VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOR OF MINORITY YOUTH

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
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degree of
Master of Public Policy

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the volunteer behavior of minority youth (black and Hispanic), both frequency and important influences, in comparison with their white counterparts. Volunteering is a critical indicator of democratic engagement, especially for youth not yet old enough to vote. Previous research suggests that young people who are involved in volunteer activities are more likely to become politically aware, empowered, philanthropic, and participatory citizens. Encouraging youth volunteer behavior is therefore an important step in strengthening society.

The tendency to volunteer is not exhibited equally across racial lines, with minority youth volunteering at lower levels than white youth. Using data from the 2005 Youth Volunteering, Service, and Civic Engagement Survey, this paper examines several key influences on volunteer behavior – both social factors and individual characteristics – to determine whether they have varying importance for minority and white youth. Summary statistics establish significant differences in parent volunteer behavior, religious service attendance, and trust in other people between minority and white youth, but not in two other important influences on youth volunteer behavior, service learning participation and belief in personal ability to make a difference.

Building from these results, OLS and step-wise regression analyses identify the relative importance of each of these factors on minority and white youth volunteer behavior, finding parent volunteer behavior to be the largest determinant for all three groups. This finding – along with findings of differential exposure to influences on volunteer behavior – suggests that government policymakers and nonprofit organizations should target mentoring and leadership programs that can serve as parental surrogates and build youth trust in others to help reduce the racial gap.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis could not have been completed without the steady guidance of my advisor, Dr. Chris Toppe. Thanks also to 2005 GPPI graduate Nicole Love, who first told me of Chris’ enthusiasm and expertise on this subject.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Tables</th>
<th>v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter One: Youth Volunteers – Who and Why?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data &amp; Variables of Analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Findings: Summary Statistics</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Two: Analyzing Motivations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Findings</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations and Conclusions</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Volunteer Participation by Race/Ethnicity 13
Table 2: Parent Volunteering by Race/Ethnicity 14
Table 3: Religious Service Attendance by Race/Ethnicity 14
Table 4: Service Learning Participation by Race/Ethnicity 14
Table 5: Civic Attitudes by Race/Ethnicity 15
Table 6: Linear Probability Model 20
Table 7: Stepwise Model 21
Chapter One: Youth Volunteering – Who & Why?

INTRODUCTION

“For a nation whose history begins with We The People, it seems self-evident that Citizen Engagement Matters.” – CIRCLE: The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2002

For democracy to thrive, successive generations of citizens must be engaged in civic activities. In his 1993 book Making Democracy Work, civic participation scholar Robert Putnam concludes that “democracies work better when there exists an independent and long-standing tradition of civic engagement.” Putnam’s indicators for civic engagement include voting, political participation, newspaper readership, and participation in social associations. These activities help promote the public good and create social networks that in turn derive norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness central to community connectedness. As pundits sound alarms about Americans’ increasing isolation from the public square, considerable attention is being paid to civic engagement attributes – particularly voting and volunteering – by those looking for ways to strengthen the country’s social capital.

Exercising the right and responsibility to vote is a critical indicator of democratic involvement. However, voting occurs infrequently, for most citizens only every two or four years, and it is an avenue of engagement closed to society’s youngest citizens. In contrast, volunteering occurs on a continuous, ongoing basis. For youth who cannot yet vote – a cohort (ages 12 to 17) that represents over 8 percent of the US population

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according to the 2000 Census\textsuperscript{2} – volunteer activities provide an opportunity to engage and make significant contributions to their community. This form of engagement in community affairs has far-reaching importance, as previous research suggests that young people who are involved in volunteer activities are more likely to become politically aware, empowered, philanthropic, and participatory citizens (Flanagan, 2001; Galston, 2001; and Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). Encouraging and supporting the expansion of volunteer behavior is therefore an important step in building a strong society for the future.

