PATHS TO PARTICIPATION: THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS BY YOUNG AMERICANS WHO ARE PARTICIPATING IN CIVIC AND POLITICAL LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Young Americans who are participating in civic and political life in the U.S. are integral to preserving democratic processes. They are tapped into a diverse array of networks, including those that provide them with information and opportunities to participate; and networks that they can distribute this knowledge on to. The use of social networks by politically and civically engaged young people is of consequence to both network theorists and social capital theorists. This study used a 25-question survey and in-depth interviews from a sub-sample of the 400 respondents who are recognized leaders in organizations such as Young Democrats, Young Republicans, College Democrats, College Republicans, or affiliated with American Democracy Institute or the Truman Foundation. We observed which networks are most influential in the lives of these young mobilized leaders and examined their willingness to act as “bridging nodes” that connect civic and political organization networks to their other social networks.

This study finds that young mobilized leaders turn to a combination of strong-tie and weak-tie networks when making decisions about daily life and civic
life. We find that although friendship networks are highly influential in general life, when it comes to getting involved in civic life, they are the least influential network in the lives of young mobilized leaders. We also learned that although this population recognizes the importance of reaching out to their social networks to support the causes they care about, they are discriminating in the messages they send.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Young people are growing increasingly more involved and active in civic and political life in comparison to years past (Pew 2007). Youth are participating in their community, with 36% of 15-25 year olds reporting that they volunteered in the past year (Lopez et al. 2006). Citizens under the age of 35 are also asserting themselves as an important cohort for candidates to reach, as the 2008 election season’s early results indicate. According to a study done by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), youth voter rates in the 2008 Iowa caucus increased 9% from 2004 (Kirby, Levine and Marcelo 2008), and 43% of under 30 year-olds turned out in the 2008 New Hampshire primary (Roscow 2008). This study explores not only what motivates young people to participate, but also helps us understand the ways we can create paths to participation from engaged young people to their networks. Discovering the ways young people interact with their social networks to engage in civic and political life is important for those wanting to utilize active participants as the gateway to the next layer of less engaged youth.

Identifying the methods young people choose to participate through can help campaigns and organizations identify the most effective venues to reach this group and draw them into their cause. Evidence indicates social networks are influential to how this cohort participates. Social networks, the ties that connect individuals in a web of
relationships, include anything from family, friends, co-workers, civic organizations, political organizations, etc. Analysis of the interactions that take place between participating young people and their social networks will help identify the ways to utilize this group as change agents who can in turn mobilize their networks to participate in civic and political processes.

**Levels of Participation**

In order to provide a systematic analysis of young citizen participation I employ Verba and Nie’s model of levels of participation (1972). Verba and Nie created a typology of the levels of engagement into which citizens fall; these categories are Inactives, Voting Specialists, Parochial Participants, Communalists, Campaigners, and Complete Activists (Ibid., 87). Although I will be looking specifically at young citizens, and not the public at large as Verba and Nie do, this typology is useful in identifying and defining the subjects I will be studying.

I have created a composite of an actively participating young person based upon a compilation of characteristics exhibited by numerous subjects I have observed in my study of this population. This character type illustrates the ways social networks help mobilized young people engage others in civic and political processes.
Mary, 24, has been volunteering for the Obama campaign for the past 8 months and has just participated in a protest in her city against a debated immigration bill. She has voted in every election in which she has been eligible to participate. She also blogs regularly about her activities and sent out an email to her friends and family about participating in the protest. According to Verba and Nie (1972), Mary would be characterized as a “Complete Activist”, because the activities she is involved with require high levels of psychological involvement, skill and competence, involvement in conflict (meaning the issue at stake is contestable and requires taking sides), and a sense of civic contribution (Ibid., 86).

Mary is tapped into a diverse array of networks through her different activities, including participating in the local Young Democrats chapter, the Sierra Club, and the YMCA. She is the Secretary of her Young Democrats chapter, and serves as a regular volunteer at the local YMCA center. She supports the Sierra Club by attending events they put on and donating money.

Mary’s central position in these networks designates her as a “bridging node” connecting the different networks within which she operates. Her networks are not limited to the organizations and causes she volunteers and works for, but also include her family, friends, co-workers, online networks, etc. Mary’s position in a diverse array
of networks allows her the ability to obtain knowledge about and participate in opportunities to act in political and civic life.

Her position as a bridging node also allows her the opportunity to distribute the knowledge she receives and spread information about opportunities for participation to all of her social networks. Through her position in these different networks, Mary has the ability to draw in individuals that are not tapped into social and political networks regularly. She can involve them in the campaigns and causes she supports using the methods of communication she prefers, such as her blog or sending out emails.

What this study seeks to understand is how Mary, an active participant in the civic sphere, can reach out to people in her social networks who participate at lower levels than she does. The idea is that through traditional and new means of participation, such as canvassing, protesting, and blogging, Mary is able to inform and mobilize people who are not likely to get involved otherwise. Is she, an active mobilized young leader, willing to reach out to her network for causes she believes in? If so, how is she most effective in drawing people into her cause?
**Research Question**

To understand how this group of young active citizens can draw others into the democratic process, we must define their methods of information gathering and distribution, as well as examine the forms of participation in which they are active. After answering these questions of participation and media use, we can then ask questions about how those factors interact with this cohort’s use of social networks. How are politically and civically engaged young people utilizing their social networks to gather and distribute information about issues and causes they believe in? How much influence do they have over their social networks and how much do those same networks influence them? When are they willing to reach out to their networks, and what keeps them from doing so? These foundational research questions guide this study and in answering them, we elucidate the potential of this cohort to increase civic engagement in the U.S.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses guide this analysis of how young active citizens use their social networks to engage and engage others into civic and political life. The analysis will address the level of influence strong-tie and weak-tie networks hold in the general and civic life of young mobilized leaders. Strong-tie networks are composed
of relationships that have a high level of time and effort invested in them, and there is a high frequency of interaction between the individuals within them. Weak-tie networks are those in which relationships require low frequency of contact and little investment of time and effort.

**H1:** Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will feel more strongly influenced by their strong-tie networks in *general* life than their weak-tie networks.

**H2:** Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will feel more strongly influenced by their strong-tie networks in *civic* life, than by their weak-tie networks.

**H3:** Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will rank their strong-tie networks as groups they have influence over, higher than their weak-tie networks.

**H4:** Young Americans who are active in civic and political life are discriminating in their outreach to their social networks about the causes that they support.
Argument

I argue that, despite Putnam’s contention about declining civic engagement among youth in America, we are seeing that young people do get involved – although not always through traditional means. They are choosing some of the same traditional methods as in the past, as well as new methods, which warrant observation and attention.

Young people who are actively engaged in civic and political organizations are contributing members of democracy, preserving our democratic institutions through their participation. They serve as critical bridging nodes in networks tied to individuals who are less exposed to information or opportunities to participate in causes or campaigns.

I argue that these bridging nodes are engaging their networks to support causes they believe in, willingly spreading the opportunities to participate to less active citizens. However, although I argue that they will use their networks to gather and distribute information, I also maintain they will use discretion about what kinds of messages they pass along to others. They will not pass along messages they do not feel strongly about simply to pass them on. Their networks are important to their daily and civic life and they are less willing to overwhelm their networks for campaigns or causes to which they do not feel passionately or personally connected. I also contend
that those networks with the strongest ties are the same networks that engaged youth turn to when they want to get involved in civic life, and are the same networks they recruit to the causes they support.

**Findings**

This study finds that family and faith networks, two strong-tie networks, held considerable influence over the daily and civic lives of participants in this study. Friends, another strong-tie network, was important in their general lives, but held the least amount of influence when it came to civic life. Media and online networks, both weak-tie networks, proved to have more influence than both mentors and co-workers, which are both strong-tie networks.

Paired sample t-tests, comparing how respondents rated each network’s influence in general life versus each network’s influence in civic life, indicated significant differences in mean scores (p ≤ .01) in eight of the ten networks. Outreach to networks was generally accepted as a necessary and useful tool in promoting the causes and campaigns these young leaders support, however they preferred using personal methods such as face-to-face discussion, or personalized emails over mass email campaigns.
Many interesting findings emerged from this study related to the media use and participation behavior of young mobilized citizens, and the social networks within which they operate. The preferred forms of participation amongst this population include volunteering, donating money, and signing petitions. Financial limitations and time constraints were often cited as reasons they chose one of the above methods. The feeling that their participation was effective and that they could see the measurable impact of their efforts were also important factors in their participation choices.

**Theoretical frameworks supporting this study**

I have based my research upon several theoretical frameworks including social capital theory, network theory, and social network analysis. In the following chapter, I include a fuller development of these frameworks but provide a basic explanation of each here.

*Social Capital Theory*

Social capital theory emphasizes the importance and value of social ties and social networks for the individual and the community as a whole. The definition of social capital that is adopted for this study comes from Robert Putnam’s book, *Bowling Alone* (2000): “Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among
individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (19).

In the context of social capital theory, social networks of young people engaged in civic and political life are then interesting and important to study. If social networks are intrinsically valuable to social capital, we need to understand how this cohort employs them in an effort to increase civic engagement across a broader spectrum of society.

Based upon social capital theory, it is evident that civic engagement, defined by Delli Carpini as, “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern…” is a critical component in strengthening communities and democracy (Pew Charitable Trusts website 2000). New media and technologies provide new tools through which young people can reach out to their networks and participate in civic and political life. Although this group does employ some of the traditional forms of engagement, there are newer forms that are important to recognize and evaluate. These new forms of engagement, such as blogs, listservs, and email can also contribute to the accumulation of social capital and deserve examination.

**Social Network Analysis and Network Theories**

Social network analysis is a broad field that encompasses many different areas of study, but this study will focus on its application as a methodology used to identify
the impact of personal ties between politically active individuals and their networks. Increasingly, political socialization experts and social scientists recognize that studying the individual alone to examine motivations to participate in political and civic spheres is not enough. Network theorists approach the study of social phenomena by observing the structures and networks within which an individual is positioned. It is from this perspective that we approach this study.

Network theory studies have examined how families, friends, co-workers, and communities shape and influence individual political behavior and indicate there is a strong relationship between some of these groups and the political behavior of individuals (Verba, Schlozman, and Burns; Levine; Kotler-Berkowitz; Johnston and Pattie in Zuckerman, 2005). This study seeks to build upon past social network literature by identifying and examining how young engaged citizen are interacting with their social networks to support the causes and issues they believe in. Understanding when, why, and how this group of young active leaders reach out to their networks can be useful in understanding how to draw others into the political process through networks of these individuals.
Chapter outline

This first chapter introduced the reader to several key concepts useful in this study: civic engagement, youth participation in civic/political life, social capital theory, social network analysis, and the importance of social networks in engaging and activating groups to participate. This section also covered my stated hypotheses and arguments as well as any key findings that emerge through analysis of data collected for this study. The following provides the reader an outline and description of what you will find in the following chapters.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks – This chapter is devoted to explaining the core theoretical foundations for this study – social capital theory and social network analysis. This chapter offers the reader useful terminology and an introduction to the key concepts of social network analysis and social capital theory. There is a brief review of literature associated with both frameworks, although primary findings are included directly in analysis chapters.

Chapter 3: Methodology – In this chapter, I will discuss all steps of analysis that were involved in conducting the study to keep it entirely transparent and replicable by others. This will include information about how the sample was fielded, the way the survey was created, and any type of transformation of data, etc. In this chapter, one
will also find Charts of all useful variables in the study. The author also provides an explanation how the specific sample studied was chosen, and why it was chosen.

Chapter 4: America’s Sweethearts – This will be a profile of young “engaged” citizens who are actively participating in civic and political organizations, based on demographics collected from the survey instrument. This chapter will include the basic descriptive information about the engaged youth that were surveyed. The focus of this will be drawing a broad picture of the young mobilized American who holds a position of leadership in civic and political organizations. In this section, I will include excerpts from the in-depth interviews to explain why young leaders in democracy choose to participate. This section will also include some comparable data analysis gathered from other groups such as Pew or the Census Bureau.

Chapter 5: Paths to Participation – This chapter will help to identify how social networks can be used to pass along messages most effectively. Based on the survey data and interviews, this chapter provides an analysis of the ways this cohort is engaging and engages its social networks. It will be one of the most relevant chapters of this thesis. In this chapter, I discuss the means through which these young engaged citizens interact with and mobilize their networks. I will identify the ways that they seem most willing to “listen” to messages passed through their networks. I will also

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identify the methods through which they are willing to reach out to their networks when it comes to engaging others in the causes or issues they support.

Chapter 6: Conclusion/Discussion – The final portion of the thesis will be devoted to an overall concluding chapter that draws out all key and relevant findings. I will include suggestions and recommendations for future extensions of this study.

Motivations in pursuing this study

When trying to identify the moment that turned me onto this study, several key moments come to mind. In 2004, I was working as a journalist, newly moved to DC from San Diego, and completely enraptured by the political enthusiasm of the young people who I was in contact with on a daily basis here. The next two years I continued to observe the high level of participation by my peers, while being immersed in their messages on a regular, if not daily, basis. Technology was increasing my exposure to issues via emails from friends, YouTube clips, jibjab.com, and other forms of social media – all of which contributed to my feeling of being involved and active in civic and political affairs.

After deciding to get my Master’s degree at Georgetown, I was privileged to work with Dr. Diana Owen on a project related to youth participation and elections, through which I learned there are many who are skeptical that young people care about
our democracy and want to be involved in the civic sphere. I remember one interview with a journalist participating in the project, who said, “they [young people] don’t care so why should we?” Struck by how sure he was that youth did not care about democracy and the well-being of this country, I could not help but feel slightly offended and dejected on behalf of those of my peers who I knew did not fall into this category.

It was through that same project that I was able to meet John Hart, the director of American Democracy Institute, an organization devoted to empowering, educating, and engaging young people in democratic processes. I joined ADI in the summer of 2007 and quickly realized there are many young people who do not just participate in our democracy individually, but also want to encourage their peers to do the same.

It became clear to me through my studies at Georgetown and these specific experiences that for every cynic there is a believer like Mr. Hart who is working to give young people the chance to act, react, and change the world we live in. I am motivated by the efforts of those who believe we young people can and want to make a difference. I hope that my findings are helpful in informing and re-energizing the efforts of organizations like ADI.
Chapter II: Theoretical Foundations

The following chapter lays the theoretical foundations upon which this study is found. This study seeks to contribute to the fields of social capital theory and network theories by using social network analysis. In this chapter, the reader will find the core concepts that define these areas of inquisition and their relation to the content of this study. This study builds upon past literature in the fields of social network theory and social capital theory by identifying the use of social networks by young mobilized leaders who are participating in America’s democratic processes.

Social Network Analysis

Social network analysis is a useful interdisciplinary methodology used to support network theories and structural perspectives, which focus on the patterns of relationships between actors to uncover social and political behavior. The following section will provide a review of terminology used by network analysts to introduce the basic tenets of network theory, and then provide a review of findings related to how social networks influence political participation.

The most basic assumption in social network analysis is that relationships amongst actors are important, and studying an actor as an isolated, individual unit, while ignoring the structures within which they operate, provides only a deficient
explanation at best. As Knoke and Kuklinski explain, “The structure of relations among actors and the location of individual actors in the network have important behavioral, perceptual, and attitudinal consequences both for the individual units and for the system as a whole” (1982, 113). Social network analysis allows a methodological approach to observing and measuring the patterns of interaction between individuals and the network structures within which they operate. A field that has been gradually gaining popularity since the 1960s, social network analysis has been applied to the fields such as economics, marketing, industrial engineering, and political science amongst others (Scott 2000). Before we identify the findings social network analysis has uncovered, we provide here an introduction to basic terminology useful to those not familiar with network analysis methodology.

**Terminology**

In network analysis, the objects of explanation or units of analysis are the “interactions that link each pair of social actors in a system” (Knoke 1990, 235). A node is the individual who forms the nucleus of the network. The nodes of interest in this study are young individuals actively engaged in civic and political life. A network is a set of nodes linked together by ties. Ties represent the relationships between nodes. Relationships between two nodes and the possible relational ties between them are dyads. Triads are a subset of three actors and the possible relational ties between them.
Social networks consist of the web of relationships and communities within which an individual interacts. An alternate way of describing a social network is that it is compromised of a web of nodes and the relationship ties that bind it to other networks. In this study, they consist of the groups, individuals, or organizations that young engaged leaders exert influence over or by which they feel influenced.

Relationships are observed for both their form and their content. According to Knoke, variations in form and content are believed to “explain observed behaviors of individual actors and entire social systems” (1990, 236). “Relational form refers to the properties of connections between dyads, apart from their substantive meanings. Two basic forms are (1) intensity (the strength or frequency of interaction), and (2) the degree of joint involvement in activities…” (Ibid.) “Relational contents are “the substantive meanings of network connections”.

This study is primarily concerned with the relational forms, and the strength of network ties. The strength of interpersonal network ties has been used to explain diffusion of information, social mobility, political organization, and social cohesion in general (Granovetter 1973, 1361). “Strong-tie” or “weak-tie” relationships are defined as such by considering a “combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (Granovetter 1973). Strong-tie relationships are those ties where there is a high
frequency of contact and high levels of time and effort invested in the relationship between two nodes (Kotler-Berkowitz in Zuckerman 2005, 152). Examples of strong-tie networks used in this study include, family, friends, faith community members, co-workers, and mentors. Conversely then, “weak-tie” relationships are those with low-contact frequency and little investment of time and effort. Weak-tie networks in this study include online networks, alternative media, mainstream media, civic organizations/movements, and political officials. In these networks, the flow of reciprocity is not necessarily high and often information flow is one-directional (as in the case of mass media networks). A literature review of relevant findings related to the nature of tie strength in networks will follow this discussion of network terminology.

