness of group-based political action. Sherrod *et al*. (2010) noted the power of new media and technology in the 2008 American Presidential Campaign in attracting young people to politics, much of which was in a participatory format.

In relation to external efficacy, participation will inform the individual not only of self-capacity, but of the manner in which such participation is facilitated in the system. Morrell (2005: 52) cited the earlier work of Berry, Protney and Tomson (1993) who found that participation plays a more important role in influencing external efficacy than efficacy played

[127] For a bibliography of studies which considered the reciprocal effects of participation, see: Dyck and Lascher Jr. (2009: 404).

in participation. In this regard the perceived utility of action undertaken is likely to be of relevance for external efficacy considerations. Pinkleton *et al*., (1998) found that active media use was a significant positive predictor of external efficacy when education and cynicism were controlled. These effects were significant but small in relation to both dimensions, even after socio-economic, partisan and other political variables are controlled. Kenski and Stroud (2006: 177) identified that much prior study on internet media use effects do not distinguish between efficacy dimensions, which obscure the clarity of the findings.

Using a qualitative approach, Coleman *et al.* (2008: 781) observed a feeling of frustration at institutional unresponsiveness, among those who used 'new' media such as internet technologies to contact politicians, which itself is a form of participation. Madsen (1987) observed the positive effect of successful petitions on self-efficacy and simultaneously the negative effect of unsuccessful petitions on the perception of government responsiveness. Seligson (1980a) and Lee's (2005) findings confirm Balch's negative finding between protesting and external efficacy. Lee (2006) observes the positive effect of successful political action on one's sense of external efficacy.

Zimmerman (1989) and Baker (1973) in relation to younger citizens opined that given the limited nature of their participation, it is difficult for their participation to inform their knowledge of the level of system responsiveness. In the absence of a measure which captures the perceived outcome of participation, the direction of the relationship between political participation and external efficacy is difficult to specify in terms of direction.

- *Internal: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher level of political participation will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have a lower level of political participation.*
- *External: H5: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher level of political participation will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have a lower level of political participation.*
- *External: H5a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher a level of political participation will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have a lower level of political participation.*

Political Participation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Many forms of political participation are the preserve of adult groups such as; voting, membership of political parties, donating money to political campaigns or movements, and running for political office. Hoffman and Thomson (2009: 7) acknowledged that 'true political participation' is not necessarily a feasible option for pre-adults, which dictates the

use of alternative measures. Lopes *et al.* (2009: 6-8) acknowledged that adolescent participation in collective or public activities is often determined, facilitated, and supervised by adults. This limits the extent to which their activity is a reflection of their values and choices. In discussing their measure of political participation, which is based on projections of participation when reaching adulthood and independence, they recognised that this approach is likely to be subject to some error. The benefit of using items which relate to activities already undertaken, as in the current measurement, is that it is theoretically more intuitive to envisage causation running from activity undertaken in the past to current political efficacy, than pertains in proposed participation (Amna et al, 2004; and Schulz, 2005). However, it is likely that undertaking activities in this measure reflect pre-existing respondent efficacy in part, particularly in respect of the item on self-initiated contact with a political representative.

To create an age-appropriate measure of political participation, three of the activities in this measure of political participation are related to information search and expression, and are therefore more related to internal rather than external considerations. The item on political demonstration is included as an indicator of an active and mobilised form of public participation. While some of these activities may be a function of school work, this does not preclude them having an effect on the development of political attitude.

Time, energy and personal resources, and the degree of personal discretion associated with each activity, varies from item to item. Involvement in a political demonstration may involve much time commitment, but it may be the result of peer or parental pressure, rather than personal volition. Presenting an opinion on a political topic in an internet discussion may not demand much time, but may occur due to personal volition.

In recent times, political interest has been used as a proxy for political participation among young citizens, aged 14-25. (Amna and Zetterberg, 2010: 56). In accounting for the positive effect of internet use for political information on subsequent political participation, McLeod *et al*. (2010: 380) highlight the internet's participative learning capacity not only as a forum of information collection, but of political exchange. Online environments offer young people a less hierarchical, user-determined forum to plan and execute communal and /or political actions, and are therefore opportunities for developing a sense of competence and political skills (Bennett *et al*., 2010: 417). Table 11.5 presents the distribution of response on the five political participation items. [Table Overleaf]

Table 11.5. Political Participation Item Response

Response Percentage	No	Yes	*n*
Self-initiated contact with political representative[128]	89	11	840
Visited websites of political organisations, politicians or candidates	74.3	25.7	849
Presented your opinion on a political topic in an internet forum or discussion	88.3	11.7	847
Presented your opinion on a political topic in a newspaper, magazine or on radio	95.0	6.0	844
Taken part in a political demonstration	87.7	12.3	846

Participation in each of the activities is not prominent. Visiting websites of political organisations, politicians, or candidates was the most common activity, with 25.7% of respondents having done so by the time of survey. A similar percentage of respondents (approximately 12%) reported self-initiated contact with a political representative, posted an opinion on a political topic on the internet, and took part in a political demonstration. Half of that percentage (i.e., 6%) report having presented their political opinions in a newspaper, a magazine, or on radio. Political participation is traditionally measured, not by one item, but by an index composed of several items. Principal Component Analysis and scale reliability analysis was conducted to establish the scalability of the items with resultant factor scores providing a measure of respondent political participation for use in multivariate regression analysis.[129]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political participation and internal efficacy, those who had experience of a self-initiated contact with a politician were more likely to feel politically capable (40%) than those who did not have experience of self-initiated contact (22%), $\chi^2(2)=17.56^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had experience of a self-

[128] This item was created from a coding of response to an open-ended item on contact with political representatives.

[129] Principal component analysis was undertaken as the items are being used to construct a composite measure, rather than to indicate an underlying or latent construct. This analysis produces a one factor solution (KMO, .716; eigenvalue 1.915), with the extracted component explaining 38% of the variance in the participation items. All communalities and factor loadings of items were above .5. In scale reliability, a low Cronbach's Alpha (.587) raised a caveat as to the reliability of the scale, as did the presence of inter-item correlation coefficients which are below .3, ($p<.05$) However, all corrected item-total correlation coefficients were above .3, ($p<.05$). Acknowledging that this scale is not robust in terms of scale reliability, it will be included in subsequent analysis. Factor scores created using the regression method are used as measures of respondent political participation, with Listwise deletion of cases with missing data.

initiated contact with a politician were more likely to feel politically informed (17%) than those who did not have experience of self-initiated contact (8%), $\chi^2(2)=258.96^{*}$.

Those who had visited political websites were more likely to feel politically capable (43%) than those who did had not visited political websites (17%), $\chi^2(2)=73.34^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had visited political websites were more likely to feel politically informed (22%) than those who had not visited political websites (4%), $\chi^2(2)=82.09^{***}$.

Those who had presented political opinions on the internet were more likely to feel politically capable (53%) than those who had not presented political opinions on the internet (20%), $\chi^2(2)=62.54^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had presented their opinion on the internet were more likely to feel politically informed (29%) than those who had not presented political opinions on the internet (6%), $\chi^2(2)=61.07^{***}$.

Those who had presented political opinions on other media were more likely to feel politically capable (45%) than those who had not presented political opinions on other media (22%), $\chi^2(2)=14.47^{**}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had presented political opinions on other media were more likely to feel politically informed (20%) than those who had not presented political opinions on other media (8%), $\chi^2(2)=11.87^{**}$.

Those who had taken part in a political demonstration were more likely to have feel politically capable (49%) than those who had not taken part (20%), $\chi^2(2)=40.87^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had taken part in a political demonstration were more likely to feel politically informed (22%) than those who had not taken part (7%), $\chi^2(2)=42.73^{**}$

Evidently all forms of political participation presented here were significantly related to threshold voters' internal efficacy, with those who had participated more likely to express a high level of internal efficacy than those who did not.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political participation and threshold voters' external efficacy, those who had experience of a self-initiated contact with a politician were more likely to feel politically influential (38%) than those who did not have self-initiated contact (24%), $\chi^2(2)=8.02^{*}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had experience of a self-initiated contact with a politician were slightly more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those who did not have self-initiated contact (26%). Notably, those who had experience of a self-initiated contact with a politician were less likely to consider the

government unresponsive (48%) than those who did not have self-initiated contact (62%), $\chi^2(2)=9.88^{**}$.

Those who had visited political websites were more likely to feel politically influential (35%) than those who had not visited political websites (23%), $\chi^2(2)=13.93^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had visited political websites were more likely to consider the government responsive (33%) than those who had not visited political websites (23%), $\chi^2(2)=8.26^{*}$.

Those who had presented political opinions on the internet were more likely to feel politically influential (41%) than those who had not presented political opinions on the internet (24%), $\chi^2(2)=14.64^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had presented political opinions on the internet were more likely to consider the government responsive (39%) than those who had not presented political opinions on the internet (24%), $\chi^2(2)=11.62^{**}$.

Those who had presented political opinions on other media were more likely to feel politically influential (45%) than those who had not presented opinions on other media (26%) $\chi^2(2)=10.78^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had presented political opinions on other media were more likely to consider the government responsive (41%) than those who had not presented opinions on other media (25%), $\chi^2(2)=8.04^{*}$.

Those who had taken part in a political demonstration were more likely to feel politically influential (41%) than those who had not taken part (24%), $\chi^2(2)=15.03^{**}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had taken part in a political demonstration were more likely to consider the government responsive (39%) than those who had not taken part (24%), $\chi^2(2)=10.42^{**}$.

As in the case of internal efficacy, the cross tabulation on all external efficacy items indicates a statistically significant bivariate relationship between political participation and external efficacy.

11.7 Civic Participation: Hypothesised Effect

Threshold voters have opportunities to engage in a range of civic oriented activities. These actions are not strictly political, yet are related to matters of collective concern. Jensen (2010: 426) distinguished between elements of political and civic considerations:

> The political realm includes views such as trust in the government and patriotism, and activities such as voting, donating money to political causes, and making contact with public representatives. The civic realm includes attitudes such as social trust, and involvement in school and voluntary organisations (e.g. cultural, social, and religious).

He suggested that research based on youth citizenship should capture civic involvement along with political involvement. Though environmentally conscious consumption or participation in a petition may not be considered as political, such activity is related to the distribution of public values or goods. The manner in which political and civic participation is classified has expanded, with inclusion of internet activism and political consumerism (Norris, 2002; Amna et al, 2004; Zukin *et al.* 2006; Dalton, 2007; and Dalton, 2008).

Civic actions are indicative of one's responsibility in society, not only on an individual level, but on a collective basis. The completion of civic oriented acts such as consumerism based on ethical grounds will bolster one's appraisal of competence. Therefore a positive effect of participation in civic activities is anticipated for internal efficacy.

The effect of such participation on external efficacy is less obvious. In participating in a civic manner and reflecting on it, the participant is likely to be alerted to the role and status of the citizen in collective and public decision-making environs. Those who have taken part in civic activities may rationalise their behaviour, cognitively reinforcing that the act was not a waste of time, and will be responded to by the political system or public institution involved. Finifter's (1970: 406) research on powerlessness, which was measured by items comparable to inefficacy, found that participation in the political process is important in reducing powerlessness. For those outside of the many aspects of the political process, civic action may take on proxy political status. In line with the more active forms of political participation, there may be the anticipation of an effect on the threshold voter's sense of system responsiveness. The nature of the effect of engagement in civic participation is likely to depend on the outcomes of participation.

- *Internal: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher level of civic participation will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who have a lower level of civic participation.*
- *External: H6: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher level of civic participation will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have a lower level of civic participation.*
- *External: H6a: In comparing threshold voters, those who have a higher level of civic participation will be more likely to have lower external efficacy than those who have a lower level of civic participation.*

Civic Participation: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The items included in this measure of civic participation include: signing a petition; and boycotting and buying products on political, ethical or environmental grounds. The actions epitomise the 'power of one' campaigns which have become popular in recent years. While

they do not fit the frame outlined by Jenson in the previous section, they are considered civic in this case as they relate to community level activities aimed at resolving a collective issue. The commitment of these acts may not be the result of long held pre-meditated beliefs, such as signing a petition on the spot. Irrespective of the motive guiding this behaviour, the subsequent effect of acting may lead to a reappraisal of an individual's role and effect in social and political environments.

Table 11.6. Civic Participation Item Response

Response Percentage	No	Yes	*n*
Signed a petition	29.6	70.4	846
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	81.7	18.3	845
Bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	69.5	30.5	845

A much greater percentage of respondents have signed a petition (70.4%) than consumer type behaviours. Purchasing (30.5%) rather than boycotting (18.3%) products on political, ethical or environmental grounds was a more common occurrence for this cohort. The items were included in a principal component and scale reliability analysis to discern the scalability of a civic participation variable.[130]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' civic participation and internal efficacy, those who had signed a petition were more likely to feel politically capable (27%) than those who had not signed a petition (16%), $\chi^2(2)=14.50^{**}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had signed a petition were more likely to feel politically informed (10%) than those who had not (7%), $\chi^2(2)=2.14^{(non\text{-}sig)}$.

Those who had boycotted products were more likely to feel politically capable (41%) than those who had (20%), $\chi^2(2)=33.52^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had boycotted products were more likely to feel politically informed (11%) than those who did not (8%). Notably, those who had boycotted products were less likely to feel politically uninformed (55%) than those who had not boycotted products (71%), $\chi^2(2)=14.38^{**}$.

[130] Principal components analysis produced a one factor solution (KMO .570; eigenvalue of 1.551) with the extracted factor explaining 51.7% of item variance. As in the case of political participation, a civic participation scale constructed from these items has a low Cronbach's Alpha value (.521). Corrected item-total correlation coefficients (with one exception .230 for signing a petition) were above .3, ($p<.05$). The low Cronbach's alpha urges caution in the presentation of results here. The factor scores were created using the regression method, with Listwise exclusion of cases with missing data on these items.

Those who had bought products on a civic basis were more likely to feel politically capable (30%) than those who had not bought such products (21%), $\chi^2(2)=20.36^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had bought products on a civic basis were more likely to feel politically informed (14%) than those who had not bought such products (7%), $\chi^2(2)=24.90^{***}$.

In respect of each civic participation item, those who had participated were more likely to have high internal efficacy than those who did not participation. With one exception, in the case of signing a petition, all relationships were statistically significant.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' civic participation and external efficacy, those who had signed a petition were more likely to feel politically influential (28%) than those who had not signed a petition (23%), $\chi^2(2)=2.14^{(non\text{-}sig)}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had signed a petition were more likely to consider the government responsive (28%) than those who had not signed a petition (21%), $\chi^2(2)=6.46^{*}$.

Those who had boycotted products were more likely to feel politically influential (40%) than those who had not boycotted products (23%), $\chi^2(2)=19.38^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had boycotted products were more likely to consider the government responsive (38%) than those who had not boycotted products (23%). $\chi^2(2)=19.24^{***}$.

Those who had bought products on a civic basis were more likely to feel politically influential (34%) than those who had not bought such products (22%), $\chi^2(2)=14.24^{**}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who had bought products on a civic basis were more likely to consider the government responsive (34%) than those who had not bought such products (22%), $\chi^2(2)=23.83^{***}$.

Civic participation is also positively related to threshold voters' external efficacy in bivariate analysis. With the exception of one item and signing a petition, those who had participated in civic oriented activities were (statistically) significantly more likely to have high external efficacy than those who not participated.

11.8 Political Support: Hypothesised Effect

The distinction between specific and diffuse types of political support as suggested in the mid twentieth century has evolved into a classification of support which relates to levels of the political system (Easton, 1975; and Norris 2002). Expanding on Easton's classification of the political system between: political community, political regime, and political authorities; Norris (2002) suggested that it is possible to distinguish between an individual's evaluative and affective attitudes which are particular to levels of the political system. In this regard, she

approaches citizens' political support as relating to the following political system objects: political community; regime principles; regime performance; regime institutions; and political authorities. Therefore, orientations toward the political system are not of one type, and do not have the same significance for its maintenance (Easton 1975: 437). The relationship between political support and internal political efficacy is not evident in the literature. It may be that the political system appears as a more understandable and straightforward environment for those who are more supportive of those who hold political power and office. In respect of support at the political institution level (incumbent government) and the regime principles level (macro-economic regime), Karaman (2004) does not find a significant relationship with internal political efficacy.

In relation to external efficacy, there is an evident linkage between the extent to which one is satisfied with the operation of various levels of the political system and the extent to which one perceives them as responsive to citizen input. Easton (1975: 457) suggested that efficacy sentiments are best considered as conditions associated with a broad level of political support, which are both cause and consequence of such support. There is a degree of concord in the literature that recognises the distinction between support and external efficacy (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982; Finkel, 1985; and Madsen, 1987). More recently, Karaman (2004: 32) notes a degree of inconsistency in research in maintaining this distinction. She observed a relationship between the specific type of support for regime institutions (incumbent government) and external efficacy, but did not observe a relationship between the broad level measure of regime principle support and external efficacy.

Particularly in a democratic system, where responsiveness to the citizenry is a central tenet of the political system, a positive relationship between political support and external efficacy is anticipated. As is the case in cross sectional research which looks at this relationship, a caveat as to the causal order of the relationship is necessary. It is possible that the effects are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing in a representative political system.

- *Internal: H7: In comparing threshold voters, as their support for political regime principles changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H7: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher support for regime principles will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower support for regime principles.*
- *Internal: H8: In comparing threshold voters, as their support for regime performance changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*

- *External: H8: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher support for regime performance will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower support for regime performance.*
- *Internal: H9: In comparing threshold voters, as their support for regime institutions changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H9: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher support for regime institutions will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower support for regime institutions.*

Political Support: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Items were included to measure respondent political support at the levels of the political system which reflect the Norris (2002) classification of the political system. A measure of political community support is not included in the analysis. In relation to political regime; items are included which measure support for: regime principles; regime performance; and regime institutions (government satisfaction). At the political authority level, support is measured using items on political trust in reference to: political parties; politicians in general; local politicians; the parliament and the government.

11.8.1 Regime Principles Support

The item on regime principles required the respondent to consider the relative merit of democracy as a regime type or form of governance, compared to unspecified other regimes.

