



# Space to act out? Neighbourhood and school influences on behaviour within and outside school

*Emer Smyth, James Williams*





# Introduction

- **Paper looks at the influence of school and neighbourhood social composition on behaviour inside and outside school**
- **Uses the second wave of the child cohort component of the Growing Up in Ireland study (13 years of age)**



# Research context

- **School effects:**
  - School policy, incl. disciplinary policy
  - Teacher-student relationships
  - Peer relationships
- **Neighbourhood effects:**
  - Collective efficacy
  - Social ties
  - Cultural norms



# Context (2)

- **Most studies focus on school or neighbourhood effects**
- **But growing number who focus on both, often in relation to achievement but sometimes in relation to delinquency:**
  - Sykes and Musterd (2011): schools are the channel for neighbourhood effects on achievement; SES at individual, school and neighbourhood levels
  - Pauwels et al. (2015): no between-neighbourhood variation in violent offending when school attended is taken into account
  - Kim (2016): neighbourhood effect on delinquency is 2-3 times larger than that of school; no SES info at individual or school level
- **Most studies focus on school misbehaviour or delinquency, except:**
  - Smith (2006): behaviours are closely associated and influenced by similar school factors
  - Weerman et al. (2007): the two behaviours are related but not as strongly as expected
- **Contribution of this paper:**
  - Context where school  $\neq$  neighbourhood
  - Behaviour inside and outside school
  - Social composition of school and neighbourhood; individual social background



# Behaviour within school

- **Frequency in last 12 months:**
  - Late for school
  - Got into trouble for not following school rules
  - Skipped classes
  - ‘Messed’ in class
  - Got extra work as punishment
  - Got detention
  - Suspended
- **Scale of total school-based misbehaviour**



# Behaviour outside school

## 1. Theft

- From shop
- From school
- From home
- House-breaking
- Broken into car
- Stolen car

## 2. Vandalism

- Damaged property
- Written/sprayed things
- Arson

## 3. Violence

- Carried knife
- Used force to get money/things
- Injured someone
- Serious physical fight



# Social context

- **Family:**
  - Social class
  - Maternal education
  - Household income (deciles)
  - Family structure
  - Migrant status
- **Second-level school**
  - Social composition: private (fee-paying)/ non-DEIS/ DEIS (disadvantaged)
  - Gender composition: girls/ boys/ coeducational