Network analysts concerned with network structure also observe the position a node holds in a network or several networks. Here the concept and value of centrality is introduced. In the online textbook, Introduction to Social Network Analysis, Hanneman and Riddel explain, “Centralization refers to the extent to which a network revolves around a single node. More specifically, measured as share of all centrality possessed by the most central node” (Chapter 10, 2005). A highly centralized node holds a position of power and influence. To illustrate this, we will employ the use of a star-shaped network, in which node 1 is the centrally located node in Figure 1.1 below.
Figure 1.1: Star Structure illustrating centrality and positions of power in a network (source: Borgatti and Everett 2000, 4)

Figure 2. Freeman’s Star.

“In a star network, the central point has complete centrality, and all other points have minimum centrality: the star is a maximally centralized graph” (Hanneman and Riddle 2005).

Node 1 is the only node with a connection to all other actors in this network. Node 1 has easy access to nodes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. However, if node 6 wanted to get information from node 3, they would have to go through node 1 to do so. Thus, node 1
has the ability to control information flow and directly influence relationships between all other actors in this network. The star structure figure illustrates the power of node 1’s position of centrality in this network.

The power that a centrally located node has is of consequence when examining the flow of information and influence with a network. In conjunction with this concept is that of a bridge, a tie, that if removed would disconnect two networks (Hanneman and Riddle, 2005). Should node 1 be removed from the star structured network, it would sever connective ties between all of the remaining nodes. Thus, nodes 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 would no longer have a connection between each other. The author then classifies a node with a central position connecting otherwise disconnected nodes a “bridging node”. A bridging node in this study is a mobilized young leader who is connected not only to networks such as family and friends, but also to a series of different networks through their engagement in civic and political life such as civic and political organizations. The mobilized young leader is able to gather information from this array of diverse networks and pass along what they learn to other networks that may not be connected otherwise.

Using Figure 1.1 again, we can see that node 1 is connected to node 6. Let us say that node 1 is a political organization, and node 3 is a family member. Through bridging node member 1, information can travel between the political organization and
the family member. As is illustrated by this example, the bridging node is a powerful and important actor in the flow of communication between the political organization and others who are not directly connected to it. The bridging node is thus an integral component in a communication network between those with messages and opportunities pertaining to civic and political life and those who are not tapped into their networks.

In this section, we have gone over the main components of network analysis that are relevant to this study of young mobilized leaders and their use of social networks. The core concepts defined here only touch the surface of the complexity and diversity of concepts social network analysis uses to measure and observe social structures and relations. However, we have adequately and satisfactorily covered all key concepts relevant to this study. The author encourages those who are interested in furthering their knowledge of social network analysis to read Hanneman and Riddle’s online textbook, *Introduction to Social Network Analysis*, in its entirety to gather the true scope of its value as a methodology in observing social relational patterns.

*Relevant Literature in the field of Network Analysis*

This study examines two areas of network theory particularly; the relationship between tie-strength and influence, and the role of network influence in political and
civic activity. The following section provides a review of theoretical and empirical findings in these two areas of network analysis.

*Network Influence and Political Participation*

Any study which attempts to address the means through which political influence and political information pass through a network, must necessarily build upon the Columbia studies of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet and McPhee. Their work in the 1940s and 1950s examined the group context of electoral behavior and created a research path that political scientists have been following ever since.

Using a study of the residents in Erie County, Ohio, Lazarsfeld et. al (1944) first alluded to the notion that voters vote “in groups” (Ibid., 137 as in Elau 1980), and introduced the concept of “political homogeneity” – meaning “people who live, work and play together are likely to vote for the same candidates” (Ibid., 150). This study, which used a panel survey of 600 participants during the 1940 elections, laid the foundational groundwork for later network theories of voting. In the same study, they also identified the significance of “opinion leaders”, or more politically active member in a group, to inform and influence other less active members. They termed the process, “two-step flow communication theory” which asserted that these opinion leaders would gather political information from mass media (radio and print) and then pass along the information to their less active counterparts (Ibid., 151).
In *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formulation in a Presidential Campaign* (Berelson et al. 1954), the authors again used panel surveys of political behavior, interviewing respondents several times over the course of an electoral campaign. Berelson et al. (1954) found evidence contrary to the then widely accepted notion that voting was an isolated, individual decision based upon the voter’s predispositions and mass media use. Instead, they found variables such as socio-economic status and religion were variables that influenced voter’s choice (Elau 1980, 209). Furthermore, they found “personal influence” was also a variable of impact on voter choice.

Perhaps the study that most closely mirrors network theory is that which Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) conducted in Decatur, Illinois. In this study, which produced the book *Personal Influence*, they more closely examined the way information passed through social networks. The study was designed to monitor the two-step flow process, observing how information from mass media passed to opinion leaders and through the personal networks of those opinion leaders. The authors concluded that reinforcement of political opinions is often “generated and/or reinforced in small intimate groups of family, friends, co-workers” (Ibid., 10). During the election season interviewees indicated they willingly changed their opinions “as a group”, based on the knowledge of one of more of the political leaders in their group.
This study also contributed importantly to the nature of influence and information flow through interpersonal networks by identifying the powerful role the “opinion leader” holds in the communication flow. “The leader is a strategic element in the formation of group opinions: he is more aware of what several members think; he mediates between them; and he represents something like the “typical” group mind” (Ibid., 10).

Although these studies stopped a step short of identifying their findings in relation to network theories, they serve as seminal studies upon which network theories of political participation build. The Columbia studies provide us with enduring messages that people do not act in isolation in civic and political life. The work of these authors and others indicate sharing knowledge, opinions, and perspectives within an individual’s personal networks, does influence their decision to participate in electoral activities. It is upon these theoretical foundations that studies such as this one can develop

*Network Theory Studies of Political Participation*

Very few social hermits inhabit this world, only obtaining information from impersonal information sources such as mainstream media. Most of us interact regularly with family, friends, co-workers, members of our faith community, etc. and
obtain information relevant to our daily lives. Studies in network theory have shown their relevance in influencing our political participation.

There is a plethora of studies that demonstrate that voting turnout is highly correlated among friends, family members, and co-workers (Beck et al. 2002; Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1954; Glaser 1959; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995; Kenny 1992). Fowler takes this relational finding one-step further by “exploring the impact of a single decision to vote on a socially connected electorate” (in Zuckerman, 269). Using a model of turnout based on the “small-world network” concept – the idea that people can connect themselves through a small number of intermediaries, (some call this the “6 degrees to Kevin Bacon” phenomena) – Fowler identifies that the decision to vote by one person can affect the turnout decision of several other people (Ibid., 270). Fowler suggests, “As the world gets smaller, the capacity to influence others increases exponentially, and so should the incentive to participate…” (Ibid., 286). His study demonstrates the powerful influence of a single node in directly affecting electoral participation.

Several studies have examined the influence of familial networks such as husband and wife relationships and parent/child relationships on political participation (Stoker and Jennings 1995; Zuckerman et al. 2002; and Verba et al 1995). Verba et al. (1995) examined the influence of family by studying intergenerational transmission of
political participation. Seeking to understand the influence of family networks, they examined if politically active parents have politically active children. Their findings indicate that those who come of age in a politically rich environment “are likely to absorb explicit and implicit lessons and, as adults, to have psychological orientations to politics…” (in Zuckerman 2005, 110). These findings are consistent with political socialization literature that suggests family is “the most important agent in the socialization process” (Renshon 1973, 31). Verba et al. (1995) also found that the socio-economic status of the parents also affected the children’s participation levels. This finding supports the Civic Voluntarism Model that suggests a specific set of factors foster participation: resources, motivation, and location in recruitment networks. If the parents are well educated, the children are likely to be well educated also. Not only does education have a positive relationship with political activity, but “the well educated are likely to be well endowed with participatory resources: to command both a high family income and civic skills, to be located in a networks through which activists are recruited, and to be motivated to take part” (Ibid. 110).

The influence of friendships networks is another area social network analysis has uncovered relevant findings. However, those findings often are related to strength of tie analyses, and thus will be expanded upon in that discussion. Many studies have examined the influence of family, friend, and co-worker influence. However, other
networks of relevance warrant attention. Faith networks, online networks and civic organization networks have been studied to a lesser degree. This study seeks to understand the strength of influence of those networks in addition to family, friend, and colleague networks.

Studies of Network Tie-Strength

Tie-strength is an aspect of social network analysis that has applied to many different fields, including economic development, labor markets, organizational communication, political information, and political influence. The following section provides a review of studies identifying the prominence of tie-strength in network studies.

One of the most prominent thought leaders in the field of social network analysis is Granovetter, who’s major contributing work includes identifying the strength of weak-ties for jobseekers. His work, entitled “The Strength of Weak-ties” (1973), used a random sample study of jobseekers, and asked them to identify how they heard of the new job opportunity. He asked those who said they found a new job through a contact (n = 282), how often they had physically seen the contact around the time that the job information was passed along. This was used as a measure of strength of the relationship, and a majority of respondents indicated they saw their contact
“occasionally” (55.6%) or “rarely” (27.8%). Only 17% of respondents in Granovetter’s study reported they saw the contact “often” (Granovetter 1973, 1371).

These findings suggest weak-tie relationships that serve as bridges are beneficial to the individual in ways that strong-tie relationships may not be. Granovetter suggests individuals with only strong-tie relationships serve to isolate themselves from the benefits of heterogeneous relationships including exposure to new information and opportunities. To capture the important of this concept, the author turns to Kotler-Berkowitz who adequately explains, “the more people we know and the more different they are from us and from each other, the more varied the information we receive from them, and the greater are the social opportunities and benefits made available to us” (in Zuckerman 2005, 152).

As mentioned in the earlier terminology portion of this chapter, strong-tie relationships are considered to be more representative with people of homogenous backgrounds who likely circulate to some degree within the same circles that the individuals does already, thereby discouraging new information flow from outside sources. Granovetter’s study implies that weak ties are useful in obtaining information that is “socially distant” from the individual. His findings show that a person with both strong-tie and weak-tie relationships stands in a better position than those who only
have strong-tie relationships to find out information about jobs or opportunities due to the diversity of information sources.

The impact of weak-tie relationships on political participation has also been a topic of study by those in the field of network analysis. In Jeffery Levine’s article, “Choosing Alone?” (in Zuckerman 2005), he examines the impact of “intimacy” on social influence. His study, measuring the impact of influence of casual relationships (defined as relations less intimate than those of family members or close friends) finds that social influence in political matters is not strictly restricted to only strong-tie networks. This study finds that “social interaction consists of more than a simple exchange of opinions between like-minded individuals” (in Zuckerman 2005, 131). His study supports the notion that weak-tie networks are influential and that they do influence political choice. Weak-tie relationship studies have contributed to reinforcing and supporting the postulation those robust networks of strong-tie and weak-tie relationships are the most beneficial to the individual.

Fowler’s findings related to turnout cascades mentioned earlier in this section, also serve to support the notion of that a “mix” of weak and strong tie connections are beneficial to individuals. In his case, an individual with both strong-tie and weak-tie networks who is interested in increasing voter turnout has the ability to “initiate larger turnout cascades than people with all weak or all strong ties” (Ibid., 286).
The use of tie-strength in social network analysis helps identify the types of relationships that are able to exert power and influence individuals to participate in activities such as voting. Although there are benefits to both kinds of ties, the literature shows that those individuals with a variety of strong and weak-tie network relationships are likely to reap the most benefits. This study seeks to expand upon this area of study by identifying those networks, which are most influential in the lives of young leaders who are actively engaged in civic and political life and gaining an understanding of how they are used to support their participation.

**Social Capital Theory**

Defining the concept of “social capital” has been a struggle for countless academics, political elites, civic and non-profit organizations. Yet, most seem to believe it is a core concept in reviving the state of civic, economic, and political affairs. There are countless definitions to which one can turn that attempt to explain this concept embedded in the networks we operate within and the outcomes the produce. This author has chosen the definition of social capital supplied by one of the scholars most widely associated with the term, Robert Putnam. In his hallmark study, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam provides the following definition of this elusive concept:

Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, social capital refers to *connections among individuals* –
social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.

In that sense, social capital is closely related to what some have called “civic virtue”.
The difference is that “social capital” calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital.

(italics added 2000, 19)

Although Putnam is neither the first nor the last to provide a definition of social capital, he is one of the most prominent social capital theorists. Therefore, he will hold special prominence in this review of social capital theory in the context of civic engagement. The rest of this chapter will include a brief history of the use of the term “social capital” leading up to Putnam’s findings in *Bowling Alone*. From that point, we will evaluate Putnam’s findings related to the concepts of “bridging capital” and “bonding capital” which are directly relevant to this study of social networks. A brief discussion of relevant findings related to bridging and bonding capital will conclude this section.

*Historical review of Social Capital definitions*

In his observations of American democracy, Alex De Tocqueville suggested the foundational stone of American democracy lay in its associational life ([*original* 1840] 1969, 517). “An association unites the energies of divergent minds and vigorously
directs them toward a clearly indicated goal.” (Ibid., p. 190). Through these institutions social collaboration fostered collective action to solve the problems that faced the community. Durkheim’s 19th century empirical study of suicide show the act of suicide was more common in societies and groups with low cohesion and low levels of bonding. On the contrary, communities and groups with high social cohesion showed lower levels of suicide, promoting “mutual moral support, which instead of throwing the individual on his own resources, leads him to share in the collective energy and supports his own when exhausted” (Durkheim 1897 as in Berkman and Kawachi 2000, 175).

Although these scholars addressed the importance of relational networks, it was not until Hanifan that the term “social capital” was first used. His writings were meant to “urge the importance of community involvement for successful schools” and thus used the term “social capital” to explain why it was important (Putnam 2000, 19). Hanifan (1916; 1920) identified the importance of cultivating goodwill, fellowship, and sympathy to foster growth in communities in his studies of rural school community centers. However, this term fell out of the public conscious for several decades, not resurfacing until the 1960s when Jane Jacobs (1961) addressed the concept in her studies of neighborliness and its relationship to urban life. However, she did not use the term “social capital” in its original context, nor did several others who were
studying the importance of place-based relationship at the time (Young and Willmott 1957; Gans 1962; Loury 1970).

Pierre Bourdieu (1983), James S. Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (1995; 2000) are often credited with bringing the concept to academics and providing its theoretical constructs. Bourdieu, who was primarily concerned with it in relation to economic inequality, defines social capital as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition” (1983, 249). In later works, he further expanded this definition to include, “Acknowledging that capital can take a variety of forms is indispensable to explain the structure and dynamics of differentiated societies” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1993, as in Halpern 2005, 7).

At the same time that Bourdieu was introducing social capital in economic circles in Europe, Coleman, introduced the concept in American circles in relation to his study of relations between elite and non-elitist groups. He described social capital as a function: “it is not a single entity but a variety of different entities…they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure” (1994, 205)

Now we turn to Putnam’s work, specifically pulling from his book, *Bowling Alone* (2000). Putnam conducted including nearly 500,000 interviews over the span of
25 years measuring American’s participation in civic life. He asserts that participation in civic life encourages the accumulation of social capital, which is created through the interactions human beings have with one another. From Putnam’s work, we learn that social networks are intrinsically valuable for the resources and opportunities they produce (Ibid., 19). These resources, such as increased trust, volunteerism, productivity, and concern for the greater good, are examples of social capital (Ibid, ) His work also claims social capital is valued for its potential to facilitate individual and collective action to solve community problems (Ibid., 24).

Putnam is generally the most cited author when discussing analysis and measurement of social capital. In his book, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam suggests that there are two types of social capital “bridging” and “bonding” (Ibid., 22). According to Putnam, bonding capital is important as it provides the strong ties and connection making between homogenous groups (family members). Bonding capital is produced from dense strong-tie networks, of homogenous backgrounds. Bonding capital is useful in creating a sense of “solidarity” and mobilizing dense networks of strong-tie relations (Ibid., 22). An example of a community that produces bonding capital is an ethnically homogenous neighborhood of immigrant Ethiopians who have settled in the same part of Washington D.C. Through their daily interactions with one another, they mutually reinforce their exclusive identity. They develop a deep sense of trust within
one another and are able to come together as a community because of those bonds of trust. However, if they are unwilling to reach out to diverse networks, this bonding capital can be detrimental to them. As was explained in the network theories chapter, networks of homogenous nodes risk the loss of access to new information and opportunities.

Putnam claims it is bridging capital that is necessary to connect communities together for the collective good. Bridging capital is defined as the relationships between friends, associates, and colleagues and are considered weaker ties but more important to “getting ahead” as an individual or a community (20). He states this is the case because, similar to findings supported in network theories literature, these weak-tie connections allow us to obtain information and learn about opportunities we would not hear about from our strong-tie groups, which tend to be homogenous. The weak-tie networks we operate within provide bridging capital and offer us exposure to information we would not gather if we spent all of our time within networks of like-minded individuals.

Putnam’s work specifically, drew the conclusion that civic engagement in America is declining and he used the drop in associational life over the span of 30 years to illustrate his position. He concluded that associational life provided the environment to foster and support the weak ties in a community. A decline in these
organizations thus indicated a decline in social capital and civic engagement as a whole.

However, many argue that his assessment, based on associational life alone, was a somewhat out-dated and narrow approach. As several authors, including Bookman (2004) point out, other means of participation also deserve inclusion in an analysis of civic engagement in America. Bookman argues that the changing family structure means working families have other means to reach out to their communities. She also concludes that women particularly endure the most of having to partake in “community engagement” activities. Skocpol (2003) also suggest that although associational membership may be declining, we may be moving toward professionalization and management of civic life instead. She argues that although there may be a decline in local groups, there is a place for government and national organization to help support the development of local democratic life.