Table 11.7. Regime Principles Support Item Response

Response Percentage	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither d. nor a.	Agree	Strongly agree	*n*
Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government	2.5	6.5	30.4	40.6	20.0	842

Three in five respondents (60.6%) agreed to some extent ('Agree' or 'Strongly agree') that democracy is better than other forms of governance. Fewer than one in ten (9%) disagreed to an extent with the statement, with three in ten respondents (30.4%) in the middle category of neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' support for political regime principles and external efficacy, those who had high support for regime principles were more likely to feel politically influential (29%) than those who had low support for regime principles (23%), $\chi^2(4)=8.87^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high support for regime principles were more likely to consider the government responsive (31%) than those who had low support for regime principles (22%), $\chi^2(4)=17.24^{**}$.

In respect of external efficacy, those who had high support for regime principles were more likely to have high external efficacy than those with low support for regime principles, though the relationship is only statistically significant in the case of the second item.

11.8.2 Regime Performance Support

The item on regime performance related to satisfaction with the way democracy works. The generic nature of the statement was appropriate given the limited exposure which the respondents would have had of the workings of the constitutional and institutional apparatus of the political system.

Table 11.8. Regime Performance Support Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Neither u. nor s.	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	*n*
In general how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Ireland	13.8	28.3	32.8	22.3	2.7	838

Approximately one in four (25%) respondents expressed a form of satisfaction ('Fairly' or 'Very satisfied') with the way democracy works in Ireland. Approximately two in five respondents (42.1%) expressed low levels of satisfaction ('Not at all satisfied' or 'Not very satisfied'), with one third of respondents in the middle category.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' support for regime performance and external efficacy, those who had high support for regime performance were more likely to feel politically influential (36%) than those who had low support for regime performance (29%), $\chi^2(4)=24.20^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high support for regime performance were more likely to consider the government responsive (35%) than those who had low support for regime performance (20%), $\chi^2(4)=19.66^{**}$.

Threshold voters who have high support for regime performance were more likely to have high external efficacy than those who had low support. This relationship was statistically significant for both external efficacy items.

11.8.3 Government Satisfaction

An item on satisfaction with government was used to indicate 'regime institution' support for the central executive authority in the state. The item is generic in nature, and did not specify a particular function or criteria on which to appraise performance. This was a restricted measure of regime institution support, other possibilities could have included support for: the electoral system; the referendum system; or the state's constitution. [Table Overleaf]

Table 11.9. Government Satisfaction Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Neither u. nor s.	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	*n*
Thinking about the Irish government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?	29.9	41.9	23.2	4.9	0.1	842

Only 5.9% of the respondents expressed a degree of satisfaction with current government performance. Almost three quarters (71.9%) expressed lower levels of satisfaction, i.e., 'Not at all satisfied' or 'Not very satisfied'. At the time when the survey was administered, Ipsos MRBI polls commissioned by *The Irish Times* indicated that the adult national demographic were somewhat more supportive of government at the time, that participants in the threshold voter demographic: May 2009 (10% satisfied and 12% satisfied) and September (11% satisfied and 14% satisfied).[131]

Looking across the item responses on political support, there was a greater tendency to express high support for regime principles than regime performance, and for regime performance than for government performance. These findings in relation to political support reflect the findings of Dalton (2002: 252) and Norris (2002) which identified a degree of scepticism around the behaviour of political authorities and political institutions, but resolute support for the democratic regime in principle.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' satisfaction with government and external efficacy, those who had high satisfaction with government were more likely to feel politically influential (45%) than those who had low satisfaction with government (24%), $\chi^2(4)=21.20^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high satisfaction with government were more likely to consider the government responsive (42%) than those who had low satisfaction with government (25%), $\chi^2(4)=18.80^{**}$.

In relation to external efficacy, threshold voters who had high satisfaction with government performance were twice as likely to have high external efficacy as those who had low satisfaction, with both of these relationships being statistically significant.

11.9 Political Trust: Hypothesised Effect

The terms political trust and political support have been used in a related manner in existing research. Trust tends to be examined in relation to personalised elements of the system, such as political representatives, rather than systematic elements, such as regime performance and

[131] Source: *The Irish Times*, p. 8, dated 21/07/2011, which traced government and leader satisfaction levels from May 2007 until July 2011.

principles. In this instance, trust is used in reference to elected politicians and political institutions. Hetherington (1998: 791) defined political trust in government as; "a basic evaluative orientation toward the government founded on how well the government is operating according to people's normative expectation" (Anderson 2010: 65). It therefore encompasses elements of performance, attribute, and rationale of political actors, and the bodies in which they act.

Political trust is related to external rather than internal efficacy, as it is focussed on an individual's considerations of the system rather than the self. Existing literature suggests that the relationship between political trust and internal efficacy should be weak, if at all (Balch, 1974; Craig and Maggiotto, 1982; and Craig *et al*., 1990). It is anticipated that political trust will not relate to one's sense of internal political efficacy.

One of the driving motives of the Craig *et al*, (1990) review of external efficacy measures was to distinguish between external efficacy and incumbent-based trust, which guided their creation of a regime-based and incumbent based external efficacy scale. There is eminent difficulty in establishing the direction of causation in the relationship between trust and external efficacy. Schulz (2005: 14) acknowledged this issue in his cross-sectional research:

> Trust in institutions has a consistently strong effect on external efficacy and a weaker (but still consistently significant) effect on school efficacy...However, whether lower feelings of external efficacy are a result of "accumulating distrust" in institutions (Miller, Goldenberg and Erbring, 1979) or whether the general belief in the system's responsiveness is rather a pre-condition for developing trust in the institutions of this system cannot be tested with cross-sectional data.

In line with these findings and those of Kim *et al*. (2002), the expectation is of a positive relationship between threshold voter political trust and external efficacy.

- *Internal: H10: In comparing threshold voters, as their level of political trust changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H10: In comparing threshold voters, those who have higher political trust will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who have lower political trust.*

Political Trust: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Respondents were presented with five items relating to political trust in: local politicians; politicians in general; political parties; the Dáil; and the Government. The distinction between local politicians and politicians in general was included to account for the candidate-centred and local-based political culture which pervades Irish politics (O' Leary, 2011). While the measure of regime institution support was based on government satisfaction, an item on

government trust features in existing measures of political trust. The items were prefaced with the question wording: 'How trusting are you of each of the following?'

Table 11.10. Political Trust Item Response

Response Percentage	Not at all trusting	Not very trusting	Neither u. nor t.	Fairly trusting	Very trusting	*n*
The Dáil	15.5	26.9	42.0	14.6	1.1	841
Politicians in general	18.2	38.1	35.0	8.5	0.2	840
Your local politicians	11.8	22.2	40.6	23.4	2.0	838
Political parties	15.8	33.5	39.0	11.4	0.2	840
The Government	25.9	31.5	29.6	11.9	1.1	841

The distribution of trust varied somewhat across the items. The proportion of respondents who opted for the middle category of response was high in each instance. The level of trust ('Fairly' or 'Very trusting') expressed in local politicians (25.4%) was higher than that expressed in politicians in general (8.7%). There was little divergence in the percentage of respondents expressing a degree of trust in the Dáil (15.7%), the government (13%), and political parties (11.6%). Trust in parliamentary parties, and the institutions of parliament and government have been subject to declining trust in the last two decades in Ireland. The Eurobarometer survey from spring 2009 (conterminous to this project's survey) reported 15% of those polled expressing trust in government and 16% expressing trust in political parties. There is comparability between pre-adult and adult levels of trust, which indicates that threshold voters are in tune with the prevailing political sentiment of adults in the country.

The level of trust expressed among threshold voters in the government and political parties is far less than that found in the ICCS. In its early-mid adolescent sample 52 per cent responded that they trust the government 'Completely' or 'Quite a lot', and 40 per cent responded that they trust political parties 'Completely' or 'Quite a lot' (Cosgrove *et al*., 2011).[132]

The expression of trust in each item is hypothesised to reflect an underlying generic sense of political trust. Principal axis factoring and scale reliability analysis assessed the

[132] It is notable that the trust items presented in the ICCS did not feature middle response categories, with the following response options; 'Completely', 'Quite a lot', 'A little', and 'Not at all'.

dimensionality and scalability of these items, with the emerging factor scores used as a measure of political trust.[133]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political trust and external efficacy, those who had high trust in the Dáil were more likely to feel politically influential (41%) than those who had low trust (23%), $\chi^2(4)=27.30^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high trust in the Dáil were more likely to consider the government responsive (35%) than those who had low trust (23%), $\chi^2(4)=18.80^{**}$.

Those who had high trust in politicians were more likely to feel politically influential (53%) than those who had low trust (24%), $\chi^2(4)=46.40^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high trust in politicians were more likely to consider the government responsive (51%) than those who had low trust (19%), $\chi^2(4)=40.10^{***}$. On the more specific issue of trust in local politicians, those who had high trust in local politicians were more likely to feel politically competent (36%) than those who had low trust (20%), $\chi^2(4)=16.66^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high trust in politicians were more likely to consider the government responsive (33%) than those who had low trust (17%), $\chi^2(4)=22.58^{***}$.

Those who had high trust in political parties were more likely to feel politically influential (44%) than those who had low trust (19%), $\chi^2(4)=32.09^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high trust in political parties were more likely to consider the government responsive (38%) than those who had low trust (19%), $\chi^2(4)=24.96^{***}$.

Those who had high trust in government were more likely to feel politically influential (36%) than those who had low trust (23%), $\chi^2(4)=12.71^{*}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had high trust in government were more likely to consider the government influential (38%) than those who had low trust (23%), $\chi^2(4)=16.83^{**}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters political trust and external efficacy, those with high trust were more likely to have high external efficacy than those with low trust. Moreover this differential was statistically significant in respect of all objects included in the political trust index.

[133] Principal axis factoring produced a one factor solution (KMO .850; Eigenvalue 2.863), which explained 57% of observed item variance. Scale reliability analysis was supportive of forming a scale from the items, with all inter-item and corrected item-total correlation coefficients above .3 ($p<.05$); and a Cronbach's Alpha value of .863. Multicollinearity was not evident in looking at inter-item correlations, as all inter-item correlation coefficients were below .8 ($p<.05$). Factor scores for respondents were created using a regression method, with Listwise deletion of cases with missing data.

11.10 Political Cynicism: Hypothesised Effect

Political cynicism has been defined as "the belief that politicians and the government do not work in the best interests of citizens and cannot be trusted" (Hoffman and Thomson, 2009: 10). They posited that while cynicism is a reflection of low external efficacy, it is more focussed on feelings of trust in political representatives, than evaluations of system responsiveness. Political cynicism appears to be a broader consideration than perception of system responsiveness. Lin and Lim (2002) consider political cynicism and political efficacy as two components of political disaffection. Existing literature suggested that feelings of cynicism among younger generations have led to lower levels of political efficacy (Bowler and Donovan, 2002: 380, citing Jennings and Niemi, 1981). Recent literature highlighted the prominence of political cynicism among contemporary citizens, and in particular, among younger cohorts (Hay, 2007: 42).

As in the case of political trust and support, cynicism (or the absence thereof) is more related to the considerations of external rather than internal efficacy. Nonetheless, Amna *et al.* (2004: 20) made a case for the effect which an open political environment can have on citizens' perceptions of their political competence:

> …In an open society with a small gap between the citizens and the elite and with a low level of corruption, it is easier for citizens to understand politics, and thus to get involved in political matters. Hence, low corruption and an effective government could also have a positive impact on the internal efficacy of the citizens. The more the government is marked by equal and fair treatment of the citizens, the fewer citizens will feel powerless.

Their findings are somewhat contradictory, finding a negative correlation between internal efficacy and absence of corruption. They also find a negative correlation between perception of government effectiveness and trust in political parties.

Pinkleton and Austin (2002: 142) presented cynicism within the broader concept of disaffection and lack of confidence in a political system which they framed as working to erode a sense of political self-efficacy (i.e., internal efficacy). In an article, they raise the possibility that those who believe that they can "see through the lies they are being told by politicians via the media are more apt to think their participation can make a difference" (Austin and Pinkleton, 1995: 215). They added that those with a more sophisticated understanding of political realities are more confident of their ability to affect the political system. In this regard those who are cynical, and believe that this cynicism is justified, may receive a boost in sense of self-competence that they are judicious actors in political matters.

While an effect of political cynicism may arise, it is difficult to anticipate whether the relationship is a positive or a negative one.

The expectation is that the absence of cynicism and external efficacy are positively related, i.e., a rise in cynicism decreases threshold voters' external efficacy. In their study of American adults, Abramson and Aldrich (1982: 519) suggested that the decline in political effectiveness, which they measure with external efficacy items, results from more generalised disaffection and cynicism derived from political events.

If an individual is cynical about the merits of political authorities or procedures which affect the relationship between the citizen and the state, then the perception of system responsiveness is likely to suffer.

- *Internal: H11: In comparing threshold voters, as their level of political cynicism changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H11: In comparing threshold voters, those who are less politically cynical will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are more politically cynical.*

Political Cynicism: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The measure of political cynicism in this study related to the perception of corruption in Ireland. Due to the heightened profile of corruption allegations and investigation in Ireland in recent decades, this item appears to be an intuitive gauge of threshold voter cynicism. It is essential to assess the role of threshold voters' perceptions of cynicism in their perception of political efficacy, considering the political atmosphere which has developed in Ireland in recent decades. The wording of the item did not specify what corruption refers to, which will mean a vague interpretation or consideration.

Table 11.11. Political Cynicism Item Response

Response Percentage	Almost all	Quite a lot	Some	Only a few	Almost none	*n*
In your opinion, how many politicians in Ireland are involved in corruption? [134]	9.2	39.1	36.1	13.0	2.7	829

Almost half of respondents (48.3%) believed that 'Quite a lot' or 'Almost all' politicians were involved in corruption in Ireland at the time of survey. Only 15.7% believed that 'Almost none' or 'Only a few' are involved in corruption. Fitzgerald (2003) drew attention to the historic low esteem in which politics and politicians are held in Ireland, even during a period

[134] The coding of this item describes a measure of the absence of cynicism rather than cynicism, in that the highest response code was attributed to those who responded 'Almost None'.

of economic prosperity and peace-building. The unprecedented nature of the challenge in restoring the stock of the political profession from corruption revelations of the 1990s was highlighted by Collins and O' Shea (2000: 1).

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political cynicism and external efficacy, those who had low political cynicism were more likely to feel politically influential (36%) than those who had high cynicism (21%), $\chi^2(4)=22.35^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who had low political cynicism were more likely to consider the government responsive (37%) than those who had high cynicism (20%), $\chi^2(4)=22.69^{***}$.

Threshold voters who were low in political cynicism were more likely to have high external efficacy in respect of both external items. Moreover, these relationships were statistically significant.

11.11 Political Partisanship: Hypothesised Effect

Political parties occupy a central position in the politicisation and mobilisation of individuals. The relationship between political partisanship and key political attributes such as: political interest; political efficacy; and electoral participation; is acknowledged in existing literature (Karp and Banducci, 2008: 314; and Wu, 2003: 730). While the proportion of adolescents displaying partisan tendencies is small relative to older age groups, the seeds of partisanship begin in childhood socialisation. Greenstein (1960: 936) noted the tendency of young adolescents (9-13 year olds) in America to describe themselves as Republicans or Democrats; "long before they were able to make any meaningful statements about the parties, or even to link the party labels with the names of conspicuous leaders such as the President and Mayor". The partisan tendencies of parents or partisans in proximate environments thereby provide cues around which to acquaint oneself with political parties and political matters generally.

Political parties provide the threshold voter with political information and a means through which to understand political events, as well as opportunities for involvement in political activities. Caprara *et al.* (2009: 1016) alluded to the social element which accompanies party affiliation. They suggested that party affiliation provides mastery experiences in terms of political familiarity and inclusive feelings which arise from group identity which in turn boost considerations of political competence. Existing findings among adults illustrated the positive relationship between political partisanship and perception of internal efficacy (Lee, 2006; Kenski and Stroud, 2006; and Anderson, 2010).

In relation to external efficacy, the expectation is that those who are aligned to political parties perceive a greater degree of responsiveness on behalf of the citizen. The placement of oneself as close to a political party is a vote of confidence in the political system, and an indication that it is in some way reflective of one's needs or those of citizens in general. The findings of Kenski and Stroud (2006) and Karp and Banducci (2008) indicated a positive relationship between the strength of partisanship and respondents' external efficacy. Anderson (2010) on the other hand did not. Partisanship among this age group, even for those who express a sense of closeness to a party, may not have hardened. In this regard, the impact of partisanship may be more evident at later stages in the life cycle.

- *Internal: H12: In comparing threshold voters, those who are partisans will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not partisan.*
- *External: H12: In comparing threshold voters, those who are partisans will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are not partisan.*

Political Partisanship: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

Political partisanship is captured by asking about feelings of closeness to a political party. It is appropriate for this age group as it captures a sense of affinity to one party over another, rather than membership status.

Table 11.12. Political Partisanship Item Response

Response Percentage	No	Yes	*n*
Do you usually think of yourself as close to any political party?	81.5	18.5	838

Fewer than one in five respondents (18.5%) described themselves as being close to a political party. In response to the same item in the Irish Election Study of adult citizens, 26% of respondents selected Yes, and 72% selected No (Marsh *et al*., 2008). While threshold voters appear to be less partisan than an adult sample, the differential is surprisingly small. Formal membership of Irish political parties is open to those aged 16 and over.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political partisanship and internal efficacy, those who were partisan were more likely to feel politically capable (46%) than those who were not partisan (18%), $\chi^2(2)=63.20^{***}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who were partisan were more likely to feel politically informed (25%) than those who were not partisan (5%), $\chi^2(2)=81.93^{***}$.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political partisanship and external efficacy, those who were partisan were more likely to feel politically influential (35%) than those who were

not partisan (24%), $\chi^2(2)=13.43^{***}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who were partisan were more likely to consider the government responsive (33%) than those who were not partisan (25%), $\chi^2(2)=6.86^{*}$.

In relation to both efficacy dimensions, threshold voters who were political partisans were more likely to have high efficacy than non-partisans, with these bivariate relationships being statistically significant.