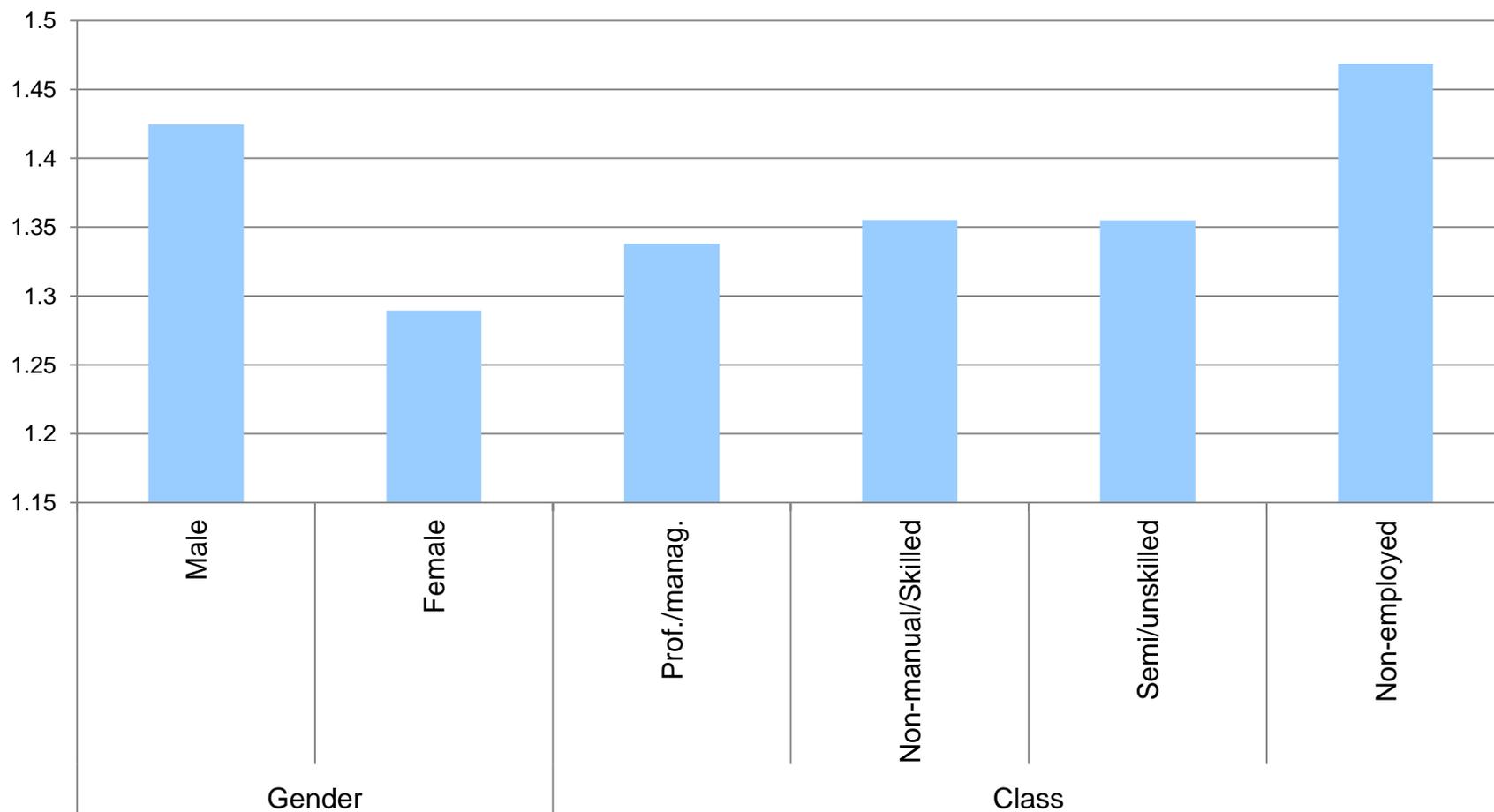


# Social context (2)

- **Neighbourhood (DEDs = 3,409 nationally) (control for population density)**
  - % unemployment
  - % working-class
  - % with less than upper secondary education
  - % living in social housing
- **Neighbourhood (self-report by parents so potentially different concept of neighbourhood)**
  - Perceived (dis)order locally
  - Safe for young people to hang out
  - Facilities for teenagers