**Review of Social Capital Literature**

Social capital has also been used to explain why some groups and communities thrive while others fail to do so. Social capital theory has provided support for community building programs worldwide, with studies indicating social capital provides increased capital and trust amongst citizens. It was cited by the World Bank (1999) to serve as theoretical foundations for implementing certain programs in rural
and under-served communities throughout the world. Social capital has also been associated with lower crime rates (Cote and Healy 2001; Green et al. 2000; Halpern 1999; Sampson et al. 1997). Sampson et al.’s study (1997) indicates that low civic engagement and high neighborly anonymity increased the risk of crime and violence in communities. Halpern (1999) illustrated a significant positive relationship between social capital and economic growth in nations by measuring the level of trust between strangers.

Social capital has been identified as critical to educational success and youth development (Putnam 2000, 305). Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) conducted a study on Catholic schools are more successful than public schools because they have a high level of trust amongst the social networks that operate within it. They found that faculty that has a high sense of trust engage and interact with students and importantly with participants as well, creating a community of supporting networks. Civic participation and

One of the major criticisms of social capital theory is the assumption that it provides a benefit to society. Several studies have shown that crime networks, gangs (Halpern 2000), and racist organizations also have high levels of social capital. Putnam recognizes this fact and devotes a chapter in Bowling Alone to “The dark side
of social capital”. He explains the way tolerance and social capital interacted in America during the 1950s-60s:

In small-town America in the 1950s people were deeply engaged in community life, but to many this surfeit of social capital seemed to impose conformity and social division…between the mid-1960s and the late 1990s Americans became substantially more tolerant, precisely the same period when they were becoming disconnected from civic life and from one another(354).

Bridging capital appears to be critical in overcoming the challenges that a society, which emphasizes bonding capital, has to face. Bonding capital can create mutual exclusion that reinforces isolation within homogenous groups and as Putnam suggests, bridging capital is necessary to facilitate interaction between the two.

Summary of Theoretical Frameworks

Combining the lessons we have learned through social network analysis and social capital theory it becomes clear that the strength of ties in a community and between individuals are intrinsically valuable. The connection of heterogeneous networks provides bridging capital that serves to strengthen a community as levels of reciprocity and trust increase across groups of diverse individuals and collective action is encouraged.
Diversity in networks allow for increased information flow about political knowledge and opportunities to participate, increasing engagement in civic life, which is critical to preserving democracy and encourages the accumulation of bridging capital. Defining the strength of influence a network holds over an individual in shaping political opinion and encouraging civic participation is of consequence to both network theorists, who are interested in the way influence flows in a network, and social capital theorists who seek to build social capital through civic engagement.

This study seeks to contribute to the fields of social capital and network theories by building upon these theoretical frameworks, and examining the use of social networks by young individuals who are contributing to the accumulation of social capital by participating in civic and political life.
Chapter III: Methodology

This empirical study seeks to answer how politically and socially active young people use their networks to engage and engage others to support the causes and campaigns in which they believe. This chapter will provide the reader with information on the instruments, participants, data collection methods, and operations used to address the problem presented in this study. A multi-method approach was employed in the analysis that includes both online and paper-pencil surveys for quantitative data, as well as in-depth interviews that provide qualitative support. This chapter explains the design, pre-testing, distribution, and analysis of data for this study.

Survey Tools

Data for this study are aggregated from a 25-question survey questionnaire developed by this author and the American Democracy Institute (ADI) in effort to identify some core characteristics and beliefs held by young people who are actively engaged in political and civic organizations (see Appendix). The survey was available in the online form through the SurveyMonkey application for four months (www.surveymonkey.com). It was available through a link sent in emails from October 2007 until February 2008. The hardcopy version of the form was distributed to ADI participants at two separate ADI conferences held in the fall of 2007. Questions presented in this survey were original or partially derived from other surveys, such as
CIRCLE’s “Civic Engagement Quiz”. The methodological appendix provides questions drawn from other studies. Those questions were employed in this study for their level of reliability and ability to measure the concepts this study is observing.

Recruiting of Participants in Study

The population this study focuses on is young people (ages 18-35) who are actively participating with and supporting political and/or social causes. In order to fit the definition of “politically or socially active” they must be one of two things: actively engaged in a political organization or social cause OR affiliated with and attendants of conferences put on by the American Democracy Institute.

Actively Engaged Youth

To sample this specific population of politically or socially active young people, we targeted several political and civic organizations that rely on and recruit young people to support their efforts. We chose these types of organizations because they tend to draw in young people who want to participate in civic or political affairs, and these organizations expose young people to larger networks of organizations and groups. Thus, they provide access to the specific population this study seeks to observe.
The researcher kept the sample limited to the definition of “engaged” young citizens by reaching out only to certain members of the larger population of young people; specifically those who belong to a specific civic or political organization. One group of targeted individuals includes, board members or chairs of Young Democrats, Young Republicans, College Democrats, and College Republicans, who received the online survey link via email. To obtain email addresses for these individuals the author conducted internet research using the Google search engine and used key words “Young Democrats”, “Young Republicans”, “College Democrats”, and “College Republicans” combined with state names (i.e. California, Wisconsin, New York). Search results yielded chapter websites that listed board members and their contact information. The author then sent email solicitations that included a link to the survey. Every attempt was made to ensure an equal number of Republicans and Democrats were reached.

The Truman foundation, an organization that provides scholars with financial support for graduate study, leadership training, and fellowship with other students who are committed to making a difference through public service was also targeted for this study. Truman Scholars, (recipients of the scholarship) the group of young people recognized for their leadership and work in the government, advocacy, or non-profit sectors, distributed the survey via their listserv of 2006 honorees.
American Democracy Institute

Certain participants in this study were systematically targeted based upon their affiliation with ADI. The American Democracy Institute (ADI) is a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., “dedicated to educating, engaging, and empowering young American leaders to help shape the future of our country” (www.empowerchange.org). ADI seeks to build a social network of identified young leaders and provide them with the information and tools necessary to help them achieve their goals in shaping and participating in civic and political life.

ADI has several types of programming aimed at drawing young people into political and civic life in the U.S. Their Leadership Forums consist of smaller workshops of 50-100 identified young leaders for whom they provide skill-building programs, problem-solving initiatives, and access to a growing network of young leaders via one-day events held across the U.S. ADI also holds summits throughout the country during which they invite up to 1,000 participants from colleges and organizations to attend an all day event. The day is filled with keynote speakers and workshops where they offer tools, guidance, and inspiration to participants to help them reach out to their communities and get involved in civic life.
Attendants of ADI sponsored events received the survey via an email link in conference correspondence or took a pencil/paper version of the survey at the event itself. To avoid data error, every attempt was made to distribute paper/pencil versions of the survey to only those participants who had not already taken the online version of the survey.

The author of this study worked as a Fellow with ADI in the summer of 2007 and developed the survey tool during that time. ADI’s interest in understanding how organizations like their own can help support young political and civic leaders participate and engage others via their networks provided the author with foundational support for this study.

Data was collected from participants who attended one of two ADI events in the fall of 2007. The first ADI event, the New York Leadership Summit, took place on October 9, 2007 in New York City. Eighty-five young leaders participated in the one-day event. The other ADI sponsored event, The Empower Change Summit, took place on November 5, 2007 on the UCLA campus in Los Angeles, California. ADI approximates that 1,800 individuals attended the event. It is important to note that the keynote speaker at the Empower Change Summit was Former President William J. Clinton, a high profile celebrity whose presence may have contributed to a higher number of attendants than is normal for ADI events. His presence at the event may also
explain the high number of responses from participants who self-identified as Democrats.

*In-depth Interviews*

A sub-sample of ADI participants who took the first survey were asked for in-depth interviews based upon a semi-structured 12-question instrument developed by the author (see Appendix). The purpose of these interviews was to speak on a more substantive and detailed level with members of the sample group about specific ways they were able to utilize their networks in projects, campaigns, and causes in which they have taken leadership roles.

*Interview Participants*

The in-depth interview questionnaire was pre-tested with a group of 12 graduate students. Based upon their suggestions it was then reviewed, and revised to make questions clear, concise, and useful in obtaining the content sought after in the study. The author interviewed eight participants via phone or in-person over the course of six weeks in February and March of 2008. The questionnaire initially asked several closed answer questions about the participants’ age, profession, news gathering and blog related behavior to ease the participant into the interview and gain background information. Other interview questions, addressing how respondents used their social networks to achieve their goals, were primarily open-answered in order to allow the
depth of answers to reach their fullest scope. Questions about their experiences in recruiting social networks for a cause they supported, barriers they felt in reaching out to their networks and the means through which they tried to pull in their social networks were the subject of the open-ended questions.

At times, the author would integrate follow-up questions based upon answers provided from the participant that supplemented the semi-structured questions in the survey. This allowed the author to address certain issues that were not included in the original questionnaire but contributed valuable information to the study. Examples of all types of questions asked are included in the Methodological Appendix. The author transcribed the interviews to provide qualitative and anecdotal evidence in the analysis, supplementing the quantitative data aggregated from the survey.

**Concepts & Measures**

The goal of this study is to measure they ways young engaged citizens interact with their social networks to help support the causes and issues they believe in. Below is a list of the networks we used in this study and the members who comprise them. Basic conceptual definitions are also included below to define clearly the concepts employed in this study. Finally, you will also find the hypotheses that drive this study and the variables used to support or reject them.
Networks

Family networks are composed of kinship, including husbands, wives, siblings, aunts, uncles, etc.

Friend networks are considered close acquaintances with whom the individual interacts and confides in.

Faith Community networks are compromised of members of the individual’s religion. An example of a member of this network would be church leaders.

Mentor networks are made up of influential role models whom the individual turns to for guidance and support.

Online Networks are compromised of members of the online communities, listservs, and message boards with which the individual interacts. An example of an online network member would be those who subscribe to a listserv about social activities taking place in the Washington D.C. area.

Mainstream media networks include traditional media (TV, newspapers, radio) and their online counter-parts that reach a wide audience. Examples of mainstream media network members include, The New York Times, Newsweek, cnn.com, and cbsnews.com.

Alternative media networks are compromised of communication media (newspapers, radio, television, movies, Internet, etc.) which are not owned and
controlled by big business and government. Examples include indymedia.org, and the wonkette.com blog.

Political official networks are compromised of individuals who are employed by the government, and have the ability to make public policy changes. Governors and their staff members are examples of members of this network.

Civic organizations/movement networks include organizations or grassroots initiatives that exist to address an issue or problem that arises in civil society. Members of the ACLU or activists who marched in the civil rights movement in the 1960s are examples of members of this network.

Concepts/Definitions

**Bonding Capital** refers to the value assigned to social networks between socially homogeneous groups of people (example: gangs) Bonding capital can have negative effects if it serves to exclude or isolate groups from one another (Putnam 2000). In this study, bonding capital comes from strong tie networks such as family networks and faith networks.

**Bridging Capital** refers to the value assigned to social networks between socially heterogeneous groups of people (example: bowling groups). Bridging
capital is believed to benefit communities, governments, individuals, and groups (Putnam 2000). In this study, bridging capital results from interactions with networks of friends, mentors, online networks, news media, political officials, and civic organizations.

Civic engagement is defined as “Individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern…” (Delli Carpini, 2004).

Engaged/active/mobilized leaders are people who are actively participating in civic or political organizations at a level of involvement greater than simply belonging to a group or organization. For this study, they are participating as a board or chair member of Young Democrats, Young Republicans, College Democrats, College Republicans, or they have been identified as leaders by the Truman Scholars Foundation or ADI.

Forms of participation include, but are not limited to the following activities: raising funds, participation in a blog/listserv/online discussion board, participating in walk/run/bike races for a particular cause or organization, volunteering, contacting political officials, contacting media, displaying
buttons/bumper stickers, wearing t-shirts that support a cause, donating money, attending protest events, signing petitions, boycotting, boycotting, and canvassing.

**Networks** consist of things or people (the nodes) and links, which characterize the relational ties between these nodes in this study, networks are the patterns of relationships between young engaged citizens and their ties to other groups, individuals, and organizations (Saguaro Seminar, 2004).

**Social Networks** consist of the web of relationships and communities within which an individual interacts. A social network consists of a web of nodes and the relationship ties that bind it to others. In this study, they consist of the groups, individuals, or organizations that young engaged leaders exert influence over or exert influence over young engaged leaders.

**Nodes** are the individuals who form the nucleus of the network. The nodes of interest in this study are young individuals actively engaged in civic and political life.
Young people are defined as 18-35 year olds.

*Measures*

There are two categories of interest in this study of young active citizens engaged in civic and political life; they are the relationships of influence in their social networks, and the means through which they communicate and interact with their networks to support the causes and campaigns they believe in.

The following hypotheses provide the point of analysis in this study:

**H1**: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will feel more strongly influenced by their strong-tie networks in *general* life than their weak-tie networks. Strong-tie networks include family, friends, co-workers, mentors, and faith communities. Weak-tie networks are online networks, mainstream news media, alternative news media, political officials, and civic organizations/movements.

**H2**: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will feel more strongly influenced by their strong-tie networks in *civic* life, than by their weak-tie networks.
**H3:** Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will rank their strong tie networks as groups they have influence over, higher than their weak-tie networks.

**H4:** Young Americans who are active in civic and political life are discriminating in their outreach to their social networks about the causes that they support.

In the analysis, strong-tie networks are those networks with relationships characterized by high frequencies of interaction, and strong interpersonal connection. Weak-tie networks are characteristically impersonal and have low levels of interaction.

*Social Network Measurements*

To answer the question pertaining to who constitutes the social networks of young people, several questions were used that can be found below in Chart 1.1 and Chart 1.2. Respondents revealed the strength of influence different groups and people exerted over them, by identifying how strongly they felt each group influenced them in both general life and civic life specifically. These variables are measured on a scale ranging from 1 = “very strongly”, to 5 = “not at all strongly”.

53
Chart 1.1: Variables and Values used to measure Social Network Influence in general life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: FAMILY</td>
<td>Q10a</td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Not very strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: FRIENDS</td>
<td>Q10b</td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Not very strongly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: CO-WORKERS</td>
<td>Q10c</td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat strongly</td>
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<td>3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly</td>
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<td>4 = Not very strongly</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: MENTORS</td>
<td>Q10d</td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat strongly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Not very strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: ONLINE NETWORKS</td>
<td>Q10e</td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Not very strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA</td>
<td>Q10f</td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Not very strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: ALTERNATIVE NEWS MEDIA</td>
<td>Q10g</td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Somewhat strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Not very strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10h</td>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: <strong>POLITICAL OFFICIAL</strong></td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly, 2 = Somewhat strongly, 3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly, 4 = Not very strongly, 5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10i</td>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: <strong>MEMBERS OF FAITH COMMUNITY</strong></td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly, 2 = Somewhat strongly, 3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly, 4 = Not very strongly, 5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10j</td>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: <strong>CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS/MOVEMENTS</strong></td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly, 2 = Somewhat strongly, 3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly, 4 = Not very strongly, 5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q10k</td>
<td>Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life: <strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td>1 = Very Strongly, 2 = Somewhat strongly, 3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly, 4 = Not very strongly, 5 = Not at all strongly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 1.2: Variables and Values used to measure Social Network influence in civic life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?: FAMILY | Q12a     | 1 = Very Strongly  
                      2 = Somewhat strongly  
                      3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly  
                      4 = Not very strongly  
                      5 = Not at all strongly                  |
| When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?: FRIENDS   | Q12b     | 1 = Very Strongly  
                      2 = Somewhat strongly  
                      3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly  
                      4 = Not very strongly  
                      5 = Not at all strongly                  |
| When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?: CO-WORKERS | Q12c     | 1 = Very Strongly  
                      2 = Somewhat strongly  
                      3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly  
                      4 = Not very strongly  
                      5 = Not at all strongly                  |
| When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?: MENTORS   | Q12d     | 1 = Very Strongly  
                      2 = Somewhat strongly  
                      3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly  
                      4 = Not very strongly  
                      5 = Not at all strongly                  |
| When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?: ONLINE NETWORKS | Q12e     | 1 = Very Strongly  
                      2 = Somewhat strongly  
                      3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly  
                      4 = Not very strongly  
                      5 = Not at all strongly                  |
| When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?: MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA | Q12f     | 1 = Very Strongly  
                      2 = Somewhat strongly  
                      3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly  
                      4 = Not very strongly  
                      5 = Not at all strongly                  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALTERNATIVE NEWS MEDIA</td>
<td>Q12g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLITICAL OFFICIALS</td>
<td>Q12h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMBERS OF FAITH ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>Q12i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS</td>
<td>Q12j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>Q12k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?:

**When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?:**

**ALTERNATIVE NEWS MEDIA**

1 = Very Strongly
2 = Somewhat strongly
3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly
4 = Not very strongly
5 = Not at all strongly

**When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?:**

**POLITICAL OFFICIALS**

1 = Very Strongly
2 = Somewhat strongly
3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly
4 = Not very strongly
5 = Not at all strongly

**When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?:**

**MEMBERS OF FAITH ORGANIZATION**

1 = Very Strongly
2 = Somewhat strongly
3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly
4 = Not very strongly
5 = Not at all strongly

**When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?:**

**CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS**

1 = Very Strongly
2 = Somewhat strongly
3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly
4 = Not very strongly
5 = Not at all strongly

**When looking to get involved in civic life, how strongly do each of the following groups influence you?:**

**OTHER**

1 = Very Strongly
2 = Somewhat strongly
3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly
4 = Not very strongly
5 = Not at all strongly

Other variables used to identify the use of social networks to gather and distribute information, are the in the form of dichotomous questions found below in Chart 1.3. To provide further context and qualitative evidence, an open-ended follow-up question was offered in the form of Question 9a, “If not, why not? Are there
instances that make you more likely than others to send messages to members of your network?"