11.12 Political Party Identification: Hypothesised Effect

In consideration of the significance of political partisanship for political efficacy, an ancillary consideration is the particular party to which one is aligned. In relation to internal efficacy, there is little literature that assesses the effect of party identification. That which exists looks at the relationship between identification with a larger party or not: Bowler and Donovan (2002) find those who identify themselves as non-party to have lower internal efficacy than party identifiers, while Kenski and Stroud (2006) do not find a significant difference between those who do or do not support major parties.

The significance of party identification for external efficacy is likely to revolve around power dynamics, and the perception of responsiveness which aligns with electoral or political success. Iyengar (1980b) found that over a two year period partisan attachment increased among Indian adolescents, as did levels of political efficacy and trust. This partisan attachment was found to affect a respondent's level of political efficacy, which tended toward a measure of external efficacy. In noting the tumultuous nature of the Indian political environment at the time, Iyengar accounted for the relationship between partisan identity and efficacy in terms of a winner and loser effect, whereby those who support parties that were in office considered the system to be more responsive to their interests.

Alignment with governing parties is likely to lend itself to a feeling that the political system is responsive to the needs of the citizenry (Lambert *et al*., 1986). Moreover, those who feel close to political parties which are in remote positions may consider the political system as unreflective and unresponsive. In the literature, much of the concentration has been on the effects of large party versus small party identification: Bowler and Donovan (2002) did not find a notable effect between party and non-party identifiers on external efficacy. Kenski and Stround (2006) found positive effects of large party identification on external efficacy. Karp and Banducci (2008) find that large party supporters possess a higher sense of political efficacy, than small party supporters. Their measure tends toward external efficacy

considerations with a reference to voting effect. They clarified that this gap was smaller in proportional representation electoral systems, than in non-proportional electoral systems. The expectation is that party identification with large Irish political parties will positively relate to external political efficacy.

- *Internal: H13: In comparing threshold voters, as their Fianna Fáil partisanship changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H13: In comparing threshold voters, those who are Fianna Fáil partisans will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are not Fianna Fáil partisans.*
- *Internal: H13: In comparing threshold voters, as Fine Gael partisanship changes, their internal efficacy will not change.*
- *External: H13: In comparing threshold voters, those who are Fine Gael partisans will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are not Fine Gael partisans.*

Political Party Identification: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

The survey item on party identification was open-ended. The percentages reported in Table 11.13 are a proportion of the number who self-reported as close to a party.

Table 11.13. Political Party Identification Item Response

Response Percentage	FF	FG	Labour	GP	SF	PD	SP	*n*
If yes, which party is that?	28.4	40.5	10.8	5.4	13.5	0.7	0.7	148

Of those who reported as being close to a party, two in five (40.5%) mentioned Fine Gael, followed by Fianna Fáil (28.4%) and Sinn Féin (13.5%). An Ipsos MRBI polls commissioned by *The Irish Times* conducted in May and September 2009 indicate reflect similar levels of support among Irish adults. Identification with the Labour party among threshold voters appears to be lower than the support level of adult, with marginally greater support reported for Fine Gael and Sinn Féin among this demographic.[135] The focus in this measure is on the effect of identifying with either of the two major political parties of government in Ireland, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. As noted in relation to parent party identification, as Fianna Fáil have been by far the most successful party in terms of parliamentary representation and government incumbency, the criterion of affiliation with Fianna Fáil will hopefully capture a

[135] Source: *The Irish Times*, p. 8, dated 21/07/2011 which presented party support levels (excluding undecided) from May 2007 until July 2011. The results of the May polls display the following level of support May: FF 24%, FG 35%, Labour 19%, GP 3%, Sinn Féin 10%, and Others 9%. The September polls display the following level of support: FF 22%, FG 31%, Labour 22%, GP 4%, Sinn Féin 11%, and Others 10%. As two polls were conducted in each month, the reported percentages were the mean of two polls, with a maximum difference of 3% between party support level within polls conducted in the same month.

big party and successful party effect in relation to the external efficacy perception. The criterion of affiliation with Fine Gael will capture a big party effect; but one which has enjoyed much less electoral success at a national level in the 70-80 years preceding the survey. While more respondents identified with Fine Gael at time of survey, they had yet to experience the subsequent swing in their favour which has emerged since the time of survey in the parliamentary elections of 2011. The small *n* from which these percentages are based makes it difficult to assess individual party affects.[136] As those who did not identify with a party or identified with another party are undistinguished in these variables, cross tabulation will not give a refined representation of the effect of such variables on efficacy dimensions. This relationship will become clearer in the multivariate analysis which included a measure of political partisanship.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' party identification and external efficacy, those who were FF partisans were more likely to feel politically influential (34%) than those who were not (26%), $\chi^2(2)=3.20$ (non-sig). On the second internal efficacy item, those who were FF partisans were more likely to consider the government responsive (36%) than those who were not (26%), $\chi^2(2)=3.05$ (non-sig).

Those who were FG partisans were more likely to consider the government responsive (37%) than those who were not (25%), $\chi^2(2)=4.85^{\wedge}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who were FG partisans more likely to consider the government responsive (42%) than those who were not FG partisans (25%), $\chi^2(2)=10.07^{**}$.

Those who were partisan to either FF or FG, were more likely to have high external efficacy than those who were not aligned to each party. These relationships were not statistically significant with the exception of the second external efficacy item and FG partisanship.

11.13 Political Party Involvement: Hypothesised Effect

The more involved one becomes in a political party, the greater the potential effect of party membership on political attitudes. Andolina *et al.* (2003: 278) identified the effect which involvement in political groups can have for young people:

> Many high school students are gaining significant training through their participation in extra-curricular activities, especially when they are involved with political groups.

[136] A dummy variable was created for identification with each party. In each case, the reference category consists of those who identify with the party (coded 1), and the base category consists of all others (coded 0). Therefore those who identify with other parties or with no party are together in the base category. This approach seeks to increase the *n* around which analysis is based. The party identification variable becomes a cruder measure of partisanship as a result.

Students who participate in political groups in high school continue to be disproportionately civically and politically active after graduation.

Involvement in political groups (party or non-party) is likely to involve a greater sense of identity and loyalty than involvement in non-political groups. Zimmerman (1989) found a higher sense of political efficacy among university students and a community sample who were members of politically oriented voluntary organisations, than non-members, or members of non-political organisations. Participation within a political party, similar to other forms of political participation is likely to foster a sense of capacity in the individual. Activism is a means through which adolescents can gain insight, cognitive skills, and organizational capacity (Hart and Gullan, 2010: 66). In a reflection on contemporary political trends, Metzger and Smetana (2010: 232) indicate that involvement in political parties is not considered salient by adolescents, with involvement in community activities, or concrete behaviours such as voting considered more important. Dalton (2002: 182) identified that "party ties also mobilize individuals to become politically active" which increases the opportunity for political mastery experiences. A positive relationship between involvement in a political party and sense of internal political efficacy is therefore anticipated.

Involvement in political parties provides first-hand evidence of the manner in which parties attempt to achieve political effect for their members or for the citizenry in general. A keener appreciation of the necessary complexity of political decisions, and the manner in which individual's voices are felt within the system, may result from involvement in a political party (Stoker, 2006). Therefore a positive relationship between involvement in a political party and one's sense of political system responsiveness is anticipated. As involvement in a political party is a form of political participation, it is possible that the direction of causality is reversed, whereby those who are high in efficacy are more likely to get involved in political party activities than those who are not as efficacious.

- *Internal: H14: In comparing threshold voters, those who are involved in a political party will be more likely to have higher internal efficacy than those who are not involved in a political party.*
- *External: H14: In comparing threshold voters, those who are involved in a political party will be more likely to have higher external efficacy than those who are not involved in a political party.*

Political Party Involvement: Measurement, Distribution, and Cross Tabulation

In the presentation of items relating to involvement in different types of organisations, as detailed in Chapter 8, an item was also included on political party involvement. This item

related to considerations of belonging and participation. As in the case of organisational involvement, a restriction of this item was the ability to decipher the activity level of those previously involved in a political party.

Table 11.14. Political Party Involvement Item Response

Response Percentage	Never belonged	Used to belong	Belong but don't participate	Belong and actively participate	*n*
A Political Party	95.8	1.0	1.9	1.3	840

Only 4.2% of respondents had been or were members of a political party at the time of survey. Only 1.3% of respondents (11 individuals) reported active participation. A dichotomous variable was created from response to this item on the criterion of being a current and active participant for subsequent regression analysis, with a caveat that the number of cases in the reference category is very small. This mirrors the loosening of traditional party identifications in Ireland as highlighted by FitzGerald (2003) and Mair and Marsh (2004). This positioning of Ireland within the wider party dealignment of western state citizens by Marsh *et al.* (2008: 61) appears to be supported, if based on threshold voter response in this instance. Response in the ICCS report indicated a higher tendency toward alignment among those in early-mid adolescence with 19 per cent responding that they would 'Certainly' or 'Probably' join a political party in later life. However the survey item is evidently prospective and attitudinal rather than a reflection of past/current behavior.

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political party involvement and internal efficacy, those who were involved in a political party were more likely to feel politically capable (73%) than those who were not involved in a political party (23%), $\chi^2(2)=15.06^{**}$. On the second internal efficacy item, those who were involved in a political party were more likely to feel politically informed (55%) than those who were not involved in a political party (8%), $\chi^2(2)=30.46^{***}$.[137]

In the cross tabulation of threshold voters' political party involvement and external efficacy, those who were involved in a political party were more likely to feel politically influential (64%) than those who were not involved in a political party (26%), $\chi^2(2)=8.13^{*}$. On the second external efficacy item, those who were involved in a political party were more likely to

[137] In the cross tabulation of the political party involvement variable with internal and external efficacy dimensions, the expected counts were less than 5 in 33% of cells, however the minimum expected cell count was more than 1 in each analysis. This was due to the large number of respondents who were positioned in one response category of the political party involvement variable.

consider the government responsive (36%) than those who were not involved in a political party (26%), $\chi^2(2)=2.09$ (non-sig).

Threshold voters who were involved in political parties were more likely to have high internal and external efficacy than those who were not involved in political parties. These relationships are statistically significant with the exception of the second external efficacy item.

11.14 Internal Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Political Attributes Model

Table 11.15 presents the results of the multivariate regression of political attribute variables on threshold voter internal efficacy, controlling for demographic effects. The strong and positive effect of threshold voters' political interest and current affairs news consumption on their sense of internal political efficacy aligns with the expected relationship. The positive regression coefficient of civic duty indicated that the socialisation of a sense of civic duty in early political learning provides a fillip for citizens' perception of political effect at the time of entry to the electorate. The developmental effects of political participation for an individual's sense of political competence were evident in the significant relationship of news consumption and political participation, while civic participation in less directly political activities displayed a positive but not statistically significant relationship with threshold voter internal political efficacy.

The positive effect of political party involvement on threshold voters' political efficacy was anticipated considering the learning opportunities provided in political parties. This effect as in the case of other political variables may be best viewed as reciprocal, whereby a certain level of political self-competence may be required in the initial engagement with a political party or activity, which is then reinforced by one's involvement. However in a cross-sectional (one time) study such as this, it is not possible to distinguish these effects. These relationships held when external efficacy was introduced to the regression model. External efficacy itself was not significantly related to internal efficacy in the multivariate political attribute regression.

The negative relationship between respondents' level of government satisfaction and their internal efficacy is not intuitive.[138] It is difficult to see how satisfaction with government

[138] The cross tabulation analysis with the two internal efficacy items selected, which didn't take account of other variables, indicated a positive relationship between government satisfaction and internal efficacy. Those who had high satisfaction with government were more likely to feel politically capable (29%) than those who had low satisfaction with government (26%). Notably, those who had high satisfaction with government were less likely to feel politically incapable (39%) than those who had low satisfaction with government (50%), $\chi^2(3)=10.89^*$.

performance, would lower threshold voters' internal efficacy. A possible explanation is that dissatisfaction in the performance of government boosts one's feeling of political competence. This follows Pinkleton and Austin's (1995) identification that a sense of negativity about politics may lead one to believe that they have a more sophisticated understanding of political reality, than more sanguine citizens. This is also evident in Amna *et al.*'s (2004) negative finding between internal efficacy and the absence of cynicism. Similar findings are in evidence in respect of threshold voters' perception of parent responsiveness, student council responsiveness, and sense of social trust.[139]

Considering the cross-sectional nature of this study, it is also possible that causality runs in the opposite direction, from internal efficacy to government satisfaction. Those who feel competent may tend to being more demanding and critical of external agents' performance in their interactions with them. In line with expectations, respondent political support (government satisfaction aside), political trust and political cynicism were not significantly related to internal political efficacy.

With the inclusion of all the political attribute variables, the distinction between male and female respondents, and between village residents and other residents persisted. While the socio-economic status effect was significant when initially entered in the model's first block, it lost size and significance when respondent's political engagement (interest, news consumption, and political knowledge) were taken into consideration.

As intuitively expected, the addition of political attributes to their demographic characteristics substantially increased the account of threshold voter internal efficacy. The Adjusted R Square value denoted an increase from 2.9% to 55.5% of variation explained. This was largely accounted for by the political interest variable, the effect of which was much bigger than of the news consumption variable, and that of the political participation variables. Civic duty and political party involvement exhibited small effects relative to the other significant variables.[140] [Table Overleaf]

On the second internal efficacy item, those who had high satisfaction with government were more likely to feel politically informed (14%) than those with low satisfaction with government (10%), $\chi^2(2)=9.21^{\wedge}$.

[139] While not reaching the level of statistical significance in the multivariate regressions, this was also evident in the direction of the relationship between perceived school authority responsiveness, organisational responsiveness, and political cynicism.

[140] In this multivariate regression three cases (#5, #399, and #543) had standardised residual values outside the values expected in a normally distribution, i.e. above 3.28. However, their values were between 3.3 and 3.6 and all cases had a Cook's distance less than 1.00, which suggested that they did not unduly influence the results of the regression model.

Table 11.15. Political Attributes Model Internal Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.046	-1.372***	-1.345***
GENDER	.105**	.079**	.078**
Village	.075*	.049^	.050^*
Non-Manual	-.086*	-.037	-.034
Skilled Manual	-.108**	.013	.015
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.099**	-.006	-.006
POL. INTEREST		.483***	.481***
NEWS CONSUMPTION		.164***	.162***
POL. KNOWLEDGE		.028	.026
CIVIC DUTY		.075*	.073*
POL. PARTICIPATION		.113***	.108***
CIVIC PARTICIPATION		.019	.013
REGIME PRINCIPLES SUPPORT		-.036	-.031
REGIME PERFORMANCE SUPPORT		.006	.001
GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION		-.079**	-.080**
POL. TRUST		.018	.010
ABSENCE CYNICISM		-.015	-.019
POL. PARTISANSHIP		.014	.017
FF PARTISAN		.028	.029
FG PARTISAN		.033	.032
POL. PARTY INVOLVEMENT		.065*	.065*
EXTERNAL EFFICACY			.042
n	721	721	721
R	.190	.751	.751
R Square	.036	.563	.565
R Square Change	.036***	.007*	.001
Adjusted R Square	.029	.551	.552
ANOVA F	5.362***	45.139***	43.180***
Durbin Watson			1.983

11.15 External Efficacy: Multivariate Regression of the Political Attributes Model

The results of the multivariate regression of political attribute variables are presented in Table 11.16, with the effects of significant demographic variables again controlled in the first column of regression coefficients. In line with hypothesised expectations, elements of threshold voters' political support are positively related to external efficacy, namely; regime performance support; political trust; and the absence of political cynicism.

The negative relationship between one aspect of political support, regime principles support, and external efficacy was not anticipated. It does not appear intuitive that the more likely one is to champion democracy as a system of governance, the less likely one is to believe it leads to responsive government. This also runs counter to the initial indication offered by the cross tabulation with two external efficacy items. From a methodological point of view, it is possible that the conditional wording of the item creates a degree of confusion on the item.

Aspects of political engagement such as political interest and news consumption while positive related, were not significantly related, to threshold voters' external efficacy. Neither was their sense of civic duty.

The significance of both political and civic types of participation for threshold voter external efficacy may be indicative of the developmental effects of political participation. This suggests that for those who do engage in political and civic type activities, a sense of system responsiveness rather than frustration appears to arise. As much existing literature structure this relationship as political efficacy leading to participation, or as a reciprocal relationship, it is best to caution as to the order of causality in this case. All of the effects above remained statistically significant when internal efficacy was introduced to the regression model.

None of the partisanship measures captured in this study were significant predictors of threshold voters' external efficacy. A more encompassing measure of respondent party identification would be more robust for distinguishing between involvement and identification effects. Nonetheless, to the extent measured in this case, involvement in a political party did not significantly boost respondents' perception of political responsiveness.

In respect of demographic variables, suburban residence remained a significant predictor of threshold voter external efficacy, even after controlling for respondents political attributes. The effect on socio-economic status was interesting. While the significant difference is between the two upper occupational categories (i.e. those unspecified in the model) and the lower three initially, when threshold voters' political attributes are considered, only those in the non-manual (middle-occupational category) remained significantly lower in external efficacy than other threshold voters. While this may indicate a curvilinear relationship, the low numbers of respondents in the lower two occupational categories may also affect the ability of regression to capture the linear effect. The effect of an unemployed parent in the home was not statistically significant from its initial entry in this model of analysis.

The addition of political attribute to demographic variables increased the percentage of variation in external efficacy explained from 2.9% to 16.2%. This is a modest increase, with threshold voter political trust having a slightly stronger linkage with their external efficacy, than civic participation, regime performance support or the absence of political cynicism.