In democratic societies, civic engagement should be inclusive, with all people encouraged to participate. However, in the United States the tendency to seek change through direct action, by volunteering, is not exhibited equally across racial lines. Minority youth, especially Hispanic youth, volunteer at lower levels than their white counterparts.\textsuperscript{3} This paper examines several key influences on volunteer behavior – social behaviors, such as church attendance, family involvement, and experience with service learning, and individual characteristics, such as school performance and attitudes about society – to determine whether they differ among minority and non-minority youth.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} US Census Bureau, “American Fact Finder,” http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet
\item \textsuperscript{3} Lopez, Mark Hugo, “Civic Engagement Among Minority Youth,” \textit{CIRCLE: The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement}, September 2002, pp. 8-10
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Previous research suggests that the presence of these influences allow us to predict volunteer behavior (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995; Keeter et al, 2002). If minority and non-minority youth are exposed to different influences, and these lead them to volunteer at different rates, is there any action that can be taken to change this? I suggest a number of steps that can be taken by both government policymakers and nonprofit organizations to intervene. These include expansion and alteration of service learning programs, and more efforts by nonprofit organizations to supplement missing parental encouragement by exercising the “power of the ask” to increase volunteer involvement by underrepresented youth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a significant volume of existing literature on the various facets of my research question – youth civic engagement, civic education (including service learning), and disparities in civic engagement behaviors between minority and non-minority youth. One study for understanding the overall context in which youth civic engagement is occurring – or not occurring – in American society today is CIRCLE’s 2002 study, “The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait.” This study examines 19 core participatory activities and identifies distinctly different behavior among youth and adults. I am particularly interested in the findings about the civic

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activities in which youth choose to participate and their motivation for such participation.

Overall, the cohort of young Americans 15 to 25 (referred to in this study as the DotNets) “trail their elders in attentiveness to public affairs and in electoral participation, but hold their own in community-related and volunteer activities and in activities that give voice to their concerns.” DotNets are equally likely as other generations to have “worked informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live,” to have participated in a charity run/walk, or to be regular volunteers with a non-electoral group. This study points out that civic engagement must be created through deliberate effort. It cites evidence of several promising approaches to encourage and increase youth civic and political engagement, including school-based initiatives, invitations to involvements, and open political discussion in school and at home.

The importance of parental involvement and family characteristics is emphasized through the finding that “many of the important lesson for engagement are learned at home.” Both being raised in a home with regular political discussions and being raised in a home where someone volunteered make a young adult nearly three times more

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5 Ibid, p. 1
6 Ibid, p. 13
likely to be civically involved\textsuperscript{7}. While acknowledging the importance of schools as a training ground for civic involvement, the study identifies an important qualification – the impact of civic instruction in school depends significantly on the structure of that instruction. Open discussion, where students are encouraged to make up their own mind and to discuss opinions different than their own, is a key factor in promoting the development of students’ civic skills and interest.\textsuperscript{8} This finding is critical to efforts to design service learning programs with long-term positive impact. This study finds that of student volunteers, those who are encouraged to discuss their volunteer work in class are twice as likely to volunteer regularly as those who don’t get the chance to talk about their experiences (64\% vs. 30\%, respectively).\textsuperscript{9}

Beyond home and school, this study addresses the importance of outside groups and institutions in boosting youth civic engagement. Two findings are of particular importance. First is the role of religious organizations – DotNets who attend religious services regularly are more active in both the civic and political realm than are those who do not take part in any religious activities. Second is the importance of asking youth to get involved – over half of the current volunteers surveyed had someone else facilitate their initial contact with the group. This finding suggests that one strong mechanism for increasing youth involvement is to ask them more often.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid, p. 17  
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid, p. 32  
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid, p. 33  
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, p. 35
The CIRCLE study emphasizes several important motivating factors for youth civic involvement. Given the extensive research and public attention to disparities between youth and adult civic behavior, especially the distinction between young Americans as active volunteers and young Americans as infrequent voters, determining the motivations for youth volunteer participation can shed light on connecting this behavior to the larger civic arena. Because my research focuses on the cohort of youth not yet old enough to vote, research on volunteering and educational motivations, both in the home and at school, is particularly relevant. In his 2002 article, “The Volunteering Decision – What Prompts It? What Sustains It?” Paul Light explores a variety of potential influences on volunteering behavior. He discounts presidential calls to service as being relatively ineffectual, despite their grand rallying rhetoric. Instead, he focuses on the importance of direct encouragement, through service learning and requests of family members and friends, as being the most effective way to increase volunteer participation. This is an important motivation for youth as well as adults, as emphasized in the CIRCLE study’s conclusions about the importance of family role models and of asking youth to participate. Light also highlights the importance of the service act being seen as meaningful by the volunteer for continued

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13 CIRCLE: The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait, pp. 30-36
involvement to occur. This attribute is particularly relevant to the design of effective service learning programs in schools.

