



Community Foundation Ireland

Poverty, Life Satisfaction, Social & Civic
Participation

Helen Russell, ESRI
Bertrand Maitre, ESRI

POVERTY, INCOME INEQUALITY AND LIVING STANDARDS IN IRELAND: FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

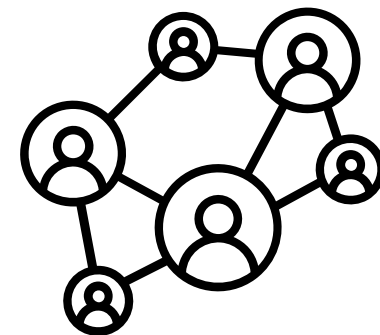
Barra Roantree, Bertrand Maitre and Helen Russell



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Poverty, Life Satisfaction, Social & Civic Participation

- How is poverty related to life, satisfaction, social contact and civic engagement?
- Does the effect of poverty vary across social groups?
- How has this combined with the disruption caused by the pandemic?



Previous research

- Strong relationship between low income/ poverty and life satisfaction (more so than high income) (see Clark 2018)
- Higher income inequality in society also reduces life satisfaction. Due to comparative reference groups & perception of opportunity for mobility (Clark & D'Ambrosio 2015; Perdersen 2004)
- Civic and social participation also influenced by income and poverty - not just about financial costs. Also lack of social/educational capital, social stigma, lower community-level resources, time-poverty (Verba et al, 1995; Duncan 2010).
- Relatively little research on this topic in Ireland, and research on whether effects of poverty on such outcomes differ across social groups. (& pandemic impact)