Table 11.16. Political Attributes Model External Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.058	-.618*	-.515*
Suburb	.111**	.090**	.087*
Non-Manual	-.102**	-.075*	-.072*
Skilled Manual	-.101**	-.050	-.051
Semi-Skilled Manual	-.097*	-.017	-.016
PARENT UNEMPLOYED	-.050	-.033	-.037
POL. INTEREST		.054	.014
NEWS CONSUMPTION		.056	.043
POL. KNOWLEDGE		.046	.043
CIVIC DUTY		.037	.033
POL. PARTICIPATION		.101*	.092*
CIVIC PARTICIPATION		.131**	.131**
REGIME PRINCIPLES SUPPORT		-.104**	-.101*
REGIME PERFORMANCE SUPPORT		.127**	.126**
GOVERNMENT SATISFACTION		.028	.034
POL. TRUST		.160***	.159***
ABSENCE CYNICISM		.104**	.104**
POL. PARTISANSHIP		-.074	-.077
FF PARTISAN		-.024	-.026
FG PARTISAN		.033	.031
POL. PARTY INVOLVEMENT		.002	-.004
INTERNAL FFICACY			.079
n	721	721	721
R	.189	.431	.434
R Square	.036	.186	.188
R Square Change	.036***	.005	.003
Adjusted R Square	.029	.162	.164
ANOVA F	5.305***	7.975***	7.724***
Durbin Watson			1.954

11.16 Conclusion

As expected the relationship between threshold voters' political attributes and their internal and external political efficacy tended to be larger than variables in the other models of analysis. In the analysis of socialisation effects on political efficacy it is necessary to control for the influence of other political aspects of the threshold voter's persona. As anticipated

many of the political engagement, behaviour and attitude variables demonstrate significant effects on internal and external dimensions.

In relation to internal efficacy; consumption of news, political party involvement, and political participation were significant predictors of threshold voters' sense of internal efficacy. The largest effect is that of political interest on sense of internal political efficacy. This relationship, as anticipated, must be controlled in assessing the contribution of the home, school, and peer politicisation variables in a multi-model analysis. That news consumption displayed a discrete positive effect indicated that news consumption does not have a demoralising effect on one's sense of political competence. In line with expectations, the evaluation of elements of the political system as indicated by political support, trust, and the absence of cynicism were not significantly related to internal efficacy, though were related to the external dimension. The negative relationship between government satisfaction and internal efficacy may be evidence of the self-rationalising processes suggested by Austin and Pinkleton (1995). However, due to the correlational (one-time survey) design of this study, the causal order may also be reversed in this instance, i.e., those who feel politically au fait, exact higher standards on governmental performance.

Political and civic participation are both significant in boosting threshold voter external efficacy. This may demonstrate a rationalising of activities undertaken, where those who take time to look for political information, express political opinions, or purchase according to public oriented concerns, believe that their behaviour is worthwhile. The evident positive relationship between regime performance, political trust, and the absence of cynicism (as measured by reverse scoring perceived prevalence of corruption) and individual's external efficacy are evident in this study as in existing literature. Before the citizen enters electoral entitlement, it appears that the mental trade-off between trust and efficacy has developed. The low level of political trust and higher level of perceived corruption are therefore causes of concern in terms of ensuring that those entering the electorate perceive the system in some way responsive to political input.

When all other political attributes are controlled external and internal political efficacy were not significantly related to each other. This is further evidence of the divergent interaction and focus of internal and external efficacy considerations, and the necessity to facilitate such divergence when assessing the political influences on and consequences of each efficacy dimension.

In the multivariate analysis of internal political efficacy with the inclusion of political attributes, gender and village retain significance as demographic variables which significantly affect threshold voter internal efficacy. In the multivariate analysis of external political efficacy when political attributes were included in the analysis, suburban residence retained a significant relationship. In both internal and external efficacy socio-economic effects lost their significance by and large, indicating that their effect is mediated by aspects of threshold voter political attributes. In the external efficacy model, respondents from the non-manual social class do retain a statistically lower sense of external efficacy than those from other social class categories.

The effects of resources, socialisation environments, and aspects of the personal and political persona have been established discretely. To assess the effects of significant variables across models, Chapter 12 will present a multi-model analysis on political efficacy dimensions. This will give a more complete view of the unique contribution of socialisation effects on efficacy dimensions.

Chapter 12. The Multi Model Analysis of Political Efficacy

12.1 Introduction

The relationship between elements in the socialisation environments of threshold voters and their political efficacy was assessed discretely in the preceding chapters. Demographic variables were included in the multivariate regression analysis of socialisation and attribute variables for each efficacy dimension. Multivariate regression within each model made it possible to assess the unique relationship between a predictor variable and a political efficacy dimension, controlling for other variables within the environment as well as for significant demographic factors. Socialisation factors which significantly relate to threshold voter internal and external efficacy were therefore identified.

This chapter moves from the model by model approach to a multi-model approach. Variables which were found to be statistically significant in earlier demographic, socialisation, and attribute analyses are entered in blocks in a multivariate regression. In this manner, it is possible to control for the 'third variable' problem. The inclusion of respondent attributes in a multi-model analysis of socialisation effects, will aid the identification of direct and indirect socialisation effects on internal and external political efficacy. The effect of socialisation environments does not occur in isolation, the assessment of such affects should therefore allow for their joint occurrence (Takei and Kleiman, 1976: 394).

The order of variable entry in this analysis is guided by the theorised causation between each model. Demographic variables are entered in the first block of analysis. Variables from the socialisation models are then entered in the order of: family; school; social; and political representative. This order reflects the circumstance that the family environment precedes other environs and is likely to influence other environmental conditions.

The attribute variables are entered in the multi-model analysis after socialisation variables. This order is informed by the likelihood that socialisation environs affect the wider personal and political outlook of the threshold voter. Of course it is likely that these attributes, personal and political, in turn affect the nature of one's socialisation environment (Flanagan *et al*., 2010). The final variable entered in each regression, is the other political efficacy dimension. Its entry at this point will make it possible to assess if the effect of other predictor variables on a specific efficacy dimension are direct or indirect in nature. The entry of variables in blocks makes it possible to assess the proportion of variation in threshold voter efficacy associated with each model. As effect size (β-size) and significance is altered by the addition of more

variables of consideration, it will indicate whether such effects are direct and indirect. When all of the variables are included in the model, the degree to which the variables included in this study explain threshold voter internal and external efficacy will be evident. This will indicate the explanatory power of this study, and where there is greatest need for further investigation.

The selection of variables for this analysis is based on the preceding multivariate analyses. The variables with significant (α=.05, i.e., $p<.05$) standardised regression coefficients (βs) in such analyses, before the second efficacy dimension was controlled for, are brought forward for this analysis. The reason for selecting variables before the second efficacy dimension is controlled is to facilitate the inspection of indirect effects which arise from predictors to one efficacy dimension, through the second efficacy dimension. A few exceptions to this variable selection method are noted in the specification of the internal and external multi-model. A Listwise deletion of cases with missing data was also utilised in this analysis. This results in a more restricted sample (smaller *n*) in the multi-model analyses than the analyses within model. However, the sample size is still large relative to the number of variables in the model: *n* 689-internal efficacy; and *n* 670-external efficacy. Verification of the assumptions of multivariate linear regression and diagnostics for influential or outlier cases was again undertaken in these analyses.

12.2 Internal Efficacy: Multi Model Analysis

The variables were entered in eight hierarchical blocks in the multi-model multivariate analysis on the internal efficacy variable. Five variables with significant regression coefficients (βs) from the preceding model analyses were not included in this analysis: 'parent responsiveness'; 'student council responsiveness'; 'life satisfaction'; 'social trust'; and 'government satisfaction'. In each case the particular negative effect of these variables was not hypothesised or detailed in the existing literature. It is likely that the causal direction of this relationship runs from internal political efficacy rather than to it, though this is not possible to determine in a correlational study design. When included in a multi-model regression, three of these variables remained significant predictors of internal efficacy (β, $p<.05$): parent responsiveness; student council responsiveness; and government satisfaction. The inclusion of these five variables in such analysis added less than 1% to the proportion of internal efficacy explained overall in the multi-model.

The following variables were included in this multi-model analysis:

Demographics: Gender, Village, Non-Manual, Skilled Manual, and Semi-skilled Manual.

Family: Home Politicisation, and Father Political Interest.

School: Community/Comprehensive School-type, School Candidacy, Student Council Involvement, Class Politicisation, Political Education Importance, and CSPE Grade Attainment.

Associational: Voluntary Organisation Involvement, Organisational Voting, Friend Politicisation, and Friend Political Interest.

Representative: Political Representative Contact, Self-Initiated Contact, and Relation Contact.

Personal: Personal Efficacy, and Normative Youth Influence.

Political: Political Interest, News Consumption, Civic Duty, Political Participation, Political Party Involvement, and External Efficacy.

The results of the analysis are presented in Table 12.1 (p. 278). The standardised regression coefficient (β) for each predictor and its associated statistical significance level are present in each column for each block of variable entry.

When introduced in the first block of regression, the selected demographic variables were significant predictors of internal efficacy. Being in the male, in the village residence, and in the upper two occupational categories had a positive effect on threshold voters' internal efficacy. These demographic variables accounted for 3.3% of the variation in internal efficacy in their own right. When the elements of the threshold voters' political socialisation at home were considered, the effect of occupational status loses strength as evident in the reduction in size of βs across columns, and loses statistical significance. It is likely that socio-economic status contributes indirectly to threshold voter internal efficacy, as the profile of politics in the home which influences internal efficacy is itself influenced by parent socio-economic-status. While the direct effect of gender and residential area was reduced when respondent political attributes were considered, these effects retained significance.

In the second block of variable entry, the level of politicisation in the home and fathers' political interest were positive predictors of internal efficacy, even after demographic differences were accounted for. The addition of these variables increased the percentage of internal efficacy variation explained substantially, from 3.3% to 41.5%. This was largely due to the home politicisation variable. In the earlier analysis within socialisation models it was evident that measures of home, school, and friend politicisation, contributed substantially to

the explanatory power of each model. The effect of such variables is best assessed when respondents' political interest was considered, as its measurement related to political discussion which was likely to reflect political interest. The effect of home politicisation therefore reduced when respondents' political attributes were considered in the model, though it was strong relative to other predictors, and retained statistical significance. The effect of father political interest retained most of its strength when other socialisation factors and personal attributes were considered. The reduction in size (and loss of statistical significance) when respondents' political attributes were considered suggests that its effect was largely indirect. It is likely that father political interest influenced threshold voters' engagement which in turn affected their internal efficacy.

When introduced in the next block of regression analysis, neither respondents' school-type (Community/Comprehensive) nor CSPE grade attainment were significant predictors of internal efficacy. While candidacy in school elections and class politicisation (albeit at the α=.10 level) were positive predictors of internal efficacy when introduced, the strength of these effects was reduced (and lost statistical significance) when associational factors were subsequently considered. Those who were involved in student councils were significantly higher in internal efficacy than those who were not, when other socialisation and personal attributes were considered. However, the variable reduced in effect size and statistical significance when political attributes were considered (though it was significant at the α=.10 level). Respondent perceptions of the importance of political education were positively related to their internal efficacy, though lost statistical significance when political attributes were considered. The introduction of school socialisation variables increased the percentage of internal efficacy variance explained by 2%. This was a substantively small, though statistically significant increase.

The introduction of associational socialisation variables produced some interesting results. The positive relationship between involvement in a voluntary organisation and internal efficacy was not significant when preceding socialisation variables are considered. The experience of voting in an organisation was positively associated with internal efficacy and remained significant when other aspects of socialisation and respondent attributes were considered. In relation to peer effects, the level of friend politicisation was a positive predictor of internal efficacy when socialisation and personal attributes were taken into consideration. The strength of this relationship lessened (and lost statistical significance) when respondents' political attributes were considered. The frequency of political discussion with friends (as an

indicator of the politicisation of their relationship) was likely to affect (and be affected by) respondents' political interest, news consumption and participation, thereby indirectly influencing their internal efficacy. The relationship of friend political interest and internal efficacy was particularly interesting. While cross tabulation, and multivariate regression within the associational socialisation model suggested a positive relationship, the polarity of the regression coefficient changed when respondents' political attributes were considered. This suggests that when respondents' political outlook was controlled, the more politically interested one's friends appear the less competent threshold voters felt politically. This was intuitive to an extent as internal efficacy (as traditionally measured) involve relative considerations of capacity, the more interested and engaged one's peers appear, the more exacting the standard against which one judges one's own competence. This may be particularly relevant for young people as politics is not a matter of salience. The introduction of associational socialisation variables significantly increased the percentage of internal efficacy variation explained, but again to a small extent (1.1%).

The range of measures relating to political representative socialisation in this study was relatively narrow, with a focus on direct contact with a political representative. The experience of first-hand contact with a politician had a positive effect on respondent internal efficacy when demographic, socialisation, and personal attributes were considered. This effect lost strength (as evident in the reduction in β size) and statistical significance when respondents' political attributes were considered in the analysis. This indicates that the effect was somewhat indirect. The positive effect of self-initiated contact with a politician was significant at the lower level of significance (α=.10) when introduced. However, when respondents' political attributes were taken into consideration this relationship changed polarity with a negative β. This change in direction appears counter-intuitive from a developmental perspective, and was not statistically significant. When all aspects of the study were considered, those who reported a family relationship to a political representative had a higher level of internal efficacy then those who did not, though not at the α=.05 level of significance.[141] The increase in variation in respondent internal efficacy associated with the addition of political representative socialisation was substantively small with a 1% increase in R. Square. In fact, the Adjusted R square decreased as it adjusted R. Square for the number of variables in the analysis.

[141] Significance results on this variable are likely to be restricted by the distribution of this variable, as very few respondents reported contact with a related politician.

In line with the existing literature, respondents' personal efficacy was positively associated with their internal political efficacy. This effect was largely unaltered when respondents' political attributes were controlled in the final analysis. The second personal attribute variable, normative youth influence, while positive, was not significantly related to respondents' internal efficacy in multi-model analyses. The introduction of personal attribute variables increased the percentage of internal efficacy explained by 1.2%, which is attributable to the personal efficacy variable.

The introduction of political attribute variables altered the nature of the relationships between preceding socialisation variables as noted above. Respondents' political interest and news consumption were positive predictors of respondents' internal political efficacy. Threshold voters' engagement in political activities, as captured through political participation and political party involvement were positive related to internal efficacy. Respondents' sense of civic duty, while positive, was not a significant predictor of their internal efficacy. The introduction of political attributes increased the percentage of internal efficacy variance explained by 14.4%.

The introduction of the external efficacy variable, in the final block of analysis did little to alter preceding relationships in size or significance. The exception is the change in significance level of the organisational voting variable from the α=.10 level to the α=.05 level. Threshold voters' external efficacy, while positive, was not significantly related to their internal efficacy, when other variables in this analysis are considered. Its addition to analysis did not increase the explanatory power of the regression model

In the multi-model regression analysis on internal efficacy the variables in this study accounted for or explained 61.2% of variation in threshold voter internal efficacy. Ten variables were found to be statistically significant and direct predictors of internal efficacy at the level of significance set (α=.05). These variables were: gender; village residence; home politicisation; organisational voting; friend political interest; personal efficacy, political interest; news consumption; political participation; and political party involvement. With the exception of friend's political interest, all effects were positive in nature.

It is important to note the relationships of other socialisation variables, beyond these direct effects, which lost statistical significance when respondent political attributes are controlled. Father political interest; student council involvement; the perception of political education importance; friend politicisation; contact with a political representative; and contact with a

political representative relative may all contribute indirectly to threshold voters' internal efficacy.

In assessing the size of direct effects on internal efficacy, i.e., what drove the explanatory power of the model, respondents' political interest was by far the strongest predictor. Home politicisation demonstrated a weak to moderate effect size, with respondent personal efficacy slightly smaller in size. The effect size of other variables was relatively weak from a substantive perspective, with the significant political attribute variables showing stronger direct effects than the demographic or socialisation variables.

[Table Overleaf]

Table 12.1. Multi Model Internal Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.040	-1.567***	-2.058***	2.091***	-2.098***	-2.094***	-1.592***	-1.597***
GENDER	.100**	.083**	.103**	.091**	.092**	.091**	.063*	.063*
Village	.094*	.098**	.098**	.094**	.094**	.089**	.047^	.047*^
Non-Man.	-.100*	-.040	-.043	-.039	-.036	-.024	-.021	-.018
Skilled Man.	-.122**	-.035	-.030	-.021	-.014	-.012	.009	.011
Semi-Skilled Man.	-.082*	-.001	.016	.011	.012	.011	.016	.018
HOME POLITIC.		.569***	.486***	.430***	.420***	.408***	.179***	.181***
FA. POL. INT.		.129***	.107**	.109**	.100**	.099**	.027	.026
Comm./Comp.			-.035	-.033	-.020	-.020	-.003	-.005
SCH. CANDIDACY			.067*	.051^	.042	.022	.020	.020
STU. COU. INV.			.072*	.069*	.070*	.065*	.048^	.046^
CLASS POLITIC.			.055^	.031	.032	.028	.044	.042
POL. EDU. IMPORT			.096**	.090**	.088**	.079*	-.025	-.024
CSPE GRADE			.029	.023	.018	.003	-.032	-.032
V. ORG. INV.				.029	.024	.007	.009	.010
ORG. VOTING				.081**	.071*	.066*	.048^	.050*
FRI. POLITIC.				.094*	.087*	.084*	.038	.036
FRI. POL. INT.				.009	.007	-.003	-.057*	-.059*
POL. CONTACT					.065*	.067*	.032	.031
SELF-I. CONTACT					.050^	.041	-.033	-.033
RELAT. CONTACT					.045	.058*	.043^	.043^
PER. EFFICACY						.131***	.124***	.122***
NORM. Y. INFLU.						.031	.009	.012
POL. INTEREST							.447***	.447***
NEWS CONSUMPT.							.081*	.079*
CIVIC DUTY							.032	.030
POL. PARTIC.							.079*	.075*
POL. PARTY. INV.							.092***	.091***
EXT. EFFICACY								.029
n	689	689	689	689	689	689	689	689
R	.200	.649	.668	.678	.685	.696	.792	.792
R Square	.040	.421	.446	.459	.469	.485	.627	.628
R Square Change	.040***	.381***	.025***	.013**	.010**	.016***	.142***	.001
Adjusted R Square	.033	.415	.435	.446	.453	.468	.612	.612
ANOVA F	5.716***	70.776***	41.818***	33.520***	29.489***	28.478***	41.109***	39.712***
Durbin Watson								1.952

12.3 External Efficacy: Multi Model Analysis

As in the case of internal efficacy, the selection of variables for this analysis is based on the standardised regression coefficients in the preceding model by model multivariate analyses. The criterion for selection is a β which is significant at the α=.05 level (i.e., p<.05), before the internal efficacy is controlled in the analysis. Four variables which are included did not meet the selection criteria (α=.05 level) when internal efficacy was controlled within preceding analyses; home politicisation; school politicisation; class politicisation; and personal efficacy. As noted in the discussion of the demographic model analysis, the coefficient of unemployed parent variable only increases from the α=.10 to the α=.05 level of significance when internal efficacy is controlled. Its effect appears intuitive and has been included in subsequent analysis for comprehensiveness.