Chart 1.3: Variables and Values used for measurement of News Distribution Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you actively receive messages about politics, your community,</td>
<td>Q 8</td>
<td>1 = No, not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or issues that affect your life from someone in your social network?</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Yes, less than once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Messages can be email, forwarded articles, videos, or other media)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Yes, Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Yes, several times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Yes, daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Yes, multiple times a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you actively send messages about politics, your community, or issues</td>
<td>Q 9</td>
<td>1 = No, not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that affect your life from someone in your social network? (Messages</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Yes, less than once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be email, forwarded articles, videos, or other media)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Yes, Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Yes, several times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Yes, daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Yes, multiple times a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If not, why not? Are the instances that make you more likely than others</td>
<td>Q9a</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to send messages to members of your network?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were also asked to identify in order the three groups or people they felt they influenced most. Chart 1.4 includes all variables used to aggregate this
ordinal level data. This type of question clearly indicates the groups that actively engaged young people feel they can reach out to and potentially draw into civic and political action.

Chart 1.4: Variables and Values used to measure Respondent Ranking of who they hold influence over:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: FAMILY</td>
<td>Q13a</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: FRIENDS</td>
<td>Q13b</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: CO-WORKERS</td>
<td>Q13c</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: MENTORS</td>
<td>Q13d</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: ONLINE NETWORKS</td>
<td>Q13e</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA</td>
<td>Q13f</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: ALTERNATIVE NEWS MEDIA</td>
<td>Q13g</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: POLITICAL OFFICIALS</td>
<td>Q13h</td>
<td>1 = First 2 = Second 3 = Third</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices:

MEMBERS OF FAITH COMMUNITY

Q13i

1 = First
2 = Second
3 = Third

Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices:

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS/MOVEMENTS

Q13j

1 = First
2 = Second
3 = Third

Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices: OTHER

Q13k

1 = First
2 = Second
3 = Third

Demographics & Information Gathering/Distribution Behavior

Although the primary focus of the study is the use of social networks by young people active in civic and political life, the next chapter creates a basic profile of their demographic profile, their preferred information gathering and information distribution methods, and the forms of participation in which they choose to engage.

Demographic data of survey respondents were obtained through a series of questions provided at the end of the survey. Chart 1.5 includes all variables used to gather descriptive data.

Chart 1.5: Variables & Values used for Demographic Measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex: Are you:</td>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>1 = Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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On a basic level, this study also focused on newsgathering and information distribution methods of young people active in political or social causes. A list of indicators of news gathering and information distribution behavior can be found in Chart 1.6 and Chart 1.7 below.

**Chart 1.6: Variables and Values used for measurement of Newsgathering preferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your age?</td>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>1 = 18-24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = 25-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = 30-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = 35-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = 40+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your race/ethnicity?</td>
<td>RACE</td>
<td>1 = African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Asian-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Hispanic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the highest level of education you</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>1 = High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have attained thus far?</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Some College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Master’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = JD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Affiliation: Do you consider yourself</td>
<td>PARTY</td>
<td>1 = Democrat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to be:</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Republican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Independent/Other/Non-partisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology: Do you consider yourself to be:</td>
<td>IDEOLOGY</td>
<td>1 = Very Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Somewhat Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Moderate/Middle of the Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Somewhat Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 = Very Conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: National Newspapers (print)</td>
<td>Q31a</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Local Newspaper (print)</td>
<td>Q31b</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Local TV News</td>
<td>Q31c</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Network TV News</td>
<td>Q31d</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Cable TV News</td>
<td>Q31e</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Magazines (print)</td>
<td>Q31f</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Websites of major news outlets (newspaper, cable, news sites, magazine sites, etc)</td>
<td>Q31g</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Independent Websites &amp; Blogs</td>
<td>Q31h</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Nationally syndicated talk/news radio</td>
<td>Q31i</td>
<td>1= Not at all 2 = Very little 3 = Some 4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Local talk/news radio</td>
<td>Q31j</td>
<td>1 = Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Podcasts</td>
<td>Q31k</td>
<td>1 = Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How frequently do you use: Other</td>
<td>Q31l</td>
<td>1 = Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you actively receive messages about politics, your community, or issues that affect your life from someone in your social network? (Messages can be email, forwarded articles, videos, or other media that someone in your networks has actively sent you)</td>
<td>Q8</td>
<td>0 = No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chart 1.7: Variables and Values used for measurement of News Distribution Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you actively send messages about politics, your community, or issues that affect your life from someone in your social network? (Messages can be email, forwarded articles, videos, or other media)</td>
<td>Q 9</td>
<td>1 = No, not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 = Yes, less than once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 = Yes, Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 = Yes, several times a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 = Yes, daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 = Yes, multiple times a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If not, why not? Are the instances that make you more likely than others to send messages to members of your network?</td>
<td>Q9a</td>
<td>Open-ended</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Participation**

Another goal of this study is to determine the types of ways young people who are already involved in civic and political life, participate to support the causes and campaigns they believe in. Variables used to measure this concept are included in Chart 1.8, Chart 1.9, and Chart 1.10. These indicators reveal the nature of participation methods young active individuals partake in. The next chapter explains more fully the three types of engagement categories measured in this study.

Chart 1.8: CIVIC Indicators: How do you personally express support for causes you believe in? Please mark all that apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise Funds</td>
<td>Q14a</td>
<td>0 = No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in bikes/runs/walks for a particular cause or organization</td>
<td>Q14c</td>
<td>0 = No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 1.9: ELECTORAL Indicators: How do you personally express support for causes you believe in? Please mark all that apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display buttons/bumper stickers</td>
<td>Q14g</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear t-shirts</td>
<td>Q14hi</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate Money</td>
<td>Q14i</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1.10: POLITICAL VOICE Indicators: How do you personally express support for causes you believe in? Please mark all that apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in blog, listserv, or online discussion board</td>
<td>Q14b</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Political Official</td>
<td>Q14e</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Media Official</td>
<td>Q14f</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend protest events</td>
<td>Q14j</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign petitions</td>
<td>Q14k</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycott</td>
<td>Q14l</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buycott (buy a product or service because you like the social or political values of the company or producer that provides it)</td>
<td>Q14m</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvass</td>
<td>Q14n</td>
<td>0 = No, 1 = Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operations
Several statistical analysis tests provided the quantitative results that support or reject the hypotheses presented in this study. To run these analyses, data were first collected in the Surveymonkey application in the form of an Excel sheet. Paper/pencil surveys were manually entered through the “Manually Insert” option provided by Surveymonkey. The Excel sheet was downloaded and then converted into the SPSS data application used for statistical analysis.

Measuring Demographics, Media Use, and Participation Methods

A simple process of running frequencies provided the descriptive information to create a profile of the sample studied. Frequency and percentage distributions of responses were run to create frequency tables for analysis.

Measuring Strength of Network Ties on General and Civic Life

When analyzing the variables associated with social networks, the first step was to run frequency tables. Using the “mean score” function in SPSS the author was able to obtain the mean scores for all variables. The mean score provided the author with the measure of central tendency, providing the most typical value for the strength of influence the networks held over the sample group. This analysis provided the basic measurement of influence of each network had in both general life and civic life.
Then, to assess the statistical significance of differences in mean values between general life and civic life variables of the same sample group, a paired t-test was conducted. Through this form of analysis the author was able to measure if the respondents mean score for family influence in general life (10a) was statistically significant from the respondent’s mean score of family influence in civic life (12a). A paired t-test was used between all paired variables 10a-10k and 12a-12k.
Chapter IV: America’s Sweethearts – Profiles of Young Mobilized Americans Engaged in Civic and Political Life

Studies of participation in America focus on three questions: Who participates? How do they participate? Why do they participate? The data presented in this chapter descriptively reveal who young engaged citizens are and how they are participating in civic and political life in the US. Examining their civic behavior and motivational patterns for engaging in political and civic processes, reveals information useful to organizations and campaigns seeking to use them as bridging nodes to the broader population of less mobilized youth. This study focuses on young people who are actively participating in political and civic life and seeks to understand their demographic background, their methods of participation, and their motivations to get involved.

This chapter builds upon previous studies of larger populations, providing a profile of the young mobilized Americans, by identifying their basic demographic information, compiling information about their information gathering and distribution behavior, and revealing their preferred methods of participation. In-depth interviews and open-ended survey questions provide qualitative evidence explaining their motivations behind participating. Survey items and variable transformations appear in the Methodological Appendix.
Measurements of Demographic Profile

Demographics were measured with the following variables; SEX, AGE, RACE, RELIGION, EDUCATION, PARTY, and IDEOLOGY (see Chart 1.5). The individuals targeted for this study were chosen for their active involvement and leadership roles in a political or civic organization, therefore we classify them as mobilized and engaged citizens. Table 2.1 is a breakdown of demographic data of the sample used in this study. It indicates the variables and the categories in each variable, and it highlights those categories with the highest percentage of valid responses (n = 323).

Table 2.1: Demographics of Sample Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category (%) valid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>(38.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24:</td>
<td>(52.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29:</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34:</td>
<td>(6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-40:</td>
<td>(2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+:</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>(3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian-American/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>(14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>(41.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnostic</td>
<td>(16.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>(15.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The survey had 400 original respondents, of which 323 completed the study in its entirety, (80% response rate). Demographic information, asked at the end of survey, provides a limited but interesting profile of young people who are active in political
and civic organizations. This study focused on a very specific group of young individuals, and these findings are not meant to be translated to the general youth population. The individual in this study are highly active participants belonging to specific organizations (ADI, Young Democrats/Republicans, College Democrats/Republicans, and Truman Foundation Scholars) in which they take on leadership roles. Their characteristics may not be typical of all youth who are participating in civic and political life through other means. Great care should be taken in avoiding translating these findings to broader populations.

A full 86% of participants fell into the age range of 18-29, with about 14% aged 30 and above. Behavioral patterns between those in this age cohort and those older have been widely accepted as different so it is important to treat the two groups as distinct from one another. Many critics claim 18-24 year olds are not participating or engaging in civic processes in the ways older generations have (Iyengar and Jackman 2004). However, this study does not support those postulations in their entirety. Our findings show that young people do get involved in not only traditional forms of participation, but also in a few newer forms that had not been included before. More discussion of this can be found in the participation analysis of this chapter.

A large percentage (62.7%) of the participants self-identified as Democrats and a majority (72.9%) identified their ideology as “very Progressive”, “somewhat
Progressive”, or “Progressive”. Progressive ideologies are difficult to define, however using a dictionary reference one can say, it is an ideology “favoring or advocating progress, change, improvement, or reform, as opposed to wishing to maintain things as they are, esp. in political matters” (dictionary.com). Generally, progressive notions are paired with liberal ideologies. However, the author did receive several emails from respondents who were concerned that the scale for IDEOLOGY assumed that Conservatives could not be Progressive. This is an important note to make, since “Progressive” ideology does not necessarily limit itself to liberal or Democrat viewpoints and can be considered a weakness of the measurement scale. The significant difference in the number of Democrats and Republicans may also be attributed to the presence of Bill Clinton at the ADI Summit held in Southern California in 2007.

Race

Survey results show a majority (51.4%) of the sample that indicated their race/ethnicity are Caucasian. Asian-American Pacific Islanders constituted about 18% of the group, while Latinos accounted for about 17% of the sample. It is particularly interesting that Latino youth constituted nearly 1/5th of the sample of young leaders in political and civic life.
Earlier studies (Davila and Mora 2007), have found that this group is generally not as involved in civic life as most other minority groups, but these results show they are an active population participating in civic and political life in the U.S., and taking on leadership roles. Davila and Mora (2007) also found Latino youth tended to favor protest activities and are less likely to vote, attributing it to the likelihood that they were not able to participate due to their legal status (pg 7). However, a recent study released by the Pew Hispanic Center (Minushkin et al. 2008) found that “more than one-in-five Hispanic voters on Super Tuesday were ages 17 to 29”, (Ibid., 4) indicating there maybe a shift in the voting habits of young Latinos.

The Latino population has doubled its size in the U.S. over the span of the last twenty years and based on Census Bureau predictions, Latino youth will constitute almost 29% of the population by 2050. Their participation in electoral and civic activities will be critical if they want representation. Their affiliation with ADI, Truman Scholars, or belonging to one of the political organizations targeted in this study indicates they are taking more leadership positions and may be participating in more ways. The findings in this study, paired with those of the Pew Hispanic Center, should be conservatively be considered encouraging, showing that minority youth are finding their voice in political and civic arenas and participating in electoral processes. The scope of this project is limited, but an extension of the study that includes a breakdown
of participation activity by race/ethnicity could further illuminate the ways leaders in minority populations are taking action in democracy.

Another interesting finding based on descriptive frequencies alone is the small number of African-American respondents. Only 4.3% of respondents identified themselves as African-American, the lowest represented race in the study. Other studies (Lopez et al 2006) have identified African-American youth as a highly empowered group that is engaged in political processes. However, according to this analysis, it seems that African-American youth are not serving in leadership roles in some of the country’s most organized and well-established political and civic organizations.

Education

Many studies have evaluated the relationship between education and political participation. Mora and Davila (2007) found teenagers who are civically engaged are more likely than their peers to graduate from college. Looking at the relationship from a different angle, Verba and Nie conducted a study (1972) in which they found participating citizens have higher education than those who do not participate (129). Socio-economic status and civic participation have demonstrated a positive
relationship (Verba et al. 1978), as education levels and economic status increase so do the levels of participation.

By using the variable EDUCATION, we are able to support this finding, observing that a majority of participants (51.1%) indicated the “Highest level of education received” was “College” (3), “Master’s Degree” (4) “JD” (5) or “Doctorate” (6). An additional 25.3% had indicated “Some College” which maybe because the sample’s average age fell between the years 18-29, which is generally the age category during which Americans attend college.

As Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996) found in their study of the political knowledge of Americans, formal education provides basic knowledge of issues and causes, information about how an individual can participate, and importantly, provides access to opportunities to participate (110). This study, focusing on young leaders who are actively participating in American democracy, shows involved citizens are obtaining degrees of higher learning that expose them to the knowledge and opportunities to act in civic and political life. Evidence presented in this analysis serves to support previous studies indicating active participating individuals are also receiving higher education.
Measurements of News Gathering

Survey respondents were asked to identify the extent to which they used specified forms of information resources (e.g., news websites, cable news, print newspaper. Please see Chart 1.6 for full list of sources). A Likert scale of options offered respondents four choices of response ranging from “a lot” to “not at all”. They were also able to fill in an open-ended “Other” category to include any other forms they used that were not listed.

The survey respondents also provided information about their newsgathering behavior in connection with their social networks. Respondents were asked if they “received messages about politics, your community, or issues that affect your life, from someone in your social network? (‘Messages can be email, forwarded articles, videos, or other media that someone in your social network has actively sent you’).”

Information Gathering Findings

Technological changes have fast changed the way we communicate in the world today. Information we receive or send out is literally at our fingertips to gather or distribute at any moment. How young people obtain their information is an important component for understanding their participation in political and civic life. At the core of democracy is the informed citizen who can engage in democratic institutions, empowered with knowledge to initiate the change and shape the policies
that affect their life. Descriptive data presented in this study are useful for political and civic organizations who are interested in recruiting young mobilized leaders to their cause. These findings show what forms of communication a mobilized young American prefers to receive their messages through. Therefore, an organization can create a campaign that integrates forms of media from which they know this cohort of actively engaged young people gather their information.

Table 2.2 below provides a descriptive analysis of preferred sources of information from which young active citizens prefer to obtain their information (N=374). Listed variables include those with the highest percentage of participants answering “some” or “a lot” as compared to “very little” and “not at all”.

Table 2.2: Preferred sources of Information of Young people actively engaged in political and civic life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Total % “A lot” + “Some”</th>
<th>% “A lot”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online News outlets of major newspapers, cable news, magazines, etc</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines (print)</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local TV news</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Websites/Blogs</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable TV News</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network TV News</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 374
Table 2.3: Percent who read blogs to gather information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56.3% (210)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43.7% (163)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 373

Table 2.4: How often blog readers read blogs in a week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you read blogs?</th>
<th>Valid % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than weekly</td>
<td>19.5% (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>17.1% (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a week</td>
<td>28.1% (59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>38 (18.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several times a day</td>
<td>36 (17.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 210

Data suggest that online forms of news media are the preferred source of information used by this group of young mobilized citizens. All three forms of television news (local, 59.4%; network, 54%; and cable, 56%) were highly rated supporting other studies (Pew 2004) that indicate television news is still a major source of information for most Americans.

Print editions of magazines (68.7%) and local and national newspapers also fared relatively high in use by young engaged citizens with local print newspapers (50.4%) rating just slightly higher than national print newspapers (49.5%). This analysis supports the hypothesis that traditional forms of media still have a presence in
the lives of young engaged citizens, although it seems their internet counterparts have a strong pull on the audience as well. A study released by CIRCLE in 2004 shows there is a difference between the information gathering behavior between engaged youth and disengaged youth. They found engaged older youth are more likely to turn to traditional new sources such as newspaper and television, than disengaged youth who are more likely to rely on friends and family members for political decision-making. The findings in this study support those findings.