Encouragement of civic participation can occur in both formal (i.e. schools) and informal (i.e. family, church) settings. In his 2001 study, “Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education,” William Galston examines these various sources of civic education, including schools, family, and voluntary associations. His observations about the importance of high schools in fostering civic understanding and practice are particularly useful. Galston cites previous research (Conover & Searing, 2000) that focuses on four key elements of the school experience: the sense of school as community; students’ level of civic engagement in school and extracurricular activities; the level of political discussion in school; and the formal academic curriculum. Each of these elements is determined to affect young people’s civic consciousness and practice, suggesting a wide variety of approaches to encouraging engagement available within the school setting.

Galston also discusses the recent growth in service learning as an alternative (or supplement) to traditional civic education. Defined by the National Center for Educational Statistics as “curriculum-based community service that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities,” service learning had become

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15 Ibid, 227
part of the curriculum in nearly ½ of all U.S. public high schools by 1999. Galston’s review of the service learning literature finds “mixed but encouraging results,” and reveals the importance of program design to program effects. He emphasizes Skinner and Chapman’s findings (1999:3) that the service element “must be organized in relation to an academic course or curriculum, must have clear learning objectives, and must address real community needs over a sustained period of time.”

A recent CIRCLE working paper, “The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning on High School Students’ Civic Engagement,” provides additional analysis of the potential of service learning programs to positively effect youth civic behavior. The study notes that “the school-based practice of service-learning offers a promising approach to the challenge of civic engagement since it capitalizes both on students’ willingness to volunteer and on the options presented in community settings for students to become civically engaged.” However, it cautions that there is substantial variation in youth outcomes depending on program design and quality. Service-learning is found to be most effective when the following characteristics are present: 1) programs last at least one semester; 2) students are engaged in service tasks with clear goals that meet genuine community needs; 3) student voice is maximized in selecting,

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16 Ibid, 229
designing, implementing, and evaluating the project; and 4) student reflection is encouraged before, during, and after service.\textsuperscript{18}

Beyond school and family, another important influence on youth volunteer behavior is religious institutions. A recent study by the Corporation for National and Community Service\textsuperscript{19} found that 61% of teens who attend religious services regularly – in general, once weekly – volunteer, and 27% of these are regular volunteers; whereas among teens who do not regularly attend religious services, only 40% volunteer and 14% are regular volunteers. Interestingly, the study also found that less than half of teen volunteers who are regular church attendees volunteer primarily with their congregation: 62% volunteer with secular organizations. These findings suggest that religious institutions – with school and family – can be considered a third social environment of critical importance to encouraging youth volunteering and community connectedness.

Having identified these three main sources of youth civic encouragement, I turn to the role of race and ethnicity in predicting volunteer behavior. Research (CIRCLE 2002, Flanagan \& Faison, 2001) on youth volunteering suggests that race and ethnicity are related to the likelihood of volunteering, with minority youth less likely to be volunteers than their white counterparts. The reasons for these lower participation

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Corporation for National and Community Service, in collaboration with US Census Bureau and Independent Sector, survey of 3,178 American youth, January – March 2005, report unpublished
rates among minorities are less clear. This paper examines several possible explanations, for example, the correlation between race and certain family characteristics, such as having parents who volunteer, that affect the likelihood of youth volunteering. I find that minority youth are equally likely as their white counterparts to participate in service-learning at school, and that racial discrepancies exist in regular attendance at religious services. After finding a race effect on youth volunteer behavior (holding other variables constant), I look for factors that can help mitigate this disparity. For instance, strengthening service learning programs in public education and tailoring programs to the specific interests and needs of minority communities. Also, participation in community organizations such as churches, which play a particularly important role in many African-American communities, could be another route to increased community volunteer behavior by minority youth.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data & Variables of Analysis

To conduct this study, I used data from the Youth Volunteering, Service, and Civic Engagement Survey, a national survey of 3,178 American youth between ages 12 to 18. This survey was conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service, in collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau and Independent Sector, between January and March 2005. Respondents were asked about their volunteer

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activities and experiences with school-based service-learning projects. The survey also
gathered information on education, family, religious involvement and community
associations, as well as the youths’ sense of empowerment and connections to their
community.