The regime principle support variable, which had a significant coefficient on the above criteria, was not included in this analysis. As noted in the discussion of the political attributes model, the negative relationship is not explainable, with a possibility that the item wording on this variable was problematic. When included in a multi-model analysis this variable remains significant (α=.05 level), though its inclusion only increased the proportion of explained variance in external efficacy by 1%.

The variables included in this analysis were:

Demographics: Suburb, Non-Man, Skilled, Semi-skilled, and Parent Unemployed.
Family: Home Politicisation and Father Partisanship.
School: School Authority Responsiveness, Class Politicisation, and Political Education Effectiveness.
Associational: Friend Politicisation
Representative:
Personal: Personal Efficacy, Social Trust, and Institutional Trust
Political: Political Participation, Civic Participation, Regime Performance Support, Political Trust, Absence of Political Cynicism, and Internal Efficacy

The results of the multi-model multivariate regression on external efficacy are presented in Table 12.2. (p. 283). The standardised regression coefficient (β) for each predictor and its associated statistical significance level are outlined in each column according to the block entry of variables.

The initial block of variable entry featured demographic variables. While those with an unemployed parent expressed lower external efficacy than those without, this difference was

not statistically significant throughout the multi-model analysis. While this is divergent from the earlier demographic model analysis, the lower *n* associated with the Listwise deletion of cases with missing data (involving a larger number of variables in this case) is likely to result in a slight reduction in power to detect effects. The positive effect of suburban residence remained significant, when socialisation and political attributes variables were considered. When considered in the initial regression, the divergence between those in the lower two occupational categories and the upper two categories, was significant. The divergence between those whose parents are in non-manual occupations and the upper two categories was only significant at a lower level (i.e., α=.10), and lost significance at that level when respondents' family socialisation was considered. The difference between those in the bottom two occupational categories and those above lost significance when variables from the school block were entered. The difference between those in the bottom occupational category and other respondents at the α=.05 level remained until personal attributes were considered, and at the α=.10 level when political attributes were included in the analysis. Demographic variables account for 2.9% of the variation in threshold voters' external efficacy in the model.

The home politicisation and father partisanship variables were introduced in the second block of entry. The positive effect of the level of politicisation in the home was significant when introduced to the model. Its effect was somewhat weakened with the addition of school socialisation variables, and it lost statistical significance when friend politicisation was introduced to the analysis. This raises a question of the independence of the politicisation variables, as there is a strong relationship between the three variables which may relate to respondent political engagement as well as indicating the politicised nature of their environs. The second family socialisation variable, father partisanship, retained its negative effect on respondent external efficacy throughout the subsequent addition of variables. Those who identified their fathers as voting for one party in the preceding election were significantly lower in external efficacy than those who did not. While this was an indirect measure of parent partisanship, the tendency to report one's parent as voting for one party in a PRSTV electoral environment was suggestive of strong partisanship. In this instance it appeared that such voting and the identification of partisanship was a manifestation of negative sentiment toward the responsiveness of the current system. The inclusion of family socialisation variables increased the percentage of external efficacy variation explained from 2.9% to 4.9%.

The addition of school socialisation variables increased the percentage of external efficacy variation explained by a further 4.2%. The perception of school authority responsiveness had

a positive relation to external efficacy, which remained largely intact with the subsequent addition of other respondent variables. The positive relationship between perceptions of political education and respondents' external efficacy was significant at a lower level (α=.10), before respondents' personal attributes were taken into consideration. While class politicisation was positively associated with respondents' external efficacy, this relationship was not statistically significant.

The only variable added from the associational environment model was the friend politicisation variable. Its positive relationship with external efficacy remained significant throughout the model, though at the lower (α=.10) level when respondents' political attributes are included. The increase in proportion of variance explained was substantively small (1%) though statistically significant.

When the three personal attribute variables were added to the model, respondents' social trust demonstrated a positive effect on external efficacy. This effect while slightly mediated by the addition of political attributes remained significant in the final analysis. The positive effect of institutional trust was not statistically significant when introduced, and reversed polarity when political attributes are controlled. While this reversal was not foreseen, the effect size is small and not statistically significant. The positive effect of respondents' personal efficacy on their external efficacy was not significant, and lost virtually all its effect when internal efficacy was controlled in the analysis. The increase in explained variance (2.2%) associated with the addition of respondents' personal attributes was substantially due to the social trust variable.

Each of the political attribute variables when introduced displayed a positive and statistically significant relationship with respondent external efficacy. Both types of participation; political and civic were positively related to external efficacy. The two political support variables, regime performance support and political trust remained significant projectors of external efficacy in the final analysis. The absence of political cynicism variable was also positively associated with respondents' external efficacy though at a lower level of statistical significance. The addition of political attribute variables increased the percentage of external efficacy variance explained by 7.9%.

The addition of the internal efficacy variable did not significantly increase the percentage of external efficacy variance explained, and while positive, was not significantly related to external efficacy when other variables were considered. Neither did it alter the pattern of relationships evident before its inclusion.

Eight variables showed statistically significant direct effects on threshold voters' external political efficacy in the final model of analysis. These were: suburban residence; father partisanship; school authority responsiveness; social trust; political participation; civic participation; regime performance support; and political trust. With the exception of father partisanship, the variables are positively related to external efficacy. A further two variables: friend politicisation and absence of political cynicism were positive predictors of external efficacy at a lower level of significance. The latter variable was border line significant at the α=.05 level (β sig. p=.052).

These variables explain just over 20% of the variation in threshold voter external efficacy. The strongest predictor of external efficacy was respondents' political trust which had a weak to moderate effect size. Respondents' perception of school authority responsiveness, their social trust and their civic participation displayed slightly smaller positive effects on external efficacy. The effect size of the other variables was relatively weak though statistically significant.

[Table Overleaf]

Table 12.2. Multi Model External Efficacy Multivariate Regression

Predictor Variable	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Constant (Beta)	.037	-.141	-.798***	-.851***	-1.105***	-1.233***	-1.162***
Suburb	.117**	.104**	.108**	.111**	.104**	.090*	.091*
Non-Man.	-.070^	-.063	-.043	-.045	-.032	-.025	-.025
Skilled Man.	-.110**	-.098*	-.073^	-.071^	-.060	-.043	-.041
Semi-Skilled Man.	-.101*	-.088*	-.082*	-.080*	-.069^	-.028	-.027
PA. UNEMP.	-.055	-.052	-.054	-.062^	-.055	-.033	-.036
HOME POLITIC.		.135**	.096*	.031	.033	.015	-.017
FA. PARTISAN		-.096*	-.091*	-.080*	-.084*	-.087*	-.091*
SCH. RESPONS.			.183***	.180**	.147***	.125**	.124**
CLASS POLITIC.			.066	.045	.052	.018	.018
POL. EDU. EFFECT			.066^	.070^	.054	.050	.045
FRI. POLITIC.				.125**	.128**	.082^	.077^
PER. EFFICACY					.044	.011	.001
SOCIAL TRU.					.142***	.116**	.118**
INSTITUT. TRU.					.064	-.011	-.009
POL. PARTIC.						.115**	.103*
CIVIC PARTIC.						.123**	.123**
R. PER. SUPPORT						.088*	.089*
POL. TRUST						.164***	.161***
ABSENCE CYNICISM						.075^	.075^
INT. EFFICACY							.070
n	670	670	670	670	670	670	670
R	.189	.243	.324	.338	.374	.473	.476
R Square	.036	.059	.105	.115	.140	.224	.227
R Square Change	.036***	.023***	.046***	.010**	.025***	.084***	.003
Adjusted R Square	.029	.049	.091	.100	.122	.201	.203
ANOVA F	4.942***	5.932***	7.706***	7.740***	7.614***	9.874***	9.514***
Durbin Watson							1.986

12.4 Analytical Summary

This multi-model analysis made it possible to assess the effect of variables which were found to be significant predictors of internal and external efficacy in the earlier model-by-model regression analysis. It offered a more encompassing assessment of demographic, socialisation and attribute variable relationships with threshold voters' political efficacy.

As this multivariate regression analysis was based on the forced entry addition of variables in blocks, a critical decision is the order of variable entry. Socialisation variables were entered before attribute variables in this analysis as the socialisation which threshold voters receive was likely to influence their wider personal and political attitudes as well as political efficacy.

However, this was a matter of methodological approach. The following variables were found to relate to political efficacy dimensions at the critical level of significance (α=.05):

	Internal Efficacy	**External Efficacy**
Demographics:	Gender	
	Village	Suburb
Family Socialisation:	Home Politicisation	Father Partisan
School Socialisation:		School Responsiveness
Associational Socialisation:	Organisational Voting	
	Friend Political Interest	
Representative Socialisation:		
Personal Attributes:	Personal Efficacy	Social Trust
Political Attributes:	Political Interest	Political Participation
	News Consumption	Civic Participation
	Political Participation	Regime Performance Support
	Political Party Involvement	Political Trust

In respect of demographic variables, the socio-economic effects which were evident in earlier analyses did not remain significant when respondents' socialisation was taken into consideration. This suggests that the effect of static factors like socio-economic status on the political efficacy of those entering political adulthood, was mitigated by the political socialisation they receive. It may equally suggest that the effect of socio-economic status on political efficacy was played out in the manner in which young people from different socio-economic backgrounds were politically socialised. This analysis found that male threshold voters had a higher sense on internal efficacy than female threshold voters, though there was not a divergence on their external dimension. This finding mirrors the earlier findings among adult respondents, though some studies among pre-adults did not detect such an effect.

An interesting finding of this analysis was the effect of residential area. While effects were not anticipated, village residence demonstrated a positive effect on internal efficacy; and suburban residence demonstrated a positive effect on external efficacy. While both effects do not appear to be the consequence of socio-economic status to the extent captured in this design, they cause may rely on wider socio-economic or community level variables. Aspects of this environment such as sense of social or community identity, or perception of community level efficacy, which were not captured in this study may account for this effect. External efficacy may be boosted by observation of such surroundings, where population size

ensures political responsiveness at a community level. This is an area for further investigation to affirm the nature and dynamic of residential area effects.

Different aspects of threshold voters' socialisation experience impacted on their internal and external sense of efficacy. While the effect size of home politicisation was initially inflated as the measure aligned with political interest, it remained a positive correlate on internal efficacy even when political attributes were controlled. All politicisation variables (home, school, and friend) displayed positive effects on threshold voter internal efficacy. However, it appears that the political discussion in the home environment is a more potent influence on internal efficacy. Interestingly, fathers' political interest appeared to have an indirect positive effect on threshold voters' political efficacy as mediated through their political attributes. While the measure of parent partisanship was specific in its reference to single party voting, it is therefore likely to relate to strong partisan tendencies. The negative relationship of this variable to respondent external efficacy, suggested that threshold voters' are attuned to electoral participation cues from parents, and particularly fathers, who may be unhappy with the responsiveness of aspects of the current system.

In line with expectations, the involvement of young citizens in scaffolding entities such as student councils in school was positively related to their sense of internal political efficacy. While this effect was mediated by political attributes it demonstrated the importance of collective student led processes for boosting a sense of collective and political competence. The positive linkage between the experience of organisational voting is further evidence of the boosting relationship between participatory mastering experiences and young citizens' internal political efficacy, albeit many of the organisational socialisation variables did not significantly relate to threshold voters internal or external efficacy. Schulz (2005) noted the importance of impression building in school for appraisal of decision maker responsiveness. The positive effect of school authority responsiveness for threshold voter external efficacy was testament to the view of schools as mini-publics informing developing citizens on the nature of power relations, which are then transferred in initial orientations toward wider social and political spheres as noted by Schulz (2005) among younger adolescents.

Friend politicisation showed an indirect positive relationship with both internal and external political efficacy. Interestingly, when political attributes were controlled, the relationship between friend political interest and internal efficacy changed to a negative sign. It is possible that this captured the relative aspect of internal political efficacy. Considerations of one's own capacity to act may be framed within a comparison of the perceived abilities of relevant

others. The presence of friends who appear au fait with politics may depress one's sense of capacity. This finding highlights the relative aspect of the internal efficacy items, which may be particularly potent for a pre-adult group for whom politics is not salient. A measure which captured one's perception of political knowledge relative to friends or close intimates may reveal such an effect.

The manner in which political representative socialisation was captured in this study was restricted. While experience of contact with a political representative positively related to internal efficacy its effect was small and non-significant when political attributes were considered. In line with expectation self-initiated types of contact appear to be more important than other type of contact. A more encompassing measure of political representative socialisation with greater detail of the profile of the politician contacted, reasons for the contact and the outcome of the contact, and representative contact with parents is necessary to develop this analysis.

The effects of personal attributes on political efficacy align with existing adult-based research. The positive effect of personal efficacy on internal efficacy and social trust on external efficacy indicates that such effects develop before entry to political adulthood, at a time when direct political learning was relatively low for many. The provision of social opportunities which bolster a sense of general competence simultaneous to bolstering a sense of trust and identity with others therefore has consequence for more specific perceptions of political efficacy.

Predictably, many elements of threshold voters' wider political outlook related to their sense of political effect. The only study variable to predict internal and external efficacy was political participation, with a positive effect on both dimensions. Engagement in wider individualised participation, captured by the civic participation variable, was positively related to external efficacy. While this may represent a behaviour rationalising attitude on behalf of those who have undertaken such activities, it indicates that considerations of modern measures of non-institutionalised forms of participation are relevant for political attitude formation. Such effects assert the strong link between political participation and political efficacy among those who for whom adult political opportunities will soon present. The more specific, partisan involvement variable was also positively related to internal efficacy. The role of political parties as providers of learning opportunities is important, though such benefits in terms of political self-appraisal are felt by a small proportion of threshold voters.

The strong relationship between one's political engagement and feeling of political competence is evident as the political interest variable is the strongest predictor of internal efficacy. That news consumption is a positive predictor of internal efficacy, even when political interest and other variables are controlled, demonstrates the significance of exposure to political information, albeit loosely defined, for feelings of competence. In a correlational one-time study where establishing causation is theory rather than data driven, it is best to view the relationship between political attributes as associative and reciprocal. Particularly in the case of political participation as measures which involve an element of personal endeavour require a degree of confidence to start with. This is equally true in the case of political support type items and external efficacy in a representative democracy.

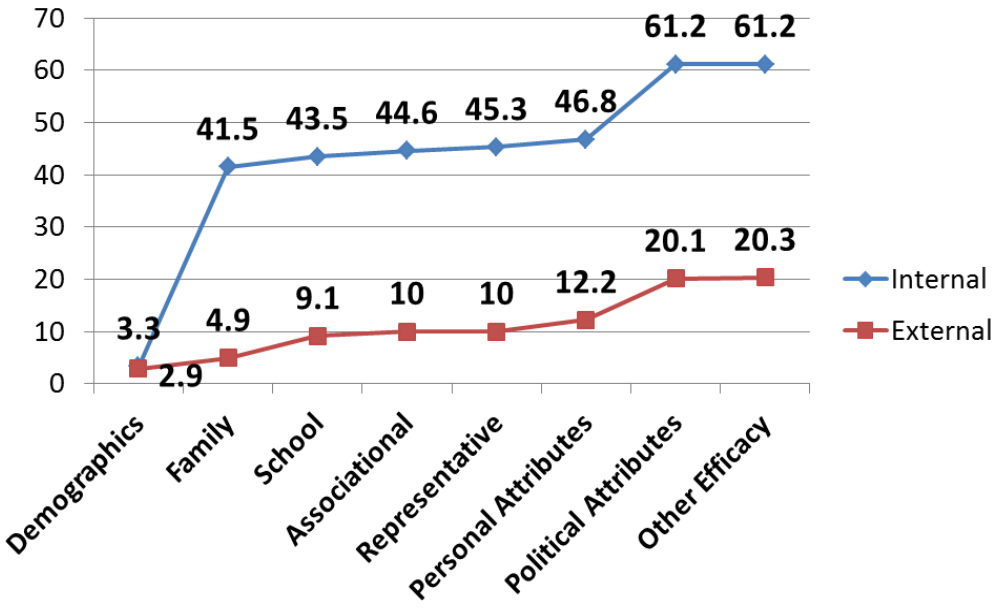
Even before entry to political adulthood, the relationship between political support measures such as regime performance and political trust and perceptions of external efficacy is evident. Particularly in the case of political trust which was the strongest predictor of threshold voters' external efficacy. Considering the low levels of political trust demonstrated by respondents and high perception of political corruption, the relationship of both variables to external political efficacy is a concern for the perceived health of democracy in Ireland.

The divergent effects of not only socialisation variables, but demographic and attribute variables, on internal and external efficacy was further evidence of the necessity for empirical studies to distinguish between both dimensions. This analysis indicated that prior to entry to political adulthood, internal and external efficacy develops in accordance with different elements of the socialisation environment. The internal and external dimensions were not significantly related to each other, when other political attributes were considered. It is therefore ill-advised to consider the causes and consequence of political efficacy among adult citizens without capturing this nuance. Indeed many variables were found to have opposite relationships with internal and external dimensions, though not at the set level of statistical significance; such as perceptions of home, school, and organisational responsiveness; and normative youth influence. While the social trust variable is not included in the internal efficacy multi-model analysis it displayed a negative relationship with internal efficacy and a positive relationship with external efficacy.

Though the intention of this study was to assess the nature of socialisation effects on threshold voter political efficacy, it is evident that the variables captured in this study were more adept at accounting for respondents' internal rather than external efficacy. As evident in Figure 12.1. overleaf, while 61% of the internal efficacy variation was explained, only 20% of

external efficacy was explained, via the multi-model regression analysis. The greater account of internal rather than external efficacy is a common occurrence in existing literature. As external efficacy is related to external appraisals of elements of the political system, it is likely to be influenced by more transient factors than internal efficacy. A task of future research with threshold voters' and other age groups is to increase the understanding of what influences citizens' external efficacy.