It is also necessary to highlight the difference of preference young mobilized citizens have between blogs and podcasts, two forms of new media. Fifty-six percent of respondents answered that they read blogs, and 35% of those who indicated they read them, said they do so “daily” or “multiple times a day” (see Table 2.3 and Table 2.4). Interestingly, podcasts, a newer form of media that organizations such as ADI are trying to use, have the lowest rating level, with nearly 84% of respondents reporting that they use it “very little” or “not at all”. A very small portion (6.1%) of the respondents indicated they listen to podcasts “a lot”. This information can prove critical as campaigns and organizations look at the costs of providing new media forms of information and compare it to the number of targeted audience members who consume it.
Based on the results of this survey it seems organizations and campaigns that want to increase their outreach to young citizens to get involved with their issues or causes should implement a multi-media strategy that focus on both traditional forms (newspapers and television) and online sources (mainstream and independent websites/blogs). Audio forms of media – podcasts and radio (14.2%) – are preferred less by this particular cohort and may not be as useful in helping organizations and campaigns in targeting this group.

*Measurements of News Distribution*

Several variables were used to measure news distribution behavior (see Chart 1.7). Blogs are sources through which information can be distributed – no matter the content (political, personal, social, etc) and are thus an important measure of information distribution activity. If respondents indicated that they did maintain a blog, they were directed to another question that asked them to indicate how often they posted to the blog. This measured the extent to which they were actively distributing information of any kind to their social networks.

Variable Q9 asked respondents, “Do you actively send messages about politics, your community, or issues that affect your life to members of your social network?” As a follow up to this question, Variable Q9a allowed users to answer an open-answered
question “If not, why not? Are there instances that make you more likely than others to send messages to members of your network?” Variable Q9a gathers qualitative and contextual evidence to support findings related to the reasons young engaged people do or do not want to distribute messages of political/social consequences to their social networks.

_News Distribution_

If young people who are engaged in political and civic activities act as bridging nodes to less active counterparts, knowing the methods through which they distribute information they have can be useful to those interested in increasing citizen participation in political and civic life. Descriptive data show they are willing to distribute messages to some degree, but are discriminating about the types of messages they distribute and how often they distribute them.

Table 2.5: Do you actively send messages about politics, your community, or issues that affect you to members of your social network?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>% Valid (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71.6 % (265)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28.4 % (105)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=370

Although most participants indicated they do send messages pertaining to political, community, and social causes (71.6%), almost half of that group answered
they do so once a week or less (47.8%). Table 2.6 represents how often they forwarded such messages on to their social networks.

Table 2.6: Do you actively send messages about politics, your community, or issues that affect you to members of your social network?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>% Valid (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, not at all</td>
<td>28.4% (105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, less than once a week</td>
<td>37.3% (138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, once a week</td>
<td>10.5% (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, several times a day</td>
<td>11.9% (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, daily</td>
<td>5.7% (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, multiple times a day</td>
<td>6.2% (23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 370

A follow-up open-ended question to this variable asked respondents to explain the reasons they are or are not willing to pass along these types of messages. Answers indicate that although they are willing to receive emails related to political or social causes, they are hesitant to pass them along to their social networks for a myriad of reasons. These reasons include not wanting to bother their friends, the belief that if someone is interested in the topic, they will already have the information, and if they want to draw others into their cause, they prefer it to be personalized in nature, such as through a face-to-face conversation or a personal email.

One survey respondent answered, “I do not mind receiving political/policy based emails but I prefer not to email them to others. I forward articles or links to blog sites if I know that they have an interest in the subject about which the article talks. If
not, I just keep the information to myself and bring it up in conversation…”

Respondents often echoed this reaction, indicating they do not want to bombard others with messages about politics, to avoid “pushing my politics on others”.

Participants in this study mentioned that the networks they are tapped into are already filled with individuals who are engaged in political and social affairs, and that they probably had information already. Respondents from the in-depth interviews also indicated similar reason for not wanting to forward along messages to their networks. One interviewee said, “I feel that if they are interested in the cause they are likely already on the listserv. I can always bring it up in face to face contact, but I don’t want to overwhelm them with a bunch of forwarded emails from causes and campaigns.” Another interview participant said she does not “like when campaigns ask me to pass along their messages to friends. There are plenty of great causes out there and if I am interested, I get involved. I think my friends and networks are likely do the same thing.” The same respondent later included, “Plus, if there is something I am actually really involved with, then I will send out a personal email explaining to my friends and family why it matters to me to get involved. I don’t want them to feel like I do that about absolutely every cause that comes along.”

Young people who participate in political and social causes are actively receiving messages from political and social organizations willingly for the most part.
Many organizations, civic and political, use email campaigns to extend their outreach by providing these bridging nodes messages to forward on to their friends. It seems that this may not be the most effective way since these individuals are not likely to pass them along to their networks. These mobilized young leaders prefer to incorporate messages about the causes and issues they support in a way that connects them personally to their networks – often through face-to-face contact or personalized messages. In the next chapter, we will elaborate further upon this point.

Young citizens engaged in political and civic life are inclined to participate but are not as enthusiastic about reaching out to their friends to do so. Overall they are discriminating in the messages they do choose to pass along, wanting to avoid being “annoying” and “exploiting” their networks.

**Core Indicators of Participation/ Engagement**

Charts 1.8 – 1.10 describe all the variables used to measure participation activities of young people actively engaged in political and/or social causes. These variables come from a set of “19 Core Indicators of Engagement” used in a CIRCLE study, “The Civic and Political Health of the Nation” (2002).

The variables were used to indicate one of three types of participation, clustered together based on similarity of behaviors: Civic indicators (see Chart 1.8), Electoral
Indicators (See Chart 1.9), and Indicators of Political Voice (see Chart 1.10). Civic indicators are those activities in which the participant participates in his/her community. Electoral indicators are those that directly relate to the political institutions of engagement such as campaigns and elections. Indicators of Political voice include activities in which the participant reveals their political or social viewpoints (CIRCLE 2002, 10).

Variables Q14b, Q18c, Q18d, and Q18e were not included in CIRCLE’s survey. They author included them to allow some newer forms of participation to be offered in the survey options. The author self-defined variable 14b as an indicator of political voice, based upon its similar qualities to other variables grouped in that cluster. Variables Q18c, Q18d, and Q18e cluster with electoral indicators since they are specific to active participation in the 2008 general election.

Political Participation Findings

Political and civic participation amongst young American’s has been an interesting topic of study for decades for academics, politicians, journalists, and civic organizations amongst others. Active participation of citizens is fundamental for democracy and mobilization of constituents has long been an area of scholarly debate. The scope of this broad area of study ranges from examinations of the generational and
socioeconomic status effects in participatory behavior, to observing the ways traditional and new forms of participation have increased or decreased mobilization over time (Beck and Jennings 1979; Keeter et. al 2002, Matsubayashi 2004; Weber 2000).

The trends and patterns of young citizen’s participation in democracy have garnered special attention as well. Fueling the recent climb in interest of this cohort are the Generation Xers (those born between 1965-1978) whose low general election voter turnout rates, low party affiliation, and general political apathy alarmed many in the social and political science fields (Bennet and Craig 1997). However, many attribute this to the fact that those born between those years had not experienced many life altering world events. In a post-9/11 world, in the midst of a War on Terrorism, and the hotly debated war in Iraq, it seems many young people (now called Generation Yers, or Millennials) have felt the calling to mobilize and are getting involved with social and political causes again.
Participation Behavior

The findings of this study show that there are certain types of participation that are more highly favored by this population of young people engaged in political and civic processes. Table 2.7, Table 2.8, and Table 2.9 illustrate the types of participation activities respondents indicated having used to support causes they believe in. They are categorized into the specific type of participation each method represents (Civic, Electoral, and Political Voice).

Table 2.7: CIVIC Indicator Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% Valid YES (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raise Funds</td>
<td>43.8% (175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in bikes/walks/runs for a particular cause or organization</td>
<td>41% (164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>71.5% (286)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 400

Table 2.8: ELECTORAL Indicator Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% Valid YES (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display Buttons/Bumper Sticker</td>
<td>41% (164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wear T-shirts</td>
<td>45.5% (182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate Money</td>
<td>56.8% (227)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 400
Table 2.9: POLITICAL VOICE Indicator Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>% Valid YES (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participate in blog/listserv/online discussion board</td>
<td>26.2% (105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Political Officials</td>
<td>41% (164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Media</td>
<td>20% (80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Protest Events</td>
<td>39.5% (158)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign Petitions</td>
<td>60.8% (243)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycott</td>
<td>30% (120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buycott</td>
<td>38% (152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvass</td>
<td>19.2% (77)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 400

Participants were asked in two open-ended questions (q16 and q16a) why they chose or did not choose the forms of participations listed in Table 2.7-2.9. When responding to why they chose some forms, several themes emerged from their responses. Factors influencing their choices including the need to feel they were being effective in their action, the amount of time or money the method demanded, and the want to see measurable impact of their participation.

Volunteering (71.5%) was the most popular form of participation used by this group of mobilized youth used. However, it seems that engaged individuals are torn between how much time and money they can afford to give to a cause. These factors might lead them to choose different forms of participation. “Signing petitions” (60%), which is an activity that requires the least amount of time investment, came in second
while “donating money” had the third highest rate of “yes” responses (57%) out of all the possible activities. Many young people who are active in political and civic organizations seem to believe money is critical for the success of campaigns and causes. One individual wrote, “Unfortunately, I don’t have a lot of time, so giving money and signing petitions and the like give me a way to get involved without a lot of commitment”. Another wrote, “…I believe that donating my money, time, skills, and talent are crucial to effecting [sic] the change I want to see”.

On the other hand, these young people are dealing with the financial costs of being students or are new to the workforce and do not have the ability to give money. “I rarely give money to organizations, because as a full-time college student I don’t have much to spare. Instead I give my time in volunteer efforts or protest activities,” writes one respondent, illustrating the financial instability that pushes some of them towards different forms of participation.

Boycotting (30%) and buycotting (38%) are fairly popular forms of political voice activity called consumer activism. These activities allowed them to use their monetary influence to show support for causes or campaigns. “I think RED is a great program,” writes one individual, “…it makes sense to help in ways that are so easy.” Another participant had a similar response, “…boycotts and buycotts are things I can do on a regular basis to further causes and goals I believe in.” This study reveals
participants felt money related participation was the least time-consuming and most effective way of supporting causes they believe in. In general, this study finds that effectiveness, measurable impact, and the amount of time or money necessary to participate, governed survey respondents choices of participation methods.

Figure 4.1: Percentage of respondents who indicated “Yes” to specified participation methods
This study produced many interesting participation behaviors of young people mobilized in civic and political life. The three most popular forms of participation belong in each of the indicator categories. Civic participation had the most popular form of participation (volunteering), political voice indicators produced the second (signing petitions), and electoral indicators had the third (donating money).

Participation in civic action, ways individuals participate in their communities or contribute to causes, generated relatively high rates of use.

Not surprisingly, volunteering is the most popular form of participation in which a large majority (71.5%) of this group engages. The increasing trend of high volunteer rates amongst American youth has been chronicled over the past decade (Verba et al. 1995, (80); Lopez et al. 2006), and descriptive results of this study indicate volunteering is a form of participation young people are still very active in.

Forms of electoral participation had high response rates and demand the least amount of time and effort. Those activities that have the lowest response rates coincide with those that require the most amount of effort and time. For example, only 19% responded that they get involved using canvassing, which requires a large amount of time from the individual and generally requires background knowledge in the cause or campaign for which they are canvassing. Respondents who explained why they did not contact media cited they felt it was a lot of effort without any results. To illustrate this
concern, one respondent says, “I really dislike blogs, and media … there is too little to benefit from the energy put in. I don’t believe that form is very effective.”

Several respondents also indicated the want for face-to-face or more personal means of participation. “I tend to favor more personal methods of communication”, was the comment of one participant who explained why they did not choose to participate in blogs, listservs, or online discussion boards. Interpersonal connections are an important part of political and civic participation for this group of mobilized young leaders. The next chapter examines more closely how they choose to engage and involve others to support their causes.

**Summary of Chapter Findings**

In summary, descriptive data of America’s Sweethearts reveals a portrait of youth who come from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, are well educated, and tend to have progressive leanings. They rely on traditional and new forms of media to obtain their information, but are hesitant about distributing information about the causes they support to their networks. This group of young people engages in civic and electoral participation activities, as well as in activities that allow them to voice their political or social standings. They are motivated to participate in activities that allow them to use their time and money in ways that are effective and exhibit measurable
impact. They are concerned about overwhelming their peers with information about social or political causes, and are discerning in the information they pass along to their networks.

Now that we have a profile of a mobilized young person, and what their motivations and behaviors to participate in democratic processes are, we can examine their use of social networks to support their goals. The next chapter is devoted to defining the social networks that influence young people participating in civic and political organizations, and the networks that they feel they influence most. We then examine the means through which they reach out to those networks to draw others into civic and political activities.
Chapter V: Paths to Participation - Young Mobilized Americans
Use of Social Networks

American democracy thrives upon the active and engaged citizens who participate in its political and civic processes. The future of America’s democracy lies in its younger generations who must rise above apathetic disinterest and contribute to their communities and government. Young citizens who are engaged in democratic processes are crucial bridging nodes that can help increase the level of participation amongst others in their networks who are not participating. This chapter analyzes the ways mobilized young people are able to use their networks to engage and engage others in civic and political life.

Using statistical analyses, several hypotheses related to the strength of influence of strong-tie networks and weak-tie networks reveal the networks young mobilized citizens turn to for guidance in both general life and civic life. Strong-tie networks are those with which the individual has a high level of communication and interaction such as family, friends, co-workers, faith community, and mentors. A weak-tie network consists of impersonal relationships that typically require low interaction and communication such as online networks, civic organizations/movements, alternative media, mainstream media, and political officials.

A number of key findings emerged from the analysis. The respondents indicate that they do not turn to the same networks for these two different aspects of life.
Respondents also ranked the three groups they feel they hold the most influence over. Some of the groups that young mobilized leaders feel they hold influence over are not the same groups that hold influence over them. Mobilized young people who are participating in democracy willingly serve as bridging nodes to groups that are less involved by providing them with the information and opportunities to participate. However, they are discriminating in how they approach their networks. In-depth interviews reveal this group of participating young Americans are hesitant to “overwhelm” their networks, and only reach out when they feel passionate or personally connected to a cause.

Mobilized young people who are participating in democracy can serve as bridging nodes to groups that are less involved by providing them with the information and opportunities to participate. Civic and political organizations, institutions that are critical components to democracy, can utilize these bridging nodes to expand their outreach to individuals in other networks that may be less accessible. The premise of this argument lies in the assumption that interactions and conversations between nodes (individuals) within their social networks expose them to knowledge and opportunities to engage in political and social causes (Knoke 1995).

Critical points of evaluation in conducting this study are the strength of influence different networks and what type of tie those network relationships are
composed of (strong or weak). We must also consider the willingness of mobilized young people to reach out to their networks, and identify any barriers that inhibit their participation or ability to draw others into civic and political action.

Hypotheses

The following is a list of hypotheses tested in this analysis. The following sections will address each one individually and discuss the findings. A final summary of findings and their implications conclude the chapter.

**H1**: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will feel more strongly influenced by their strong-tie networks in *general* life than their weak-tie networks.

**H2**: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will feel more strongly influenced by their strong-tie networks in *civic* life, than by their weak-tie networks.

**H3**: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will rank their strong-tie networks as groups they have influence over, higher than their weak-tie networks.

**H4**: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life are discriminating in their outreach to their social networks about the causes that they support.
Social Network Influence over Young Mobilized Citizens

Analysis of Network Influence in General Life and Civic Life

To test H1, we first ran a simple frequency table including mean scores on variables 10a-10k, which provided respondent’s measurements of the level of influence each network exerted in their general life. We used the same analysis to test H2, using variables 12a-12k, which provided respondent measurements of the level of influence each network exerted in their civic life. In this study, the scale of strength ran from 1 = “very strongly” to 5 = “not at all strongly”.

Table 3.1 below provides the percentage of respondents who indicated “very strongly” (1) for each network’s influence over them in general life and in civic life. Weak-tie networks are indicated with gray shading in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2. This chart demonstrates the high level of influence family networks exert in both the general and civic lives of mobilized young leaders. However, their influence is considerably less in civic life than in general life. In general, we find that most networks experienced higher levels of influence in the general life of young mobilized leaders than in their civic life. The major exceptions to this case are mainstream media, alternative media, and civic organizations/movements. They all demonstrated higher values in the civic life “very strongly” category, than they did in general life.
Table 3.1: Percentage and n of respondents who said networks influence them “Very Strongly” in General Life and in Civic Life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>% Strongly General Life (n)</th>
<th>% Strongly Civic Life (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>64.5 (222)</td>
<td>41.9 (144)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>47.5 (163)</td>
<td>5.5 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Community</td>
<td>35.5 (122)</td>
<td>37 (128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Networks</td>
<td>20.9 (72)</td>
<td>20.1 (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Orgs/Movements</td>
<td>12.8 (44)</td>
<td>15.1 (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Media</td>
<td>13.7 (47)</td>
<td>20.9 (72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Media</td>
<td>13.7 (47)</td>
<td>24.1 (83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Officials</td>
<td>12.2 (42)</td>
<td>10.2 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Workers</td>
<td>10.2 (35)</td>
<td>16 (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>6.1 (21)</td>
<td>11.6 (40)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total N = 344
Gray Shading = Weak-tie Networks

Mean scores for scales of each network show the networks of influence in the general lives of young mobilized leaders include both strong-tie networks of family, friends, and faith community as well as some weak-tie networks such as, online networks and civic organizations/movements.
**Paired sample t-tests**

To demonstrate if there is a significant difference in the way young people felt influenced by the ten networks in general life compared to civic life, paired-sample t-tests were conducted for each pair. Results show that of the ten networks, the mean scores of eight differed significantly between their values in general life and in civic life. Table 3.2 demonstrates the mean scores and the significance levels of the difference between mean scores. It is important to remember low scores indicate the strongest influence and conversely, higher mean scores indicate weaker strength of influence.

The relative levels of influence that the ten networks had in the lives of young people actively involved in civic and political life were somewhat lesser in strength than their influence in general life. None of the networks had a mean score that fell in the “very strongly” range in civic life. The mean score of family networks (2.11) and faith networks (2.46) showed the strongest level of influence in civic life. Family networks prove to be the most influential networks that mobilized young people turn to in both general and civic life.
Findings of paired sample t-tests in strong-tie networks

Strong-tie networks are characterized as those with high contact frequency and high levels of investment and time. Those networks with the strongest influence in general life are family (mean score 1.51), and friends (1.65), which fall between the categories “very strongly”, and “somewhat strongly”. Faith communities (2.37) were generally rated closer to the “somewhat strongly” category, than both online networks (2.57) and civic organizations/movements (2.62) which lean slightly more towards the “neither strongly, nor not strongly” category. The results of a paired sample t-test indicate the difference in mean scores is statistically significant at the .00 level for family network influence in general life and family influence in civic life. In both aspects of life, family networks held the strongest influence in the lives of young citizens participating in civic and political life. A paired sample t-test reveals the influence of friend networks in general life is significantly different, statistically, from the influence of friends in civic life at the .00 level. Although friends were highly influential in general life, they held the least amount of influence in civic life of young Americans participating in democracy.

The difference in levels of influence members of faith networks hold in the lives of young Americans active in political and civic life approaches statistical significance at the .08 level, when computing paired-sample t-tests of mean scores of
influence in their general and civic life. The strength of influence faith networks hold in the lives of civically and politically engaged young people is “somewhat strong”.

A paired sample t-test shows that there is no statistical significance between the mean scores of co-worker networks levels of influence in the general and civic lives of young Americans engaged in civic and political life (p = .918). Respondents indicated in both spheres that co-workers did not hold any influence. Statistical significance at the .003 level was revealed when comparing the means in a paired sample t-test of the influence of mentors in the general life versus the civic life of young citizens engaged in civic and political life. Generally, mentors were not very influential in either sphere for participants in the survey.

*Findings of paired sample t-tests in weak-tie networks*

Mean scores for all five weak-tie networks fell between the “somewhat strongly”, “neither strongly nor not strongly”, and “not very strongly” levels of influence in the general lives of young mobilized leaders. Weak-tie networks are those defined as impersonal ties with low-contact frequency. The relative strength of these networks indicates weak-tie networks do hold some degree of influence in the general lives of mobilized young leaders, although the level is lower than those of most strong-tie networks are. The three weak-tie networks that show influence in the civic life of engaged young leaders are online networks, alternative media, and mainstream media.
The difference of mean scores in the level of general and civic influence *online networks* hold for young Americans engaged in civic and political processes is revealed as statistically significant at the .00 level according to results of a paired sample t-test. Results show that online networks held slightly stronger influence in general life than in civic life. The use of online networks by mobilized young people should be studied more thoroughly based on the results, as results indicate they infer some influence in their daily and civic lives.

A paired sample t-test shows the difference in mean scores of the level of influence *civic organizations/movements* hold over the general life of young engaged citizens compared to their civic life, is statistically significant at the .00 level. Interestingly, they held more influence in general life more than civic life.

A paired sample t-test indicates the influence of *alternative media* has in the general life of young engaged citizens is statistically different at (p = .00) than the level of influence they hold in the civic life of young engaged citizens. *Alternative media networks* show a slightly higher level of influence in civic life than in general life. The difference in means score of the influence of *mainstream media networks* in the general life of young engaged citizens compared to their influence in the civic life of young engaged citizens is statistically significant at (p = .00). Their influence is civic life is shows to be mildly stronger in civic life than in general life.
Paired sample t-tests indicate statistical significance of the difference in means scores of political officials influence over young active Americans in general versus civic life at \( p = .00 \). Political officials held more influence in the general lives of these engaged citizens than in their civic life, but are generally not influential.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 are useful visual representations of the levels of influence each network holds in the lives of young mobilized leaders – the bridging nodes – based on their mean score. Figure 5.1 indicates the level of influence networks hold in their general life decisions, and Figure 5.2 indicates the level of influence they hold in their civic life decisions. The following section provides an interpretation of the figures.
Figure 5.1: Strength of Networks’ Influence in General Life of Young Mobilized Leaders

Legend:
- A = Family
- B = Friends
- C = Faith Community
- D = Online Networks
- E = Civic Orgs/Movements
- F = Alternative Media
- G = Mainstream Media
- H = Political Officials
- I = Co-workers
- J = Mentors

Rating Scale:
1 = Very Strongly
2 = Somewhat Strongly
3 = Neither strongly nor not strongly
4 = Not very strongly
5 = Not at all strongly

Lines indicate strength of influence:
- Thick line = Strong Influence
- Thin line = Weak Influence
Figure 5.2: Strength of Networks’ Influence in CIVIC Life of Young Mobilized Leaders
Table 3.2: Difference and Statistical Significance of Mean Scores of Network Influence in General and Civic life: (Scale: 1 = very strongly, 2 = somewhat strongly, 3 = neither strongly nor not strongly, 4 = not very strongly, 5 = not strongly at all)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network</th>
<th>Mean (General)</th>
<th>Mean (Civic)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Statistical Significance level of difference in mean scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>-.599</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>-2.480</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Community</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>-.090</td>
<td>.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Networks</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>-.189</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Orgs/Movements</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>-.858</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Media</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Media</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Officials</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>-.718</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total N = 344, p = <.05  Gray Shading = Weak-tie Networks
Tie-strength and Level of Influence Typology

To make data manageable the author has created a typology to further illustrate and provide discussion of the influential power these ten networks have in the general and civic lives of young mobilized leaders. In this typology, the ten networks fall into one of four categories based on their influence level in general life and civic life. The four categories are, “High General Influence/High Civic Influence”, “High General Influence/Low Civic Influence”, “Low General Influence/High Civic Influence”, and “Low General Influence/Low Civic Influence”. Networks are further categorized by their tie-strength (strong or weak). Table 3.3 below identifies which networks fall into each category. The results of this analysis will be discussed in relation to their typology. The level of influence was assessed by determining what percent of survey respondents rated the networks as “highly influential”. Those with percentages higher than 20% were classified as “highly influential”. The reason we chose 20% as the cut-off point is that 40% of the sample (or the top four networks) is included using this measure.
Table 3.3: Typology of Network Strength by Level of Influence in General and Civic Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Influence</th>
<th>Strong-Tie Networks</th>
<th>Weak-Tie Networks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High General/High Civic</td>
<td>Family, Faith</td>
<td>Online Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High General/Low Civic</td>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low General/High Civic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative Media, Mainstream Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low General/Low Civic</td>
<td>Co-workers, Mentors</td>
<td>Civic Organizations, Political Officials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Networks with High General/High Civic Influence

Family, faith, and online networks all belong in this category. Many social network analysts have studied the influence that familial networks have on political participation. Stoker and Jennings (in Zuckerman 2005) found spousal influence was strong in shaping political opinions and attitudes (70). Political socialization studies show children pickup on political cues from their parents in early years, and adopt their parents’ political viewpoints (Hess and Torney 1968, 110-111). Verba et al.’s (1995) study, “Family Ties”, suggest that the socio-economic status and political participation of parents directly relates to the participation levels of the children (in Zuckerman,
Socio-economic status provides the level of access to knowledge and opportunities to participate, and the political participation of the parents provides the environmental cues the child receives about participating. This study supports the previous findings that suggest family networks are important influentially in the civic lives of young people.

The high rates of influence online networks held in the civic and general life of mobilized young leaders were somewhat unexpected. These weak-tie networks require little face-to-face time and low interaction. Online networks specifically require no face-to-face personal connection, yet over 20% of respondents reported their influence as “very strong”. Online networks include any type of online community with which the individual interacts, such as a listserv or community board. There is little research conducted thus far examining the influence of online networks. However, these results indicate it is an area that political and social scientists should further explore. The extent to which they are influential in the lives of citizens who participate suggests they could be relevant forms of outreach and communication.

Demographic information shows that almost 65% of the respondents identified themselves as belonging to a major world faith or identified themselves as Agnostic. Studies on the relationship of faith/religion and political participation have produced some mixed results. A study of 3000 Canadians and Americans by Smidt (1999)
revealed religion had a substantial influence on the level of civic participation of the sample. Studies observing civic engagement in relation to the race/ethnicity of congregations or in conjunction with a specific faith also demonstrate differences in the rates of participation and forms of participation in which the faith community partakes. Studies using General Social Survey data have found religion has a positive effect on political participation amongst the black population in America (Harris 1988). Similar studies of the effect of religion on civic engagement amongst Latino populations have revealed churches and faith leaders condemn involvement in protests and rallies, but encourage engagement in the local community through volunteering or similar efforts (Marquez and Wainer 2002).

Our study finds that faith networks are the second most influential network for young mobilized citizens who are participating in and want to get involved in civic life. Often service activities sponsored by the faith leaders and communities provide these young leaders opportunities to engage and interact with their community. Faith networks, another strong-tie network, do exert influence in the civic life of young citizens who are actively involved in civic and political life.
Networks with High General/Low Civic Influence

One of the most interesting finding in this study is the dramatic difference of influence friend networks hold over mobilized young leaders in their general life compared to their civic life. It is the only network that falls into this category of having high influence in the general life of mobilized young people and having almost no bearing on their civic decisions. Almost 50% of respondents answered that they feel strongly influenced by friends in their general life. However, only 5.5% of respondents rated the influence of friends as “very strong” in civic life. The mean scores for friends in general life (1.65) and in civic life (4.13) shows the vast difference in how much less influence friends exert when it comes to young engaged citizens wanting to pursue activities in civic life. Friends ranked in with the lowest rate of influence of all ten networks tested.

There are mixed findings related to the influence of friendship networks and political/civic action. A study conducted by Jeffery Levine, “Choosing Alone?” (2005) examined the strength of influence of intimate or strong-tie networks. His findings support the findings of this study, that friendship networks are not likely to influence political participation (in Zuckerman 141). On the other hand, Kotler-Berkowitz (in Zuckerman 2005) studies the linkage of political participation to networks of diverse friendships and found there was an increase in participation rates of people integrated
in networks of diverse friendships. This is attributed to the notion that increased interaction with diverse groups exposes one to a diversity of viewpoints, discussion, and opportunities to act.

This study’s finding that demonstrates that friendship networks do not have strong influence in the civic life of young people active in politics seems somewhat startling when one investigates the ways political and social campaigns conduct outreach. Email campaigns from organizations such as NOW (National Organization for Women) regularly send out emails informing subscribing members of their listserv about news related to their cause. Often they urge action such as signing an online petition or sending an email to congress supporting or opposing a cause. Included in these emails is a link that says, “Tell a friend” or “Forward this to your friends!” Findings from this study suggest that those who are already actively involved will not forward these messages to their friends, as their friendship networks are not important influentially in their civic life.

In-depth interviews revealed qualitative evidence to support these findings. It seems that this population of engaged young people does not like to extend information out to their friend networks, and possibly do not receive messages from their friends related to civic and political causes. One interviewee who works for a political campaign explained, “My friends and I don’t ask each other for money, but I’ll invite
them to a fundraising happy-hour and it’s up to them if they want to come. I don’t like to make them feel like I always need something from them and I don’t like to feel like they always need something from me”.

Friendship relationships are quite interesting to study in light of political and civic participation. As Gimpel and Lay suggest (in Zuckerman 2005), nodes who are tapped into diverse networks (such as those who compose our sample population) avoid discussion about politically charged topics in order to reduce conflict with their strong-tie relationships (210). The respondents’ rating of friends as the least influential network in their civic life possibly reflects this attitude of avoidance of topics that could pose conflicts or threaten the relationship. Another interviewee spoke to this point when asked if there were any barriers he felt to reaching out to his networks. “I really hate feeling like I am pushing my politics on my friends. They don’t always support the things I support, and that puts me in a very strange position at times…”

Since this group of individuals are already tapped into networks that already expose them to civic opportunities (i.e. ADI, Young Democrats, College Republicans), it is possible they do not need to turn to their friend networks to receive knowledge and opportunities to participate. The findings in this study that indicate friendship networks are not valuable influentialy to young mobilized people are interesting to
pursue and could be more fully supported with a second qualitative component that asks respondents to explain why they turn to some groups instead of others.

Networks with Low General/High Civic Influence

Both media networks, alternative and mainstream, are not influential in the general lives of young mobilized leaders, but are influential in their civic life. The relevance of media in the lives of young active participants in political and civic life is influential according to data results. Only 14% marked alternative and mainstream media as “very strongly” influential in their general lives, while almost 21% said alternative media are influential in their civic life and 24% said mainstream media are as well.

Several studies look at the direct effect of mass media on political participation. Some studies indicate there is a positive relationship between mass media consumption and participation in local communities. Visawanath’s (1990) findings show civic and political involvement had a positive relationship to local and regional newspaper subscription, although television media did not have the same positive relationship. McLeod et al (1995) found local television news often focused on crime stories however, which could serve to deter citizens from participating actively in their local communities.
As mentioned in the previous chapter, newspapers are a form of information consumed by a large portion of young citizens engaged in political and civic life and may explain why media is “somewhat” influential in their lives. All the television news categories (cable, network, and local) also ranked highly as well as sources of information for this sample, which does not support McLeod’s findings (1995) that they contribute to less participation. More in-depth analysis of the forms of participation and the types of media sources young active citizens use could further substantiate this notion.

Networks with Low General/Low Civic Influence

Civic organizations/movements, political organizations, co-workers, and mentors are all networks which do not exert influence over this population of young people who are actively participating in civic and political life. Respondents to the survey indicated co-workers and mentors had little role in their general life. Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) found people placed value on the opinions of co-workers community leaders in general and political matters. Results from this study show the mean score of co-worker influence (3.16) falls very close to the “neither strongly, nor not strongly” level of measurement revealing the relative apathy these young citizens
feel towards individuals they interact with regularly. This group of young people clearly does not place value on the opinions of their co-workers.

Another interesting finding is mentors, whose mean level of influence is 3.81, fall closer to the “not very strongly” category of influence. Mentors, defined as “influential seniors or sponsors”, are the network with the lowest influence level in the general lives of this particular group of young citizens who are participating in civic and political life. This paradoxical finding is worthy of further analysis. Perhaps these types of relationships are less influential because the participants are already inclined and motivated to participate and thus do not feel their mentors influence or shape their lives in a dramatic way. It would be interesting to build upon the findings of this quantitative study by adding a qualitative component asking open-ended questions that elaborate on why they felt some groups influenced mobilized young leaders more than others did.

Political officials are also not influential in the lives of these young mobilized citizens. In the previous chapter, we mentioned some survey respondents did not feel contacting media and political officials produced tangible results and was not an effective way of spending their time. Perhaps this mentality permeates through this population of mobilized citizens and results in their rating the network as not influential to their lives.

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Only about 13% of respondents rated the influence of civic organizations and movements as “very strongly” in their general life and only about 15 percent rated them as “very strongly” influential in their civic life. These results are somewhat unexpected and do not support other findings looking at the relationship between civic organizations and participation in the American population. Civic organizations and movements are tools of engagement that this population of mobilized leaders do not find influential in their lives.

Civic organizations have long been considered an important means of promoting a sense of community and increasing interactions between networks that would not normally interact with one another (Skocpol 1999), providing a sense of “brotherhood” and increasing social capital (66). Mobilized young leaders however, do not necessarily turn to these organizations to provide insight and influence to the extent they turn to their family, faith community, and online networks. This finding may correlate with Putnam’s *Bowling Alone* study (2000) that showed associational membership was declining in the cohort of young participating Americans (247-248). This analysis suggests they turn to their family, faith, and online networks to provide them with opportunities participate more often than they turn to civic organizations to do so.
The mean scores of civic organizations and movements round out to three in both civic and general life, classifying their influence level as “neither strongly, nor not strongly”. Thus, we can assess that civic organization and movements hold a less influential role in the lives of young Americans who participate and are not necessarily relevant to those still relevant to those who participate in democracy.

Summary of Network Influence in General Life and Civic Life of young mobilized leaders

Measuring the level of influence each social network has over the general life of young citizens actively participating in civic and political life was one goal of this study. The findings from this analysis serve to support the H1: “strong tie” networks are more influential in the general lives of young American’s that are active in political and civic life than weak-tie networks. The two networks with the strongest influence are family and friends, both of which are examples of the strongest types of network ties.

The findings in this study do not support H2: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will feel more strongly influenced by their strong-tie networks in civic life, than by their weak-tie networks. Instead, results find that none of the networks “very strongly” influenced this group of individuals in their civic life, as all
networks placed between the “somewhat influential” and “not at all influential” 
categories. Furthermore, of the top five most influential networks, strong-tie networks 
only accounted for two of them. Friendship networks, one of the networks with the 
strongest-ties, had the weakest level of influence in the civic lives of young mobilized 
citizens of all ten networks.

Meanwhile, the level of influence co-workers and mentors, both strong-tie 
networks, exerted on this group in their civic life fell in between the “neither strongly 
nor not strongly” category and “not very strongly” values, indicating their lack of 
influence. Three weak tie networks (online networks, alternative media, and 
mainstream media) showed high influence and had mean scores higher than the three 
of the strong-tie networks.

Influence of Mobilized Youth over their Social Networks

Survey respondents were asked to identify, in rank order, the three networks 
that they felt they exerted the most influence over. Table 3.4 below reveals the results 
of the analysis based on descriptive information.

| Table 3.4: Three Networks Identified to be the Most Influenced by Respondents |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Network                        | 1st             | 2nd             | 3rd             |
| Family                         | n =192          | n = 101         | n = 29          |
| Friends                        | n = 125         | n = 181         | n = 112         |
| Co-Workers                     | n = 8           | n = 25          | n = 112         |
Family, friends, and co-workers are the three networks that respondents felt the influenced most. These three networks are those which they have the most interactivity with on a daily basis. Since we are qualifying the strength of the relationship tie by the amount of interaction and communication between nodes, all three of these are strong-tie networks. Therefore, these findings support H3: Young Americans who are active in civic and political life will rank their strong-tie networks as groups who they have influence over, higher than their weak-tie networks.

Although the level of influence over family and friends is understandable, the most interesting finding from this analysis is that this population believes they exert influence over a population that they indicate they feel does not influence them in general or civic life. In the previous analysis, we determined that young people engaged in civic and political life did not feel co-workers influenced their daily or civic life. However, they do think they are able to affect the lives of their co-workers.

**Outreach to Networks by Mobilized Young People**

The final component of this study examines the means through which young people actively reach out their networks to support the causes and campaigns they believe in. The bulk of information guiding this part of the analysis derives from the in-depth interviews. In the previous chapter, we discovered survey respondents were
not as willing to forward along messages about politics, community affairs, or causes to their social networks very often. The also revealed that they do not like to “push” their politics on others or demand time or money from their friends.

From the interviews, it is clear that they also realize that engaging in their networks is the only way they can succeed in their endeavors. Said one young leader, “You can’t be afraid to reach out to people you might not know or know well, they are bound to have access to hundreds more you should know.” How then, do young people who are active in civic and political life, engage their networks to support campaigns and causes? Based upon qualitative analysis of the interviews results show here are several means through which they draw others into their causes. They also all had very specific reasons for choosing specific mediums of outreach.

Email was one method that all interviewees mentioned they used to inform their social networks about a cause or event in which they were involved. However, they also all mentioned they did not like to forward on messages that they received from organizations or campaigns. As on interviewee mentioned, “I get emails about bills that will be presented to congress that asks me to call my congressman. There is no way I am going to pass it on to a friend, even if I think it is important. They are probably receiving the same email if they care enough.” Another interviewee noted, “Forwarding along a message is rarely effective, it increases a sense of distance. If I
really want them to support something I have to make sure it comes from me in a
sincere and personal way, so they understand the cause is close to me.”

A primary concern for this group was to avoid being overly aggressive and
harming the nature of relationships within their networks. One female participant who
is active in several environmental organizations said, “I know I care about things that
not everyone else does. I hate to impose on them, and don’t want them to impose on
me in the same way.” Instead of forwarding on messages or sending out mass emails,
this group of young active leaders preferred sending out personalized emails to their
social networks. The personalization was critical, especially if they were trying to talk
to their friends, co-workers, or family. “My uncle is not going to appreciate if I ask him
to donate money for the walk/run I took part in, in a mass email. Instead I sent him a
personal email and also encouraged him to look at my website and blog to see updates
on my progress.” Identifying and emphasizing the personal connection the young
leader and the network node had enabled them to reach out in a more successful and
amiable manner.

Along those same lines, several of the interviewees mentioned the relevance of
face-to-face contact in getting people to join their cause. One interviewee said when he
was asking for donations to start a non-profit organization he now runs, he did not ask
anyone with whom he was not able to sit down in a face-to-face setting. “Asking for
money is always an awkward thing but if you can sit there and look them in eye to show them why this matters so much to you, you can get a lot further.”

Face-to-face contact was critical in non-monetary support as well. The founder of a social/political association said the whole reason his organizations exists and grows is that people want face-to-face time with one another. “Discussing politics and recruiting members to social causes does not work if you are distant and impersonal,” he said “but now get people to sit down together and talk about the issues they care about, then they can contribute and build on one another’s ideas. Suddenly some great new idea emerges that wasn’t there before, and you have a new reason to get excited and to get together.” To get people to support a cause impersonal communication is not as effective as personal or face-to-face efforts for these young leaders.

Nonetheless, some tools which are less personal but have been useful to these young leaders in recruiting their networks to their causes. Almost all interviewees mentioned that they used the popular social networking website, Facebook to tell their friends about events, campaigns, or to create awareness about a social cause they support. An interviewee who worked for political parties and campaigns in the past said he felt the website allowed him to share his opinion, promote causes, and invite others without being “too pervasive”.

It [Facebook] is a tool I can use so easily to mention that there is an event coming up…for example I can post in my “status” that I am
going to be attending a happy hour fundraiser and want people to come by. I can also use the “Notes” application and take a story I read in the Washington Post …about the campaign, and post it so that it shows up in my friends’ news feeds.

Another interviewee who founded a liberal non-profit organization mentioned she uses Facebook to recruit others to the organizations. “I can create a profile for my organization; provide information about what we’re doing and post upcoming events. I can also use Facebook to look up people who might be interested in my organization based on what groups they belong to.” These non-pervasive means of outreach allow the young leaders to broadcast their messages in a way that is not overwhelming to someone who is not interested, but does allow them to inform people in their networks who are interested.

Young leaders in American democracy are using a combination of new forms of communication and traditional forms to draw others into the causes they support. Impersonal messages are only useful in getting the message out, but once a person needs specific action to be taken they turn to interpersonal communication via personalized emails, phone calls, or face-to-face conversations.

Every interviewee mentioned the value of social networks in promoting causes or campaigns for which they have worked. “I think networks are the most critical component to any grassroots initiative, campaign, or organization. They cannot be
ignored as a valuable tool to increasing participation in any activity - political or social”, remarked one interviewee.

The results of the qualitative portion of this study, which focused on the mediums of outreach young leaders use to reach out to their networks, support H4: Young Americans active in civic and political life are discriminating in their outreach to their social networks about causes they believe in. Although they are willing to tap into their networks, they are discriminating in the way the reach out to those networks for support. One quote from a young leader who is newly active in civic and political life conveyed the general sentiment of all interviewees in regards the value they put in networks. “I have such a diverse group of friends, associates, peers, and colleagues. I can learn a lot from them and they can learn a lot from me and who I interact with… tapping into networks is the only way to get something done in the end….”

**Summary of Chapter Findings**

This analysis of the influence and use social networks by young people active in civic and political life has yielded several important findings. Overall, this analysis finds strong-tie social networks are influential in shaping the lives of young people engaged in political and civic life. Some weak-tie networks are also influential but to a
lesser degree. Young leaders recognize the value of networks and are willing to use them to promote causes or campaigns as long as it is not in an intrusive manner.

Family networks show the strongest level of influence in both the general and civic life of this population. Family networks are also the group mobilized young citizens feel they influence the most. Friendship networks are highly influential in the general lives of young engaged citizens, but have the weakest level of influence in their civic lives. Qualitative interview answers indicate there may be hesitancy to impose political or social opinions between friends. Certain weak-tie networks (online networks and mass media) were also influential in both parts of life. Political officials, mentors, and co-workers held very little influence in both general and civic life of young mobilized leaders.

The qualitative portion of this analysis revealed young leaders are willing to tap into their networks, but in ways that are not too pervasive. They recognize the importance of using their strong and weak ties to provide support and recruit others to their causes. Young leaders do not prefer to use informal mass communication, and instead choose to personalize interactions as much as possible. Face-to-face communication is highly valued by this particular group, as they feel it allows them the chance to explain and “show” their commitment to a cause. When face-to-face communication is not an option, they will use emails, but insist they must be personal
in order to expect anyone to take action. They are willing to use social networking
websites to simply spread a message but do not expect major action to take place from
those methods of communication. Instead those sites are used as a complementary tool
to personal emails or conversations young leaders use to draw their social networks to
action.
Chapter VI: Conclusion

At the beginning of this study, we posed several questions about young mobilized American leaders and their use of social networks to promote the causes and campaigns they support. Which of their social networks influence them to get involved in civic life? Are they the same networks they turn to for influence in their general life? Relatedly, we asked, how do they gather information about causes in which they are interested? Are they willing to pass along information they receive? If they are willing to pass information, through which forms of communication do they do so, and to whom?

This study was designed to answer the above questions using a combination of methodologies including a survey and in-depth interviews with participants who are actively involved in civic and political organizations currently. Through their responses, these young mobilized leaders provided us with insightful and valuable information that is useful to those concerned with increasing civic engagement in America. The results of this study yielded many interesting findings indicating they are a group of educated, racially/ethnically diverse individuals, who do have the ability and desire to draw others into political and civic causes.

Survey results revealed interesting findings about the level of influence different social networks had in the lives of young mobilized leaders. In this study, we
found they are influenced by more weak-tie networks to get involved in civic life than strong-tie networks. They turn to weak-tie networks including online networks, and civic organizations/movements over strong-tie networks such as friends, co-workers, and mentors. Family and faith networks hold influential positions in daily life and in the civic life of this population. However, friend networks, which are highly influential in general life, are not at all influential in the civic decisions this group of mobilized young people make. This finding does not support our original hypothesis that strong-tie networks, including friends, would have a strong influence in the civic life of these mobilized young leaders.

The finding is particularly interesting as other studies have found the impact of strong-tie networks are highly influential in civic activities such as exerting influence over voting behavior and political opinions, which, as our findings show, is not the case within this population of mobilized young leaders. This finding suggests that mobilized young Americans have a diverse array of networks from which they receive advice or information related to civic life, and do not rely on their friends to guide them through civic life decisions. This population does not find co-worker networks or mentors particularly influential in their lives either, but they do believe co-workers are one of the networks over which they exert the most influence.
In addition to the above findings related to the influence of their social networks, we found that young people active in civic and political life are receiving messages from their social networks about political and civic affairs. They are also distributing those messages to their networks on a restricted basis. Although they are open to receiving information but they are not as willing to act as distributors of wide email campaigns, choosing instead only to pass along information about causes or campaigns that they feel particularly passionate or connected to personally.

They do not want to exploit their networks and feel when they do reach out about a particular cause or campaign making relevant their personal connection is critical to mobilizing their networks. When they are willing to pass along information to their networks young mobilized leaders use personal email, blogs, and social networking sites to do so. These forms allow them to personalize the messages while reaching out to wide audience in a manner that is not imposing. Social networking sites are also tools utilized by this group to spread messages, as they allowed them to reach out to a large portion of their networks without overwhelming them.

Identifying the means through which these young leaders are participating in civic and political processes was another goal of this study. Our findings suggest young leaders are engaging in America’s civic processes through traditional methods such as volunteering, donating money, and signing petitions. Fewer young leaders are
using new forms of participation such as blogging or sending out emails on behalf of a campaign. A majority of mobilized young leaders has worked with their community to solve a problem and almost half are participating to some degree in the current 2008 presidential election.

This study also finds young leaders engaged in civic and political life are avid consumers of online news, including websites of mainstream media outlets and of alternative websites and blogs. They still use traditional television news and print newspaper as well, although to a slightly lesser degree. We also learned young mobilized leaders are receiving messages about politics and community affairs on a daily basis from members of their social networks.

*Connecting the dots: Social Capital and the use of social networks by young mobilized leaders*

What do we make of these findings? Why do the network relationships and interactions of young mobilized leaders matter? Let us turn back to Mary for a moment to make the connection. A democracy thrives on active participants engaging in political and civic processes such as voting and volunteering. Young Americans who are already involved in these democratic practices, such as Mary, are tapped into a diverse array of networks through which they can spread information they have about
participating. Studies have shown knowledge and opportunity to participate are two of the most important factors for an individual to get involved. If these “bridging node” members are willing to mobilize others and are given access through the tools they prefer to reach out to their networks, they can draw in others who may not participate in civic or political activities otherwise.

Relationships of trust and reciprocity between Mary and the nodular contacts in her social networks allows for flow of information, trust building, the manifestation of a sense of “community”, and the ability to enable collective action. This is important for developing an informed and engaged citizenry, which is a foundational element of our American democracy. Active engagement in civic life builds social capital, which is the collective value of social networks. Social capital theorists and social network analysts should be encouraged by these findings.

Turning back to Mary, our “bridging node”, let us say she learns from church leaders on Sunday about a protest being staged against an immigration bill being held the following Thursday. The immigration bill affects members of Mary’s church, and she feels strongly that she must support those members of her church network. Taking that information obtained through this faith community network, Mary talks to her strong-tie networks of close friends and family in face-to-face conversations
throughout the week, thus spreading the message. Several of those networks consume
the information and agree to pass along information to their own networks.

Mary feels very passionately about this protest and this study shows she is
likely to reach out to her other networks as well, using her blog, email, and social
networking sites such as Facebook. She sends out an email to her friends, co-workers,
and her social justice listserv asking them to support the cause and identifying her
personal stake in the issue. On Wednesday, she decides to post to her blog an item that
she found on a website of a regional newspaper that highlights the reasons behind the
protest. She does this in an effort to inform anyone who does not already know or
wants to know more about the protest. She posts a link to the same article on her
Facebook profile page. Now Mary feels she has done her duty to distribute information
to her network, without imposing it upon them. Using these tools, she allows them to
take the initiative to read her blog or the article if they are interested in learning more
about the protest. Mary’s unique position in different civic and social circles proves to
be a valuable bridging position allowing her to reach out to a variety of diverse
networks about a cause she learned about through another network.

This example of Mary illustrates how mobilized young leaders that are tapped
into diverse networks are in a valuable position to increase civic engagement in the
broader population. Their unique positions, as enabled, participating “bridging nodes”
provide those who want to increase civic engagement, a “path” through which they can reach a larger audience. We found these mobilized leaders are “bridging nodes”, willing to connect their networks of friends, family, and the organizations through which they participate. These active participants in civic and political life are critical actors in the distribution of knowledge about opportunities to engage in civic life to members of their networks that are not as connected or engaged.

Mary is not only a contributing to the accumulation of social capital by actively participating in her community, but she is also extending the opportunity for more accumulation of social capital by inviting members of her networks to participate as well. Her actions have the potential to strengthen standing ties, build new ties in her community, and pull together heterogeneous groups of people to work for a common cause. Her role as a “bridging node” positions her to be an individual who can encourage the growth of bridging social capital in her community.

By analyzing the social networks of mobilized individuals, such as Mary, we learn the strength of influence both strong-tie and weak-tie networks exert over individuals who want to get involved in civic life. Networks are critical to distribution of information, opportunities, and creating bonds. Mobilized young leaders recognize their value in supporting the campaigns and causes in which they believe. Through this study, we revealed their willingness to reach out to these networks and the mediums
they use to do so. Enabled with the information provided in this study, anyone interested in building social capital, increasing civic participation, and strengthening American democracy, can now turn to valuable bridging nodes, like Mary, to support their cause.

Extensions/Recommendations for future study

Data collected in this study are rich with information to extend further the scope of this project to contribute to the fields of Communication, Political Science, and Social Network Analysis. The parameters of this study were limited to examining the use of networks but there is a lot of information pertaining to communication methods and forms of civic participation young Americans who are active in civic and political processes prefer. Using this information and testing it across demographic variables such as age, gender, and ethnicity. will likely yield interesting results. Comparing the results about information gathering and civic participation behavior and motivations to other studies looking at the broader American population will likely reveal relevant information to those who want to identify which factors lead to participation in civic and political life.
This project could be extended many ways in the field of social network analysis. The author would have liked to see the actual results of information flow and influence distribution between mobilized young leaders and their networks. To do so, I would conduct a longitudinal panel study, which would look at the same subjects over time and examine their network interactions in civic and general life. I would also ask participants of the panel to identify three of their strong-tie contacts and three weak-tie contacts to observe the patterns of influence between the network types. This type of analysis would identify information flow from an individual engaged in civic and political life to their networks and measure the level of influence the engaged individual has in their networks when it comes to political and civic matters.
APPENDIX A:

CODEBOOKS FOR PROFILE AND SOCIAL NETWORK CHAPTERS
CODING FOR PROFILE CHAPTER

Value labels sex 1 'male' 2 'female'.

Value labels age 1 '18-24' 2 '25-29' 3 '30-34' 4 '35-40' 5 '40 and up'.

Variable labels party 'what party do you affiliate yourself with?'.

Rcode party (1=2) (2=1) (4=2) (5=4).

Value labels party 1 'democrat' 2 'independent/other' 3 'republican' 4 'non-partisan'.

Value labels religion 1 'agnostic' 2 'atheist' 3 'catholic' 4 'christian' 5 'hindu' 6 'jewish' 7 'muslim' 8 'other'

Value labels ideology 1 'very progressive' 2 'progressive' 3 'somewhat progressive' 4 'moderate/middle of the road' 5 'somewhat conservative' 6 'conservative' 7 'very conservative'.

Compute recage = age.
Recode recage (1=1) (2=2) (3,4,5=3).

Value labels recage 1 '18-24' 2 '24-29' 3 '30+'.
Variable labels race 'what is your race/ethnicity?'.

Value labels race 1 'african-american' 2 'asian-american/pacific islander' 3 'caucasian' 4 'hispanic latino' 5 'other'.
variable labels q31a 'please indicate how frequently you use national newspaper print'.
recode q31a (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).
value label 31a 1 'not at all' 2 'very little' 3 'some' 4 'a lot'.

variable labels q31b 'please indicate how frequently you use local newspaper print'.
recode q31b (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).
value label 31b 1 'not at all' 2 'very little' 3 'some' 4 'a lot'.

variable labels q31c 'please indicate how frequently you use local tv news'.
recode q31c (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).
value labels 1 'not at all' 2 'very little' 3 'some' 4 'a lot'.

variable labels q31d 'please indicate how frequently you use network tv news'.
recode q31d (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31e 'please indicate how frequently you use cable tv news'.

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recode q31e (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31f 'please indicate how frequently you use magazines in print'.
recode q31f (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31g 'please indicate how frequently you use websites of major news outlets newspaper, cable news sites, magazine sites, etc'.
recode q31g (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31h 'please indicate how frequently you use independent websites and blogs'.
recode q31h (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31i 'please indicate how frequently you use nationally syndicated talk/news radio'.
recode q31i (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31j 'please indicate how frequently you use local talk/news radio'.
recode q31j (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31k 'please indicate how frequently you use podcasts'.
recode q31k (4=1) (3=2) (2=3) (1=4).

variable labels q31m 'please indicate how frequently you use other'.

variable labels q4 'do you read blogs?'.
recode q4 (2=0).
value label q4 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q5 'if yes, how often do you read blogs?'.
recode q5 (1=6) (2=5) (3=4) (4=3) (5=2) (6=1).
value labels q5 1 'not at all' 2 'less than weekly' 3 'once a week' 4 'several times a week' 5 'daily' 6 'multiple times a day'.

variable labels q6 'Do you maintain a personal blog?'.
recode q6 (2=0).
value labels q6 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

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variable labels q6a 'if yes, how often do you post on your own blog?'.
recode q6a (1=4) (2=3) (3=2) (4=1).
value labels q6a 1 'less frequently than once a month' 2 'bi-monthly' 3 'weekly'
4 'daily'.

Variable labels q7 'do you post comment threads of other blogs or websites?'.
Recode q7 (2=0).
Value labels q7 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

Variable labels q7a 'if you do post comments, how often?'.
Recode q7a (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
Value labels q7a 1 'less frequently' 2 'yes, weekly' 3 'yes, several times a week'
4 'yes, daily 5 'yes, multiple times a day'.

variable labels q8 'Do you receive messages about politics, your community, or
issues that effect you from someone in your social network?'.
recode q8 (1=6) (2=5) (3=4) (4=3) (5=2) (6=1).
value labels q8 1 'no, not at all' 2 'yes, less than once a week' 3 'yes, once a
week', 4 'yes, several times a week' 5 'yes, daily' 6 'yes, multiple times a day'.

variable labels q9 'do you actively send these types of messages to members of
your social network?'.
recode q9 (1=6) (2=5) (3=4) (4=3) (5=2) (6=1).
value labels q9 1 'no, not at all' 2 'yes, less than once a week' 3 'yes, once a
week', 4 'yes, several times a week' 5 'yes, daily' 6 'yes, multiple times a day'.

variable labels q10a 'please list how strongly family influences your life'.
recode q10a (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10a 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or
not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10b 'please list how strongly friends influence your life'.
recode 10b (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10b 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or
not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

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variable labels q10c 'please list how strongly co-workers influence your life'.
recode q10c (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10c 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10d 'please list how strongly co-workers influence your life'.
recode q10d (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10d 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10e 'please list how strongly mentors influence your life'.
recode q10e (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10e 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10f 'please list how strongly mainstream news media influence your life'.
recode q10f (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10f 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10g 'please list how strongly alternative news media influence your life'.
recode q10g (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10g 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10h 'please list how strongly political officials influence your life'.
recode q10h (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10h 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10i 'please list how strongly members of a faith community influence your life'.
recode q10i (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q10i 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10j 'please list how strongly members civic organizations/movements influence your life'.
recode q10j (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1)
value labels q10j 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q10k 'please list other influences in your life'.

variable labels q11a 'how likely are you to turn to FAMILY when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11a (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11a 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11b 'how likely are you to turn to FRIENDS when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11b (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11b 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11c 'how likely are you to turn to CO-WORKERS when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11c (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11c 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11d 'how likely are you turn to MENTORS when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11d (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11d 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11e 'how likely are you to turn to ONLINE NETWORKS when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11e (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11e 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11f 'how likely are you to turn to MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA when looking for inspiration'.
recode q11f (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (1=5).
value labels q11f 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11g 'how likely are you to turn to ALTERNATIVE NEWS MEDIA when looking for inspiration'.
recode q11g (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11g 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11h 'how likely are you to turn to POLITICAL OFFICIALS when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11h (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11h 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11i 'how likely are you to turn to MEMBERS OF FAITH ORG when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11i (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11i 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11j 'how likely are you to turn to CIVIC ORG MOVEMENT when you are looking for inspiration'.
recode q11j (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q11j 1 'not at all likely' 2 'not very likely' 3 'neither likely or not likely' 4 'somewhat likely' 5 'very likely'.

variable labels q11k 'how likely are you to turn to OTHER when you are looking for inspiration'.

150
variable labels q12a 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do FAMILY influence you'.
recode q12a (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12a 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q12b 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do FRIENDS influence you'.
recode q12b (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12b 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q12c 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do CO-WORKERS influence you'.
recode q12c (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12c 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.
variable labels q12d 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do MENTORS influence you'.
recode q12d (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12d 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q12e 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do ONLINE NETWORKS influence you'.
recode q12e (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12e 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q12f 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do MAINSTREAM NEWS MEDIA influence you'.
recode q12f (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12f 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

152
variable labels q12g 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do ALTERNATIVE NEWS MEDIA influence you'.
recode q12g (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12g 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q12h 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do POLITICAL OFFICIALS influence you'.
recode q12h (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (1=5).
value labels q12h 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q12i 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do MEMBERS OF FAITH ORG influence you'.
recode q12i (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12i 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

153
variable labels q12j 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do CIVIC ORGS influence you'.
recode q12j (1=5) (2=4) (4=2) (5=1).
value labels q12j 1 'very strongly' 2 'somewhat strongly' 3 'neither strongly or not strongly' 4 'not very strongly' 5 'not at all strongly'.

variable labels q12k 'when looking to get involved in civic life how strongly do OTHER influence you'.

variable labels q13a 'Please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, FAMILY'.
value labels q13a 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13b 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, FRIENDS'.
value labels q13b 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13c 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, CO-WORKERS'.

154
value labels q13c 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13d 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, MENTORS'.
value labels q13d 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13e 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, ONLINE NETWORKS'.
value labels q13e 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13f 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, MAINSTREAM MEDIA'.
value lables q13f 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13g 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, ALT MEDIA'.
value labels q13g 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.
variable labels q13h 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, POLITICAL OFFICIALS'.
value labels q13h 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13i 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, MEMBERS FAITH COMMUNITY'.
value labels q13i 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13j 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, CIVIC ORGS MOVEMENTS'.
value labels q13j 1 'first' 2 'second' 3 'third'.

variable labels q13k 'please rank your top three choices of groups you have influence over, OTHER'.

variable labels q14a 'participation RAISE FUNDS'.
recode q14a (sysmis=0).
value label q14a 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

156
variable labels q14b 'participation BLOG LISTSERV DISCUSSION BOARD'.
recode q14b (2=1) (sysmis =0).
value label q14b 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14c 'participation WALKS RUNS BIKE RACES'.
recode q14c (3=1) (sysmis =0).
value label q14c 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14d 'participation VOLUNTEER'.
recode q14d (4=1) (sysmis =0).
value labels q14d 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14e 'participation CONTACT POLITICAL OFFICIAL'.
recode q14e (5=1) (sysmis =0)
value labels q14e 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14f 'participation CONTACT MEDIA'.
recode q14f (6=1) (sysmis =0).
value labels q14f 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

157
variable labels q14g 'participation BUTTONS/BUMPER STICKERS'.
recode q14g (7=1) (sysmis =0).
value labels q14g 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14h 'participation TSHIRT'.
recode q14h (8=1) (sysmis =0).
value labels q14h 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14i 'participation DONATE MONEY'.
recode q14i (9=1) (sysmis =0).
value labels q14i 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14j 'participation PROTEST'.
recode q14j (10=1) (sysmis =0).
value labels q14j 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14k 'participation SIGN PETITIONS'.
recode q14k (11=1) (sysmis =0).
variable labels q14k 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14l 'participation BOYCOTT'.
recode q14l (12=1) (symis=0).
value labels q14l 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14m 'participation BUYCOTT'.
recode q14m (13=1) (sysmis=0).
value labels q14m 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14n 'participation CANVASS'.
recode q14n (14=1) (sysmis=0).
value labels q14n 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q14o 'participation OTHER'.

variable labels q17a 'worked with others to solve a community problem'.
recode q17a (2=0).
value labels q17a 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

159
variable labels q17b 'how closely are you currently following the 2008 presidential election race'.
recode q17b (1=4) (2=3) (3=2) (4=1).
value labels q17b 1 'not at all closely' 2 'not very closely' 3 'somewhat closely' 4 'very closely'.

variable labels q17c 'are you participating in the current election in any way'.
recode q17c (2=0).
value labels q17c 0 'no' 1 'yes'.

variable labels q18a 'presidential participation CANVASS'.

160
APPENDIX B

Survey Tools and Interview Instruments
ADI CIVIC PARTICIPATION SURVEY: Thank you so much for participating in ADI’s Civic Participation Survey. The reason we are asking these questions is to see how we can create programs, events, and opportunities that are most beneficial to you. By providing this information, you provide a leader’s perspective, which helps ADI best serve you! We appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete this survey.

**New Media:**
First, we’d like to ask you a few questions about your media use:

1. Please rank your use of the following sources of information about issues affecting your life? (Rank from 1 – 11, with 1 being the highest).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Newspaper (print)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Newspaper (print)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Network TV News</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cable TV News</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Magazines – Print</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites of major news outlets (newspaper, cable news sites, magazine sites, etc)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent websites and Blogs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nationally syndicated talk/news radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local talk/news radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podcasts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Do you read blogs?
   a. Yes ___   b. No ___

3. If yes, how often do you read blogs?
   a. Multiple times a day ___   b. Daily ___   c. Several times a week ___
   d. Weekly ___   e. Less frequently ___   f. Not at all ___

4. Do you maintain a personal blog?
   a. Yes ___   b. No ___

5. If you do, how often do you post on it?
   c. Yes, Bi-Monthly or less frequent posts ___   c. No, I do not maintain a personal blog ___

6. Do you post to the comment threads of other blogs or websites?
   a. Yes ___   b. No ___

7. If so, how often?
   a. Yes, Multiple times a day ___   b. Yes, Daily ___   c. Yes, Several times a week ___
   d. Yes, Weekly ___   e. Less frequently ___   f. Not at all ___

New Media & Social Networks:
The next set of questions asks you about how you are using new media to develop and promote messages within your social network.

8. Do you receive messages about politics, your community, or issues that affect your life from someone in your network? (“Messages” can be email, forwarded articles, videos or other media that someone in your network has actively sent to you.)
   a. Yes, multiple times a day ___   b. Yes, daily ___   c. Yes, several times a week ___
   d. Yes, once a week ___   e. Yes, less than once a week ___   f. No, not at all ___

9. Do you actively send these types of messages to members of your network?
a. Yes, multiple times a day ___  
b. Yes, daily ___  
c. Yes, several times a week ___  
d. Yes, once a week ___  
e. Yes, less than once a week ____  
f. No, not at all ___

10. If not, why not? Are there instances that make you more likely than others to send messages to members of your network?

Social Networks:

The following questions are related to the Social Networks you are a part of. By answering the following questions ADI will be able to better to address your needs and those of your communities.

11. Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group/Special Media</th>
<th>Very strongly</th>
<th>Somewhat strongly</th>
<th>Neither strongly or not strongly</th>
<th>Not very strongly</th>
<th>Not at all strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainstream News Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative News Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Officials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members of a Faith Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic Organizations/Movements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

12. Please list how likely you are to turn to these groups of people when you are looking for inspiration:
### 13. When you are looking to get involved in civic life, please list how strongly each of the following groups influence you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very strongly</th>
<th>Somewhat strongly</th>
<th>Neither strongly or not strongly</th>
<th>Not very strongly</th>
<th>Not at all strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
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<td>Online Networks</td>
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<td>Mainstream News Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative News Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Officials</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Civic Organizations/Movements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (Specify)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 14. Please list how strongly each of the following groups or people influence your life:

165
15. Which groups or individuals do you feel you have the most influence over? Please rank your top three choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NETWORK TYPE</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Networks</td>
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<td>Mainstream News Media</td>
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<td>Alternative News Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Officials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members of a faith community</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Organizations/Movements</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participation:
The next few questions are about the ways that you, as a leader, are personally participating in our democracy.

16. How do you personally express support for causes you believe in? Please mark all that apply:
   a. Raise funds
   ___
   b. Participate in a blog, listserv, or online discussion board
   ___
c. Participate in walks, runs, or bicycle races for a particular cause or organization

d. Volunteer

e. Contact political officials

f. Contact media

g. Display buttons/bumper stickers

h. Wear t-shirts

i. Donate money

j. Attend protest events

k. Sign petitions

l. Boycott

m. Boycott (buy a product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it)

n. Canvass

o. Other (please specify) __________________________

17. If you HAVE participated in any of the above activities, what prevented you from doing so?

18. If you HAVE NOT participated in any of the above activities, what prevented you from doing so?

19. Have you ever worked together informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live?
20. How closely are you currently following the 2008 presidential election race?
   a. Very closely ___   b. Somewhat closely ___   c. Not very closely ___   d. Not at all closely ___

21. Are you participating in the current election in any way?
   a. Yes ____   b. No ____

22. If you are, how are you participating? Please check all that apply:
   a. Canvassing ___   b. Phone Banking ___   c. Blogging for campaign ___
   d. Posting meetups ___   e. Sending out emails on behalf of campaign ___
   f. Event Coordination ___   g. Flyer Distribution ___   h. Raising money ___
   i. Donating money ___   j. Volunteering ___   k. Other (specify) __________

23. If you ARE participating, what motivates you to do so?

24. If you ARE NOT participating what prevents you from doing so?

Values:
The next set of questions asks about the principles of American democracy that you value, and the issues and causes that you care most about.

25. As an American citizen, I believe the following are my responsibility:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving jury duty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being informed in general</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being informed about politics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively participating in the local community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actively participating in national civic life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify) ____________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
26. How important to you are the following principles of American Democracy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Not Very Important</th>
<th>Not at All Important</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preservation of Values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

27. What issues/causes do you care most about?

Background Information:
Finally, because ADI wants to best represent the broad spectrum of your generation in the questions above, please provide the following background about yourself:

1. Are you:
   Male ___   Female ___

2. What is your race/ethnicity?
   Caucasian ___   African-American ___
   Hispanic/Latino ___   Asian-American Pacific Islander ___
   Other ____________ (please specify)

3. What is your age?
   a. 18-24 ___   b. 25-29 ___   c. 30-34 ___   d. 35-40 ___   d. 40+ ___

4. What is the highest level of education you have achieved thus far?
   a. High school ____   b. Some College ___   c. College ___   d. Master’s Degree ___   e. JD ___
   f. Doctorate ___

5. Are you currently:
   a. A student ___   b. A graduate student ___   c. Employed (non-student) ___
d. Other (please specify) __

6. Do you consider yourself to be a:
a. Democrat ___ b. Republican ___ c. Independent ___
d. Non-partisan ___ e. Other __

7. Do you consider yourself to be a:
a. Very progressive ___ b. Progressive ___
c. Somewhat progressive ___ d. Moderate/middle of the road ___
e. Somewhat Conservative ___ f. Conservative ___
g. Very Conservative ___

8. What is your religion?
e. Hindu ___ f. Jewish ___ g. Muslim ___ h. Other __

9. Does your faith affect your political beliefs and or practices?
a. Yes ___ b. No ___ c. Don’t know ___

10. Do you regularly attend religious services?
a. Yes ___ b. No ___

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Young Leaders’ use of Social Networks to Mobilize for Causes and Campaigns
1. How do you gather information about causes and issues you care about? (prompt if necessary: television, blogs, listservs, face to face meetings, mainstream media, online news websites, etc)

These questions have to do with blogs specifically
Do you read blogs regularly?
If yes, how often?

Do you have your own blog?
Do you post on it regularly?

Do you post comments or interact through threads on other people’s blogs?

2. Do your social networks play a role in gathering that information?
- if yes, which networks (friends, family, academic, civic, religious etc) and how?

3. Do you distribute information about issues/causes that you believe in?
- if yes, to whom? How?
- If no, why not?

4. What type of information are you willing to pass on to your social networks?
What type of information do you avoid passing on to your social networks? Why?
- How do you reach out to your networks? (probe if necessary with: email, face- to-face, phone, blog, etc)

5. In what situations do you pass along information?

6. In what situations do you avoid passing along information?
7. When you want to get involved in different types of political activities who do you turn to? What about other types of activities – volunteering or causes?

   Why? Why not other groups?

8. Can you name some organizations that you belong to?

9. Do you try to mobilize people in your networks?
   - if yes, why? How do you do it?

   - if no, why not?

10. Can you give an example of a time you have tapped into your network for a specific cause or issue?
    -- were you successful in getting people involved?

11. Can you give an example of a time someone in your network has reached out to you to get involved in a specific cause or issue?
    -- did you end up taking action? Why or why not?

12. Who do you turn to specifically for political insight?

13. Are there any barriers you feel keep you from reaching out to your networks?

14. Is there anything else you’d like to add in relation to your social networks and participation in civic or political life?

Thank you so much for your time today! I am happy to share any results of these findings if you’re interested?
BIBLIOGRAPHY