Michael O’Neill (University of San Francisco) has raised methodological concerns
about existing research on giving and volunteering. Most relevant for this analysis, in
his 2000 study of Californian’s voting behavior, he found that when controls for
income, education, and immigrant status are included in measures of giving and
volunteering, ethnic and racial group differences disappear. 21 While there is no
information on immigrant status in the CNCS data set I used, income data is included.
I run two sets of analyses, one to hold income discrepancies constant and the other to
allow for the secondary influences that occur as a function of the increased likelihood
of minority communities to be low-income. In contrast with O’Neill’s findings, I find
that even when controlling for income, significant discrepancies still exist in the
volunteer behavior of minority and white youth.

To conduct my analysis, I use variables measuring both social and individual factors
that are proposed to influence youth volunteering behavior. Though specifically
interested in the influence of social factors, I believe that individual factors are also

21 O’Neill, Michael, “Research on Giving and Volunteering: Methodological Concerns,” Nonprofit and
correlated with youth volunteer behavior and thus I hold them constant as I measure the social factors. The social variables I include are parent volunteering behavior, church attendance, and participation in service learning at school. The individual variables I use are civic attitudes – whether the respondent feels he/she can personally make a difference, and whether the respondent believes other people are generally trustworthy.

I have recoded the variables to create four distinct racial and ethnic groups – non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic blacks, Hispanics of any race, and all others. I designate blacks and Hispanics as minorities, and use these two groups, along with white, in my analysis of variations in volunteering behavior and influences between white and minority youth.

Preliminary Findings: Summary Statistics

The data support previous research findings of lower and less frequent volunteer participation among black and Hispanic youth compared to white youth. Episodic volunteers are characterized as youth who volunteer less than 16 hours (or 2 full days) per year. Occasional volunteers are those who volunteer more than 16 hours but less than 56 hours per year (two to seven full days, or approximately one hour per week), and Regular volunteers spend more than 56 hours per year (on average, more than one hour weekly) volunteering.
**TABLE 1: VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>WHITE</th>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>HISPANIC</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-volunteers</strong></td>
<td>29.13%</td>
<td>40.70%</td>
<td>42.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episodic volunteers</td>
<td>27.92%</td>
<td>24.07%</td>
<td>23.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional volunteers</td>
<td>21.02%</td>
<td>14.70%</td>
<td>18.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular volunteers</td>
<td>21.93%</td>
<td>20.53%</td>
<td>15.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All volunteers</td>
<td>70.87%</td>
<td>59.30%</td>
<td>57.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean volunteer hours per year*</td>
<td>82.03</td>
<td>89.62</td>
<td>67.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Mean hours per year for individuals who have volunteered within past year; non-volunteers (zero hours/year) not included in this analysis.

Volunteer participation for both blacks and Hispanics is significantly lower ($\alpha = .05$) than the volunteer participation of whites. However, when comparing the portion of each group that does volunteer at all, there are no statistically significant differences between the groups in hours per year spent volunteering.