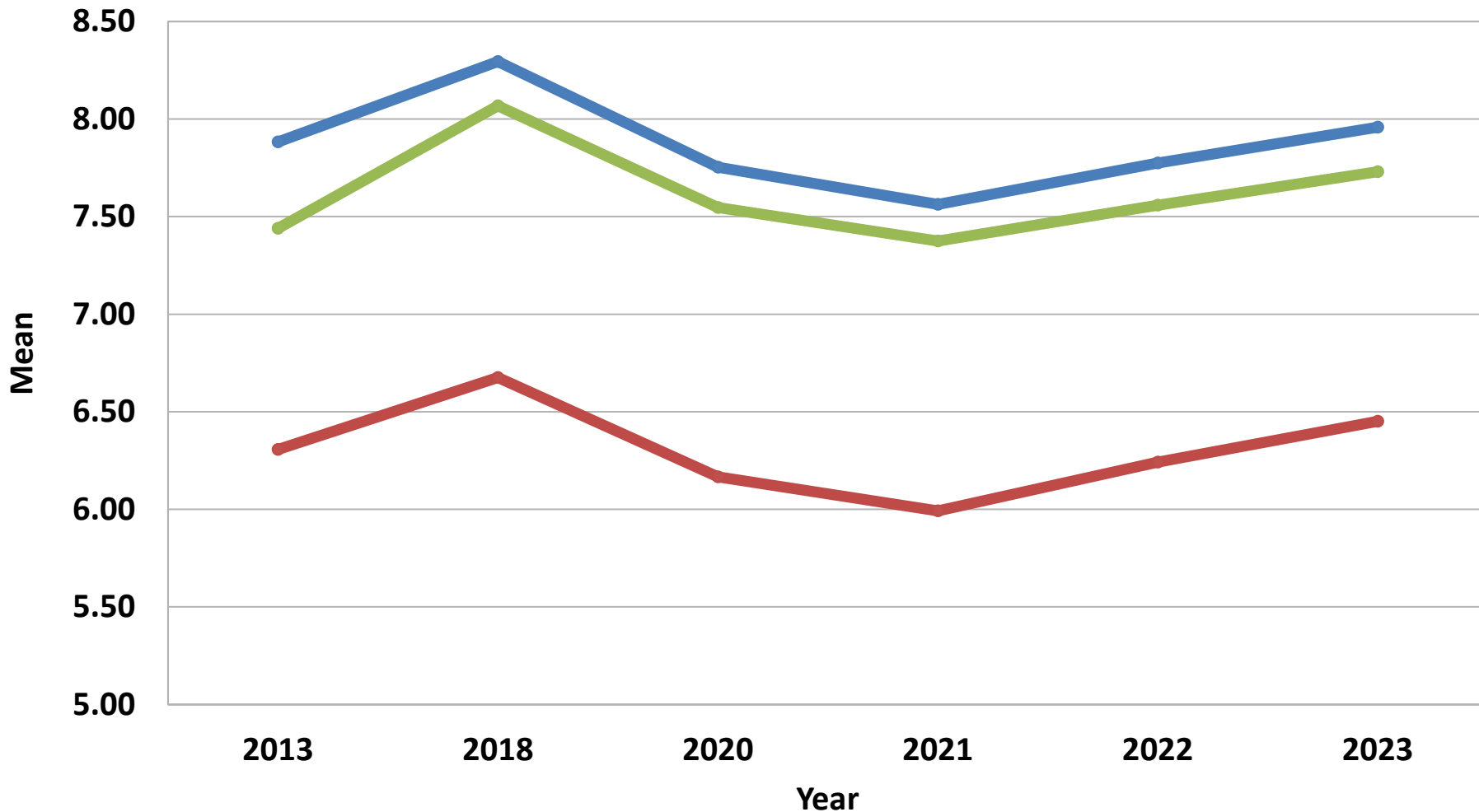


DATA AND METHODS

- Nationally representative sample – SILC (special modules, various years).
- Over 18 years only
- **Life Satisfaction** scale (0-10)
- **Civic participation** – in 12 months prior to interview participated in
 - formal volunteering,
 - informal volunteering
 - political action e.g. participated in demonstration, consultation, petition etc. Scale
 - 0 (none) - 3 (yes to all)
- **Social contact** - frequency of contact with family and friends in-person and remotely. 4 questions summed and rescaled 0-10
- Data is cross-sectional so cannot establish causality between poverty and life-sat/participation.
- Data does not include most excluded – eg homeless, those in direct provision