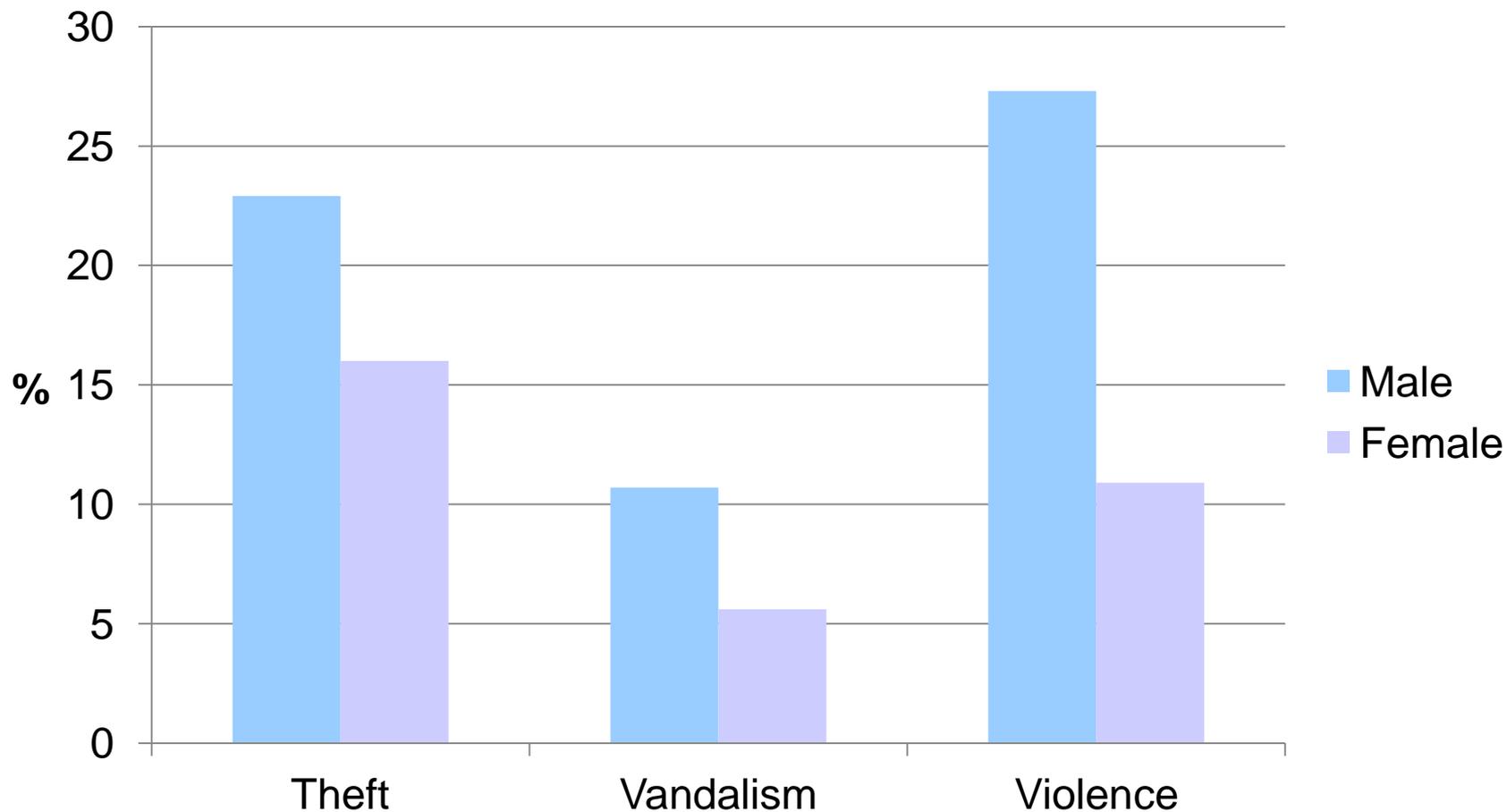


# School-based misbehaviour



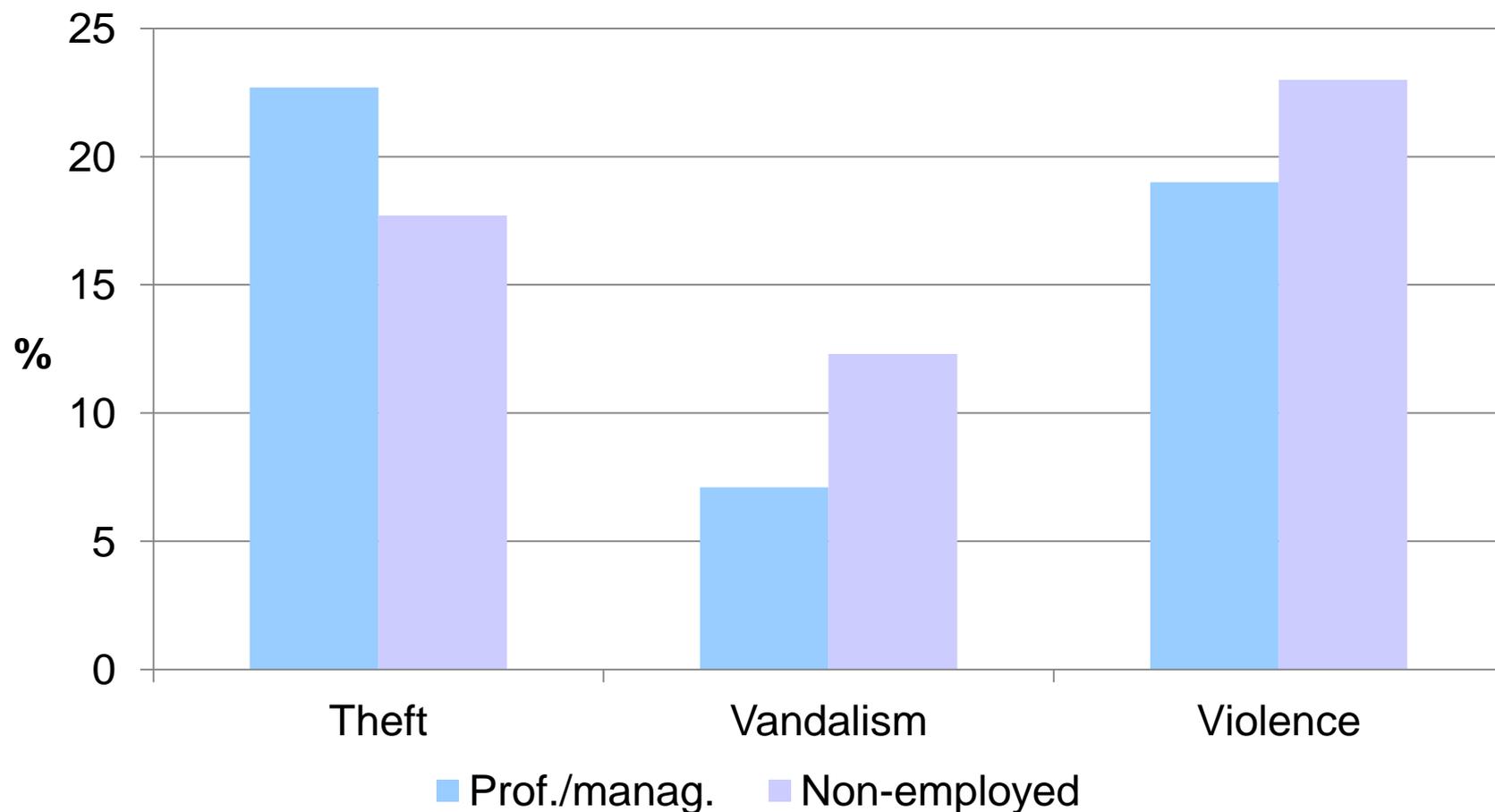


# Behaviour outside school by gender



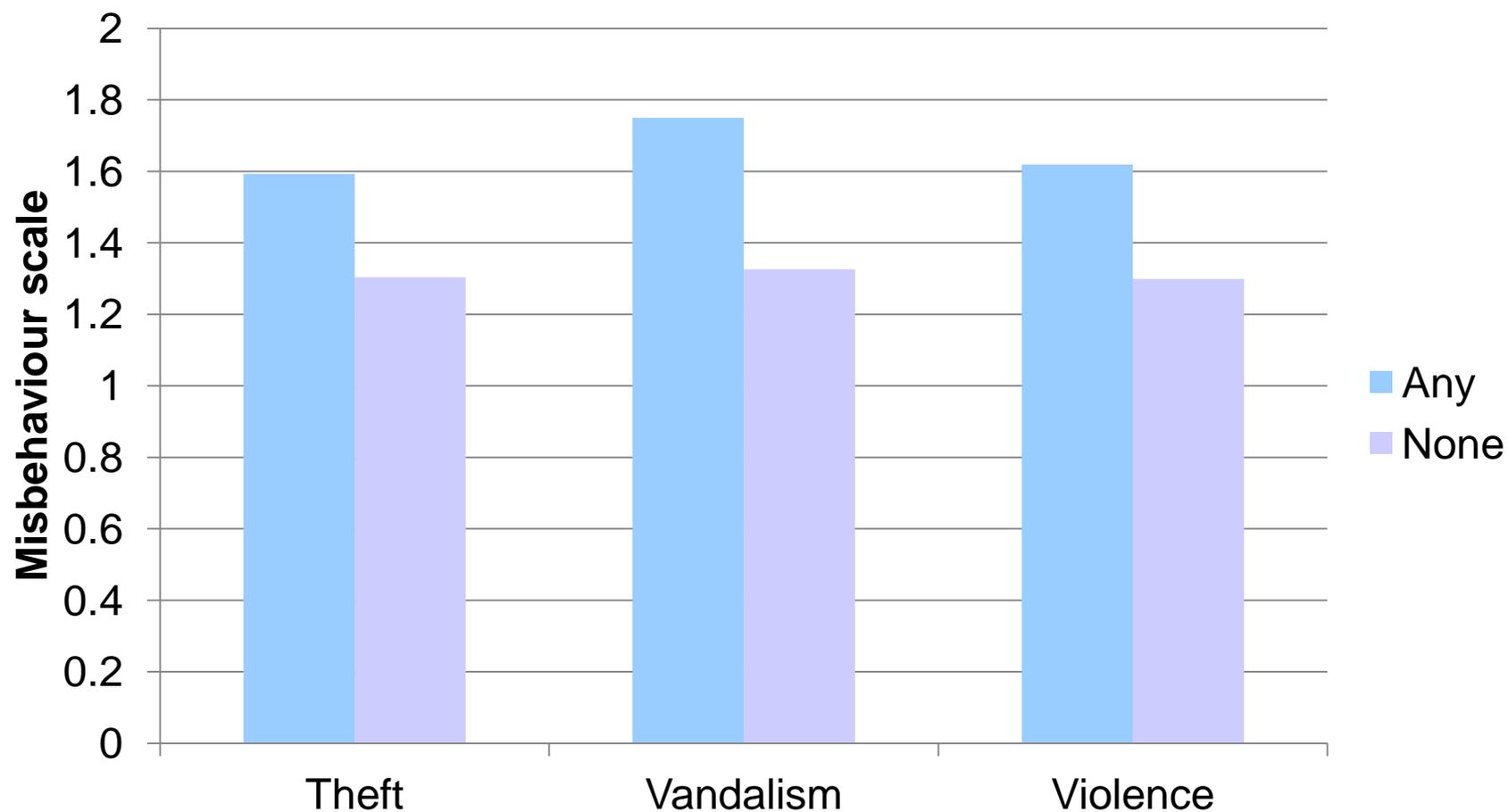


# Behaviour outside school by social class background





# School-based misbehaviour levels by behaviour outside school



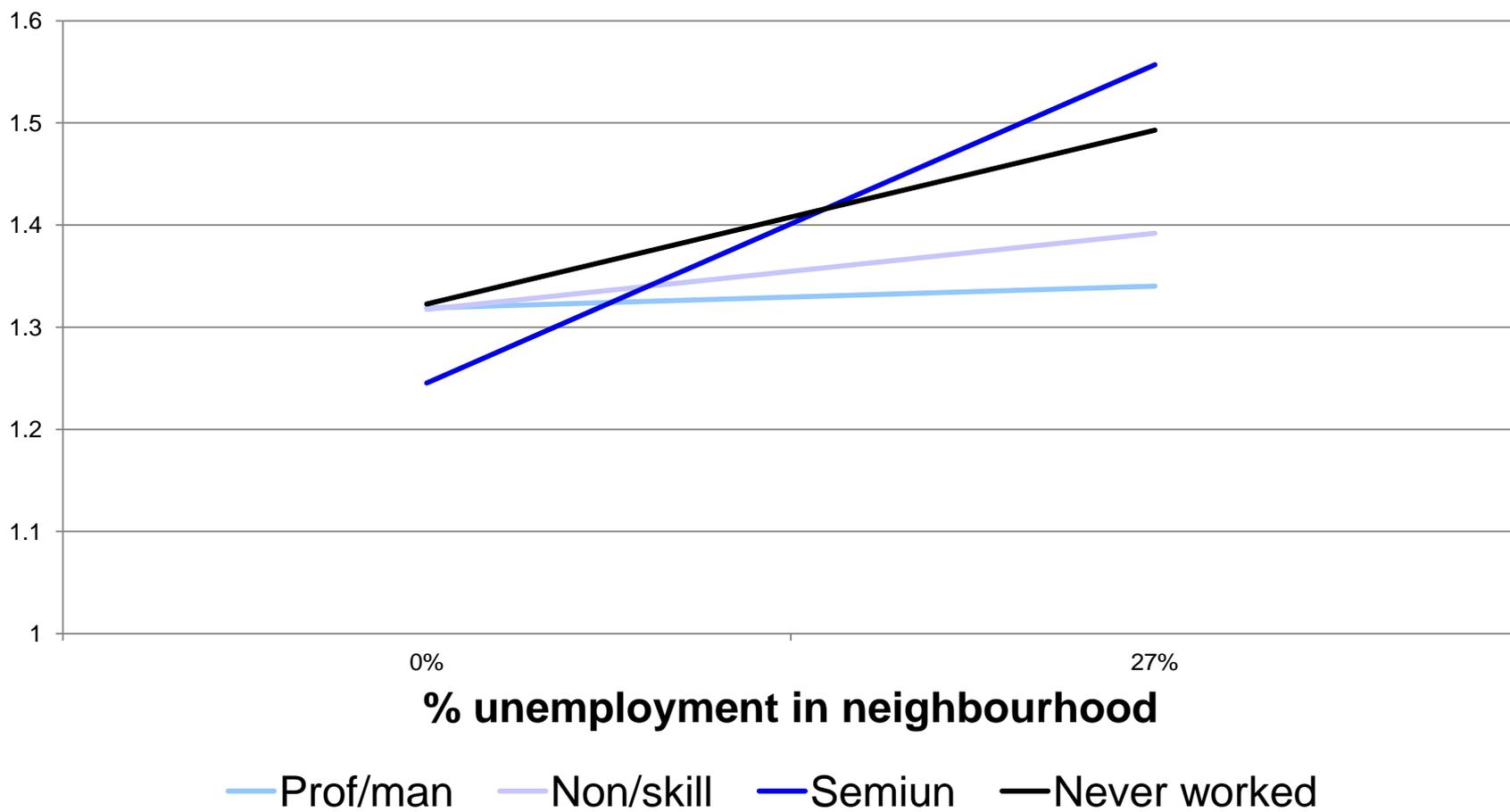


# School-based misbehaviour models

- **Multilevel cross-classified models: 618 schools, 874 areas, 7,113 young people**
- **Significant differences by both school and neighbourhood, even controlling for background**
- **Gender and social background gradient**
- **Higher in disadvantaged schools; lower in single-sex schools, especially girls**
- **Higher among second year than first year students**
- **Neighbourhood:**
  - Objective: higher in areas with more unemployment; larger towns/cities
  - Subjective: lower in orderly areas and where not safe to hang out (regulation) and higher where no facilities



# Social background effect varies by neighbourhood social composition





# Theft

- **Some variation between schools and neighbourhoods controlling for individual background**
- **Gender difference but little variation by social background**
- **Higher in private schools and slightly lower in girls' schools; no variation by year group**
- **Does not vary by neighbourhood characteristics (objective or subjective) except size (+)**



# Vandalism

- **Variation by school but not neighbourhood**
- **Gender differences but little difference by social background**
- **Girls' schools have lower levels but no variation by social composition; no variation by year group**
- **Neighbourhood:**
  - Objective: % working-class or early school leavers sig. and negative; size + (threshold)
  - Subjective: order and not safe to hang out -; lack of facilities +



# Violence

- **Variation by school but not neighbourhood**
- **Gender -; lone parent family +**
- **Disadvantaged school +; girls' school -; no variation by year group**
- **Neighbourhood:**
  - Objective: no effect except + for cities
  - Subjective: order - ( $p < .10$ )



# Conclusions

- **Opportunity to disentangle school and neighbourhood effects, given school choice patterns in Ireland**
- **School effects are evident for within and outside school behaviour; school social mix matters for some types of behaviour but not others**
- **Social composition of the neighbourhood matters for school misbehaviour (especially for disadvantaged groups) but very little for outside school behaviour**
- **Parental perceptions have a stronger relationship with behaviour than objective characteristics (definition of neighbourhood; interaction of perceptions and responses)**
- **Some relationship between behaviour patterns in and outside school but not strong and influenced by different factors, highlighting the importance of looking at behaviour within context**