The basic question is if these differences are statistically significant when the other social and individual variables are considered. I also find variation among the my main expected predictors of volunteer behavior – parent volunteering (having at least one parent who regularly volunteers), religious service attendance (which I have recoded into two categories – attends weekly v. other), service learning experiences, and personal civic attitudes – for minority and white youth. These differences are statistically significant for parent volunteering, religious service attendance, and trustful civil attitude. There is not statistically significant difference among groups for service learning experience or belief in ability to personally make a difference.
TABLE 2: PARENT VOLUNTEERING BY RACE/ETHNICITY

<table>
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<th>WHITE</th>
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<th>HISPANIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least one parent</td>
<td>46.42%</td>
<td>27.43%</td>
<td>25.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents</td>
<td>22.19%</td>
<td>12.21%</td>
<td>8.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td>18.11%</td>
<td>12.55%</td>
<td>12.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father only</td>
<td>6.13%</td>
<td>2.67%</td>
<td>4.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No parents volunteer</td>
<td>53.58%</td>
<td>72.57%</td>
<td>74.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using SAS, I determine that at least one parent volunteers at statistically significantly higher levels for white youth than for black and Hispanic youth.

TABLE 3: RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE BY RACE/ETHNICITY

<table>
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<th>WHITE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend frequently:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weekly or more</td>
<td>49.09%</td>
<td>61.66%</td>
<td>45.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend infrequently:</td>
<td>50.91%</td>
<td>38.34%</td>
<td>54.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once/month or less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Black youth are more likely than either Hispanic or white youths to regularly attend religious services. The difference between white and Hispanic youths is also statistically significant, with a lower percentage of regular attendees among Hispanic youth. All results are statistically significant at $\alpha = .05$

TABLE 4: SERVICE LEARNING PARTICIPATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WHITE</th>
<th>BLACK</th>
<th>HISPANIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated in service learning in past year</td>
<td>38.40%</td>
<td>33.59%</td>
<td>35.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate in service learning</td>
<td>61.60%</td>
<td>66.41%</td>
<td>64.65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no statistically significant difference in service learning participation among white, black, and Hispanic youth.
TABLE 5: CIVIC ATTITUDES BY RACE/ETHNICITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Believe that I can personally</td>
<td>58.37%</td>
<td>60.91%</td>
<td>63.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make difference to solve community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe that, in general, people</td>
<td>53.17%</td>
<td>40.61%</td>
<td>40.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can be trusted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no statistically significant difference among groups for respondent’s belief that he/she can personally make difference. However, there is a difference between attitudes of trust for white and minority youth. Both black and Hispanic youth are less likely to believe that people can be trusted than white youth (α = .05).

**Hypothesis**

Having demonstrated through descriptive statistics that minority youth are statistically less likely to be volunteers than their white counterparts, I then test the hypothesis that the social factors which influence youth volunteering have different explanatory power for minority and white youth. In this analysis, I collapse the volunteer frequency categories to create one binary variable for volunteer (youth who have volunteered for any amount of time in the past year versus the baseline of youth who have not volunteered at all in the past year). This is the dependent variable in my linear probability model. The social and individual factors analyzed in the descriptive statistics are my independent variables. To test my hypothesis, I use stepwise regression and a general linear probability model to examine the most distinct and predictive social factors for white compared to minority youth. This analysis allows
me to identify the most significant explanatory variables and to evaluate the effectiveness of these variables for predicting volunteer behavior in the different subgroups. By identifying what sets groups apart, as well as what they have in common, I am able to make useful policy recommendations – certain policies can influence the volunteering spirit of all youth, while others can target groups under-represented in today’s volunteers.
Chapter Two: Analyzing Motivations

Key Findings

As a baseline model, I run a general linear probability model to determine the differential effect of each of my explanatory variables on the likelihood of a youth to be a volunteer. Several findings are of particular interest (see Table 6, Model 1A). As expected, I find that as family income increases, likelihood of volunteering increases. Specifically, each increase of $10,000 in annual family income results in a 1.5 percent increase in the likelihood that someone volunteers, holding race constant. Results on race and volunteer behavior are also consistent with my predictions. Black youth are 6.6% less likely than white youth to be volunteers, while Hispanic youth are 11.1% less likely to volunteer.

Of the individual and social factors measured, all but trust in others have statistical significance and a large positive effect on likelihood of volunteering. In this initial model, these factors are measured aggregate across minority and white youth. Youth who have at least one parent who volunteers are 19.7% more likely to volunteer than youth whose parents do not volunteer. Youth who attend church regularly (defined as at least weekly) are 18.3% more likely than those without regular religious attendance to volunteer. Youth who have participated in a service learning program within the past year are 13.1% more likely than youth without this educational experience to be volunteers. Finally, youth who believe that they personally can make a difference are
14.1% more likely to volunteer than youth who do not feel empowered to affect change.