Trends in Life Satisfaction by Deprivation

0= not at all satisfied 10 = completely satisfied

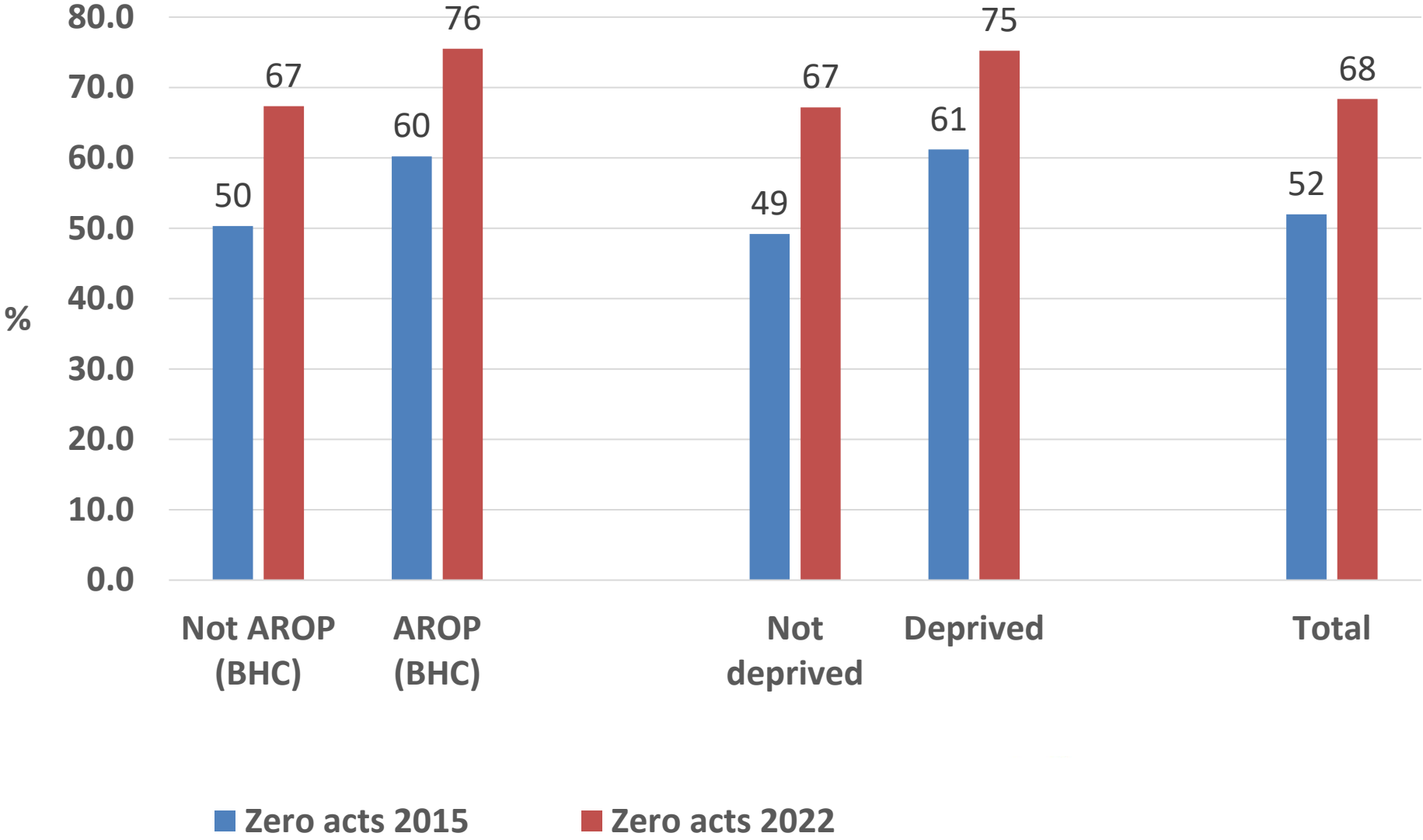


5 — Not deprived — Deprived — Total

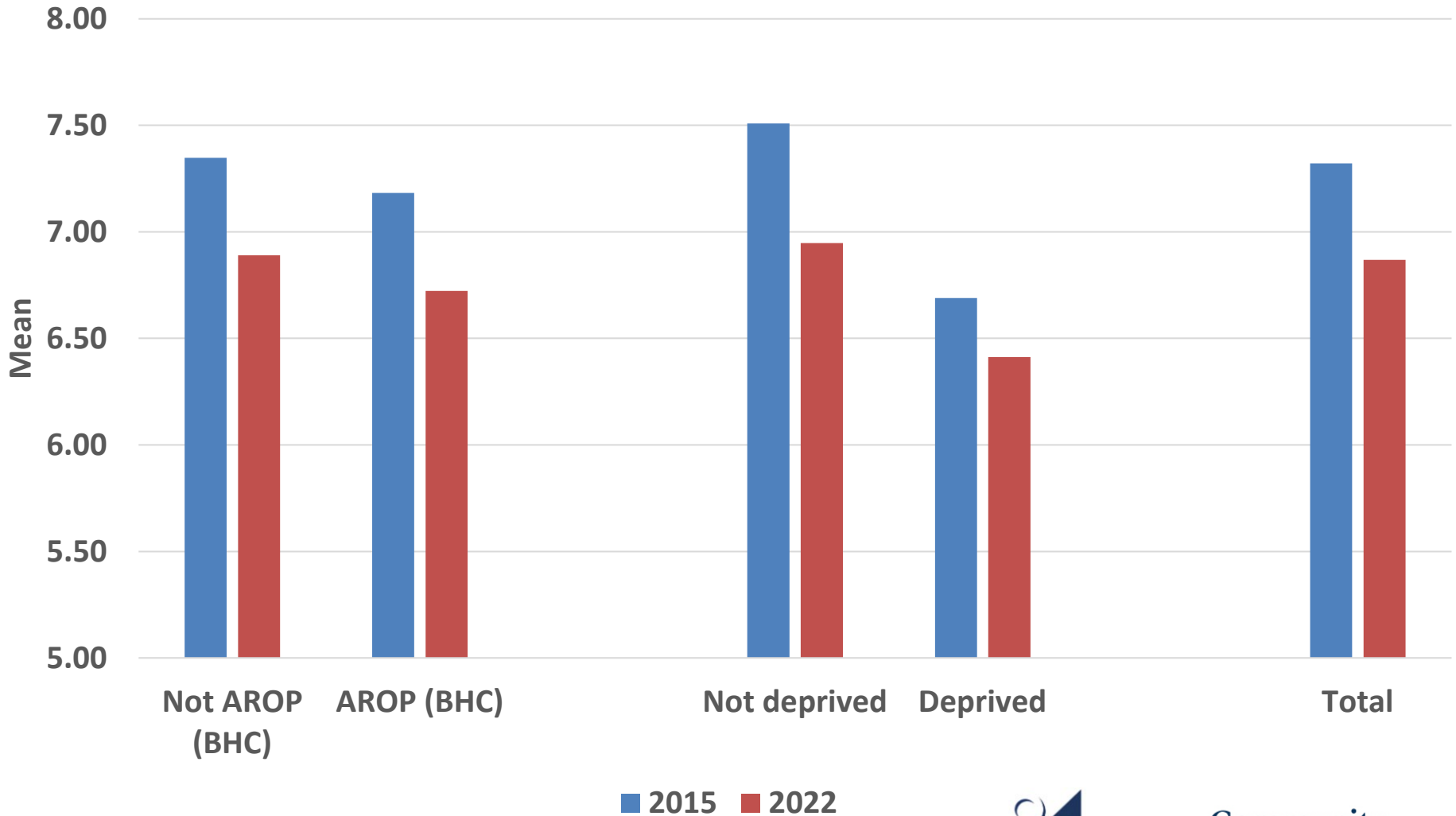


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% No civic participation by poverty status 2015 and 2022



Social Contacts and Poverty 2015 and 2022



Does impact of poverty on life satisfaction differ ?

- Relationship with deprivation is stronger than low income
- Life satisfaction lower in middle age groups and deprivation has a more negative effect on life satisfaction for individuals aged 35 to 64 than those aged over 65yrs
- EU and Non-EU Migrants have lower life satisfaction than Irish born, but income poverty has a somewhat weaker association with life satisfaction for EU born and UK born compared to Irish born (don't see this for deprivation)
- Other factors associated with lower life satisfaction – poor health, disability, being single, year.



Does effect of poverty on civic engagement differ ?

- Civic participation more strongly related to deprivation than income poverty
- Migrants born within EU or outside EU exhibit lower civic participation than those born in Ireland
- However, non-EU migrants in income poverty or deprivation are more likely to participate than Irish-born in the same position. May reflect greater involvement in volunteering connected to religion
- Other factors associated with lower participation – youth (18-34), older age (65+), bad health, disability, single, 2022 (v 2015)

Does effect of poverty on social contact differ ?

- Social contact more strongly related to deprivation than income poverty (NS)
- All migrant groups have lower levels of social contact than Irish born but the effect of deprivation is the same for all
- Young people (18-34) report higher levels of social contact and this is less affected by deprivation than for other age groups.
- Other factors associated with lower social contact –older age (65+), bad health, men, single, 2022 (v 2015)

Conclusions

- Findings underlines the multi-dimensional nature of poverty
- Not only affects standard of living but also reduces capacity/opportunity to participate in social and civic activities & have voice heard in public domain