Figure 12.1. Internal and External Efficacy: Percentage of Variance Explained



Chapter 13. Conclusion

13.1 Aims of the Study

This study initially looked at the measurement of political efficacy among threshold voters, using a framework recommended by Craig, Niemi, and Silver (1990) which has become prominent in adult-based research. The Craig *et al*. measure distinguished between internal and external political efficacy. They also distinguished between considerations of external political efficacy and political trust, through their recommendation of a regime-based external efficacy measure. The inconsistent use of survey items to measure each political efficacy dimension in existing literature has undermined our understanding of the causes, correlates and consequences of political efficacy. As the consideration of political effect diverges between adults and pre-adults, the use of adult oriented measures ought to be assessed rather than assumed. It was hoped that an assessment of this measure among threshold voters would provide further support for its applicability in empirical research.

The central focus of the study was to assess how the perception of political efficacy develops among threshold voters. In cognisance of the relatively low level of direct interaction which this cohort have with the political system, the study followed the path of political socialisation research. The expectation of this approach is that threshold voters' political efficacy is influenced by: social experiences; second hand cues about the nature of the political environment; and formative interactions with political representatives and public institutions. With a case study of the Republic of Ireland, the analysis focussed on the experiences of the threshold voter in the home, school, associational, and political representative environments. The inclusion of multiple socialisation environments made it possible to assess the impact of each environment, bearing in mind their overlapping nature. The study aimed to feed in to the discussion around the roll out of political education to those in late adolescence in Ireland, and the downward review of the voting age from 18 by one or two years which featured in a recent review by the parliamentary committee on the constitution.

13.2 Literature Frame

The academic interest in political efficacy arises from its connection with political support and political participation. The perception of political effect is considered to be a vital attitude in representative political systems, which are premised on the ideal of popular control. Consequently, the perception of political efficacy has been considered a key indicator of democratic politics from an individual and a systematic perspective. This acknowledgement has guided an investigation of how a sense of political efficacy is fostered in citizens.

In respect of political effect, pre-adults, including threshold voters, differ from adults. In a political system where citizen control is based around electoral entitlement and representative politics, the lack of electoral entitlement has consequence for pre-adults interaction with political agents and for how they consider their political effect. The central agents of representative democracies, parties and politicians are more focussed on adults than those who are electorally impotent. This combined with the low salience of politics for many pre-adults, means the opportunities for direct political learning are low relative to adulthood.

The political socialisation approach emphasises the long-term significance of attitudes which develop during early life stages, before the individual has direct contact with aspects of the political system. In the initial wave of political socialisation literature in the middle of the last century, political scientists emphasised the role of family and school in the political learning of the child. In more recent times, an acknowledgement of the role of formal and informal social capital building experiences has emerged. While the role of socialisation for early political learning was largely agreed, questions arose as to the permanence of attitudes which develop in childhood, and of their relevance as a guide to outlook and behaviour in later life. In the last decade, the IEA ICCS cross national study has provided a valuable contribution for the study of internal efficacy among early adolescent stages (Schulz, 2005; Amna *et al*., 2010; and Cosgrove *et al*., 2011).

The impact of socialisation agents evolves in line with the wider social setting in which individuals interact and learn about social and political contexts during adolescence. There is an expectation that by the time of entry to political adulthood the individual will be imbued with a range of political attitudes which makes it possible for her to successfully navigate her political rights and responsibilities. The resurgence in political socialisation literature over the last two decades has been attributed to concerns about the vitality of democratic politics if judged by political participation and support for authorities and institutions in established western democracies. This question therefore arises as to the impact of the current political setting and socialisation processes on the perception of political effect among those entering political adulthood. A focus on those in late adolescence, threshold voters, encompasses socialisation effects which emerge during adolescence. It also captures political efficacy at a juncture which is considered to have significance for the political engagement, participation, and considerations of political effect in subsequent life stages (Plutzer, 2002; and Franklin, 2004). However, there has not been an investigation of the socialisation of political efficacy among those in late adolescence, who have yet to reach political adulthood.

13.3 Research Frame

This research encompassed a primary survey due to the inadequacy of existing data in respect of political efficacy measurement in Ireland, and the lack of data on threshold voters' political attitudes. The use of a quantitative methodology, with the administration of a project specific written questionnaire, follows existing practice in the field. Qualitative techniques (focus group and pilot survey consultation) were used in the preparation of the survey instrument, to refine aspects of survey design, presentation and administration. To the extent possible, existing survey items were used to measure survey variables. Variables relating to demographic characteristics, aspects of the main socialisation environments under study, and personal and political attributes were surveyed. Contemporary literature recognises political socialisation is a dynamic process, where the individual's perception interacts with environmental cues. To that end, the measurement of many elements of the social environs here is framed through the perception of threshold voters, rather than objectively measured. For instance, parent political interest is measured as respondents' perception of parent interest, and organisational responsiveness is measured as respondents' perception of organisational responsiveness.

The school environment was used as a survey location. The school setting was useful for the creation of a systematic and stratified survey sample and in the control of the survey environment. The analysis was based on a working survey sample of *n* 849 with representative subsamples across school type, school location and gender stratum.

Factor and scale reliability analysis was used to assess the applicability of the Craig et al measures of internal and regime-based external efficacy. In cognisance of the original nature of this data for this cohort, participants' response on all study variables was presented in the main body of the discussion. This provided an insight not only of the political efficacy of this age cohort, but of their wider political and social perspective.

Cross tabulation results gave an initial indication of the bivariate relationship between survey variables and political efficacy dimensions. Regression analysis was used to assess the unique relationship between survey variables and efficacy dimensions within environmental models, with demographic effects controlled. Multi-model analysis captured the impact of significant socialisation variables, with all significant socialisation variables and demographic/attribute variables taken into consideration.

13.4 Boundaries of the Study

Firstly, the conception of threshold voters has been tied to a specific age range in this study. The upper age limit of a 'threshold voter' is easier to direct than the lower limit. Establishing a lower limit is a matter of methodological rather than objective approach. However, youth is perceived as a period of change, particularly by those who are currently within its throes (Rossi, 2009). Life experiences and attitudinal development are the function of a much wider range of living circumstance which is not neatly framed by biological aging (Melucci, 2006). Recent political socialisation research highlights the elongating period of attitudinal flexibility associated with contemporary youth (Sherrod *et al.,* 2010; and Finlay *et al.,* 2010: 38). This said the conception of threshold voters in this instance is related to a specific time in a person's life, the transition to political adulthood, which occurs irrespective of the level of one's social and attitudinal development. The study therefore does not claim to indicate a level of efficacy which will persist unaltered as one proceeds through the early stages of political adulthood.

Secondly, the premise of political socialisation literature is that experiences in one's social environs affect or influence political learning. However, the relationship between political attributes and political efficacy, such as political interest and internal efficacy, or political trust and external efficacy, are likely to be reciprocal. This same applies for engagement in the social environs be it organisations or student councils and internal efficacy. The design of this study uses a correlational (one-off) collection of data from threshold voters. In this regard, ascertaining the causal order of relationships relies on existing theoretical understandings. For this reason this study has focussed on relationships between socialisation variables, respondent attributes and efficacy dimensions, rather than being declarative on socialisation effects by and large. A longitudinal panel design or experimental design would be more robust in clarifying the causation involved in relationships. Such approaches involve greater time and financial resources, and a greater commitment from research participants, which was not possible in the current instance.

Thirdly, the inferential potential of findings from a case study such as this relies on the integrity of case selection and sample size. The steps taken to ensure a systematic stratified sample was created can only attempt to achieve a random and representative sample of the survey frame, it cannot be guaranteed. While data collection is limited to students in the Cork area, it is not anticipated that students in the Cork area are different in political and non-political attributes and socialisation from other Irish threshold voters. While the effects of

political context on all empirical research undertakings are ever-changing, the political climate in Ireland at present is particularly strained, relative to recent decades. The ability of a correlational study to assess the effects of the current political context on the attitudes in question would be much more evident in a longitudinal design. This is particularly relevant as threshold voters, for whom political attitudes are still bedding down, are likely to be particularly susceptible to relatively recent political events.

13.5 Research Findings

In this initial analysis of threshold voters' political efficacy in Ireland, it is evident that they are sceptical of their potential effect. While they are not robust in a sense of internal efficacy, they are less confident in the responsiveness of the political system. A majority of respondents expressed low efficacy on most external efficacy indicators. This represents a challenge for the current political system to maintain the engagement and support of those entering political adulthood.

There was strong variation in response to items within internal and external efficacy dimensions. The high level of variation, particularly on the Craig *et al*. regime-based external efficacy measures, reinforces the argument for a consistent selection of items. While the Craig *et al* items have become prominent in existing literature, they are seldom completely replicated. Selecting an item or a portion of items in this context will lead to a restricted and unreliable measurement, which is critical in the analysis of levels and correlates of political efficacy. It is not possible to establish the significance of a variable in the advance of research, if the measurement of that variable involves inconsistent frames.

The Craig *et al* internal efficacy items were proficient in capturing a unified and reliable measure of threshold voters' internal efficacy. With a minor alteration to the survey item on capacity in public office their measure performed as well in factor analysis and scale reliability analysis as a proposed 'age-appropriate' alternative batch of items.

However, the regime-based external efficacy items did not capture a unified underlying attitude or form a reliable scale measure of external efficacy. At face value, the items on 'having a say in how the country is run' and 'making the government listen' may be confusing for respondents when negatively phrased in agree or disagree format. While a reliable alternative measure of external efficacy was constructed from items which feature in exiting research, there is a necessity to consider the measurement of external efficacy in a divergent manner from the adult-oriented current approach.

In assessing demographic effects, the positive relationship between socio-economic status and political efficacy is well established among adult age groups. This study found that this effect appears in advance of entry to political adulthood. The distinction was consistently between those with parents in the two upper and lower three occupational categories for internal and external efficacy. The negative effect of having an unemployed parent in the home for external efficacy, demonstrates that this perception is reactive to personal economic circumstance. However, the socialisation experience of threshold voters in the home and school environs mitigate these differences by and large. Dynamic aspects of the threshold voters' social environment are therefore able to bridge the differentials arising from more static factors such as socio-economic status.

The most interesting and unanticipated finding in this study was the effect of residential area on political efficacy. While there have been studies on the effect of community identity and engagement on political efficacy, there are no existing findings specific to the effect of residential area on political efficacy. In this light the positive effect of village residence on internal efficacy, and suburban residence on external efficacy, which retain significance through analysis, are an interesting area for further research to establish what is behind this effect.

While existing adult studies have identified gender effects on political efficacy, the effect among pre-adults have not been as prevalent. However, the higher level of internal efficacy of male threshold voters remains in this study irrespective of considerations of socialisation or of respondents' political attributes.

The lack of a significant effect of nationality on either dimension is encouraging for those who would observe challenges for foreign nationals to identify with a political system. Indeed, while the effect is small and not statistically significant foreign threshold voters were more likely to have higher external efficacy than Irish citizens.

In respect of internal efficacy, participatory experiences in social settings provide threshold voters with learning experiences which associate with a higher sense of political competence. Involvement in voluntary organisations, in student councils, and in school and organisational elections positively related to threshold voters' internal efficacy. Equally the experience of self-initiating contact with a political representative was positively related to internal efficacy. In the last instance it is likely that the relationship may be reciprocal rather than one directional.

The positive effects of the importance of political education and the grade attained in state examination of political modules are indicative of the role which threshold voters attribute to political education in their consideration of political capacity. However, there is a divergence between threshold voter's perceived importance of political education and their confidence in the current curricula to enhance their political competence.

The politicisation of threshold voters' social environs, as measured by the frequency of political discussion, was also positively associated with internal political efficacy. The positive effect of discussing politics with family, irrespective of one's political interest, is evident among threshold voters. A further indication of the role which the family plays in scaffolding threshold voters' internal efficacy is the positive effect of father's political interest, albeit indirectly through their level of political engagement. Friends' political interest appeared to be positively related to internal efficacy until other political attributes of the threshold voter were considered. The negative relationship between friend political interest and internal efficacy when political attributes are controlled indicates the relative comparison involved in considerations of one's own political competence. This may be particularly important for threshold voters as they are relatively politically inexperienced. The divergence in the father and friend correlate, indicates the divergent roles ascribed to different agents of socialisation.

As in existing literature the strong linkage between a general sense of personal efficacy and the more specific internal political efficacy is evident among threshold voters. For those who wish to increase a sense of political competence among young people, a focus on increasing a general sense of competence is likely to have positive consequence for their political outlook.

As anticipated the strongest predictors of threshold voters' internal political efficacy arise from other political attributes. The wider political engagement of threshold voters as indicated by political participation and involvement in political parties are positively related to their sense of political competence. This is further testament to the enhancing role of participative opportunities on young citizens' sense of political competence. However, such engagements are experienced by a small minority of those in this age group. Beyond the potent relationship between political interest and internal efficacy, threshold voters' consumption of or exposure to current affairs news further boosts their sense of political competence. This suggests that for the minority who engage in political matters, a virtuous circle exists in respect of their feelings of political competence. This virtuous circle is replicated in the external dimension, as the more politicised the home, classroom and friend environs are, the more positive

threshold voters are about the responsiveness of the political system. Moreover, those who engage in political or civic participation possess a higher level of external efficacy than those who do not participate.

In respect of threshold voter external efficacy, the positive relationship between perceived school authority responsiveness and threshold voter external efficacy is interesting. A similar relationship was captured in the Schulz (2005) study in respect of the openness of school setting. The school environment and the observation of decision making therein provides young citizens with formative experiences of how public figures and institutions operate. This finding is reinforced by the positive relationship between non-political social trust and external efficacy. The general sense of trust in individuals is carried over to political area. Considering the lack of direct political engagement for many threshold voters, socialisation experiences in other public institutions provide a base of attitudinal development. These relationships may also be evidence of an unmeasured tendency toward positive evaluation. While not significant in the final analysis, positive relationships between parent responsiveness, organisational responsiveness, and the perception of political education offering on the external efficacy dimension are grounds for this suggestion.

Threshold voters with an evidently partisan father expressed a lower level of external efficacy than those without. The manner in which parent partisanship was measured was sub-optimal in this study, i.e. through parent voting for a single party. Where single party voting is an indication of protest voting, or has led to subsequent disappointment with performance, this finding provides insight not only of the importance of cues provided by parent' voting participation, but of their reasons for voting and of the perceived outcome of such participation.

The low level of social trust and political trust expressed by threshold voters in this study has particular consequence for their overall feeling of political effect. Aside from the wider social trust, and specific political trust, the level of support for regime performance and the absence of cynicism are all positively related to impressions of external efficacy. The extent to which this is particular to the Irish setting is a moot point, considering the perceived high level of political corruption which threshold voters' express.

Threshold voters' internal and external efficacy clearly relate in divergence manners to other aspects of their political outlook. Moreover, different demographic and socialisation factors relate to internal and external efficacy. In some instances variables which are positively

related to one dimension are negatively related to the other (parent responsiveness, social trust). The low correlation between both dimensions informs their distinction which must be observed in the selection of survey items to measure political efficacy. While internal efficacy among threshold voters is more closely related to participative and involvement experiences, external efficacy is more related to impressions of other people, political and non-political. This highlights the necessity to be consistent in operating the dichotomy between dimensions when conducting empirical research, not only among adults, but among those who have yet to reach adulthood.

The positive association between political participation and both dimensions of political efficacy reinforces the connection between impressions of political effect and action, even among a demographic which is not involved in what are considered to be the primary forms of institutionalised participation. The measure of participation in this study was not prospective as tends to occur in existing research on pre-adults political efficacy. It focussed on expressive and information gathering activities. Involvement in such activities is not only associated with an increased level of perceived political competence but with a more positive view of the responsiveness of the political system to citizens' input.

It is evident from response that politics is not of high salience to threshold voters according to their responses on political interest and participation items. However, the tone of the political attitudes which they express indicates a level of dissatisfaction with aspects of the political system, with political parties, with government, and with politicians in general. In this regard their attitudes reflect the attitudes arising from research with adult Irish citizens at present. Threshold voters evidently are attuned to and mimic the prevailing political climate despite their relative disengagement from it.

13.6 Significance of Findings

In the political socialisation field, the permanence of attitudes socialised in childhood has been a matter of debate. The focus on childhood in early literature has evolved toward consideration of those in early to mid-adolescence in recent decades. This study has expanded the understanding of socialisation effects in late adolescence, and has therefore catered for the attitudinal change which occurs during adolescence. The political outlook of this age cohort has been considered critical for longer term political engagement and participation (Franklin, 2004). This research highlights the importance of non-political and political participative opportunities for ensuring that those entering adulthood are imbued with a sense of political

competence. The positive role played by personal attributes such as personal efficacy and social trust in the consideration of political effect emphasise the transfer of attitude and approach from social to political settings. This is particularly important for pre-adults, considering the low level of salience which politics has, and the relatively low engagement they have with political actors and institutions.

This study has revealed that those on the verge of political entitlement are not armed with a high feeling of political competence, or an expectation of effect in respect of the political system. This represents a challenge for democratic institutions whose legitimacy is based on the political support and participation which arise from citizens' political efficacy. While threshold voters express a relatively low level of political interest and engagement in politics, they are evidently attuned to the prevailing political climate in respect of political trust and political cynicism. This is a testament to the role of pre-adult socialisation. Contemporary citizens are therefore entering political adulthood on a disempowered footing, before they experience it on a franchised basis.

The use of Craig *et al*.'s political efficacy measure to a pre-adult demographic has provided a greater understanding of its application for different cross-sections of the population. Findings here emphasise the necessity of a consistent measurement framework, considering the strong variation across survey indicators, even within the same dimension. Advancements in the understanding of political efficacy, of its levels, correlates, causes, and consequences can only be based on a consistent measure of the concept. This study has provided an understanding of how threshold voters' external efficacy relates to other demographic, social, and attitudinal variables. This is an advance of the existing literature, which has focused on the internal rather than the external dimension of political efficacy among pre-adult. The poor fit of the Craig *et al*. regime-based external efficacy measure highlights the need for a consideration of the premises on which a pre-adult external efficacy measure should be based. It is evident from response that threshold voters have a clear and connected sense of political trust, political cynicism and social trust, which align with their sense of external efficacy. On the measure of external efficacy used in this study, irrespective of their lack of voting entitlement, threshold voters clearly have constructed an impression of political system responsiveness. The analysis here has been more proficient in accounting for the internal rather than the external dimension of efficacy. In itself, this is cause for appraising and considering alternative measures of external efficacy and what factors may account for it.

Studies of political efficacy among pre-adults generally rely on a prospective measure of political participation. The measure of political participation used here was a culmination of experienced participation, relating to: information search, political expression, and contact with political authorities. While not discounting the reciprocal nature of the relationship, the association between political participation and both efficacy dimensions here is based on a more reliable and age appropriate framework for considering the relationship between efficacy and participation.

13.7 Policy Implications

In the introduction to this study the proposed reduction in voting age and extension of political education in Ireland were noted. In order for the extension of the franchise to achieve its intended consequence of engaging younger people in the democratic process, it is important that they are willing to take advantage of this change. This study has found many trends in political attitude which have consequence for the merit of the proposed changes. Threshold voters possess a low level of political trust, a perception of high political corruption, and are not particularly engaged in political matters, i.e. political interest, news consumption, frequency of political discussion. Moreover these trends have been found to contribute to their (low) sense of internal and external efficacy. As the Democracy Commission affirmed, Ireland is relatively unique among European neighbours in not featuring a political or civic education module in the Senior Cycle of post-primary education. In assessing the correlates of internal and external efficacy, it is evident that young citizens, in theory, see political education as being an important aspect of their education. However, it is also evident that respondents were circumspect of the contribution which the current educational offering makes to their political capacity. The boosting effect of engagement in student councils and other participative activities in a wider social environment should provide a basis on which to develop the political competence of threshold voters. It is evident that whatever boosts the wider personal efficacy and social trust of young people has consequence for their feelings of political efficacy. This offers support for a participative approach to political education. This is further supported in the positive linkage of the political participation measure, which focuses on information search and expression. These activities appear to be bolstering rather than frustrating for participants in this study and are likely to have a positive effect on those entering political adulthood if included in the new political curriculum at Senior Cycle level.

From the high percentage of respondents who have had contact with political representatives, it is evident that opportunities for direct political learning exist. However, it appears that such encounters, or the impression thereof, have not significantly contributed to the perception of the internal of external efficacy. In light of the low level of trust in politicians, and the low trust and engagement in political parties, a more sustained engagement by politicians and parties with threshold voters is required. This may lead to more engagement by threshold voters, as experienced by the small minority who are currently involved in political parties, or have experienced self-initiated or relative-related contact with politicians. If the extension of the franchise is to be meaningful for those who will have voting entitlement at an earlier age, and for the political system in conferring legitimacy upon it, the current feelings of political inefficacy and distrust will have to be overcome, and political education has a role to play in this regard.

13.8 Areas for Future Research

Two of the most interesting findings of this study relate to demographic effects on threshold voter political efficacy. The higher internal political efficacy of male rather than female threshold voters warrants further investigation. This divergence in internal efficacy at a time when direct interaction with the political system is low, suggests that elements of pre-adult socialisation are scaffolding young men and women with a divergent sense of political capacity and competence. Considering the disparity in political representation on gender lines, it is encouraging to see that male and female threshold voters do not significantly differ in their perceptions of external efficacy. However, if the internal divergence leads to different levels of political engagement and participation, it may perpetuate lower feelings of internal and external political efficacy during the critical early stages of political adulthood. It is important to locate the cause of this variation, perhaps through a design which encompasses a wider range of socialisation factors which cleave on gender lines.

The second demographic effect of interest was the positive effect of village residence on internal efficacy and the positive effect of suburban residence on external efficacy. As this study did not include measures of community identity, or community level efficacy, it is not possible to identify if these differences are attributable to social or more specifically political reasons. The inclusion of such indicators would shed light on what may be an interesting geo-political angle to the study of political efficacy socialisation.

The difficulty encountered in fitting the Craig *et al.* regime-based external efficacy framework provides a stimulus to find an alternative measure of external efficacy which befits pre-adult considerations. Inevitably, the conception of external efficacy in representative democracies is complicated by pre-adults not having electoral entitlement. It creates a difficulty in assessing whether perceptions of responsiveness to oneself, to ones' peers, or to those who are enfranchised is of greater significance. The measure of external efficacy which was used in this study aligns with existing frameworks. However, there is a need to devise a measure of external efficacy which meets Craig *et al.*'s intent of being distinguishable from political trust, but which is more fitting for the age group. Qualitative techniques may be useful to capture the manner in which pre-adults conceive external efficacy type considerations. As part of such a process it would be insightful to establish if external efficacy is constructed around levels or objects of the political system, as Norris (2002) has shown in the area of political support. This seems like a logical extension in exploring the external efficacy dimension which has remained elusive in this and other studies, in terms of accounting for its variation.

The negative relationship between parent responsiveness; student council responsiveness; social trust; government satisfaction; political cynicism; and internal efficacy, represents an interesting area for exploration. While it is possible that the causal direction is in the opposing direction, i.e., from efficacy to the other variables, Austin and Pinkleton (1995) raised an interesting point about the use of negative evaluations as a boost to one's perception of political sophistication. This may be particularly relevant in a political environment where public sentiment is sceptical about the merits or practice of politics, as in the Irish case. A longitudinal panel study may provide a better handle on the issue of causality which relate not only to this matter, but to other socialisation and political attribute relationships here. Considering the atypical political context in which Ireland currently finds itself a longitudinal analysis would also provide a greater insight as the important of political context for the socialisation of political efficacy.

In the area of longitudinal panel designs, a design which straddles the threshold voter and the Henn *et al.* (2002) 'attainer' cohort would provide insight of the effect of voting entitlement on feelings of political efficacy. In a climate where the wellbeing of democracy is being assessed by electoral participation, such a design would provide a more nuanced view of the significance of electoral entitlement, irrespective of whether people subsequently make use of this entitlement. Extending such a panel study to a mid-late twenties age cohort would capture the significance of pre-adult attitudes for subsequent political outlook, after the initial bedding

down period associated with the initial years of political adulthood. A panel design across such an age range would also overcome the problems arising from the retrospective study of pre-adult political socialisation with those who are already adults, and the prospective measurement of political participation and engagement among those who are currently in pre-adulthood.

13.9 Concluding Remarks

The 'political void of childhood' thesis, which Easton and Dennis (1967) criticised, has long been dispersed with. The first wave of political socialisation literature in the mid-twentieth century established the precepts along which subsequent investigation proceeded in terms of socialisation. The evolved understanding of the dimensionality of political efficacy, and the utility of measurement frames such as Craig *et al*.'s, suggest that political efficacy research has a role to play in processing the latest bout of concerns about the health of democracy. Proposals to lower the voting age and expand the provision of political education are an acknowledgement of the political sophistication and significance of those in the 'threshold voter' age cohort. However, such initiatives on their own will not determine the health of democracy or the attitudes of those within democracies. If anything their success or failure will be a symptom of the attitudes which prevail among threshold voters, which arise from socialisation processes. As John Stuart Mill opined "we do not learn to read or write, to ride or swim, by merely being told how to do it, but by doing it, so it only in practicing popular government on a limited scale, that people will ever learn how to exercise it on a larger scale" (Mill, 1963: 186). This study has shown that opportunities for participation and initiatives which increase the general confidence and social trust of those on the verge of adulthood increase their perception of political efficacy. However, there is much territory to be claimed in the land of the threshold voter.

Appendices

Appendix 1. School Details and Survey Samples

These are the school samples for the working survey sample, *n* 849, after exclusion of cases.

Table A1.1. Cork County Schools

School Type	School	Date Surveyed	School Enrolment	Survey Year Enrolment	Sample Size (Male/Female)
Secondary Co-ed.	Bandon Grammar School, Bandon	06/05/2009	486	80	28/28
	Chroi Naofa, Carraig Na bhFear	21/05/2009	476	75	21/20
	Sec. Co-ed. Total				49/48
Secondary Male	De La Salle College, Macroom	18/05/2009	285	46	34/0
	St Colman's College, Fermoy	01/05/2009	380	62	43/0
	Sec. Male School Total				77/0
Secondary Female	Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy	05/05/2009	629	104	0/48
	St Aloysius College, Carrigtwohill	29/04/2009	674	143	0/46
	Sacred Heart Convent, Clonakilty	21/05/2009	467	80	0/34
	Sec. Female School Total				0/128
	Secondary Total				126/176
Vocational	Maria Immaculata College, Dunmanway	07/05/2009	536	70	21/25
	St Goban's College, Bantry	05/10/2009	419	80	32/25
	Coachford College, Coachford	09/09/2009	580	128	16/21
	Colaiste Choilm, Ballincollig	14/05/2009	1245	170	15/27
	Colaiste Treasa, Kanturk	06/05/2009	421	67	23/11
	Vocational Total				107/109
Community and Comprehensive	St Peters Community School, Passage West	08/05/2009	373	60	17/25
	Kinsale Community School, Kinsale	07/05/2009	701	115	24/16
	Millstreet Community School, Millstreet	16/11/2009	264	42	13/13
	Comm./Comp. Total				54/54
Cork County Total					287/339

Table A1.2. Cork City Borough Schools and Sample Totals

School Type	School	Date Surveyed	School Enrolment	Survey Year Enrolment	Sample Size (Male/Female)
Secondary Male	Colaiste Criost Ri, Turner's Cross	30/04/2009	626	115	50/0
	Christian Brothers College, Wellington Road	25/09/2009	792	125	23/0
	Sec. Male School Total				73/0
Secondary Female	St Aloysius School, Sharman Crawford St	15/09/2009	298	60	0/26
	Scoil Mhuire, Wellington Road	21/10/2009	395	54	0/19
	St. Angela's College, Patrick's Hill	28/09/2009	520	90	0/45
	Sec. Female School Total				0/90
	Secondary Total				73/90
Vocational	Nagle Community College, Blackrock	22/10/2009	222	19	11/0
	Colaiste Daibheid, South Terrace	19/10/2009	156	19	2/9
	Vocational Total				13/9
Community and Comprehensive	Bishopstown Community School, Bishopstown	03/11/2009	165	25	9/6
	Ashton School, Blackrock Road	10/11/2009	502	82	11/12
	Comm./Comp. Total				20/18
Cork Borough Total					106/117
Sample (Gender)					393/456
Sample Total					849

Appendix 2. Letter to School Authorities





[School Name],
[Date]
[School Location].

Dear [Principal],

I am currently conducting doctoral research in the Department of Government, University College Cork. My area of research relates to young peoples' attitudes toward the political system in Ireland. More specifically, the research is concerned with the sense of political efficacy which those of pre-voting age possess in relation to political authorities, political institutions and the political regime in Ireland.

To meet the objectives of this project, I intend to conduct a survey of approximately one thousand young people in the [Season] of 2009. Having analysed alternatives, I believe a school environment to be the most beneficial location to conduct such a survey.

In order to collect representative data, my intention is to survey students from male, female, and co-educational schools in rural and urban settings. I intend to run the survey in the forthcoming academic term, [Term title]. This survey is necessary to fill a gap in existing literature/research on young peoples' political attitudes and will be the source of future academic publication. If possible, I would like to run the survey with students in [School Name]. To ensure the replication of survey environment across schools, I would like to attend and introduce the survey to participating students myself, with a teacher present.

I would like to survey fifty students in the [School Year] of secondary education in your school. To create a representative sample of students, it would be ideal to survey students across a range of academic persuasions. However, I understand this may be difficult to achieve due to class gradation and timetable requirements. The survey will take approximately thirty minutes to complete. Student participation in the survey will be entirely voluntary and the questionnaire will be anonymous. I will gladly forward a copy of the research results to you when completed. The school's participation will be noted in the publication of research findings where appropriate. I have enclosed a copy of the proposed survey questionnaire for your inspection.

Ethical approval for the conduct of this research has been sought and received from the Social Research Ethics Committee at University College Cork. I will telephone your office within the next few days as a follow up to this letter. If there is anything you would like to discuss in the interim, I am happy to meet you in person as convenient to your schedule in advance of any possible surveying. I am contactable at the details as below.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Philip Murphy.

PhD Candidate and IRCHSS Scholar
Department of Government,
University College Cork.
Tel: […]
E-Mail: […]

Academic Supervisor,
Dr. Clodagh Harris,
Department of Government,
University College Cork.
Tel: […]
Email: […]

Appendix 3. Introduction to Survey Questionnaire

The following introduction was delivered verbally to students in advance of each survey session.

My name is Philip Murphy and I am here to conduct a brief survey with you. This survey is a vital part of a three year doctoral research project in University College Cork on young peoples' attitudes toward politics in Ireland. The research project is funded by the Irish Research Council.

The survey will take between 25 and 30 minutes of your time. Feel free to answer at your own pace, while remembering that your initial reaction is probably the one closest to your own opinion. When answering each question, please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. What I am looking for is each individual's honest response to what is asked. The items in the questionnaire are about you, your opinions and some are about your parents/guardians. Your participation in this survey is voluntary.

It is an anonymous questionnaire. All responses will be treated with secrecy, so you are not under any pressure to answer in a way other than according to your own opinion. The response to questionnaires will be added together when I publish my research and so no individual's response will be presented on its own.

If you have any questions with regards to the study, please raise them in advance. If questions occur at a later date, please refer them to your teacher who will pass them for my attention. My research is focussed on your opinions and is completely unconnected with your school and its teachers. I would like you to see this survey as separate from your school work and your opinions on school.

Unless otherwise stated, please tick one box on each line to indicate the response which is closest to your opinion. It is important that each person completes the survey on his or her own and without talking to others. It is also important to read the questions carefully and to do them in the exact order in which they appear on the questionnaire by not skipping ahead.

Thank you in advance for helping me as your opinions are valuable and vital to this research. It is an opportunity for you to express your opinions on something which you may not usually be asked about.

Before you complete the questionnaire which starts on page two, please read and complete the consent form on page one. Then continue with the survey until the bottom of page 5 where I want you to pause for a moment until I ask you to continue.

Appendix 4. Survey Participant Consent Form

By completion of this form I agree to participate in this anonymous written questionnaire as part of Philip Murphy's postgraduate research in UCC.

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in advance of completing the questionnaire and my participation is voluntary. I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up of survey response.

I understand that my responses will be used to create study findings which will be quoted in the research thesis and any subsequent publications. I hereby indicate my consent by marking with a tick one of the following boxes and I agree to give an honest reflection of my opinion in response:

I consent ☐ **I do not consent** ☐

School..... Date……

.....

Appendix 5. Coded copy of Questionnaire (Response codes and item lettering not in student copy. Font and format adjusted for printing within thesis margins).

Q1 What is your date of birth? ____Day____ Month ____Year.

Q2 Are you? Male ☐1 Female ☐ 0

Q3 Here are some statements which people sometimes make about themselves. To what extent do you think they are true for you?

	1 Not at all true	2 Not very true	3 Neither untrue nor true	4 Fairly true	5 Very true
a. I manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q4 In general how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Ireland?

Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q5 Thinking about politics in Ireland today, to what extent do you disagree or agree with <u>each</u> of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing Ireland	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b. If politicians are not interested in hearing what the people think, there is really no way to make them listen	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
c. I consider myself well able to participate in politics	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
d. I often don't feel sure of myself when talking to other people about politics and government	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
e. In democracies the people have the final say about how the country is run, no matter who is in government	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
f. People like me don't have any say about what the government does	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1

Q6 People sometimes belong to different kinds of groups and associations. For each type of group, please indicate whether you; never belonged to it; used to belong but do not anymore; belong but don't actively participate; or belong and actively participate.

	Never belonged	Used to belong	Belong but don't participate	Belong and actively participate
a. A youth organisation	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
b. A church or other religious organisation	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
c. A sports, leisure or cultural group	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
d. A political party	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
e. A voluntary/charitable organisation	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4
f. A student council in school	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4

Q7 Thinking about politics in Ireland today, to what extent do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. There are many ways for people to successfully influence what the government does	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b. I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c. I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people of my age	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
d. The average person has no influence on politics	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
e. People like me have no influence on politics	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
f. When I reach voting age, politicians will pay more attention to my opinion	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q8 How important do you think it is for people to have political education in school?

Not at all important	Not very important	Neither unimportant nor important	Fairly important	Very important
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q9 As part of your studies for the Junior Certificate you have completed the Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) module. How effective was CSPE at increasing your political competence?

Not at all effective	Not very effective	Neither ineffective nor effective	Fairly effective	Very effective
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q10 If you can recall, what grade did you receive in the Junior Certificate CSPE examination?

Grade_____ Don't recall ☐

E:1 D:2 C:3 B:4 A:5 77

Q11 Is there a student council in your school?

No ☐ 0 Yes ☐ 1 Don't know ☐ 77

Q12 If Yes, how effective do you think the student council is at representing you?

Not at all effective	Not very effective	Neither ineffective nor effective	Fairly effective	Very effective
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q13 Thinking about politics in Ireland today, to what extent do you disagree or agree with <u>each</u> of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. People we elect as TDs try to keep the promises they have made during the election	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b. I feel that I could do as good a job in political office as most other people of my age	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c. I don't think politicians care much what people like me think	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
d. It doesn't really matter which political party is in power, in the end things go on much the same	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
e. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that I cannot really understand what is going on	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1

Q14 All things considered how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?

Not at all satisfied ☐1 Not very satisfied ☐2 Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied ☐3 Fairly satisfied ☐4 Very satisfied ☐5

Q15 How interested are you in politics?

Not at all interested ☐1 Not very interested ☐2 Neither uninterested nor interested ☐3 Fairly interested ☐4 Very interested ☐5

Q16 In general, how often do you pay attention to current affairs in newspapers, on television, on radio and on the internet?

Never ☐1 Less than once a week ☐2 Once a week ☐3 A few times a week ☐4 Every day ☐5

Q17 In general, how often do you talk about political issues with family, friends or in class?

a.**With family:** Never ☐1 Less than once a week ☐2 Once a week ☐3 A few times a week ☐4 Every day ☐5

b.**With friends:** Never ☐1 Less than once a week ☐2 Once a week ☐3 A few times a week ☐4 Every day ☐5

c.**In class:** Never ☐1 Less than once a week ☐2 Once a week ☐3 A few times a week ☐4 Every day ☐5

Q18 How much attention do you feel the government pays to what the people think when it decides what to do?

None at all ☐1 Only a little ☐2 Some ☐3 A good amount ☐4 A lot ☐5

Q19 How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think?

None at all ☐1 Only a little ☐2 Some ☐3 A good amount ☐4 A lot ☐5

Q20 The following is a list of activities which people sometimes take part in. Have you ever?

	0	1
a.Voted in a class or school election	☐.No	☐.Yes.
b.Stood for election in a class or school election	☐.No	☐..Yes.
c.Taken part in a campaign to change a rule within school	☐.No	☐..Yes.
d.Visited websites of political organisations, politicians or candidates	☐.No	☐..Yes.
e.Presented your opinion on a political topic in an internet forum or discussion	☐.No	☐.Yes.
f.Signed a petition	☐.No	☐.Yes.

Q21 When you reach the age of eighteen, you will be entitled to vote in elections and referenda.
Some people don't vote nowadays for one reason or another. Do you intend to vote?

No ☐0 Yes ☐1 Don't know ☐77

Q22 If No, what is the main reason why you would not vote?

_____

_____

Q23 Here are some statements which people sometimes make about themselves. To what extent do you think they are true for you?

	1 Not at all true	2 Not very true	3 Neither untrue nor true	4 Fairly true	5 Very true
a.I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.I can usually handle whatever comes my way	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q24 The following is a list of activities which people sometimes take part in. Have you ever?

	0	1
a.Voted in the election of an association, club or organisation outside of school	No ☐	Yes ☐
b.Stood for election in an association, club or organisation outside of school	No ☐	Yes ☐
c.Taken part in a political demonstration	No ☐	Yes ☐
d.Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	No ☐	Yes ☐
e.Bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	No ☐	Yes ☐
f.Presented your opinion on a political topic in a newspaper, magazine or on radio	No ☐	Yes ☐

Q25 Have you ever met or had contact with any TDs, MEPs, Senators or Local Councillors?

No ☐ 0 Yes ☐ 1 Don't know ☐ 77

Q26 If Yes, how was that contact made? (Tick more than one box here if necessary)

Email ☐ 1 Letter ☐ 2 Phone ☐ 3 In person ☐ 4 Through school ☐ 5

Q27 If Yes, what was the reason for the contact? Feel free to give details of more than one encounter, if that is the case.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q28 Were you satisfied with the attention which he or she gave you?

Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q29 Some things about a politician may be more important than others. How important do you think it is that a politician?

	1 Not at all important	2 Not very important	3 Neither unimportant nor important	4 Fairly important	5 Very important
Help individual voters sort out their problems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Be good at contributing to national political debate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Be loyal to the political party they represent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Be close to your political views	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

PLEASE PAUSE HERE FOR A MOMENT QUIETLY UNTIL I ASK YOU TO CONTINUE.

Q30 To what extent do you agree or disagree with <u>each</u> of the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.Young people should be interested in politics	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
b.Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
c.There are only a few people I can trust completely	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1
d.Young people should have a say when plans are being made that affect them	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
e.Whatever I think about the parties and candidates, I think it is my duty to go out and vote in an election	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
f.If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you	☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1

Q31 How trusting are you of <u>each</u> of the following?

	1 Not at all trusting	2 Not very trusting	3 Neither untrusting nor trusting	4 Fairly trusting	5 Very trusting
a.The Dáil	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.The Gardai	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.Politicians in general	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.Your local politicians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.Political parties	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f.The Government	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q32 What about the following, how trusting are you of <u>each</u> of the following?

	1 Not at all trusting	2 Not very trusting	3 Neither untrusting nor trusting	4 Fairly trusting	5 Very trusting
a.The Courts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.The media	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.Religious leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.Big companies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.Teachers/ school authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q33 In your opinion, how many politicians in Ireland are involved in corruption?

Almost none	Only a few	Some	Quite a lot	Almost all
☐ 5	☐ 4	☐ 3	☐ 2	☐ 1

Q34 Thinking about the Irish government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?

Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Neither unsatisfied nor satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q35 Do you usually think of yourself as close to any political party? No ☐ 0 Yes ☐

Q36 If Yes, which party is that? _____

Q37 How close do you feel to that party?

Not very close	Somewhat close	Very close
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3

Q38 How interested would you say your friends are in politics?

Not at all interested ☐ 1 Not very interested ☐ 2 Neither uninterested nor interested ☐ 3 Fairly interested ☐ 4 Very interested ☐ 5

Q39 In general, do you think that the views of people of your age should be given; less weight than those of adults; the same weight as those of adults; or more weight than those of adults?

Less weight ☐ 1 The same weight ☐ 2 More weight ☐ 3

Q40 What is your Nationality?

Irish ☐ 1 Other nationality ☐ 0 If Other, please write here _____

Q41 How many years have you lived in Ireland? _____

Q42 Do you live with your parents? No ☐ 1 Yes ☐ 2

Q43 If No, who do you live with? _____

Q44 What is your father's nationality?

Irish ☐ 0 Other nationality ☐ 1 If Other, please write here: _____

Q45 How many years has your father lived in Ireland? _____

Q46 What is your mother's nationality?

Irish ☐ 0 Other nationality ☐ 1 If Other, please write here: _____

Q47 How many years has your mother lived in Ireland? _____

Q48 What is your father's occupation? Please describe as fully as possible.

_____

Q49 What is your mother's occupation? Please describe as fully as possible.

_____

Q50 Which of the following best describes your father's present situation with regard to employment:

At work full-time (30 hrs or more per week)..... ☐ 1
At work part-time (less than 30 hrs weekly)..... ☐ 2
At work as relative assisting/unpaid family worker.... ☐ 3
Unemployed and seeking work..... ☐ 4
Other, please specify_____ 9
Student..... ☐ 5
Retired..... ☐ 6
Engaged in home duties..... ☐ 7
Long term sick or disabled.... ☐ 8

Q51 Which of the following best describes your mother's present situation with regard to employment:

At work full-time (30 hrs or more per week)..... ☐ 1
At work part-time (less than 30 hrs weekly)..... ☐ 2
At work as relative assisting/unpaid family worker.... ☐ 3
Unemployed and seeking work..... ☐ 4
Other, please specify_____ 9
Student..... ☐ 5
Retired..... ☐ 6
Engaged in home duties..... ☐ 7
Long term sick or disabled.... ☐ 8

Q52 The last general election in Ireland took place in 2007. Do you think your father voted in that election?

No ☐ Yes ☐ Don't know ☐

……0……1……77……

Q53 The last general election in Ireland took place in 2007. Do you think your mother voted in that election?

No ☐ Yes ☐ Don't know ☐

……0……1……77……

Q54 How interested do you think your father is in politics?

Not at all interested ☐ 1 Not very interested ☐ 2 Neither uninterested nor interested ☐ 3 Fairly interested ☐ 4 Very interested ☐ 5

Q55 How interested do you think your mother is in politics?

Not at all interested ☐ 1 Not very interested ☐ 2 Neither uninterested nor interested ☐ 3 Fairly interested ☐ 4 Very interested ☐ 5

Q56 Some people know which party their parents vote for? First your father, do you know which political party or parties your father would usually vote for?

Vote for many parties..... ☐ 1
Fianna Fail..... ☐ 2
Fine Gael..... ☐ 3
Labour..... ☐ 4
Progressive Democrats..... ☐ 5
Green Party..... ☐ 6
Sinn Fein..... ☐ 7
Socialist Party..... ☐ 8
Independents..... ☐ 9
Other..... ☐ 10 If so, specify____
Don't know..... ☐ 77
Would not vote..... ☐ 11

Q57 If you selected a party, would you say that he is a strong supporter of this party?

No ☐ Yes ☐ Don't know ☐

……1……2……77……

Q58 Now your mother, do you know which political party or parties your mother would usually vote for?

Vote for many parties..... ☐ 1
Fianna Fail..... ☐ 2
Fine Gael..... ☐ 3
Labour..... ☐ 4
Progressive Democrats..... ☐ 5
Green Party..... ☐ 6
Sinn Fein..... ☐ 7
Socialist Party..... ☐ 8
Independents..... ☐ 9
Other..... ☐ 10 If so, specify____
Don't know..... ☐ 77
Would not vote..... ☐ 11

Q59 If you selected a party, would you say that she is a strong supporter of this party?

No ☐ Yes ☐ Don't know ☐

……1……2……77……

Q60 In your opinion, when the following people are making decisions that affect you, how much consideration do they give to your views?

	1 None at all	2 Only a little	3 Some	4 A good amount	5 A lot
a. Your parents at home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. The authorities in your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Organisers in the clubs/associations that you join	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q61 If a decision is made that you do not like by the following, how likely is it that you, acting alone or together with others, would try to do something about it?

	1 Not at all likely	2 Not very likely	3 Neither unlikely nor likely	4 Fairly likely	5 Very likely
a.Your parents at home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.The authorities in your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.Organisers in the clubs/associations that you join	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q62 Can you tell me the name of the Minister for Finance? (Please circle your chosen response)

Richard Bruton 0 Brian Lenihan 1 Mary Coughlan 0 Dermot Ahern 0

Q63 Can you tell me which political party has the SECOND largest number of seats in the Dáil?

The Labour Party 0 Fianna Fail 0 The Green Party 0 Fine Gael 1

Q64 Can you tell me the name of the Taoiseach?

Bertie Ahern 0 Enda Kenny 0 Brian Cowen 1 Brian Lenihan 0

Q65 Can you tell me how many TDs there are in Dáil Éireann?

98 0 142 0 166 1 206 0

Q66 Can you tell me the name of the Prime Minister in the United Kingdom?

David Cameron 0 Tony Blair 0 Boris Johnson 0 Gordon Brown 1

Q67 Suppose a law were being considered by politicians that you considered to be unjust or harmful. How likely is it that you, acting alone or together with others, would try to do something about it?

Not at all likely	Not very likely	Neither unlikely nor likely	Fairly likely	Very likely
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q68 If you made such an effort, how likely is it that the politicians would give serious attention to your demands?

Not at all likely	Not very likely	Neither unlikely nor likely	Fairly likely	Very likely
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q69 What religion are you? _____

Q70 How often nowadays do you attend religious services?

Several times a week	☐ 1	Several times a year	☐ 5
Once a week	☐ 2	Once a year	☐ 6
2 or 3 times a month	☐ 3	Less frequently	☐ 7
Once a month	☐ 4	Never	☐ 8

Q71 How close do you feel to that religion or denomination?

Not very close	Somewhat close	Very close
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3

Q72 Do you live?

In the countryside	In a village	In a town	In a suburb	In a city
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q73 Did you find this questionnaire relevant to you?

Not at all relevant	Not very relevant	Neither irrelevant nor relevant	Fairly relevant	Very relevant
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Q74 Did you find this questionnaire difficult or easy to complete?

Very difficult	Fairly difficult	Neither difficult nor easy	Fairly easy	Very easy
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

Appendix 6. Survey Variables: Item Source and Adjustments for Regression Analysis

Item Source Legend

ANES: American National Election Study
CIVED: IEA Civic Education Study
CSO: Central Statistics Office Ireland
ESS: European Social Survey
EVS: European Values Survey
INES: Irish National Election Study
ISAPA: Irish Social and Political Attitudes Survey
ISSP: International Social Survey Programme
McGill Youth Survey
N/A: Not Applicable
USCID: United States 'Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy' Survey

Table A6.1. Demographic Variables

Survey Variable	Questionnaire Item Number	Item Source	Creation of Variable
Age	1	N/A	Date of birth and date of survey used to create age variable in months
Gender	2	N/A	Original Coding
Residential Area	72	ISSP 2004	Dummy variables (0/1) created for four residential area types. 'Countryside' as the non-specified base category
Nationality	40	CSO 2006	Original Coding
Length of Residence	41	CSO 2006	Dichotomous variable (0/1) created on criterion of 10 years or less, or more than 10 years
Parent Nationality	44, 46	CSO 2006	Dummy variables (0/1) created for one foreign parent, and two foreign parents. 'Both Irish' as the non-specified base category
Religious Denomination	69	ESS2008	Dichotomous variable (0/1) created on the criterion of non-Catholic (including none), or stated Catholic.
Parental Socio-Economic Status	48, 49, 50, 51	INES 2007	Occupation social class coding as per Irish Census 2006 (Appendix 5), for parent with higher occupational or more committed work status
Unemployed Parent	50, 51	N/A	Dichotomous variable (0/1) for non-presence, or presence of an unemployed parent

Table A6.2. Family Socialisation Variables

Survey Variable	Questionnaire Item Number	Item Source	Creation of Variable
Parent Responsiveness	60a	ANES 1988	Original Coding
Reaction to Home Decisions	61a	CIVID 1999	Original Coding
Home Politicisation	17a	CIVID 1999 USCID 2005	Original Coding
Father Political Interest	54	INES 2007	Original Coding
Mother Political Interest	55	INES 2007	Original Coding
Father Voting Participation	52		Original Coding
Mother Voting Participation	53		Original Coding
Parent Voting Participation	52, 53	N/A	Dichotomous variable (0/1) for neither/one voted, or both voted
Father Political Partisanship	56		Dichotomous variable (1/0) for specifying one party voted for, or multiple/no party specified/'don't know'
Mother Political Partisanship	58		Dichotomous variable (1/0) for specifying one party voted for, or multiple/no party specified/'don't know'
Father FF Partisan	52,56		Dichotomous variable (1/0) specified FF voting, or all other replies (including 'don't know' on Q52)
Mother FF Partisan	53, 58		Dichotomous variable (1/0) specified FF voting, or all other replies (including 'don't know' on Q53)

Table A6.3. School Socialisation Variables

Survey Variable	Questionnaire Item Number	Item Source	Creation of Variable
School Type	n/a		Dummy variables (0/1) created for vocational school and community/comprehensive school. Secondary school attendance as the non-specified base category
School Authority Responsiveness	60b	ANES 1988	Original Coding
Reaction to School Decisions	61b	CIVID 1999	Original Coding
School Participation	20a, 20b, 20c		Original Coding
Student Council Involvement	6f	CIVID 1999	Dichotomous variable (1/0) created on the criteria of being currently active in a study council, or other response to the item
Student Council Responsiveness	12		Original Coding
Class Politicisation	17b	CIVID 1999 USCID 2005	Original Coding
Importance of Political Education	8		Original Coding
Perceived Effectiveness of CSPE	9		Original Coding
CSPE Grade Attainment	10		Original Coding

Table A6.4. Associational Socialisation Variables

Survey Variable	Questionnaire Item Number	Item Source	Creation of Variable
Organisation Authority Responsiveness	60c	ANES 1988	Original Coding
Reaction to Organisation Decisions	61c	CIVID 1999	Original Coding
Organisational Involvement	6a, 6b, 6c, 6e	ISSP 2004	Dichotomous variables (1/0) created on the criteria of being currently active in the particular organisation, or other response to the item
Number of Organisational Involvements	6	N/A	Index created from summation of active involvements on the organisation items
Organisational Participation	24a, 24b		Original Coding
Religious Participation	70	INES 2007	Dichotomous variable (1/0) on the criterion of attending religious service weekly and more often, or other response (including no religion)
Religious Affinity	69, 71		Dummy variables (1/0) created for moderate and high religious affinity. 'not very close' as the non-specified base category (which includes those responding 'none' to Q69.
Friend Politicisation	17c	CIVID 1999 USCID 2005	Original Coding
Friend Political Interest	38	INES 2007	Original Coding

Table A6.5. Political Representative Socialisation Variables

Survey Variable	Questionnaire Item Number	Item Source	Creation of Variable
Political Representative Contact	25		Dichotomous variable (1/0) on reported contact with a politician or not reporting contact (which includes 'don't know')
Satisfaction with Representative Contact	25, 28		Dichotomous variable (1/0) on the criterion of responding 'fairly' and 'very satisfied' on contact, or other item response (and including those who responded 'no'/'don't know' on Q25)
Type of Representative Contact	25, 26, 27		Dichotomous variables (1/0) on reporting a particular type of contact, or not (which includes 'no'/'don't know' on Q25). Types of contact created from open ended-response and are therefore not mutually exclusive.

Table A6.6. Personal Attributes Variables

Survey Variable	Questionnaire Item Number	Item Source	Creation of Variable
Personal Efficacy	3a, 3d, 3e, 23a, 23b, 23c, 23d, 23e	Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995)	Factor score variable created from analysis of personal efficacy items 1-8
Life Satisfaction	14	ESS 2008	Original Coding
Social Trust	30c, 30f	ESS 2008	Summed scale of response to network trust and interpersonal trust items
Institutional Trust	31b, 32a, 31e	ISAPA 2001 CIVID 1999	Factor score scale variable created from analysis of court trust, police trust, and teacher/school authority trust items
Normative Youth Influence	30d		Original Coding

Table A6.7. Political Attributes Variables

Survey Variable	Questionnaire Item Number	Item Source	Creation of Variable
Political Interest	15	INES 2007	Original Coding
News Consumption	16	McGill Youth Survey 2005	Original Coding
Political Knowledge	62, 63, 64, 65, 66	ISSP 2006	Factor score variable created from analysis of political knowledge items
Civic Duty	30a, 30e	CIVID 1999 INES 2007	Summed scale of response to normative political interest and voting duty
Political Participation	20d, 20e, 24c, 24f, 27	ESS 2008 USCID 2005	Factor score variable created from analysis of political participation items
Civic Participation	20f, 24d, 24e	USCID 2005 McGill Youth Survey 2005	Factor sore variable created from analysis of civic participation items
Regime Principles Support	30b	EVS 2008	Original Coding
Regime Performance Support	4	ESS 2008	Original Coding
Government Satisfaction	34	ESS 2008	Original Coding
Political Trust	31a, 31c, 31d, 31e, 31f	ESS 2008	Factor score variable created from analysis of political trust items
Political Cynicism	33	ISSP 2006	Original Coding
Political Partisanship	35	INES 2007	Original Coding
Political Party Identification	36	INES 2007	Dummy variables (1/0) for identifying FF and FG as the party which one feels closest to, or other response (including non-partisans)
Political Party Involvement	6d	INES 2007	Dichotomous variables (1/0) created on the criterion of being currently active in a political party, or other response to the item

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