When income is not held constant, two notable changes can be identified. First, the racial discrepancies in volunteer behavior increase, suggesting a correlation between race and income. In this model (see Table 6, Model 1B), black youth are 8.6% less likely than their white counterparts to be volunteers, almost two percentage points lower than when income was held constant. Hispanic youth are found to be 12.5% less likely than white youth to be volunteers, increasing the discrepancy by almost 1.5 percentage points. Second, parental volunteering has an even larger effect in this model than when income was held constant. Youth with at least one parent who volunteers are 20.4% percent more likely to volunteer than youth without volunteering parents, compared with 19.7% differential when income was held constant.

Having confirmed the racial differential in frequency of youth volunteer behavior, as well as the importance of various social and individual factors, I turn to further exploration of variations in these factors by race. To do this, I run three separate models and look at the relevance of each of the social and individual factors for whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Complete results can be found in Table 6, Models 2A, B, and C. Notable findings are summarized here. First, income matters in divergent ways for the three groups. For black youth, a $10,000 increase in annual family income is
predicted to increase volunteer likelihood by 2.3%, a factor 50% higher than the
predicted 1.6% increase for white youth. For Hispanic youth, income is not
statistically significant. Comparing across all three groups, having at least one parent
who volunteers increases the likelihood of youth volunteering more than any other
factor. However, it matters far more for black and Hispanic youth, all else equal.
While parental volunteer behavior makes white youth 18.5% more likely to be
volunteers, black and Hispanic youth with at least one parent who volunteers are
25.2% and 25.3% more likely, respectively, to be volunteers than their racial
counterparts who do not have a volunteering parent.

The predictive influence of regular church attendance is relatively steady across the
three groups, ranging between 17-18% increased likelihood compared to youth who do
not regularly attend religious services. Notable differences between the groups on the
predicted importance of service learning programs. Participation increases the
likelihood of white youth being volunteers by 11.1%, of black youth by 16.3%, and of
Hispanic youth by 20%. In comparison, belief in personal ability to make a difference
only increases the likelihood of Hispanic youth volunteer behavior by 11.9% and white
youth volunteer behavior by 13.6%, but holding such attitudes makes black youth
22.1% more likely to volunteer.
TABLE 6: LINEAR PROBABILITY MODEL: DEPENDENT VARIABLE = ALLVOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1A (w/income)</th>
<th>Model 1B (no income)</th>
<th>Model 2A (white)</th>
<th>Model 2B (black)</th>
<th>Model 2C (Hispanic)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-.06697*</td>
<td>-.08603**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>-.12552**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>.02917</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Incgrp</td>
<td>.01557**</td>
<td>.01682**</td>
<td>.02372**</td>
<td>.00700</td>
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<td>Onepar</td>
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<td>.20425**</td>
<td>.18523**</td>
<td>.25191**</td>
<td>.25254**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend</td>
<td>.18295**</td>
<td>.18502**</td>
<td>.18355**</td>
<td>.17641**</td>
<td>.17835**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve</td>
<td>.13125**</td>
<td>.13463**</td>
<td>.11134**</td>
<td>.16288**</td>
<td>.20020**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diff</td>
<td>.14146**</td>
<td>.14190**</td>
<td>.13633**</td>
<td>.22141**</td>
<td>.11987*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.00049</td>
<td>.00429</td>
<td>.00540</td>
<td>-.07940</td>
<td>.03653</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05
** p < .01