- Results also highlight the steep decline in life satisfaction, civic participation and social contact during the pandemic period.
- Lower participation can reduce social trust and social cohesion
- Good individual and societal reasons to tackling poverty
- Highlights the need to invest in the social infrastructure of communities be that that through greater resourcing of community development programmes or civic amenities (eg sports clubs, parks/green spaces etc).
- Also role for educational supports (e.g. for TY participation for disadvantaged students, *Laurence & Smyth 2023*)

Thanks for listening!

The report is available to download at
www.ESRI.ie/publications

Any questions?

| Concept | Indicators | Scale |
|--|---|---|
| Overall Life Satisfaction 2013, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 | On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not satisfied at all' and 10 is 'completely satisfied', how would you rate your overall satisfaction with life? | 0 -10 |
| Civic participation 2015 & 2022 | <p>Thinking about the last 12 months, did you volunteer by helping other people, animals or taking up other informal activities that were not arranged by any organisation?</p> <p>Thinking about the last 12 months, did you volunteer for or through a charitable, cultural, sport, religious or other organisation or a club?</p> <p>Thinking about the last 12 months, did you participate actively in the activities of a political party or local interest group, in a public consultation, in a demonstration, in a peaceful protest including signing a petition, writing a letter to a politician or to the media, etc.?</p> | <p>Yes (1) No (0)</p> <p>Sum of Scores 0-3</p> |
| Social contact 2015 & 2022 | <p>How often do you usually get together with relatives?</p> <p>How often do you usually contact relatives, by telephone, SMS etc.?</p> <p>How often do you usually get together with your friends?</p> <p>How often do you usually contact friends by telephone, SMS etc.?</p> | <p>Daily (6); Every week (5); Several times month (4); Once a month (3); At least once a year (2); Never (1) Summed and rescaled 0-10</p> |