These comparative magnitudes are borne out using stepwise analysis. For each group, stepwise regression first separates those factors which are significant at the .15 level. The relative explanatory power of each significant variable is then provided in the form of a partial R-square score. Again, for all three groups parental volunteer behavior is the most predictive indicator of youth volunteer behavior, accounting for 8.9% of the difference between volunteers and non-volunteers among white youth, 12.06% of the difference for black youth, and 7.83% of the difference for Hispanic youth. For white youth, regular church attendance is the second most predictive factor (4.38%), while for black youth belief in ability to make a difference is the second most predictive (5.38%), and for Hispanic participation in service learning is the second most predictive factor (3.26%). The stepwise analysis mirrors LPM findings whereby income is not a significant predictor for Hispanic youth, and it predicts only a small amount of the variation in likelihood of volunteer behavior for white (0.34%) and...
black (1.09%) youth. It is also interesting to note that the social and individual factors
I use predict a higher percentage of total variation for black youth (24.2%) than for
white (17.63%) or Hispanic youth (15.85%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7: STEPWISE: DEPENDENT VARIABLE = ALLVOL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables of significance at .15, partial R-sq reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 3A (white)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onepar = .0890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attend = .0438</td>
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<tr>
<td>diff = .0255</td>
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<tr>
<td>serve = .0146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incgrp = .0034</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model R-square = .1763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results presented above confirm my hypothesis that not only do minority youth
volunteer at lower rates than white youth, but different factors influence the volunteer
behavior of the groups. One particularly useful finding is that the volunteer behavior
of black and Hispanic youth responds to different influences, suggesting that policies
to increase minority youth volunteering would be most successfully if designed
differently for these two groups.

Before turning to programs likely to have specific success with minority youth, one
finding can direct efforts to increase the volunteer behavior of all youths. For white,
black, and Hispanic youth, the largest influence on volunteer behavior is having at least
one parent who volunteers. This suggests the importance of role models for
encouraging youth to volunteer. It also supports earlier findings by CIRCLE that family characteristics are important in determining volunteer engagement by youth, and could also confirm CIRCLE conclusions – echoed by Paul Light – on the importance of inviting youth to participate. Though I do not explicitly examine this question, it seems quite likely that parents who volunteer would ask their children to join them in such activities. However, because my summary statistics demonstrate that less than half of white youth have a parent who volunteers, while for black and Hispanic youth this number is closer to ¾ without a volunteering parent, there is significant opportunity to increase volunteering behavior of all youth through development of expanded parental role models.

I see two possible approaches. The first, with the highest likelihood of success, is for schools and community organizations to reach out directly to parents. Schools could expand opportunities for parents to get involved in classroom or field study activities, or where service learning programs are offered, to encourage joint child-parent participation. Religious organizations – which are another important influence on youth volunteer behavior – could design opportunities for parents to participate in youth group activities, thereby creating avenues for youth and parents to volunteer together. Beyond these efforts to directly engage parents, “surrogate” parenting programs that provide strong role models for youth could also have an important impact on increasing volunteer behavior. Development or expansion of role model
based programs could be informed by another one of my findings to strengthen their impact, especially with black youth. Youth who believe that they can personally make a difference in their communities are more likely to be volunteers than youth who do not hold this belief. For black youth, this belief increases the probability of being a volunteer by 22 percent. Given that almost 40 percent of black youth do not believe that they can make a difference, there is a distinct opportunity for improvement. If role model or mentoring programs also encourage leadership by black youth, and/or are designed around smaller-scale projects whose impact can be clearly seen by the youth, there is a strong likelihood of increasing black youth participation.

For Hispanic youth, after parental volunteer behavior, participation in service learning is the most important determinant of volunteer behavior. Such participation was also found to increase the likelihood of black and white youth to be volunteers. These findings suggest that expansion of quality service learning programs should be encouraged, especially in schools with high percentages of Hispanic youth.

Taken as a whole, these results are encouraging. Although I found the expected discrepancy between the volunteer behavior of white and minority youth, the factors which I identified as most important to determining youth volunteering can be increased through deliberate effort. Educational policymakers have an important role to play in encouraging the expansion of service learning and mentoring programs in
schools, as well as inviting increased parental participation in such experiences.

Community and nonprofit organizations must also increase their efforts to engage youth as volunteers, following the most likely success strategies outlined here.

Combined, these efforts can help lessen the volunteer discrepancies between white and minority youth and increase the volunteer behavior of all youth, outcomes which will take important steps toward greater civic participation and inclusion of all groups in this country’s democratic institutions.
REFERENCES


US Census Bureau, “American Fact Finder,”
http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet