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Youth policies inspire idealism in lawmakers and practitioners. Although this desire occasionally seems disingenuous, we should not discount the genuine care that politicians and constituents give to youth issues. In fact, we care so deeply about these issues that they often strain at our fundamental principles and beliefs. Those that argue for expanded government programs share the same idealistic passion for youth as those that focus on families, but their principles and ideologies are often at odds. From education and public health to crime and governance, youth policies charge the fundamental challenges of our society with passionate idealism.

In this Spring 2005 issue of the Georgetown Public Policy Review we explore some of the challenges and difficult choices that our society faces when crafting youth policy. In the opening feature of this issue, Paul Papierno and Stephen Ceci identify a troubling choice emerging in our public education system. Should we expand curriculum so that our best students are able to compete with the best students around the world, or should we focus instead on our most challenged students in order to reduce inequality here at home? The choice touches on a dichotomy deep in American political philosophy: How do we choose between achievement and equality of opportunity?

The second feature in this issue addresses the tough choices that society faces with regard to abortion. Young women who choose to have abortions make more money later in life than childbearing women, but Daniel Allott discovers that they are also more likely to experience depression. Mr. Allott encourages policymakers to consider these mental health consequences when they examine the costs of abortion. In the process, Allott raises a fundamen-
tual question about the role of government in protecting its citizens: Should people be helped to face the risks of their decisions or left to do it on their own?

The third and final feature in this issue examines youth and civic engagement. Today’s youth have shown a tendency to make the choice to volunteer locally rather than engage in state or national politics. Goutam Jois and Chris Toppe explore the attitudes and situations that underlie this choice and examine its consequences for the future of American democracy. Increased turnout in the 2004 election suggests a positive trend in youth voting but persistent feelings of alienation still raise troubling questions about the principles of our democracy.

A special section in this year’s Review is devoted to the Georgetown Public Policy Institute’s annual Student Conference. Notes from the conference are presented in brief essay format on topics ranging from youth unemployment and civic engagement to urban design and gun violence.

This issue also contains the first summary of research into the federal government’s latest experiment in school choice. Dr. Patrick Wolf, the lead evaluator of the D.C. School Choice Incentive Act, presents evidence that the new program has already begun to reach needy students, but he identifies a number of lingering questions about school choice that still need to be answered. Scott Stossel’s exhaustive biography of Sargent Shriver and his legacy for today’s youth is reviewed in this issue as well.

Whether it is school choice or pro-choice, the principles of our democracy find their expression in youth policies. They are contentious at times, but only because we share hope for today’s youth. We at the Review hope you enjoy these discussions on youth policy and we thank you for reading.

Ryan Tuggle
Editor-in-Chief
Promoting Equity or Inducing Disparity: The Costs and Benefits of Widening Achievement Gaps Through Universalized Interventions

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We bring attention to a largely unknown aspect of achievement gaps. In particular, researchers and policy-makers have focused much effort on the narrowing of domestic achievement gaps between various sub-groups of students, but have paid considerably less attention to gaps in achievement between American students and their international peers. The impact of this latter problem may be particularly disconcerting in light of findings that America's top students are performing at levels appreciably lower than that of the top students of our international trading partners. Adding to this problem is the evidence from a number of fields which shows that when interventions that are targeted to lower-performing students are also given to their higher-performing peers, the latter sometimes benefit disproportionately more. Although this results in a narrowing of gaps between our top echelon of students and their international counterparts, any preexisting gaps between lower- and higher-performing students within the U.S. are unintentionally widened. Following a discussion of the mechanisms by which gains are disproportionately distributed, we delve into the political, economic, and moral considerations of the potential trade-off between narrowing domestic versus international gaps.
INTRODUCTION

Among the many issues confronting America's educational system, few have been so passionately discussed as the causes of and proposed remedies for gaps in achievement between students of different ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups. In the following essay we bring to light an aspect of this issue that is unknown to policy-makers and academics, or if it is known its thorny implications preclude it from discussions of achievement gaps. Specifically, when traditionally targeted interventions intended to narrow gaps are offered to both higher- and lower-performing students, the higher-performing group sometimes benefits disproportionately more. As we show, the same is true when non-targeted interventions are utilized differently by various subgroups of students. Although this unintentional widening of pre-existing gaps may seem to undermine the goal of narrowing gaps, this outcome is particularly intriguing in light of recent findings that the performance of America's top echelon of students lags behind that of the highest-performing students of our international trading partners. We begin by providing a backdrop for this dilemma and discussing the mechanism by which this unintentional gap-widening occurs, offering examples in different domains. We then probe the political, economic, and moral consequences of both strategies — raising the bottom students and raising the top students. Later, we ask whether the widening of gaps is necessarily undesirable or goes against our nation's political philosophy.

THE OTHER ACHIEVEMENT GAP

For over thirty years the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has measured children's mathematics and reading skills and has consistently revealed large achievement gaps among various sub-groups of students. In the most recent analyses from the NAEP 2003 assessments, both black and Hispanic fourth graders scored about 0.92 standard deviations below white fourth graders in reading and 1.08 standard deviations lower in mathematics. The policy implications of a full standard deviation gap represent one of the most urgent national problems facing America. Normal curve deviates tell the story suc-
cinctly: For example, assuming equivalent standard deviations among black and white samples, homogeneity of variance, bivariate normality, and roughly equal sample sizes, then (a) randomly selecting black and white scores from the combined sample will result in the White child exceeding the black child 76 percent of the time; (b) 84 percent of white children will perform better than the average black child; (c) if a class that is 50-50 black-white is divided into high- and low-ability groups, white students will constitute approximately 70 percent of the higher group; (d) if only the top 5 percent of students in such a class is eligible for gifted/talented programs, such programs will have thirteen times more whites than blacks; (e) conversely, if the lowest 5 percent of all students is eligible for a special education programs this will translate into classes that are preponderantly black even though they may comprise only a small fraction of the student body (Rock and Stenner 2005). Translated into an IQ-type scale, a standard deviation difference amounts to approximately a 15-point IQ gap.

Lest one imagine the gaps disappearing by secondary school, numerous studies have documented large achievement gaps among high school students, with black and Hispanic high school students scoring around a full standard deviation below their white counterparts, though the exact magnitudes vary with the content area, age group and cohort tested (e.g., Hauser and Huang 1996; Grissmer, Kirby, Berends, and Williamson 1994; Williams and Ceci 1997). On the SAT the black-white gap is about 100 points. Likewise, recent results from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2003 show that black and Hispanic fourth and eighth graders score below their white peers in assessments of math and science. Some progress has been made recently, as gaps in math scores between black and white students have narrowed at both the fourth and eighth grade levels. Additionally, gaps in science have narrowed between black and white fourth graders and between black and Hispanic and white eighth graders (Gonzales Guzmán, Partelow, Pahlke, Jocelyn, Kastberg, and Williams 2004).

Notwithstanding this recent narrowing of gaps, the persistence and magnitude of achievement gaps continue to pose perplexing dilemmas for policy makers, researchers, and educators, who have embarked on a relentless pursuit to reduce or eliminate dis-
parity between sub-groups of students. Although these efforts should rightly be at the forefront of educational reform, here we bring attention to a different kind of achievement gap that, although arguably equally problematic for our national interests, has received little attention. In addition to reporting on the achievement gaps between sub-groups of students within the United States, TIMSS data also include comparisons of performance of U.S. students relative to their peers in other countries who participate in the assessment. As many researchers and policy-makers are already aware, data along these lines have revealed that American eighth and twelfth graders score well below students from many other participating nations in both mathematics and science. In fact, according to a report from the National Center for Education Statistics (1998), U.S. twelfth graders scored among the lowest of all participating nations in both subjects. This finding alone should serve as a wake-up call to American students, educators, and policy-makers. But as disconcerting as this finding may seem, what should be equally troubling is the lesser-known reality that when comparing our most advanced students to the top 10-20% of students in other participating nations, America’s top students not only scored below the international average but they did not outperform any other country in either math or science. Thus, it is not the case that the test scores of American students were under-estimated because of a disproportionate number of low-scoring students being maintained in schools, but rather that the entire range of America’s scores was shifted downward compared to other countries. Although more recent data from the TIMSS 2003 reveals that the relative standing of American eight graders in both math and science has increased compared to their international peers, much improvement is still needed.

Clearly, both issues — gap closing and performance of advanced students — warrant concern. However, the latter problem deserves particular attention because it is our top students who will largely comprise our future political, scientific, and business elites and who will have a disproportionately large influence in our competition with our international trading partners (Bronfenbrenner, McClelland, Wethington, Moen, and Ceci 1996; Kingston and Lewise 1990). Undoubtedly, it would behoove us as a nation to concurrently resolve both of these dilemmas. And, on the surface, it would seem that solutions to each problem would
not necessarily be at odds with each other, as distinct programs could be designed to reduce the gap between top students and their international peers as well as to narrow the gaps between subgroups of students within the U.S. However, findings from research in a number of fields reveal that this presumption may not be the case when interventions designed to narrow gaps within the U.S. are made available to advanced students to elevate their achievement vis-à-vis that of the students of our international trading partners.

Efforts to reduce achievement gaps among subgroups have taken the form of myriad cognitive, social, and economic interventions that have been targeted to those groups of children identified as disadvantaged in any of these domains (i.e., poor readers, at-risk youth, and economically disadvantaged students). From their inception, the underlying goal of many of these interventions has been to reduce existing gaps between lower-performing and higher-performing youth by raising the level of performance of the former group to that of their more advantaged peers. Thus, in practice, many targeted interventions are usually only offered to those children who are most in need. However, it turns out that when targeted interventions are universalized and offered to both lower-performing and higher-performing students, the latter group sometimes gains disproportionately more. The result is the unintended consequence that although both groups may improve in performance, any preexisting gap is actually exacerbated as a result of allowing the advantaged group to participate in it.

**Mechanisms of Disproportionate Benefits**

*Performance-based differentials.* When targeted interventions are universalized (i.e., made available to all students regardless of their achievement level), two mechanisms seem to underlie disproportionate gains made by higher-performing students: a performance-based differential and a utilization-based differential. A performance-based differential occurs when a universalized intervention is given to both lower-performing and higher-performing students and as a result of participation in the intervention the latter group performs better on some measurable outcome, such as a test of vocabulary. This mechanism is related to the idea of aptitude-treatment interaction, popularized by Cronbach and Snow (1977;
see Snow 1989 for review), which posits that the effectiveness of an instructional strategy will be related to the abilities of the recipients of that instruction. That is, a school intervention may result in differential effects, depending on the characteristics of the students receiving the intervention.

Studies in the cognitive domain have demonstrated this result when interventions intended to train students in the use of cognitive strategies have been offered to students of higher and lower ability and socioeconomic status. For example, Borkowski and Peck (1986) showed that prior to being trained on a number of cognitive strategies, gifted students and their non-gifted counterparts differed in their metamemory skills—one's understanding of one's own memory strategies used during cognitive tasks. Following intervention training, although both groups showed improvement, the gifted sample benefited even more, thus widening the preexisting gap. Similarly, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1988) demonstrated disproportionate gains by gifted students over their non-gifted counterparts in the number of strategies incorporated and the transfer of those strategies to novel tasks following strategy training. And as another example, Ruiz (1985) observed a disproportionate gain in academic performance by higher SES adolescents following participation in the well-known Instrumental Enrichment intervention program (see Savell, Twohig, and Rachford 1986).

Of course, performance-based disproportionate gains by higher-performing students extend beyond interventions that attempt to train gifted and non-gifted students in memory strategies. In a more recent example, Penno, Wilkinson, and Moore (2002) employed a strategy in which students repeatedly listened to stories and were given explanations of target vocabulary words by their teachers. Although children of all ability levels benefited from the intervention, higher ability children benefited disproportionately more. This was demonstrated by significantly greater accuracy in higher ability children's post-intervention use of target words. Overall, a number of studies have demonstrated an interaction between student aptitude and structure of instructional strategy, wherein higher ability students benefit disproportionately more from unstructured, indirect instructional treatments (see Snow 1989; but see Cole Dale Mills and Jenkins 1993 for evidence that higher-performing students gain more from direct instruction-
al treatments). These examples are meant only as illustrations of the problem, and numerous other examples of the "rich getting richer" could be given (see Ceci and Papierno 2005).

Utilization-based differentials. A second mechanism by which preexisting gaps are unintentionally widened is rooted in differences in utilization of, or access to, an intervention at the group level. More specifically, even programs that are not targeted at any particular group—such as community programs, merit-based aid, and groups that have the potential to offer proportionate benefits for anyone willing to take advantage of them—sometimes contribute to widening gaps when they are not fully utilized by, or are limited in their accessibility to, those who are most in need. Two notable examples of utilization differences come from the economic domain. Dynarski (2000) showed that the Hope Scholarship program and Lifetime Learning Credit, which offer tax credits to families of any student attending college, benefit middle- and upper-income families more than lower-income families. In particular, three characteristics of the tax incentive lead to widening gaps: (1) income cutoffs for eligibility were initially set high enough that they were exceeded by fewer than ten percent of households; (2) need-based aid, like the Pell Grants, offset allowable educational expenses thereby eliminating any accessibility to Hope Scholarship benefits to students who received maximum financial aid; and, (3) because the benefit is in the form of a non-refundable tax credit, the lowest-income families who are most in need but who don't earn enough to pay taxes, are ineligible. Dynarski similarly points out that the Education IRA, which allows for tax-free interest growth on after-tax dollars put into college savings, results in increased disparity between families who can afford to put extra income into savings compared with those who cannot. As a second case in point, in an analysis of Korean War veterans, Stanley (1999) found that educational benefits in the form of college subsidies from the GI Bills were used disproportionately by returning veterans from more advantaged backgrounds.

Broad-based examples. Before discussing the ramifications of these findings, we offer several broader examples of non-targeted programs that unintentionally widen gaps in achievement. In a study conducted by the California State University Institute for Education Reform, Furry and Hecsh (2001) found that, in spite of its intended availability to all students, benefits from the Advanced
Placement (AP) program were greater in schools with higher SES student bodies. In particular, Furry and Hecsh point out that (1) African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics participate at much lower rates than Asians and Whites in proportion to their respective enrollments; (2) smaller, rural schools often lack the funds for specialized resources and/or lack a sufficient number of qualified students to make the program financially feasible; and, (3) AP class sizes in higher-SES school are often larger because of greater awareness of program benefits by parents and students which results in greater demand. Thus, although everyone who is given accessibility to advanced placement courses has the potential to profit from participating in them, Furry and Hecsh show that benefits are garnered disproportionately by more advantaged students.

In a second broad-based example, Rockman (1995) used information from Quality Education Data to show how technology (i.e., computers in classrooms) is utilized differently in lower-SES and higher-SES schools, resulting in increased disparity. According to Rockman, students in more disadvantaged schools primarily use computers for isolated skill development and remediation, and receive qualitatively poorer computer skills training. As a consequence, students in lower-SES schools receive fewer benefits compared to students in more advantaged schools where teachers are more likely to integrate technology into classroom curricula and teacher training is generally better. Rockman explains that these differences persist even when controlling for resources in poorer and wealthier schools.

Finally, as a consequence of universal access to federal financial aid, Winter (2004) has shown that wealthier universities receive federal resources well in excess of those given to less wealthy universities. In his recent analysis of federal data on over 4,000 universities, Winter points out that universities that are members of the Ivy League admit fewer low-income students and yet receive five to twelve times the median amount of financial aid per applicant that is given to other colleges to run their low-interest loan programs, the result of successful negotiations by prestigious universities for higher base guarantees for federal aid dollars in the 1970s. Additionally, Ivy League universities are given over 500% of the median federal aid to pay work-study students. Taken together, these illustrative examples demonstrate how achievement gaps
The role that these findings may play in educational practices and policy begs the questions: As a nation, should we completely reject the notion of inducing increased variation in performance within our schools? Or, are we sometimes best served when we improve the performance of all children, regardless of how this strategy affects disparity between various sub-groups of students? Put another way, experts have long been aware that a major contributing factor in producing gaps in achievement is the inevitable amplification of initial advantage that leads to cumulative differences and an ultimate fan-spread of disparity (Dickens and Flynn 2001; Walberg and Tsai 1983). This phenomenon has traditionally been discussed in terms of deliberate, compensatory measures that could be taken to reduce initial differences that spontaneously build upon themselves and lead to increased disparity. The idea that such disparity can be intentionally induced by allowing higher-performing students to have access to interventions, as well as the ramifications of such policy, however, have rarely, if ever been considered.

As we discussed earlier, a nation’s next generation of political and business leaders, scientists, engineers, etc. is drawn overwhelmingly from its top echelon of students (Bronfenbrenner, McClelland, Wethington, Moen, and Ceci 1996; Kingston and Lewise 1990). Thus, from a political and economic perspective, one could argue that any strategy to elevate a nation’s top students might make that country more competitive with its international trading partners. The enhancement of the highest performing students could, in turn, benefit everyone as national economic growth
resulting from the success of these students could trickle down and create additional resources for their lower-performing peers. Thus, in spite of the potential gap-widening effect of elevating the top students, universalizing some interventions may contribute to a nation's future economic and political success, the reward of which might be reaped by everyone. Alternatively, the narrowing of gaps could be just as critical for a nation's future success. Reductions in future welfare dependency, teenage pregnancy, criminality, and grade retention, etc. by raising the lower-performing students' level of educational performance may prove to have a greater cost-benefit ratio compared to raising the top-performing students. Additionally, the growth of the U.S. economy in the recent past might suggest that in spite of the results of international comparisons of achievement showing that our top student lag behind those of our trading partners, our top students must nevertheless be performing well enough or our economy would not be doing so well. Accordingly, greater gains could be made by targeting resources to lower-performing students.

Thus, from a fiscal perspective the issue becomes one of comparing gains based on the economic "returns" of raising the top or bottom students. Of course, such an analysis raises some intriguing questions regarding how to gauge the relative impact of either strategy. For example, if we accept that raising the performance of our top students can further increase our economic growth, one might argue that the timing of these strategies (during secondary education) will result in benefits to society more readily than would interventions such as early education programs targeted to lower-performing children such as Head Start. This is because many of the economic returns from the latter type of intervention are in the form of indirect benefits mentioned above, that would not be realized by society at large until much later in the lives of the recipients of the intervention. Of course, this position does not take into consideration analyses which have shown that it is generally the case that earlier interventions have a better overall return than later ones, presumably due to the tendency of early gains to build-up over time, cascading into larger effects than could be achieved by investing the same resources into high school programs (e.g., Carneiro and Heckman 2003).

From a social justice position, some have attributed gaps in
college graduation rates, and subsequently earning gaps between blacks and whites, to prior differences in academic achievement by these groups (e.g., Jencks and Phillips 1998). Accordingly, universalizing some targeted interventions may serve to perpetuate future salary differentials between disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers. In a nutshell, making interventions available to students from advantaged backgrounds may ensure their future monopoly of elite jobs.

Finally, from an ethical perspective, one could argue that every student, regardless of their background, has an intrinsic right to have access to any intervention from which they might benefit. Thus, an argument could be made that access to interventions known to benefit everyone should not be based on a student's financial status, ethnic membership, aptitude level, or on the social or political consequences of that student's elevation. Of course, a compelling argument can also be made for reducing gaps on ethical grounds. Most persuasive would be the position that the achievement level of many lower-performing students is often the result of external constraints over which they have no control—such as lack of resources—and is unrelated to internal cognitive differences or intrinsic motivation. When this occurs, all efforts should be focused on eliminating these constraints so that every student has the opportunity to be among the top echelon, even if this means yielding the benefits associated with further elevating top students when financial considerations prohibit elevating both groups. From a practical perspective, it would clearly behoove us as a nation to identify those students whose innate potential for success is being needlessly masked.

**CONCLUSION**

To some, the idea that there must sometimes be a trade-off between doing all we can do to elevate the highest group and simultaneously closing the achievement gap between the highest and lowest groups is a false dichotomy: we can and should do both. However, such a view ignores the reality that at times there are competing interests that are not easily reconciled without one group being favored over the other. To use an example from another domain, there is growing evidence that HHC (hereditary hemochromatosis) is detrimental to the health of middle-aged
white men who get elevated iron from cereals and breadstuffs that are fortified. Sweden has responded to this evidence by de-fortifying foods to reduce iron overload and slow down the rate of acceleration into clinical disease (see, e.g., Olsson, Väisänen, Konar, and Bruce 1997). Accordingly, because HHC mostly affects middle-aged white men they are the beneficiaries of de-fortification. On the other hand, the decision in Sweden to increase iron deficiency disproportionately affects menstruating and pregnant females. If a similar decision were to be made to de-fortify foods in America (hereditary hemochromatosis is the most common genetic disorder affecting Caucasians in the United States with a rate of approximately 1 in 150-200) then it would be necessary to come up with realistic ways to offset the resulting iron loss for low-income children who are disproportionately affected by iron deficiency. Even if this were possible, the onus would be placed on low-income families to get supplementation. It smacks of a classic political trade-off: forego an intervention and one group suffers; implement an intervention a different group loses. In the context of school interventions, we must ask whether universalizing interventions to elevate the top students and close international achievement gaps is more or less rational than foregoing the universalization of interventions in order to close achievement gaps domestically.

When deciding whether or not universalizing targeted interventions is congruent or not with our national interests, several qualifying points must be considered. Most importantly, we reiterate that measured performance is often correlated with demographic factors due to external constraints disproportionately endured by certain groups. Thus, the distinction between disparities in performance that reflect variation in innate abilities and/or motivation versus those that are the result of differences in resources (for which compensatory measures can be taken) is critical. Likewise, we must be mindful that disparity in how different groups benefit from interventions is often the result of power differentials, racism, and institutional discrimination. Clearly, any decision that does not consider the potent effects of environmental variation in all of its forms will be ill-informed at best.

Second, it is important to note that the widening of pre-existing gaps is not an inevitable outcome of universalizing interventions. Moreover, it should be noted that although our examples have demonstrated the potential for deliberate gap widening as a
result of universalizing interventions, in practice this does not usually occur in educational, economic, or social programs because these interventions often focus on particular skills that would be of no benefit to higher-performing students who have already obtained proficiency in that area. For example, programs to train poor readers in sound-symbol correspondence would not serve to elevate students who are already good readers. Likewise, pre-kindergarten programs have been shown to be more beneficial and have more enduring positive effects for disadvantaged children than for children of college-educated parents, as the latter already receive equivalent resources provided by these programs at home (Magnuson, Ruhm, and Waldfogel 2004; Ramey and Ramey 1998). In these instances, successful intervention could only result in the narrowing of achievement gaps and universalizing such interventions would be an irrational economic choice.

Lastly, we acknowledge that the implementation of effective interventions is an arduous task, often inherently laden with financial limitations. When universalizing interventions is financially feasible, decisions will likely be guided by ethical considerations of the ramifications of domestic gap widening. However, inevitably, making some interventions available to higher-performing students will be constrained by resources. In these cases political and economic perspectives will likely contribute more to the decision-making process. This is because new levels of funding (or a redistribution of existing funds) required to universalize a program are based on a cost-benefit analysis of providing the intervention to either lower-performing or higher-performing students. Ultimately, the debate may come down to how we conceptualize our national political philosophy. If the improvement of all students is set as a paramount goal, irrespective of how this strategy would influence existing gaps, then the examples we present may not be problematic. However, if our primary intent is to minimize disparity, then we must focus our efforts on creating more targeted programs that elevate lower-performing students without benefiting their higher-performing counterparts.

Undoubtedly, there is a mix of targeted and universalized interventions that produces the best overall cost-benefit ratio on political, economic, and moral grounds. We take no position on which strategy would best serve our national interests. Rather, our intention in writing this essay is to bring this seemingly unknown
predicament to the attention of academics and policy-makers to spur a discussion regarding the role that this debate should play in educational practices and reform.

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References


Costs and Benefits of Widening Achievement Gaps


The Long-Term Effects of Adolescent Abortion: A Predictor of Depression

Daniel Allott
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Are teenagers who become pregnant and abort at greater risk of depression than those who become pregnant and give birth? Unlike many previous studies, I utilize longitudinal data to juxtapose depression risk between these two populations. Accounting for factors such as predisposition to depression, relationship status, physical health, and life satisfaction, I attempt to determine the long-term psychological consequences of teenage pregnancy outcomes. My findings show that while teenagers who give birth experience equal levels of long-term psychological maladjustment, compared with teenagers who have abortions, most of what accounts for the former group’s depression can be attributed to the correlates of early childbirth such as negative socioeconomic conditions and feelings of powerlessness, rather than motherhood itself. Conversely, while women who had abortions as teenagers make significantly more money and feel a greater sense of efficacy than early childbearers, they still feel considerably more depressed, on average, than women who gave birth once these other factors are accounted for. Given that at least 46 million abortions are performed each year, and as more and more evidence showing the strong link between abortion and depression is produced, it is up to policymakers and lawmakers to re-evaluate current informed consent laws, increase funding for post-abortion healing, and honestly examine whether these deleterious psychological consequences constitute a major public health concern.
INTRODUCTION

Abortion grief and other psychological consequences stemming from abortion, sometimes referred to as "post-abortion syndrome," is a subject of considerable controversy. Planned Parenthood and other abortion advocates generally assert that the emotional effects of abortion are "largely positive" (Planned Parenthood, 2003). Others maintain that the emotional risks to women who elect to abort are profound and wide reaching. Of particular concern are the potentially deleterious outcomes of abortion for teenagers whose emotional development is still in the formative stage. Presently, the empirical evidence to resolve these conflicting points of view is largely inadequate. While there have been numerous studies examining the emotional consequences of childbirth and elective abortion, few have focused primarily on adolescents, and fewer still have analyzed the long-term emotional effects of pregnancy outcomes for adolescents. Among the studies that are available, findings on the link between pregnancy outcomes and long-term emotional health are both contradictory and inconclusive. Many existing studies are also plagued by methodological problems such as inconsistent and unreliable cooperation of the study population, the time-variant nature of the intensity of many women's reactions, and the inadequacy of using questionnaires and other standardized survey instruments to uncover deep-seated reactions (Speckhard 1990).

Another key limitation of the available literature regarding adolescents is that few studies have juxtaposed the psychological outcomes of abortion versus childbirth in the same analysis, a strategy that would more clearly guide public policy. While measuring the psychological effects of pregnancy outcomes for adolescents is useful, a more intriguing analysis would measure diverse pregnancy outcomes against one another. Certainly, once pregnant, a teenage girl is no longer able to decide whether or not to become pregnant. The real question then becomes: which outcome puts her at increased risk of long-term psychological problems?

In this paper I will address this question directly by examining the relationship between adolescent pregnancy outcomes and adult depression in Great Britain. Using panel data allows me to adequately control for predisposition to depression in determin-
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ing whether a link is present. In addition, I will compare a measure of depression between women who gave birth and those who aborted as youths, which will allow me to more easily provide policy recommendations that offer suitable options for pregnant teenagers.

Research Question: Are pregnant adolescents who abort at higher risk of adult depression than pregnant adolescents who give birth?

Policy Question: What types of policies implemented by governments and NGOs can best assist young women in making more informed reproductive decisions in view of the possible links with long-term psychological effects?

Abortion has been legal in most of the western world since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Accordingly, we finally have the data and methods in hand to begin to answer the types of questions I have posed. Due to the high rates of public spending on reproductive issues, the implications of finding reliable and conclusive evidence as to the long-term effects of abortion would be significant for public policy formation. In most of the developed world, adolescent birth rates are at about 3 to 5 percent (AGI 1999). Although abortion rates have fallen in the US, over a million abortions have been performed every year since 1990. Over 30 percent of U.S. pregnancies end in abortion, (AGI 2003) while the developing world possesses a 20 percent abortion rate. In total, it is estimated that at least 46 million elective abortions are performed globally each year (International Planned Parenthood website 2003). Consequently, due to the high incidence of abortion, even a small effect on health could influence the lives of many women and their families. Also, billions of dollars are spent annually by the world’s governments and non-governmental organizations to provide abortions to women. In view of what is at stake, more research into the potential link between adolescent pregnancy outcomes and long-term depression is clearly needed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In his 1995 State of the Union address, President Clinton declared that teen pregnancy was the "greatest social problem fac-
ing our nation” (SIECUS Report 1997). Today, while teenage pregnancy rates have dropped, nearly one million teenage girls experience pregnancy every year in the US (AGI 2003). In Western Europe, while teen pregnancy rates are as much as five times lower than in the US, significant amounts of public funding are appropriated for educating youth on the negative effects of teenage pregnancy. One prominent view holds that teen pregnancy carries with it a host of significant short and long-term problems. Teens, on average, who become pregnant suffer educational setbacks, and are put at a disadvantage socially and economically.

Childbirth

Until a decade ago, there seemed to be a consensus in the research concerning the socio-economic effects of teenage childbearing for women and their families. "Kids having kids," the research literature conclusively showed, was a serious problem. Many studies from the 1970s and 1980s found that teen mothers are at increased risk of being poor (Panzarine and Santelli 1987) and on welfare, and their children often lag in standards of early development. Researchers found a strong association between teenage childbearing and low levels of education and subsequent marital instability (Maynard 1996; McLanahan and Garfinkel 1993; Bumpass and McLanahan 1989; McLanahan 1994). Others alleged that children of teenage mothers were more likely to be abused (Maynard 1996; Zuravian 1988), while still others found that children of teenage single mothers were at increased risk of experiencing teenage childbearing themselves (Bolton 1980).

Today, the consensus of the research community is far less settled. Recent studies have challenged the traditional view, showing that the consequences of teenage pregnancy on long-term socioeconomic status had previously been exaggerated. Data linking teen pregnancy to negative long-term effects do not by themselves establish that teenage childbirth is the primary cause of those difficulties. In the past, even the best studies were unable to control for enough factors to convincingly establish that teenage pregnancy was the cause of the remaining effect. Researchers increasingly became aware of both the impact of unmeasured factors such as parental attitudes and involvement that might influence coefficient estimates and the need to correct for this selectivity bias. Also, the risk of pregnancy is greater for teens who are
minorities (Bumpass and McLanahan 1989; Hayes 1987; Moore et al. 1987; Zelnik and Kanter 1980), poor (Panzarine and Santelli 1987), urban (Franklin 1988), have substance abuse problems (Zabin et al. 1986; Elster et al. 1990), or grow up in a single-mother family (Bolton 1980). Given that these pre-existing disadvantages also contribute to their negative circumstances in adulthood, it would be inaccurate and irresponsible to attribute all of these outcomes to the timing of their childrearing. In other words, even if public policy were able to somehow change a woman's age at first birth, it would not necessarily change the harmful conditions she would be facing later in life.

In addition, Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr. and colleagues observed that over the long term, many young mothers are able to overcome the disadvantages of early childbearing. In their piece entitled "Reevaluating the Costs of Teenage Childbearing," (Hoffman 1993) regression analysis indicated that teenage childbearing has significant educational and economic costs. However, this effect was mitigated when unobserved family background variables were accounted for, indicating that family background has a larger effect and that age at first birth has less of an effect than is usually attributed to each. Women who have never had a child remain more likely than teenage mothers to have graduated from high school and to have attended college, but there are no statistically significant educational differences between the two. These results suggest "conventional estimates have exaggerated the costs of teen childbearing."

The Psychological Effects of Adolescent Childbirth

For all that has been written on the socio-economic consequences of teenage childbirth, the long-term psychological effects have received little attention. The majority of existing studies show that adolescent childbearing is associated with an increased risk of long-term psychological disorder (Kalil and Kunz 2001; Beck et al. 1990; Vicary 2001), but these studies also find that differences in depression could be explained by prior individual conditions. Kalil and Kunz (2001) found that although teenage childbearers display, as expected, significantly higher levels of depressive symptoms during young adulthood than women who first give birth as married adults, these differences are dramatically reduced, and no longer statistically significant, once child bearing
individual background statistics such as early adolescent self-esteem and academic achievement are controlled. So far, no study has definitively shown that adolescent childbirth is a direct cause of adult depression.

**Abortion**

While there have been numerous studies that have established the existence of negative outcomes for women's physical health, evidence of the effects of abortion on the psychological health of the mother has been less firmly established.

Few issues evoke the same kind of passion and controversy as abortion. Some are passionate about a woman's right to choose when or whether to have a child, and feel strongly that women should be in charge of their own destinies; others believe that for a woman to exercise this choice is tantamount to homicide of the child in utero. To pro-lifers, human life is invaluable and trumps the claim to privacy upon which most western abortion laws are based.

An apparent consensus is forming in the academic community that some women experience negative psychological effects from abortion. In a special issue of the *Journal of Social Issues* dedicated entirely to research relating to the psychological effects of abortion, editor Gregory Wilmoth concluded: "There is now virtually no disagreement among researchers that some women experience negative psychological reactions post-abortion."

**Methodological Considerations in the Study of Post-Abortion Depression**

In addition to the potential for ideological bias on the part of researchers, there are other related challenges to studying the long-term consequences of abortion for teenagers. Despite its prevalence, abortion continues to be somewhat shrouded in secrecy, which greatly increases the potential for bias in the results. In longitudinal and retrospective studies, approximately 50 percent of women who have had an abortion will conceal their past abortion[s] from interviewers (Jones 1992). Even in short-term follow-up studies there are high sample attrition rates, typically in the range of 20 to 60 percent. Demographic comparisons of those who initially consent to follow-up and subsequently refuse to be interviewed indicate that those who exclude themselves from the final
sample are more likely to match the profile of women who report the greatest post-abortion distress (Alder 1976).

There is also little agreement about which symptoms researchers should attempt to quantify (relief, depression, impacted grieving, intrusive recollections, self-destructive behavior, etc.) or what level of symptoms should be regarded as significant. Some abortion reactions may fit into the model of complicated bereavement or pathological grief (Angelo 1992); in other cases, clinicians have reported that some women exhibit symptoms that fall within the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (Speckhard 1992; Barnard 1990). Indeed, it appears likely that women experience a wide variety of psychological reactions to abortion. The potential for concealment, attrition, and inadequate research tools all tend to suppress the reported rate of negative reactions in individual studies. Thus, reported rates of negative reactions should be interpreted as low, conservative estimates.

**Abortion and Depression**

The notion that there may be a relationship between the abortion experience and psychological health was first put forward by Dr. Vincent Rue, who, together with Anne Speckhard, developed the idea of Post-Abortion Syndrome (PAS), a variant of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a condition first named by psychiatrists following the return of soldiers from the Vietnam war (Scott 1990, Young 1995). Rue and Speckhard argued that the symptoms of PAS are the same as those for PTSD, including flashbacks, denial, loss of memory of the event, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, sadness, sorrow, lowered self-esteem, distrust, regret, relationship disruption and self-condemnation (Speckhard 1992). Secondary symptoms of PAS include depression, substance abuse, sleep disorders and suicidal thoughts. In 1992, Speckhard and Rue found that flawed studies on the effects of abortion and political pressure have produced a lack of information, or informational deficit, concerning post-abortion trauma, and concluded that it was impossible at that time to estimate the incidence of Post Abortion Syndrome with any degree of accuracy. Consequently, they judged that much more research needed to be done to investigate this possible phenomenon. Since then, the empirical research has been somewhat ambiguous. Some researchers have concluded that whether a woman has an abortion or not does not
significantly increase her risk of psychological problems (Major et al. 2000; Adler et. al. 2001). For example, Major et al (1985), using the Beck Depression Inventory, a highly respected measure of depression, found that only those aborting women who felt that pregnancy was a "highly meaningful event" had a difficult time coping after their abortions. Others have found the opposite: that all else being held equal, women who abort are at increased risk of depression (Bernazzani and Bifulco 2002; Ney 1999; Wheeler 1998; Williams 1994). In a Canadian study, Ney et al (1999) found a higher number of losses, particularly abortions, were correlated both with poor long-term health and the need to obtain professional help in dealing with the loss(es). In a study of Finnish women who committed suicide from 1987-1994, Gissler et al (1996) discovered that while the mean annual suicide rate was 11.3 per 100,000, the rates associated with women who had obtained an induced abortion (34.7) were significantly higher than in the population.

Minors who abort may be even more at risk than the female population at large (Wheeler 1998; Reardon 2000; Ney 1999). Sara Wheeler (1998) studied the impact of abortion on young women aged 13-19. Her study showed that women who had experienced an abortion had higher symptoms of depression and guilt than those who were never pregnant. Her findings suggest that adolescents who get an abortion have substantial psychological, social, and cognitive grief reactions and are at risk for clinical depression (Wheeler 1998). Conversely, others have found that minors are at no more risk of post-abortion psychological problems than adults. Adler et al (2001) found that although adolescents under the age of 18 were less comfortable with their decision to abort, once pre-abortion emotional state was factored, it was concluded that 18 years was not a meaningful cut-off point for psychological response to abortion.

Finally, an area that has received little if any research attention is whether there are long-term effects of teen abortion. Although Major et al (2000) found that negative emotions, depression, and dissatisfaction with the abortion decision increased over time, the authors only conducted follow-ups until two years after the abortion had taken place. In addition, Major found that most women who did experience psychological problems had a prior history of depression or depressive tendencies. On the other hand, there have been studies finding a strong association for adoles-
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cents, (Bernazzani and Bifulco 2002; Reardon and Cougle 2000). Reardon and Cougle (2000) found that subsequent psychiatric admissions (four years or more) were more common among women who had had an abortion as an adolescent than among those who had carried an adolescent pregnancy to term.

Just as in the case of determining the consequences of teenage childbearing, studying the long-term effects of adolescent abortion requires giving attention to pre-existing circumstances that are associated with the risk of depression. To infer causality between pregnancy outcomes and depression, one must account for other factors that are associated with depression in adulthood. In most tests of economic theory, and certainly for evaluating public policy, the economist's goal is to infer that one variable (such as teenage abortion) has a causal effect on another variable (such as adult depression). Simply finding an association between two or more variables might be suggestive, but unless causality can be established, it is rarely compelling (Wooldridge 2003). Below I review the additional factors that may heighten the risk that a pregnant teen, regardless of whether she gives birth or has an abortion, experiences emotional consequences in adulthood.

Youth Mental Health

Most studies of teen pregnancy have recognized the importance of controlling for pre-pregnancy (youth) characteristics. Causality could not be inferred if a depressed adult woman who became pregnant as a teenager was also depressed as a child. Clearly, she had a predisposition to depression at an early age. Only by accounting for this pre-disposition can we isolate the long-term psychological effects of the abortion/childbirth. Unfortunately, not all previous studies have accounted for predisposition to depression.

Girls with low levels of self esteem, low academic achievement, physical or mental health problems are not only at increased risk of teenage pregnancy, but are much more likely to be depressed as adults (Adler et al 2001; Bernazzani and Bifulco 2002; Kalil and Kunz 2001; Major et al. 2001; Reardon and Cougle 2000; Vicary et al 2001). Among a sample of child-bearers, Vicary et al (2001) found that psychological problems (depression, loneliness, self-esteem) could be mostly explained by prior psychological status as adolescents. The same link is found in the abortion literature. Bernazzani
and Bilfulco (2002), in a retrospective study using childhood neglect figures as a proxy for pre-adolescent maladjustment, found that childhood psychological conditions together with adolescent abortion provided the best model for long-term depression.

**Adult Variables**

An adult's family and social environment is associated with depression. Unmarried adult women, or those who have faced marital adversity, especially when coupled with earlier adolescent pregnancy, are at increased risk of depression (Reardon and Cougle 2000; Bernazzani and Bifulco 2002; Gissler et al 1996; Ney 1999). Married women often have more of a sense of structure and have a higher level of support to help deal with problems. For example, Reardon and Cougle (2000) noted that among women who gave birth as teenagers, those who were unmarried were about 57 percent more likely to be depressed than their married counterparts (Reardon 2002). Furthermore, for teenagers who aborted, the effect of subsequent children must also be taken into account. Some researchers find that subsequent children bring about increased feelings of grief, guilt, and loss regarding her first child. Indeed, Bradley (1984) found that anxiety and depression are more likely to occur after the birth of a second child if the first one was aborted. On the other hand, future births, especially within the context of marriage, could bring the mother who earlier aborted some sense of reconciliation and diminish the feelings of loss and guilt.

Religiosity has been found to be an important factor in depression rates (Miller 1997; Sherkat and Ellison 1999). A religious woman may find healing and comfort from her faith; her religion may help mitigate the pain of an earlier abortion or give special meaning to her relationships with her child or children. On the other hand, most religions teach that the institution of motherhood is an important and sacred relationship that should not be trivialized or desecrated in any way. These teachings may incline a woman who aborted to feel increased guilt, stress, and depression over her choice. In fact, Major and Mueller (1985) noted that those women who felt pregnancy was a "highly meaningful" event coped worse after their abortions than those who found pregnancy less meaningful.

Finally, sociologists have developed a construct that helps explain peoples' outlooks on life and decision making criteria. In
fact, Julian Rotter (1966) devised a locus of control personality test to assess the extent to which an individual possesses internal or external reinforcement beliefs. Put simply, people with an external locus of control believe that they have little control over the direction their lives take, while people with an internal locus of control believe that their own actions determine the rewards that they obtain and that they have the power to control their life path.

For this study, the idea is that a woman who has an abortion feels that she has ultimate authority over her own life and future (perhaps initiated by her decision to abort), whereas a young mother (influenced by her young childbirth and its effects) has an external locus of control, and feels less personal control over the direction of her life.

**Conceptual Model**

I model the effects of teenage pregnancy outcomes on adult depression for British women. The conceptual model illustrates the somewhat complicated network of depression determinants. The foremost challenge of this research may be to account for enough other variables that affect adult depression. The first box accounts for childhood predisposition to depression. The BCS70 30-year follow-up included questions that retrospectively examined the cohort's psychological health as children. Secondly, the outcome of a woman's pregnancy is ascertained via a question in the 1999-2000 follow-up survey in which the respondents are given five choices: still birth, live birth, miscarriage, abortion, or still pregnant.

The dependent variable in these analyses is adult depression. To isolate the effects of adolescent pregnancy outcomes, I must also account for economic and social variables, attitudes toward children, life satisfaction, and health conditions.

Finally, as the model shows, youth depression, adolescent pregnancy outcomes, and adult conditions are all potential contributors to adult depression. The key, again, is to ascertain whether adolescent pregnancy outcomes have a significant impact on adult depression and, if so, how strong and in what direction. In the BCS70, the adult depression variable is a combination of 24 variables or questions that were asked of the sample when they were about 30 years old. The questions range from queries about sleep-
ing habits, stress, and rage, to direct questions about nervous breakdowns. For example, one question asks: "Do you often feel miserable or depressed?" and another asks "Do you often get into a violent rage?"

**Data and Methods**

The BCS70 sample is comprised of all the births in Great Britain during one week in 1970. The analysis sample for this study is limited to females and categorizes them according to whether they were pregnant at or before the age of 20, and, if so, by whether they gave birth to the child or had an abortion. Girls who aborted will be compared with those who gave birth and also more generally with those who did not become pregnant as adolescents. Adolescents experiencing spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) are beyond the scope of this study and will be dropped from analysis. It is important to account for the possibility of selection bias in this
study. Women deciding to abort and those with high levels of depression may be less likely to respond to follow-up surveys. The 1999-2000 follow-up surveyed all participants at the age of 29 or 30. Questions were then asked about the women's prior psychological health and prior pregnancy experiences.

Limitations
Although I have already discussed some of the major methodological concerns when attempting to measure the effects of pregnancy outcomes including high attrition rates and measurement of depression symptoms, my study includes additional limitations. A complete analysis would account not only for any predisposition to depression, but also find a way to measure maternal depression. Studies (Boyle and Andrew 1997) have shown that psychological disorders and proclivity to depression have a genetic component.

Additionally, most studies of teen pregnancy have recognized the importance of controlling for pre-pregnancy (youth) characteristics. Youth family and social conditions, including a family's religiosity, play an important role in determining adult depression rates, as does a youth's economic conditions and physical health.

Finally, my analysis has no way of accounting for women who experienced an early childbirth but subsequently gave their babies up for adoption. Although adoption rates have dropped significantly in the last 20 years (Purtill 2002), early child-bearers who choose adoption do not suffer the same deleterious social or economic outcomes that unmarried teen mothers do.

Methods
In my OLS model the dependent variable is a continuous variable that specifies the respondent's depression score out of a possible 24. To evaluate the relationships between adolescent pregnancy outcomes and adult depression, I first performed a simple pregnancy outcome-specific regression to confirm that both youth abortion and childbearing are associated with adult depression. I then test whether these effects are diminished with the addition domains of variables that each are themselves correlated with depression. Each domain contains from 1 to 6 variables and is added to the model in order of hypothesized significance.
Descriptive Results

Out of a total of 5790 females in this study, 249 of them were pregnant at or before the age of 20. Of these 249 women, 152 gave birth, 78 had abortions, and 19 either miscarried or gave birth after the age of 20. Table 2 provides percentages and means across women in the two subgroups for a series of social, health, economic, attitudes toward children, and life satisfaction variables, as well as their predisposition to depression. For comparison, I provide percentages and means for all women in the study.

Across the majority of these measures, women who abort are markedly different from women who give birth as teens. It is particularly notable that women who abort have an internal locus of control, meaning they feel personal power over the direction of their future lives. Conversely, women who become young mothers tend to have an external locus of control, and feel that the circumstances of their futures are largely out of their hands. Specifically, only 22 percent of women who aborted felt powerless, compared with 56 percent of young mothers. Moreover, four out of five women who aborted felt that their lives would improve in the future, as compared with 64 percent of young mothers.

In addition, there are striking differences in the variables that measure relationship status and frequency of social interaction. Women who aborted their first child at or before the age of 20 were nearly half as likely to be married (19.2 percent**) as teen mothers (37.5 percent). This supports the notion that women who abort may be more independent-minded and less inclined to seek marriages as a means by which to obtain economic, emotional, and social support as young mothers. Unsurprisingly, young mothers make significantly less money than both the average female and women who aborted, perhaps due to interruptions in schooling or a higher drop-out rate associated with the early birth. Interestingly, women who aborted make significantly more than the average female. Again, this may stem from the fact that they are less likely to be married, less likely to have children and thus less likely to have the added expense of raising children. Women who were young mothers "go out" with their friends and partners at significantly lower rates than women who aborted. This likely relates to the fact that 97 percent of young mothers had at least one child under the age of 18 in the house at the time of the survey.
Statistically significant differences exist in the views of women towards the value of children in their lives. Of note, 87 percent of women who aborted as young women felt that children were unnecessary for fulfillment. At the same time, only one in four young mothers believed children interfere with parents' freedom, despite the fact that young mothers have lower incomes and have less active social lives than other women, especially women who aborted. While Great Britain can in no way be described as a "pro-life" country, with less than seven percent of women from the survey identifying themselves as "opposed to abortion," not one of the 78 women who had an abortion at or before the age of 20 fell into that group. Over 95 percent of women who aborted had ever taken the contraceptive pill, while significantly less (three in four) young mothers had ever been on the contraceptive pill and over 9 percent identified themselves as opposed to abortion, higher than the female population mean of 6.8 percent.

Contrary to my expectations, there is no difference in levels of depression between women who aborted at or before the age of 20 and those who gave birth. In addition, I did not observe a statistically significant difference in the level of depression according to pregnancy outcome in the bivariate examination during the teen years. To properly examine the differences in the risk of depression, however, requires a regression framework.

Table 3 presents estimates for logistic regression models predicting adult depression using the full sample of women. To begin, I estimated a model that only includes dummy variables for abortion and teen motherhood, to test the assumption that early pregnancy itself has a negative effect on the mental well-being of a woman in later life regardless of whether she gives birth. Both the abortion (p<.05) and childbirth (p<.001) variables are positively related to malaise. That is, a woman who aborts her first child at or before the age of 20, has a malaise score .8 points higher (4.6) on average, than a woman who did not get pregnant at or before the age of 20 (3.8). Similarly, a woman who gives birth at or before the age of 20 has a malaise score .9 points higher than a woman who does not. This means that without controlling for any other factors that affect depression, both early child-bearers and women who abort as youths suffer higher levels of depression.

Model 3 adds variables that capture women's union experiences. Given that having a spouse may moderate the risk of
Table 1. Variable Names, Coding, Predicted Effects, Means, and Standard Deviations for Independent Variables Used In the Analysis: BCS70 Cohort Study, 30-year follow-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Coding</th>
<th>Predicted Effect on Depression at Age 30</th>
<th>All Females Means (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV:M abuse</td>
<td>24 items self-reported psychological health index</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEENPREG</td>
<td>1 = Had a pregnancy at age 20</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.04 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEENMOM</td>
<td>1 = Had a baby at age 20</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.03 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABORT</td>
<td>1 = Had an abortion at age 20</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.01 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREGRAD</td>
<td>1 = Was depressed as a teen at any age before the pregnancy</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.06 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARRIED</td>
<td>1 = Married at time of survey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.48 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COHABIT</td>
<td>1 = Cohabiting at time of survey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.21 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVERDIS</td>
<td>1 = Ever been separated or divorced</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.07 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTSOLO</td>
<td>1 = Goes out with friends at least weekly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.67 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTPART</td>
<td>1 = Goes out with partner at least weekly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.80 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTENDCH</td>
<td>1 = Goes to religious services at least weekly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.13 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXERCISE</td>
<td>1 = Does regular exercise</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.78 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOODHLTH</td>
<td>1 = Rates health as good or excellent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.85 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>Annual income (in British pounds)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12,680 (38,581.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>1 = Rates finances as difficult</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.29 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PONRESS</td>
<td>1 = Feels powerless in life</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.32 (67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETRIFE</td>
<td>1 = Feels she will be more satisfied with life later on</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.60 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KDBOTH</td>
<td>1 = Feels children interfere with freedom</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.33 (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEUNCH</td>
<td>1 = Children are unnecessary for fulfilling art</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.79 (41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PILLEVER</td>
<td>1 = Ever taken the contraceptive pill</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>.86 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROLIFE</td>
<td>1 = Against abortion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.07 (25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

depression, the effect of marriage on depression is negative and statistically significant at the .001 level. This means that, on average, a married woman experiences a depression score .7 points lower than an unmarried woman, all else equal. Taken together, the set of relationship variables diminishes the effect of both pregnancy outcomes on the risk of depression.

Model 4 adds variables measuring a woman's social situation. The results reveal that a woman's social situation is significantly associated with her psychological well-being. For example,
a woman who goes out with her friends and her partner at least once a month has an average malaise score 1.5 points lower than a woman who does not go out at least monthly. At the same time, Model 4 shows that these social measures serve as mechanisms of the teenmom effect but do not influence the association between abortion and depression in the same way. Recall that in Model 2, before the relationship and social variables were added, the teenmom partial effect was .82, (P<.001) whereas after I account for the relationship and social variables, the parameter estimate is reduced to .72, (P<.01). Thus, part of the reason why young child-bearers are depressed relates to the fewer opportunities they have, on average, to socialize outside of the home, compared to other women.

Model 5 assesses the relative importance of health and exercise on psychological wellbeing. I find that both variables are significantly negatively related to adult depression. On average, a woman in good or excellent health has a malaise score 3 points lower than other women, reflecting the well-known robust correlation between physical and emotional health. In addition, both the
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... variables' effects decrease with the addition of the health variables indicating that health can mediate the depression in young women who gave birth and young women who aborted.

Model 6 adds two financial wellbeing variables. A woman who described her finances as difficult has, on average, a malaise score 1.2 points (p<.001) higher than a woman who is better off financially. Interestingly, the inclusion of the finance variables substantially alters the predicted effect of teen motherhood on depression, reducing it to statistical insignificance. In contrast, including the economic well-being variables did not change the parameter estimate for abortion at all. This implies that the higher depression scores observed among teen mothers are completely explained by her economic circumstances, relationships, social variables, and health. Indeed, the abortion effect only decreased marginally and remains significant at the .10 level in Model 6.

With only the elevated risk of depression associated with abortion left to explain, Model 7 adds the two life satisfaction variables. Both the powerless and betrlife variables are positively significantly related to depression at the .001 level. Specifically, a woman who feels powerless in her life has a malaise score 1.7 points higher, on average, than a woman who feels she has control over her life, ceteris paribus. What is critical to note in this analysis, however, is that these life satisfaction variables may have a protective effect upon the women who had an abortion while a teen, as we saw earlier. Women who had abortions had a greater sense of self efficacy on average compared with other women. Thus, failing to control for the beneficial effect of an internal locus of control on adult depression led to an under-estimating of the deleterious effect of having an early abortion in previous models.

To more fully understand the relationship between the powerless, betrlife, and abort variables, I ran a short regression that included just the pregnancy outcome and life satisfaction variables (Model 8). I found that controlling for locus of control and optimism about the future actually increased the predicted effect of abortion on depression. Interestingly, the teenmom variable lost all of its statistical significance from Model 1.

Finally, I added a number of variables that capture a woman's outlook on children and the means by which they control their fertility (Models 9 and 10). Women who feel that children...
interfere with their freedom are significantly more depressed, on average, than those who value children more highly. In fact, this variable was significant at the .001 level. Neither the pillever nor prolife variables were statistically significant.

All in all, there is a statistically significant association between abortion and depression that remains in Model 10. This study reveals that women whose first pregnancy at or before the age of 20 ends in abortion are more likely to be depressed than young mothers, and it remains net of their financial situation, social lives, prior depression, sense of efficacy, and life satisfaction. In fact, we can link their relatively high malaise scores to the abortion experience itself. Women who gave birth at or before the age of 20 look markedly different, however. The risk of depression among early child-bearers is completely explained by the correlates of young childbirth, such as dire financial straits, social problems and their sense of powerlessness. When these important variables are factored into the model, the teenmom variable loses all of its statistical significance.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Examining the long-term psychological effects of teenage pregnancy outcomes, I found that at first glance, early experiences of abortion and childbirth are similar in regards to their effects on women's long-term psychological health. But, when additional significant variables are accounted for, such as pre-disposition to depression, physical health, and life satisfaction measures, early childbearing itself is no longer a determinate of long-term depression. On the other hand, even after accounting for a wide range of significant variables that affect depression, an early abortion experience is associated with a higher level of adult depression symptoms. In fact, I found that on average, all else equal, a woman who aborted at or before the age of 20 has a depression score 15 percent higher than a woman who did not become pregnant as a youth.

These results make sense because while most cultures have slowly come to consider abortion as a normal and acceptable part of women's health care, the real psychological effects that aborting one's child has on a mother can never be completely avoided. I also feel compelled to answer an oft-stated argument that certain elements within society make women feel guilty and ashamed of their
reproductive decisions and that any psychological maladjustment can be attributed to this effect. Although this effect must be considered when analyzing results of studies conducted in the US, my study was conducted in Great Britain, where abortion is a very accepted, and often banal, experience.

Policy Implications

The analysis in this paper underscores the importance of an
often-neglected effect of the pregnancy decision: psychological maladjustment. The negative socioeconomic consequences of teenage motherhood are well known. What is also now starting to be accepted is the relationship between abortion, especially at an early age, and physical consequences such as sub-fertility, pre-term birth, and breast cancer. At the same time, very little research has been conducted on psychological consequences. Indeed, more research is needed to precisely declare that abortion causes depression; but, even at present, certain guidelines can be followed to more adequately meet the needs of pregnant teenagers, including:

1) Stricter informed consent laws that require clinicians to inform women seeking abortions of the psychological risks of abortion, including depression, suicide, and self-harm attempts. It is my belief that a reasonable person is entitled to know these conclusions and their limitations. I understand that the setting of informed consent at the time of counseling about a pregnancy is suboptimal as an opportunity to be introducing the potential risks of abortion. Consequently, women would be better served by having pre-existing knowledge about the scope and magnitude of potential risks. I suggest that reproductive health centers, hospitals, and schools be required to feature the best available information about the potential consequences associated with abortion. Such knowledge could reduce risky sexual behavior and would certainly protect against the undesirable situation of being provided with important information for the first time in the setting of a crisis pregnancy.

2) There is a clear and overwhelming need for additional research examining the long-term effects of abortion. Due to the important empirical limitations inherent in this kind of research, few researchers acknowledge the extent of possible devastating health effects of abortion. However, until a commitment to such research is made, women are making important decisions with incomplete information.

3) Since the childbearing experience itself may not be a strong predictor of subsequent psychological problems, government policies and funding should focus more broadly on the major correlates of depression. By encouraging and strengthening marriages, helping alleviate poverty especially for young families, and giving single mothers more opportunities to attend school, while at the same time continuing efforts to prevent teen pregnancy, public
policy can help promote the psychological health of women.

While the current study offers insight into the long-term psychological effects of teenage pregnancy outcomes, numerous aspects are not addressed. For example, it would be helpful to control for maternal depression as well as youth characteristics that may be associated with depression. Also, while my study simply juxtaposes levels of malaise, a more sophisticated analysis might include a model that predicted clinical depression. The advantage of such an analysis would be to ascertain the determinants of severe psychological problems, and to be able to offer recommendations based on possible severe reactions to teen pregnancy outcomes.

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http://www.ippf.org/about/what.htm
http://www.specus.org/pubs/fact/fact0010.html
http://www.ippf.org/donors/newsletter/index.htm
www.all.org/abort.htm
http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,102352,00.html
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Youth Attitudes Toward Voting and Volunteering: 2002, 2004, and Beyond

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Youth civic engagement has received considerable attention in recent years, and countless organizations have intensified efforts to encourage youth volunteering or voting. By focusing on youth voting instead of volunteering or vice versa, however, these organizations miss an important convergence. The field reflects a dichotomy: some organizations focus solely on service (e.g., Youth Service America) and others solely on voting (e.g., Rock the Vote). This separation can have long-term negative effects as these youth become adult citizens in our democracy. In this paper, we analyze the characteristics of youth that volunteer, vote, or some combination of the two using data from the 2002 and 2004 National Youth Surveys from CIRCLE at the University of Maryland. We find that factors predicting youth voting and volunteering such as trust and political socialization develop over many years. Service and voting organizations must partner with religious groups and parents to help instill lifelong democratic principles in today’s youth.

OUTLINING THE PROBLEM

Young Americans, the data claim, are apathetic. 18- to 24-year olds vote less than other age cohorts. Yet, today’s youth seem
to place a tremendous value on volunteering. Indeed, according to one author, they are the most engaged generation ever.1 This trend might be shifting, though, as historically high rates of youth volunteering dropped recently, and the 2004 election featured a spike in youth voter turnout. How do we explain these phenomena?

Benjamin Quinto, Executive Director of the Global Youth Action Network, claims youth are disengaged from the political process because they find it ineffectual. Youth want to make an immediate impact in their communities. This intuitive observation raises new questions: why do some young people vote while others find it ineffective? How different are they from their peers who don't vote? What explains the differences between those young people who vote, volunteer, do both, or do neither?

The cynical response might be that it does not matter; we should let things be. If young people want to vote or volunteer, they will. Why interfere in what amounts to a naturally-occurring supply and demand—a "market" for civic participation?

First, a strong case can be made that the health of our democracy is at stake. Millions of voters are increasingly disengaged from politics and unlikely to start voting as they grow older. The fact that many young people volunteer is insufficient to spark engagement; even service-learning is most effective when community service and political service are integrated, combining theory and practice, service and politics.2

Youth-serving advocacy organizations, however, tend to coalesce around poles of either voting or volunteering. It is important, then, to analyze the characteristics of young people who engage in one of these activities over the other and find out why this dichotomy exists. Such a contribution to the discourse and practice of youth civic engagement is the goal of this paper.3

**Literature Review**

In this paper, we analyze 2002 and 2004 National Youth Surveys (NYS) by CIRCLE at the University of Maryland. Among other things, the 2002 NYS found that parental political behavior is one of the biggest factors determining whether young people vote.4 Additionally, "demographic factors like education, age, partisanship, and church attendance" influence levels of political and volunteer activity.5 Finally, the report notes that voter registration and
Youth Attitudes Toward Voting and Volunteering

volunteerism rates are lower in this survey than in previous surveys. In 2004, the decline in volunteering rates continued, but voter registration was back up to 70%. While there were many questions asked in 2002 that were not asked in 2004 (or vice versa), core indicators were retained. One of the most telling results was that young people seem more cynical and less trustful than in 2002: the number of respondents who felt they could make a difference and who trust the government both declined in 2004.

Like most analyses, CIRCLE 2002 primarily examines voting and volunteering separately, not across subgroups. It notes that young adults have ambivalent views of politics, with 50 percent considering voting extremely or very important while 49 percent say it is somewhat, a little, or not important. By 2004, these numbers were up slightly, with 53 percent considering voting important and 46 percent not.

Parental political socialization is a primary predictor of youth voting. The CIRCLE study compares differences between voters and volunteers based on one characteristic (parental discussion of politics). In our study, we make similar comparisons but use different quantitative techniques and more explanatory variables.

On volunteerism, CIRCLE 2002 notes that today's youth "believe in the importance of community volunteer involvement." However, "[v]olunteer involvement in political activities is much lower than in activities that provide direct service or focus on the community more broadly. As has been seen in other studies, young adults see community activism and political activism as two separate items." Differences between voting and volunteering are manifested rather sharply: 49 percent of young adults saw volunteering in community activities as important in 2002, but just 12 percent saw getting involved in politics or government as important, 47 percent had joined a club or organization unrelated to politics; only 13 percent had joined a political club.

Youth voter turnout in 2004 seems to buck this trend a bit. While many media outlets reported a "voting rate" of 17 percent, this figure is misleading. In fact, young people voted at the highest rates in recent history, with 18- to 24-year olds voting at 42.3 percent and 18- to 29-year olds voting at 52.7 percent. This represents the youth turnout rate: the percentage of eligible young people that voted. The 17 percent figure represents the youth voting share: the
percentage of all voters between 18- to 29-years old (the voting share for 18- to 24-year olds was about 7 percent). This figure stayed constant from 2000 to 2004 because turnout increased across all age cohorts.

Many gave undue emphasis to the voting share. For example, the San Francisco Chronicle wrote that 2004 "was not the breakout year for young voters." This argument assumes that young people are not effective political actors unless they swing elections. This criticism is severely flawed. The 2002 and 2004 data both show that young people have a cynical view of the political system. The fact that a significantly higher number of them turned out to vote is tremendously positive, especially considering the dismal youth turnout years earlier. Turnout in 2004 increased about six percentage points for 18- to 24-year olds and ten points for 18- to 29-year olds.

In a 2001 study, Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber from Yale University sought to determine the efficacy of canvassing in turning out youth voters. The study found telephone canvassing and face-to-face voter mobilization campaigns highly effective in stimulating turnout. They wrote that young Americans "sense that the [2000] election is important, but many are detached from the electoral process. They need the authentic encouragement of a peer to become a participant." The study used an experimental method in which treatment groups were heavily canvassed and control groups were not. The findings suggest one way to turn out young voters is simply to ask them.

The lasting dichotomy between voting and volunteering is reflected in the Harvard University Institute of Politics survey of a small sample of college undergraduates, taken shortly before the 2004 presidential election. 70 percent of undergraduates said they participated in volunteer community service activities in the past twelve months, but only 25 percent said they had participated in a government, political, or issue-related organization. Harvard's study also asked undergraduates how likely they would be to volunteer on a political campaign if a friend asked (on a scale of 0 to 10, 10 being very likely); 34 percent answered with an 8, 9, or 10. When asked how likely they would be to volunteer for community service if a friend asked, nearly twice as many responded with an 8, 9, or 10 (66 percent). Even with respect to peer-to-peer canvassing, there is a strong difference between perceptions of community service and politics.
Interestingly, despite their low level of involvement, overwhelming majorities of undergraduates consider politics effective at dealing with national (90 percent) and community (86 percent) problems. Moreover, 87 percent of undergraduates believe politics is relevant to their lives right now, up nearly twenty percentage points from the previous presidential election cycle.22

Both this and Green and Gerber's studies suggest that young people perceive the importance of politics but feel disengaged from it.

Implications for Democracy

The overriding question is: Why this is relevant? A simplistic case can be made for increasing democratic participation. But does the difference between voters and volunteers matter? Are we amplifying a meaningless difference? A 2002 article suggests otherwise.

Alison Byrne Fields writes that today's youth may be "the most engaged generation ever," though they vote at lower rates.23 Yet she also suggests that participation in our system is a challenge for youth. Young people "do not think that the electoral process generates any 'tangible' results."24

Carolyn Woodard echoes this sentiment. She cites the tendency of youth to "vote less and march more"—the trend toward community activism and demonstration and away from electoral participation. If the difference between (non-political) grassroots activists and voters grows over time, she warns, we may have two sets of highly engaged citizens at odds with each other: one group engrossed in politics and another entirely disgusted by it.25 While this rather radical vision may not come true, a tempered version, in which voters and volunteers grow distant over time, may well come about.

This idea is reinforced in a variety of studies. CIRCLE 2002 points out that "young adults are more likely to see themselves engaging in the same kinds of activities in which they already tend to participate."26 If youth currently vote at low rates, a minority will likely be involved in the future. The Aspen Institute says people who "establish a pattern of voting when they are young... will be more likely to continue that pattern as they grow older."27 Fields echoes this, saying voting "isn't something that a young American will 'grow into,' like a sweater that's too big in the shoul-
Voter turnout for the population as a whole hovers around 55 percent. If the distance between young voters and volunteers is not closed, that number could drop precipitously.

An empirical study backs up the claim that youth will not "grow into" voting. Researchers tested "adult-roles theory," which posits that people vote at higher rates when they grow into "adult roles." The study identified six interrelated "adult-roles" transitions," and found that "adult-role theory did not fare well. . . . [I]nconsistent and often negative findings point to the conclusion that transitions to adult roles are an incomplete and predominantly inadequate explanation of youth turnout."30

In this context, the 2004 data are interesting. There was a sharp increase in youth voter turnout and a simultaneous decrease in volunteering reported (by CIRCLE 2004). Will these ultimately be seen as outliers or harbingers of a new trend in youth civic engagement? For now, the question is open.

In determining the significance of the voting patterns of today's youth, we are ultimately interested in their attitudes. What drives youth to vote? What drives them to volunteer?

**Hypothesis and Research Design**

In this study, we used 2002 and 2004 National Youth Surveys from CIRCLE to analyze youth attitudes toward voting and volunteering from a sample of young Americans ages 15-25.31 We created two dummy variables: voting equals one if the respondent considered voting extremely or very important, zero otherwise.32 Volunteering equals one if the respondent volunteered in the past year, zero otherwise.33 This yields two groups for each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Voting and Volunteering, 2002</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td>voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteering</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Voting and Volunteering, 2004</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteering</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth Attitudes Toward Voting and Volunteering

variable: those who do or do not vote, and those who do or do not volunteer. Tables 1 and 2 show means for these variables, by year.

The mean value for voting increased from 50.22 percent to 52.78 percent from 2002 to 2004. This group (who consider voting extremely or very important) will be referred to as the "voters." The sharp drop-off in volunteering is apparent here as well, with the number of those who volunteer falling from 47.58 percent in 2002 to 26.39 percent in 2004. These people will be referred to as the "volunteers." It is important to note two key points. First, the popular conception that there are far more youth volunteers than voters was not borne out, even in 2002. The data contained more vot-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Voting and Volunteering by Gender, 2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Voting and Volunteering by Gender, 2004</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ers than volunteers both years, and the difference between means in 2002 (2.64 percent) was not significant. However, by 2004, the difference (26.39 percent) was extremely significant.

Some descriptive statistics show how these characteristics differ across basic independent variables. The results for gender are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

The gender differences for voting were not very significant in 2002 (only at alpha* or α = 0.10), but differences for volunteering are extremely significant, with p < 0.001. In 2004, volunteering rates for both groups dropped significantly, indicating that the decrease in volunteering was gender-neutral. Men tended to vote slightly more in 2004 than 2002 (significant at α = .05) while the slight decrease for women was not significant. The slight differences for voting in
Do men vote or volunteer more? In 2002, the difference of nearly 7 percent for men (in favor of voting) was significant at $a=.01$, while women had no significant difference between voting and volunteering. By 2004, both groups voted far more than they volunteered; the differences had associated $p$-values of $< 0.001$. Again, the trend favoring voting is borne out across genders.

It is useful to know about variation by age (15 to 17, 18 to 20, 21 to 22, and 23 to 25 years old). Table 5 shows voting and volunteering following slight trends in 2002: younger people placed a greater importance on volunteering while older youth place a greater importance on voting. This seems intuitive, since 21 to 25 year olds are more likely to have voted than 15 to 20 year olds (by virtue of having been eligible for longer). But this was no longer true in 2004; Table 6 shows that voting oscillates, peaking around

### Table 5: Voting and Volunteering by Age, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 to 17</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>voting</td>
<td>0.4694</td>
<td>0.4564</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>0.4572</td>
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<td>18 to 20</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>voting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>volunteering</td>
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<td>0.4337</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 to 22</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>voting</td>
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<td>volunteering</td>
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<td>0.4189</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 to 25</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>voting</td>
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### Table 6: Voting and Volunteering by Age, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 to 17</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>voting</td>
<td>0.5276</td>
<td>0.5328</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
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<td>0.5239</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 to 20</td>
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<td>voting</td>
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<td>0.4995</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 22</td>
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<td>voting</td>
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<td>0.4919</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 to 25</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>voting</td>
<td>0.5469</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
<td>0.2042</td>
<td>0.3868</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Youth Attitudes Toward Voting and Volunteering

Table 7: Voting and Volunteering by Race, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>voting</td>
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<td>0.4001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>voting</td>
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<td>0.4758</td>
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*3 missing values excluded

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>voting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
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<tr>
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<td>voting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>voting</td>
<td>0.4215</td>
<td>0.4582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
<td>0.3122</td>
<td>0.4300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>voting</td>
<td>0.6856</td>
<td>0.4723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
<td>0.2482</td>
<td>0.4395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>voting</td>
<td>0.3026</td>
<td>0.9222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>volunteering</td>
<td>0.1631</td>
<td>0.7416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*4 missing values excluded

Sample sizes too small for meaningful comparison

Ages 18 to 20. This is surprising, since older youth tend to vote at substantially higher rates. Voting generally declines with age by 2004 data, which makes sense; high school students have more time to volunteer.

A number of organizations work with particular ethnic or racial groups. With this in mind, we examined differences by race (see Tables 7 and 8).

While there are minor differences (e.g., more black voters than volunteers in 2002, significant at a=.01), the data do not lead to
many meaningful conclusions. The trend of note is that black and Hispanic youth have lower voting rates in 2004 than in 2002, despite the fact that voting rates went up overall. This data point might be anomalous; it is unclear if this is a continuous trend.

These descriptive statistics form the backdrop for the study. However, the backbone of this analysis comes from the division of the sample into four subgroups: those who vote and volunteer, only vote, only volunteer, and do neither. These subgroups are combinations of the variables for voting and volunteering, as shown in Table 9.

The null hypothesis is $H_0: X_1 = X_2 = X_3 = X_4$, that there are no differences between characteristics of the subgroups. The alternative hypothesis is $H_A: X_1 \neq X_2 \neq X_3 \neq X_4$, that there are meaningful differences. If the null hypothesis is rejected, one can make meaningful comments about voters, volunteers and their characteristics.

In the next section, we use two-stage linear discriminant analysis to predict membership in voting and volunteering groups. We focus on two subsets of explanatory variables. The first set is "attitudinal," including trust in government, whether the individual talked about politics with his parents, whether he believes one person can make a difference, etc. The other set is "demographic," consisting of age, state of residence, church attendance, and similar variables.

**Methodology**

In the first stage of analysis we entered variables from attitudinal and demographic categories into a stepwise discriminant function. All variables were excluded that were not significant (usually at $a=.01$). Doing so yielded a subset of significant variables, and this subset was entered into the second stage analysis. In the second stage, we predict membership in a given group using
these variables and see "how good" the results are. For example, let us suppose that church attendance was the only significant variable that determined voting. The second stage would use the information from church attendance to predict voting status; using what we know about church attendance, the individual would be classified as a voter or a non-voter. Then, we compare this prediction to the actual numbers of voters. With a binary variable (as all of our subgroups are), a blind guess would correctly classify 50 percent of observations. In our second-stage analysis, we consistently classified around 65-80 percent of observations correctly. This demonstrates that the significant variables identified are very good at predicting engagement.

What Does a Voter Look Like?
First, we examined characteristics of voters and volunteers. A stepwise selection shows which variables are significant in explaining voting. In the first stage of the analysis, voters are com-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square (F-Value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My vote counts&quot;</td>
<td>0.1207 (85.84)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about politics w/ parents</td>
<td>0.0645 (40.62)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents took me to vote</td>
<td>0.0262 (15.84)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can make a difference&quot;</td>
<td>0.0209 (12.55)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.0183 (10.94)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square (F-Value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talked about politics w/ parents</td>
<td>0.1907 (180.06)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust government to do what is right</td>
<td>0.0959 (80.94)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents vote in every election</td>
<td>0.0326 (25.67)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can make a difference&quot;</td>
<td>0.0224 (17.46)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political party identification</td>
<td>0.0126 (9.70)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>0.0122 (9.35)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;People can generally be trusted&quot;</td>
<td>0.0098 (7.52)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .01
pared to everyone else (the non-voters). Later, we make comparisons across subgroups.

The variables that are significant in predicting whether one is a voter are presented in Tables 10 and 11 (as in subsequent tables) in decreasing statistical significance.

Entering explanatory variables into the second stage answers the question, "So what?" The function predicts membership in a group (here, voters) and compares results with the actual outcome: Is the person actually a voter? Here, the explanatory variables do a very good job; success count estimates yield averages of 72.48 percent (2002) and 72.78 percent (2004), meaning the variables predict voting status correctly three-fourths of the time. This seemingly mundane methodological point is very important.

**Table 12: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Voters, Compared to Everyone Else, 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent &amp; Number of Observations Predicted as:</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Non-voters</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual Voters</td>
<td>74.70%</td>
<td>25.30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Non-voters</td>
<td>29.74%</td>
<td>70.26%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.51%</td>
<td>53.49%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The success count for this function was 72.48%.

**Table 13: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Voters, Compared to Everyone Else, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent &amp; Number of Observations Predicted as:</th>
<th>Voters</th>
<th>Non-voters</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual Voters</td>
<td>75.48%</td>
<td>24.52%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Non-voters</td>
<td>29.92%</td>
<td>70.08%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53.70%</td>
<td>46.30%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The success count for this function was 72.78%.
for practitioners.

The methodology employed does a good job of predicting voting attitudes of American youth for both survey cycles. Moreover, the significant variables were essentially the same both years: parental and attitudinal. Young voters are more likely to have parents who were involved politically and more likely to feel a sense of trust and empowerment, both in relation to the government and other citizens.

**What Does a Volunteer Look Like?**

The idea posed earlier was that practitioners need to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square (F-Value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>0.0290 (17.60)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can make a difference&quot;</td>
<td>0.0081 (4.83)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .01; ** p < .05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square (F-Value)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I can make a difference“</td>
<td>0.0468 (37.50)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;People can generally be trusted&quot;</td>
<td>0.0269 (21.10)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>0.0219 (17.04)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took a class on government/civics</td>
<td>0.0182 (14.09)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent &amp; Number of Observations Predicted as:</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Non-volunteers</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>50.07%</td>
<td>49.93%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-volunteers</td>
<td>68.27%</td>
<td>31.73%</td>
<td>709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>1490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The success count for this function was 67.36%
emphasize connections between volunteerism and politics. Identifying differences between voters and volunteers can help in this regard.

The first stage stepwise selection yielded variables significant at \( a = 0.05 \) or better. When entered into the linear discriminant function, the variables again produced compelling results (see Table 17).

There is an interesting trend across the years. Volunteering dropped from 2002 to 2004, and as it did, the picture became more complicated there were more significant explanatory variables explaining the same phenomenon. Also, the relative importance of church attendance dropped. While attitudinal characteristics were relevant only for voting in 2002, they were relevant for both voting and volunteering in 2004.

**The Four Groups, Revisited**

The last section closed with a chart illustrating four subgroups. In the rest of this section, we compare subgroups to each other. First, we list significant explanatory variables for each subgroup compared to all others. The following table shows, at a glance, differences in characteristics across groups. Below each subgroup header are explanatory variables significant at \( a = 0.05 \) or better.

In both cycles, the highly engaged are more likely to have a favorable view of government and society: they trust others, talk about politics with their parents, believe they can make a difference, and believe elected officials care about young people. Since
Table 18: Variables of Statistical Significance Across the Four Subgroups, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Engaged</th>
<th>Moderately Engaged (vote only)</th>
<th>Moderately Engaged (volunteer only)</th>
<th>Disengaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk about politics w/ parents (positive)*** †</td>
<td>My vote counts ‡‡ (positive)***</td>
<td>My vote counts ‡‡ (negative)***</td>
<td>Church attendance (negative)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My vote counts (positive)***</td>
<td></td>
<td>Talk about politics w/ parents (negative)***</td>
<td>Leaders pay attention to youth ‡‡ (negative)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can make a difference***</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents took me to vote ‡‡ (negative)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders pay attention to youth ‡‡ (positive)***</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust the government (negative)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance (positive)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†The parenthetical notations indicate that, for example, the highly engaged talk about politics with their parents more than the disengaged.

‡‡Not asked in 2004; note that some questions that were not asked have effective proxies in 2004.

*** p < .01
Table 19: Variables of Statistical Significance Across the Four Subgroups, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highly Engaged</th>
<th>Moderately Engaged (vote only)</th>
<th>Moderately Engaged (volunteer only)</th>
<th>Disengaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can make a difference***</td>
<td>Talked about politics w/parents (positive)***</td>
<td>Born again/ Evangelical Christian**</td>
<td>Talked about politics w/parents (negative)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People can generally be trusted***</td>
<td>Trust the government (positive)***</td>
<td>Church attendance**</td>
<td>Trust the government (negative)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about politics w/parents (positive)***</td>
<td>Parents voted regularly***</td>
<td></td>
<td>I can make a difference (negative)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took a class on govt/civics***</td>
<td></td>
<td>Country of birth***</td>
<td>Church attendance (negative)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance (positive)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Party identification***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The parenthetical notations indicate that, for example, the highly engaged talk about politics with their parents more than the disengaged.

While Born-Again status is significant, those who volunteer only are equally likely to be Born-Again Christians as not; the variable has no practical significance.

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

Table 20: Stepwise Selection for Highly Engaged, Compared to Disengaged, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My vote counts&quot;</td>
<td>0.0791***</td>
<td>29.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>0.0640***</td>
<td>23.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention to politics</td>
<td>0.0424***</td>
<td>15.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about politics w/parents</td>
<td>0.0271***</td>
<td>9.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** $p < .01$

Table 21: Stepwise Selection for Highly Engaged, Compared to Disengaged, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talked about politics w/parents</td>
<td>0.1907***</td>
<td>101.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can make a difference&quot;</td>
<td>0.1145***</td>
<td>55.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;People can generally be trusted&quot;</td>
<td>0.0898***</td>
<td>42.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently a student</td>
<td>0.0437***</td>
<td>19.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took a class on govt/civics</td>
<td>0.0233***</td>
<td>10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children</td>
<td>0.0219***</td>
<td>9.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church attendance</td>
<td>0.0156***</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** $p < .01$
there are statistically significant differences in the X-matrix of explanatory variables across subgroups, we reject the null hypothesis. We know the groups are different; now, we explore the nature of these differences.

**Voters and Volunteers: The Highly Engaged**

We first compare the highly engaged (voters and volunteers) to the disengaged—the situation where we expect to see the greatest differences. Starting here is also useful to practitioners: knowing what makes young people highly engaged provides base-

---

**Table 22: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Highly Engaged, Compared to Disengaged, 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Voter-Volunteers</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter-Volunteers</td>
<td>82.88%</td>
<td>17.12%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>21.97%</td>
<td>78.03%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.30%</td>
<td>48.70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | 368 | 76 | 444 |
| | 105 | 373 | 478 |
| | 473 | 449 | 922 |

568 missing values excluded

The success count for this function was 80.46%

---

**Table 23: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Highly Engaged, Compared to Disengaged, 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Voter-Volunteers</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter-Volunteers</td>
<td>83.05%</td>
<td>16.95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>18.61%</td>
<td>81.39%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.09%</td>
<td>63.91%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | 98 | 20 | 118 |
| | 59 | 258 | 317 |
| | 157 | 278 | 435 |

565 missing values excluded

The success count for this function was 82.22%
line indicators of engagement, and the practitioner can work to develop relevant characteristics of highly involved youth among those less engaged. The variables significant at $a=.01$ are shown in Table 20 and 21.

Entering these variables into the linear discriminant function yielded success rates of over 80 percent, as shown in Tables 22 and 23.

These results show that the most significant factors that predict whether youth will be highly engaged are developed over time: the belief that one's vote counts, trust in people, attention paid to politics, and talking about politics with one's parents.\(^3\) Second, they do not show significant differences by race, region (urban/rural), or demographics.\(^4\) Engaging young people appears to be a long-term process, not determined by exogenous "social factors." Moreover, attitudinal factors were even more important in 2004 than they were in 2002. One might think that in an election year, particular demographic groups (e.g., Evangelical Christians) would stand out in the analysis, but they do not.

It is also interesting to note that attending church (or other place of worship—the question is not religion-specific) lost some explanatory power from 2002 to 2004. Observers of the American

<p>| Table 24: Cross-Tabulation of Church Attendance with the Highly Engaged and Disengaged, 2002 |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Attendance</th>
<th>Highly Engaged</th>
<th>Disengaged</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporadic/</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>48.16%</td>
<td>51.84%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 25: Stepwise Selection for Highly Engaged, Compared to Voters, 2002 |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Variable                 | Partial R-Square | F-Value     |
| "I Can Make a Difference"| 0.0174**        | 6.58         |
| Church attendance        | 0.0146**        | 5.47         |

\(** p < .05\)
tradition as far back as Tocqueville have noted the unique role religion plays in America; in 2002, church attendance was one of the most significant factors explaining engagement.\(^{41}\) A calculation of relative risk showed that, by 2002 data, someone who attended church regularly was 2.45 times more likely to be highly engaged than someone who did not.

By 2004, the explanatory effect of attending services had dropped in absolute terms (partial R-Square fell by over 75 percent) and in relative terms (falling from number 2 to number 7 on the list of explanatory variables). However, the relative risk did not change significantly; in 2004, someone who attended services was 2.53 times more likely to be highly involved. Thus, while church attendance lost some statistical power in 2004, the link between attendance and engagement persists. An analysis of 2002 data commented that "[t]he relationship between regular church attendance and civic engagement is clear."\(^{42}\) A better articulation might add that attending services is correlated with civic engagement to the extent that attending services fosters attitudes of trust and creates engagement opportunities.

The analysis above compared those who vote and volunteer to those who did neither. We would expect strong characteristics distinguishing these groups; the results support such intuitions. But how does the relationship play out in subtler situations? To explore this, we compared the moderately engaged to the highly engaged. First, we analyzed those who were voters but not volunteers.

In 2002 and 2004, the highly engaged were more likely to attend services and believe they can make a difference in their community. In 2004, even more attitudinal variables were significant, keeping with the overall trend. Interestingly, the one variable that
Table 27: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Highly Engaged, Compared to Voters, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Percent &amp; Number of Observations Predicted as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter-Volunteers</td>
<td>Voter- Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.09%</td>
<td>34.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>289</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter-Only</td>
<td>Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.61%</td>
<td>61.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>117</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>406</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

743 missing values excluded
The success count for this function was 63.24%

Table 28: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Highly Engaged, Compared to Voters, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Percent &amp; Number of Observations Predicted as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter-Volunteers</td>
<td>Voter- Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.23%</td>
<td>32.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter-Only</td>
<td>Voters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.88%</td>
<td>68.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

478 missing values excluded
The success count for this function was 67.67%

was significant for both the vote-only and the volunteer-only set in 2004 was the belief that people can generally be trusted (see below). This variable took on exactly the same mean value for those who only voted as it did for those who only volunteered, indicating that, at least with regard to this particular attitudinal indicator, the two moderately engaged groups are fairly similar. Again, the selected variables are good predictors.

Next, we compared the highly engaged to those who only volunteered. The results of the stepwise selection are in Tables 29 and 30.
Youth Attitudes Toward Voting and Volunteering

Table 29: Stepwise Selection for Highly Engaged, Compared to Volunteers, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My vote counts&quot;</td>
<td>0.1209***</td>
<td>65.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about politics w/ parents</td>
<td>0.0743***</td>
<td>37.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can make a difference&quot;</td>
<td>0.0289***</td>
<td>14.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents took me to vote</td>
<td>0.0176***</td>
<td>8.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .01

Table 30: Stepwise Selection for Highly Engaged, Compared to Volunteers, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Partial R-Square</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talked about politics w/ parents</td>
<td>0.1289***</td>
<td>25.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;People can generally be trusted&quot;</td>
<td>0.0602***</td>
<td>10.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Level of education is excluded here since it was significant but only for 18 to 25 year olds: *** p < .01

Table 31: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Highly Engaged, compared to Volunteers, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent &amp; Number of Observations Predicted as:†</th>
<th>Voter-Volunteers</th>
<th>Volunteers Only</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter-Volunteers</td>
<td>73.42%</td>
<td>26.58%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers Only</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32.08%</td>
<td>67.92%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers Only</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57.97%</td>
<td>42.03%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>709</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†781 missing values excluded

†The success count for this function was 70.67%

The highly engaged had a stronger "political culture" at home in 2002 and 2004 than those who were only volunteering. This means moving someone from "volunteer only" to "highly engaged" is probably not a simple process: a strong parental influence means organizations will probably have a difficult time engaging youth volunteers in political activity. These data bear out
Table 32: Results of Linear Discriminant Analysis for Highly Engaged, compared to Volunteers, 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted as:</th>
<th>Voter- Volunteers</th>
<th>Volunteers Only</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voter- Volunteers</td>
<td>59.32%</td>
<td>40.68%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers Only</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers Only</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>77.78%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.67%</td>
<td>52.33%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>258</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*742 missing values excluded

The success count for this function was 68.65%.

the theoretical and empirical studies cited earlier, arguing that sustained effort is needed to get volunteers involved in politics.

In Table 32, we again run a linear discriminant analysis, now comparing the highly engaged to the moderately engaged (volunteers only). Again, the significant variables do a good job of predicting whether the individual is highly engaged or moderately engaged. This shows that the variables entered are important factors in distinguishing between the groups.

Comparing the highly engaged to the moderately engaged yields strongly significant results; the explanatory variables make correct predictions roughly 70 percent of the time. The differences are subtler than when comparing the highly engaged to the disengaged, but they are still significant. For practitioners, this means that engaging the disengaged will require different strategies than engaging those moderately engaged.

**Tying It All Together**

In this section, we demonstrated significant differences between various subgroups of young voters and volunteers. Earlier, we referenced linear discriminant success counts as a "seemingly mundane methodological point." But the point is tremendously important. High success counts show that explanatory variables have real-world significance: for example, developing the explanatory characteristics of voters in nonvoting youth can be 60-80 percent successful in turning out young voters.
**Key Findings**

*Attitudes Matter.* A set of variables consistently significant, in both years, was attitudinal. Engaged youth were more likely than disengaged youth to trust the government, to trust others, to believe their vote counts, and to believe they could make a difference. The opposite was also true. For example, in 2002, the disengaged believed that politicians cared about "young people like yourself" at rates significantly lower than the highly engaged. It is precisely because (long-term) attitudes are important that the League of Young Voters, for example, works to convince "volunteer-only" youth of the importance of the political process.

*Gender, Race, and Ideology Don’t Matter.* In this analysis, gender, race, and ideology were never significant (a few times, race was significant at very low levels, but this is mostly anomalous). This indicates that the youth civic engagement field has it right: working in a nonpartisan manner is probably the route to sustainable engagement; engagement strategies for different groups are essentially the same. It is true that those who self-identified as strong conservatives or liberals were most likely to consider voting important (by a nearly two-to-one ratio over independents). However, these youth are likely already engaged. Moreover, young people are most likely to be politically independent. The effect of partisanship should not be overstated.

*Religious Organizations Can Be Important.* Attending a place of worship regularly was significant across many engaged groups in 2002, but importance fell in 2004. In an election year, the importance of religious groups might have been overshadowed by other factors, like discussing politics with one’s parents. However, the more fundamental importance of religious groups is in engendering attitudes important for engagement: trust in others, belief in oneself, etc. In the introduction, we emphasized that we are interested in attitudes, not actions; going to temple might not make one a voter, but it can help foster the necessary attitudes.

*Parents Are Important.* In almost every instance, parental political socialization was significant. This even applied to voting, where children are thought to rebel and have views opposite their parents’. However, ideology is not significant. Thus, while children might vote Republican because their parents vote Democrat, they
are still voting because their parents vote.

**Implications for Practitioners**

*Changing Attitudes Is Hard.* To change outcomes, practitioners need to change attitudes. Asking someone to vote might get him or her to turn out, but there is no "silver bullet" to civic engagement. A person's likelihood of being engaged as a young adult is the culmination of years-long processes. Most young people attend services as 16, 18, or 20 year olds because they have throughout their lives. From 2002 to 2004, an increasing proportion of youth reported talking with their parents about politics on a regular basis. Simply asking someone to vote is a poor proxy for political socialization; meaningful engagement takes time and effort.

*Voting Should Be Treated As A Means.* A voter does not necessarily become engaged, but an engaged person is likely to vote. This seemingly reflexive dictum can be illustrated by the methodology used above. Green and Gerber (Yale, 2001) found that asking young people to vote made them 8-10 times more likely to vote. But here, "voters" were people who considered voting important. We examined an attitude toward the political system, and these attitudes take a long time to form. Practitioners must treat voting as the means to an engaged citizenry. For example, Peter Raducha, Executive Director of Youth in Action, has said that his work was not guided by the mere goal of turning out voters. Instead, he said that if young people felt that they had a voice, they would vote on their own initiative. The data tend to bear this theory out.

*Religious Groups Can Play A Role.* As I mentioned above, church attendance is an important predictor of civic engagement. Therefore, youth-serving organizations should partner up with religious organizations on issues of mutual interest. This will be helpful to the organizations because they will get access to the churches' communications and membership networks. Churches, on the other hand, will be able to tap into organizations' expertise and experience. This is not to suggest that organizations and religious groups have perfectly coincidental goals, but issues like child-care, juvenile drug use, teenage crime, and health insurance for youth are issues that both groups are already working on separately—why not do so together?

*Don't Ignore Parents.* This goes along with the previous suggestion. The youth civic engagement field does a relatively poor job
of linking young people up with their own parents—surprising, considering how hard people in the sector work to connect youth to their community, nation, and world! Freedom's Answer, in the 2002 election, got young people (under the age of 18) to ask ten adults to vote. But this was actually a reversal of the trend we have seen in our analysis: instead of parents influencing their children's decisions, we see the opposite. Youth-serving organizations should work with parents and stress to them the importance of engaging youth in a long-term and sustainable way. Indeed, for all the time, money, and resources that are spent by organizations, parents are still the most important influence on young people's lives.

FURTHER RESEARCH

In this study, we focused on youth voting and volunteering. We treated "voting" as an attitude and compared it to the actual incidence of volunteering. A future study might consider only people 18 and older and compare actual voting rates with actual volunteering rates.\textsuperscript{43} Additionally, CIRCLE could ask two new questions: an attitudinal question about voting (e.g., "How important do you feel it is to volunteer on a regular basis?") and another question asking if respondents actually voted. This would not only allow direct comparisons between voting and volunteering but also demonstrate the extent of any discrepancies (i.e., the difference between the percentage of people who say volunteering is important and the percentage of people who actually volunteer).

Moreover, both Harvard's Institute of Politics and CIRCLE conduct nationwide surveys on a regular basis. While some questions (e.g., the oft-asked "right track/wrong track" question) are duplicated across these surveys, it would be useful to have more commonality between the major, regular surveys of youth. CIRCLE might consider longer surveys (the 2004 NYS was only about half as long as 2002's) and surveys specifically formulated for time-series comparisons.

Cynthia Gibson points out that there is a need for rigorous longitudinal research in the youth civic engagement field.\textsuperscript{44} We have tried to provide some longitudinal insight in this paper, but the field needs more longitudinal studies, both of young people and regarding specific programs.
Conclusion

Over the past fifteen years, youth civic engagement has become one of this nation's most active nonprofit fields, with organizations like Youth Service America, Party Y, the Global Youth Action Network, and the League of Young Voters all becoming a major part of the civic engagement landscape. The 2004 elections featured an increased interest in youth civic engagement, and youth voter turnout was up for the first time in over a decade. Over the next few years, it will be important to sustain the energy and drive that fueled the increased activity in 2004. As these organizations develop strategies for engaging youth in the long-term, it is important to consider what factors influence how young people interact with the social institutions around them.

In this study, we have tried to provide some of this information. While not exhaustive, our study provides empirical analysis of characteristics and yields results that might not have been initially obvious or intuitive. Studies like this and the work of practitioners are integral to reversing America's decades-long slump in civic engagement.

Goutam U. Jois, age 23, (A.B., Georgetown, 2003; M.P.P., Georgetown, 2004) is a J.D. Candidate (Class of 2007) at Harvard Law School. He was elected Youth Governor of New Jersey (1999), received a President's Student Service Award from President Clinton (2000), and was Executive Director of the world's largest student-run Model UN program (2002). He received an A.B. from Georgetown College in 2003, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, with Honors in Government and minors in Classical Studies and Philosophy; he received an M.P.P. from the Georgetown Public Policy Institute in 2004. He has worked with the YMCA DC Youth & Government Program since 2002, he initially directed operations and now he serves on the program's Advisory Board.

Christopher Toppe, Ph.D. is a Senior Social Scientist in the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation at the Points of Light Foundation. He has considerable professional experience in conducting original research and in the analysis of survey data. He came to Points of Light Foundation from Independent Sector, where he managed their studies on giving and volunteering, and he teaches in the graduate school of Georgetown University.
ENDNOTES

1. CYV's study is similar to "Are You Talking to Me? A Guide to Reaching Young Voters" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Institute of Politics, 2004, accessed 27 January 2005); available from http://www.iop.harvard.edu/pdfs/IOp_Voters_Guide.pdf; Internet. However, CYV breaks down voters and volunteers in more detail so I will discuss it here. The IOP guide is useful as a practitioner's tool; CYV's is useful for political candidates (indeed, it is called a "Candidate Toolkit").


3. Cynthia Gibson points out that there are many different conceptions of what constitutes civic engagement. In this paper, we use the term broadly to refer to any actions that indicate meaningful interaction with the community-at-large. This includes voting, volunteering, participation in voluntary associations, and more. See Cynthia Gibson, From Inspiration to Participation: A Review of Perspectives on Youth Civic Engagement (Berkeley, CA: Grantmaker Forum on National and Community Service, 2001, accessed 27 January 2005); available from http://www.pacefundcrs.org/publications/pubs/Moving%20Youth%20report%20REV3.pdf; Internet.

4. Conversely, parental disengagement might be a significant reason young people do not vote; after all, parents of today's children came of age during Vietnam, Watergate, stagflation, the AIDS and crack cocaine epidemics, and economic recession and formed distrustful views of the political system. See Anna Greenberg, "New Generation, New Politics," The American Prospect, Vol. 14, No. 9 (October 1, 2003).


6. Ibid., 6. The further drop from 2002 to 2004 in volunteerism might be indicative of a prolonged downward trend; the number of people who said they "never" volunteered in an April 2000 White House Project Education Fund survey was 27% (CIRCLE 2002, 7), but in CIRCLE's 2004 study, that number nearly doubled, to 53%.

7. CIRCLE, Council for Excellence in Government/Center for Information and Research in Civic Learning and Engagement National Youth Survey 2004 (College Park, MD: CIRCLE, January 2004, accessed 27 January 2005); available from http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/youth_survey_2004_questionnaire.pdf; Internet (cited in-text as "CIRCLE 2004"). In 2004, the survey asked many questions about specific issues (most notably gay and lesbian issues). While important, these questions are not relevant to this analysis.

8. Ibid. The difference, an increase of 2.56%, had an associated t-statistic of 1.333, with p = .1827.
Using the word "generation" is tricky; people use the word differently. In this article, we are referring to the "millennial generation," as introduced by Strauss and Howe and greatly expounded by Beale and Abdalla. We use Beale and Abdalla's definition of millennials: those born between 1976 and 1996. The beginning point is chosen because 1976 is the last year of a decline in U.S. annual births (the fewest since 1940). The endpoint is such the youngest millennials are those who meaningfully recall the turn of the millennium. Scott Beale and Abeer B. Abdalla, Millennial Manifesto: The Youth Activist Handbook (Washington, DC: by the authors, 2003). The millennial generation was between the ages of 7 and 27 in 2003, when CIRCLE's survey of 15- to 25-year olds was conducted. This largely fits the generational frame and an intuition of when political awareness begins.

By way of comparison, according to the Center for Study of the American Electorate, the overall voter turnout rate in 2004 was 60.7%, the highest since 1968.


Lake Snell Perry & Associates and The Tarrance Group, Findings from a Recent National Survey Among 15-25 Year Olds (memorandum to CIRCLE) (College Park, MD: CIRCLE, 15 January 2004, accessed 27 January 2005), 3; available from http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/National_Youth_Survey2004/UpforGrabs.pdf; Internet. The statistics we use are from the National Election Pool (NEP) aggregation of state exit polls. All statistics of youth voter turnout are estimates and sampling variations yield divergent results. For example, the NEP's national exit poll puts 18-29 turnout at just 48.7%, while the Los Angeles Times estimates turnout for that same group at 57.3%. We use the NEP aggregate state data because they strike a middle ground between the two. For more, see CIRCLE, Youth Voting in the 2004 Election (College Park, MD: CIRCLE, 8 November 2004, accessed 27 January 2005); available from http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/FS-PresElection04.pdf; Internet.

Green and Gerber were measuring turnout among those ages 18 to 29.

Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber, Getting Out the Youth Vote: Results from Randomized Field Experiments (New Haven, CT: Yale University, December 2001), 26-8.

The increased voter turnout in 2004 indicates that youth did experience "authentic encouragement," with a variety of new organizations encouraging voter turnout. Pop icons such as rappers P.Diddy ("Vote or Die") and Eminem (in his song "Mosh") spoke out in favor of voting, adding a popular dimension to the issue.

Institute of Politics, Fall 2004 Survey - Top Line Data (Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Institute of Politics, October 2004, accessed 27 January 2005), 8; available from http://ww-wv.iop.harvard.edu/pdfs/survey/fall_2004_topline.pdf; Internet. Both numbers are up from the October 2003 data, when 65% had done community service and 21% participated in a government, political, or issue-related organization. This can probably be attributed, in part, to the presidential election.

20 Ibid., 10.
21 Ibid., 11.
22 Ibid., 12.
23
24 Ibid., 2,3.
25 Carolyn Darrow Woodard, "Where Are Youth Headed?" (Introduction to panel discussion sponsored by the Youth Vote Coalition, 8 September 2003). Ms Woodard is now Acting Director of the Integrated Technology Initiative at Ashoka: Innovators for the Public.
28 Fields, 3.
29 Benjamin Highton and Raymond E. Wolfinger, "The First Seven Years of the Political Life Cycle," American Journal of Political Science 45, no. 1 (January 2001): 203. The adult-roles tested were (1) "settling down" (less residential mobility); (2) marriage; (3) "community ties" (measured by home ownership); (4) getting a job; (5) leaving school; and (6) leaving home.
30 Highton and Wofinger 207. "For the young person who already has all of the adult characteristics, the predicted probability of voting is only 5.9 percentage points greater, much less than the 37 percentage point gap between the turnout of those aged 18-24 and those in their sixties [who presumably embody all of the adult roles]" (Ibid.).
31 The 2002 survey had a sample size of 1,490 while the 2004 survey had a sample size of 1,000. The 2002 survey over sampled African American and Hispanic youth. The data are weighted by age and race to reflect the actual makeup of the national youth population.
32 Since the survey does not ask about voting directly and since not all of the sample is over the age of 18, attitudes toward voting are used as a proxy for voting. This seems reasonable, since we are more broadly concerned with attitudes toward the political system, not just voting per se.
33 In 2002, the question asked was, "How often do you personally participate in volunteer activities with an organization or community group?" (CIRCLE 2002, Question 5) (It is important to note that the word "volunteer" was not defined in either survey; it meant what each respondent subjectively thought it meant). Respondents who reported activity at least once per year were considered "volunteers." In 2004, the question instead was, "Have you ever spent time participating in any community service or volunteer activity?" (CIRCLE 2004, Question 6). Respondents who said yes, and that such activity was within the past 12 months,
were considered "volunteers." While the two questions are slightly different, it is doubtful that the difference is meaningful. There might be people who, for example, volunteer at a church picnic once a year who would have responded "yes" in 2002 but "no" in 2004 if the picnic was not held in the past 12 months. We take the liberty of assuming such cases are negligible, and in any event not of such widespread occurrence to account for the nearly-15% drop-off in volunteering rates.

34 The difference between means has an associated t-statistic of 1.6063, not significant even at \( \alpha = .10 \).

35 The difference between means has an associated t-statistic of 12.4226, with a p-value of \( p < .001 \).

36 In 2004, men voted more than women by a margin of 3.97% higher; \( t=0.2091 \) and \( p=.2091 \). Women volunteered more than men by a margin of 4.11%; \( t=1.4742 \) and \( p=.1407 \).

37 Here, the \( X_n \) refers to an \( X \)-matrix of explanatory variables that affect each of the subgroups. The null and alternative hypotheses are positing no difference in the relative values of the \( X \)-matrix variables and some significant difference between matrices, respectively.

38 Partisanship, age, and other factors were only significant at very low levels and we do not consider them particularly relevant to the analysis.

39 Another such variable, the belief that one person can make a difference, was significant at \( \alpha = 0.05 \) in 2002.

40 Having children was statistically significant in 2004, but this does not have any practical meaning; the difference in means between those who were highly engaged and those who were disengaged had a p-value of 0.5112, indicating that the highly engaged and the disengaged had, statistically speaking, the same number of children.

41 To confirm that this effect was non-sectarian, we used Born-Again/Evangelical status as the explanatory variable for the linear discriminant function; this yielded well over 40% error in 2002 and 2004, not much better than the 50% error rate of a blind guess.


43 Alternatively, CIRCLE could ask one attitudinal question about voting (as is done now) and another attitudinal question about volunteering (e.g., "How important do you feel it is to volunteer on a regular basis?"), and then also ask if people have actually voted and if they actually volunteer. This would not only allow direct comparisons between voting and volunteering but also the nature and extent of any discrepancies (e.g., the difference between the percentage of people who think voting is important and those who actually voted).

44 Gibson, 22-23.

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Youth Attitudes Toward Voting and Volunteering


Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. Getting Out the Youth Vote: Results from Randomized Field Experiments. New Haven, CT: Yale University, December 2001.


Raducha, Peter, interview by author, 14 April 2000, Washington, DC.

Quinto, Benjamin, interview by author, 20 January 2003, Washington, DC.


*Significance levels have been denoted by an 'a' instead of the Greek letter alpha.
Youth and Public Policy

NOTES FROM THE GEORGETOWN PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE STUDENT CONFERENCE

Introduction by Eulynn Shiu, Conference Chair

The 2005 Georgetown Public Policy Institute's Student Conference offered students and policy experts a forum for examining youth issues. This section highlights the insights that came out of this day-long meeting of academic and professional knowledge.

The Conference was held on February 3, 2005 at the Kaiser Family Foundation's Public Affairs Center in Northwest Washington DC. The event was preceded by an evening reception on Capitol Hill with a keynote address by Republican Congressman Mark Souder.

Participants were challenged to answer the question: how can public policy best serve youth in America and youth around the world? Panels focused on a number of social issues including urban design, public health education, unemployment at home and abroad, civic engagement, and early childhood development.

The notes presented in this section highlight the issue of youth unemployment and also offer brief summaries of urban design, civic engagement, and guns & crime. These are all critical issues. It is estimated that there are over 88 million unemployed 18 to 25 year olds in the world; urban design can improve city schools and the environment young people grow up in; youth civic participation supports lasting democracies; and as many as 8 children a day are killed by gun violence in this country.

The discussions contained here are the first step towards developing policies that effectively address these important issues. The next step is campaigning for action. We are proud to include at the close of this section a brief essay from a conference participant that outlines a plan of action for improving youth civic participation in America.

Please enjoy these notes, and come join us next year as we continue to advance substantive policy discourse in the nation's capital.
Youth Unemployment: Causes and Solutions

Notes Prepared by John Kim & Bret Theodos

According to the International Labour Organization, half of the world’s jobless are youth between the ages of 15 and 24. In the United States, too many youth unemployment efforts are “flavor-of-the-year” initiatives that arrive to great fanfare but later fizzle out. The key to finding successful designs is greater research into why certain initiatives are successful and then greater attention to the challenges of implementing them in other communities. One lesson we have already learned from early research is that short-term programs, whether in job-training or tutoring, are not nearly as effective as long-term programs where youth develop trusting relationships with adult mentors.

International efforts at combating youth unemployment face even greater challenges. But again there are lessons that can be taken from successful programs. The first key to success is addressing the external and internal forces at work in a foreign country. For development workers in Africa external challenges may include poor social infrastructure, ethnic conflict, and inadequate legal and political structures. Internal challenges include low existing education levels in the adult population and a lack of training or education facilities. Successful programs address these challenges by engaging with local governments and businesses. Foreign workers have difficulty working with poorly established institutions, local people understand the system and how to operate in it.

Certainly the challenges presented affect policy beyond youth unemployment; solutions to this problem must be developed through close collaboration between advocates, practitioners, policy makers, and perhaps most importantly, youth.
Youth and Their Environment: Urban Design for a Better Future

Notes Prepared by Peter R. Buryk

The constructed environment of cities affects the development of children living in them. William Millar, President of the American Public Transportation Association, highlighted the importance of improved access to public transportation. Suzanne Rudzinski of the Environmental Protection Agency similarly stressed that reduced reliance on personal vehicles would reduce air pollution and improve the health of urban children and adults. Dannielle Glaros of Smart Growth America noted that while 80 percent of the baby boom generation walked to school, only about 15 percent of children today do so.

Mike Hill, the Executive Director of the Shaw EcoVillage Project in Washington, D.C., works to make young people the catalyst for sustainable change in Washington's urban neighborhoods. Youth in the program participate in community development, urban planning, and leadership initiatives with the goal of improving the historic Shaw neighborhood in D.C. Urban design and public policy are relevant to youth, he said, because "youth are the biggest consumers of the public realm - schools, parks, sports, and transportation are all dominated by kids." With this in mind, Hill said that communities and public policies should nurture children by encouraging their participation in economic markets, while focusing on both formal and practical education and installing a sense of neighborhood ownership in kids.

Youth and Civic Engagement

Notes Prepared by Koonal Gandhi

People ages 18 to 25 favor more government action and are more socially tolerant than older generations. However, they are less attentive to public affairs and do not trust older generations according to survey's taken by the University of Maryland. Dr. Pablo Eisenberg added that this "Dot Net" generation of 18 to 25 year olds seems less likely to be political activists as well. The abil-
ity to organize for political action is lacking amongst young people, and these effects will soon permeate into the nation's political life.

Brian Reich provided a different viewpoint. As an internet communications consultant for many political campaigns, Reich felt that young activists have simply switched their medium. Youth may not be taking to the streets in mass numbers, but according to Reich, they are clicking their way to influence. Web activism was prevalent in 2004, and this medium is proving to be a powerful supplement to traditional activism.

Dr. Rockeymoore, vice president of research and programs at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, suggested that regardless of technological change, institutions must continue to promote civic engagement. She recounted a recent occurrence at Texas's Prairie View A&M University. In 2003, the local district attorney published an open letter in the local newspaper proclaiming that university students would be subject to a $10,000 fine if they voted in the local elections. The lesson is that much remains to be done educate and involve today's youth.

All panelists agreed that the best way to combat declining youth participation numbers is education. Civics education should commence early in educational progression, parents must encourage volunteer and civic behavior at home. Civic groups such as churches are important mediums to promote prudent civic activity and engagement. There is no single stroke that will overcome these problems, but the panelists suggested that multiple pathways must be explored to promote youth and civic engagement.

DC, Guns, and Youth: Putting a Youth Perspective on the Policy Making Process

Notes Prepared by Caitlin Halferty and Christine Kim

Dr. Jens Ludwig, Georgetown Public Policy Institute Professor

Professor Ludwig discussed the District of Columbia's strict firearms laws that essentially ban handguns. Last year, Congress considered repealing the law. How would District young people make their feelings known to Congressmen? Professor Ludwig also cited examples of firearms research and
policy practice in play. Recently, the National Academy of Sciences suggested that police patrols targeted against illegal gun carrying may help reduce gun violence. However, to make efficient use of these patrol resources, police presence are usually concentrated in high-crime, disproportionately low-income neighborhoods. Should Washington, DC, consider targeted control and is it possible to implement the policy in a way as to minimize any potential conflict between police and District youth?

Ivan Jordan, District of Columbia Police Officer

Officer Jordan discussed the importance of learning how one’s neighborhood can be used as an effective strategy in combating youth violence. We should ask, who are the youth that loiter on street corners? We should take practical actions in our neighborhoods to include organizing neighborhood walks and taking care to notice what youth are doing. Violence increases when disaffected youth remain unconnected to their immediate community. He challenged every person to ride-along with a police officer in a high-crime neighborhood and observe the struggles of these residents.

Morna Murray, co-Director of the Education and Youth Development Division, Children's Defense Fund

Ms. Murray made three main points about youth gun violence: (1) We are in a crisis; (2) this crisis cannot be viewed in isolation from other issues; (3) and each of us has a responsibility to do something about it. Everyday, nearly 8 children die from gun violence; we must put a human face on this suffering. More than a fiscal matter, we don't provide our children with necessary help and services. Young people are pounded by media messages and cultural attitudes that think violence is cool. It is the youth voice that is desperately needed to counter what young people hear. Adults should mentor our youth into responsible and successful adulthood.

John Muller, District of Columbia Youth Advisory Council

Mr. Muller discussed the economic and social disparities that exist between young people. Disadvantaged youth have unequal access to books, computers, and overall educational opportunities that more privileged peers enjoy, further exacerbat-
ing the problem of youth violence. A young person gives up hope and gives up on himself when he does not feel a sense of belonging in his family, school and community. Ultimately, the whole community suffers. Mr. Muller emphasized the role of technology in enabling students to connect to community. Mr. Muller pointed out the importance of education in preventing juvenile violence and providing adequate public services and educational opportunities to disadvantaged youth.

Civic Education: Required

A CALL TO ACTION BY MELISSA COMBER
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Maryland School of Public Policy
College Park, MD

Political participation is both a right of citizenry and a necessity for democracy. Yet many Americans fail to exercise that right, and many who try find they do not have the necessary skills. Civic skills cultivate, and are a requirement of, successful political participation (Verba et al. 1995). Therefore, in order to equalize the distribution of civic skills, they should be taught in schools.

THE ABSENCE OF CIVIC SKILLS

Civic skills include the capabilities to communicate with elected officials, organize to influence policy, understand and participate in one's polity, and think critically about civic and political life. Citizens can obtain civic skills from numerous sources. Home, work, school, and other organizations, such as churches, often encourage the acquisition and development of civic skills. Yet skill-fostering circumstances are not available to all citizens equally. While civic education is taught to most American students, it is not a requirement for all, and as a result many Americans have never taken a civics course. Similarly, not all home environments are conducive to the development of civic skills. Some researchers hypothesize that higher education and professional employment
can provide an alternative to civic education for acquiring civic skills (Schwadel 2002; Putnam 1995; Verba et al. 1995), however, higher education and professional employment are often only selectively available, primarily to people of higher socioeconomic status. Citizens without access to professional employment, higher education, civic education, or other paths to civic skill development are politically disabled. Since the interests of disadvantaged groups often diverge from society's more prosperous members (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), a lack of civic skills and political knowledge among such groups may further constrain their ability to effectively influence public decision-making.

A civic skill disparity among young adults is evident. According to the IEA/Civic Education study, between 75% and 90% of American ninth-grade students can interpret political campaign material, but less than 63% of those same students monitor newspaper news and less than 59% of them engage in discussions with their parents about U.S. government events (Torney-Purta et al. 2001). The Civic and Political Health of the Nation study found that less than 39% of fifteen to twenty-five-year-olds have ever worked informally with a group to solve problems in their community (Keeter et al. 2002). According to both data sources, young adults who do not possess civic skills are more likely to be African-American, Latino, or immigrants.

Civic Education

Civic participation and engagement is a cornerstone of American political ideology. The American founders felt education should provide a moral foundation and form character in future citizens (Pangle and Pangle 2000). In particular, President George Washington urged Congress to support a civic education that would consist of "teaching the people themselves to know and value their own rights; [and] to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority" (Fitzpatrick 1939 [1790] p. 493). Benjamin Franklin maintained that good schools should include the value of promoting democracy (Hochschild and Scovronick 2000).

The purpose and content of civic education has always been a subject of deliberation and contention. Often, communities debate which normative purposes and values to teach. Civic education teaches values that often conflict, such as patriotism vs.
membership in global society, or socially acceptable attitudes of character vs. independent thinking (Nelson 1991). Requirements and curricula for civic education differ among states, and even among school districts within states. Furthermore, when civic education policies mandate civic requirements, the values or norms to be taught remain a point of conflict.

State policies requiring civics coursework or examination vary widely. The majority of states require a government or civics course for high school graduation, but only a few have a state statute requiring schools to offer government or civics courses (CIRCLE 2004). While state assessment systems are often a focus of education reform, only twenty-two states' assessment systems include knowledge of government or civics (Education Commission of the States 2004).

Recent research provides evidence that civic education, in its current form, can contribute to increased civic skill levels (Comber 2005). For example, according to the IEA Civic Education Study, some civic education topics are correlated with increased levels of political interpretation skills, news monitoring skills, and group discussion skills (ibid.). If one semester of traditional civics can affect skill levels, the effect of an extra semester of civics that prioritizes civic skills would likely be significant.

More Civic Education is the Solution

Young Americans need to be taught activities of political participation outside of voting. They must be taught how to politically participate, how to be activists, how to organize others in their communities, how to lead and participate in group discussions, how to understand campaigns, and even how to vote. A civics course with a focus on teaching civic skills is the most practical source of these abilities. Such a course's content must carefully include curricula and methods that foster civic skill development.

The current average civic education requirement of one semester of government processes and institutions is inadequate. In order to teach civic skills, a separate class on political participation and the perils of unequal participation is necessary. According to the Civic Mission of Schools report, a promising approach to teaching civic skills includes class discussion, service-learning, student voice in school government, and simulations (Carnegie
Corporation and CIRCLE 2003). All these methods should be used to teach civic skills.

For young citizens, sources of civic skill development outside of the classroom can be unreliable. While families, religious organizations, after-school activities, and jobs can teach civic skills, youth cannot rely on their availability. For example, children of immigrants may not belong to families that can teach participatory civic skills. In this past election youth were asked and inspired to vote in record numbers. However, the organizations that pushed for their vote did not inspire or teach ways to participate outside of voting and therefore did not teach civic skills.

Requiring a second semester of civics to teach civic skills is a difficult proposal to support, especially in schools without any current civics requirements. Current high school curricula prioritize reading and math, and any skills likely to appear on standardized tests. Schools and students may not have time in their schedules for a required second semester of civics with a focus on civic abilities. Additionally, school districts may not find a second semester of civics financially affordable. Yet this requirement must be prioritized, to equalize the citizen voice that our government hears. We must teach skills in high schools, to give all young citizens at least one venue from which to learn civic skills.

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Evaluation of the 
DC Opportunity 
Scholarship Program: 
A Summary of the First Year 
Report on Participation 

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The Washington DC School Choice Act of 2004 granted 1,700 public school students the means to attend private schools. The "Evaluation of the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program: First Year Report on Participation" of the US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences indicates that this school choice experiment is reaching the students most in need. Whether or not it will help these students to succeed remains to be seen.

On January 23, 2004, President Bush signed the DC School Choice Incentive Act. This act created the first federally-sponsored school voucher program in the District of Columbia as a pilot program to be evaluated over a five-year period. This school choice program, now called the Opportunity Scholarship Program, will eventually provide about 1,700 full-tuition scholarships, worth up to $7,500, to low-income K-12 students in the District. The scholarships can be used to pay for tuition and fees at any participating private school in DC. Scholarships are to be awarded by lottery if the program is oversubscribed, and preference is to be given to students currently in public schools, especially if they are "in need of improvement" under the federal government's No Child Left Behind Act.

The Opportunity Scholarship Program is the most recent experiment with school choice in DC. School choice initiatives — such as public charter schools, magnet schools, and school vouch-

er programs — allow parents to select a school for their child as an alternative to their neighborhood public school. Choice programs are often controversial, primarily due to concerns that they may not reach their targeted constituency of disadvantaged students and might lead to negative outcomes for the students who remain in assigned public schools.

The School Choice Incentive Act mandated an independent evaluation to determine what effects the program is having on participating students and non-participating students and schools. After a government-sponsored competition, a research team that includes the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (GPPI) School Choice Demonstration Project was selected to evaluate the program. Along with the prime contractor, Westat, the evaluation team includes Patrick Wolf and Nada Eissa, both GPPI Associate Professors, and Michael Puma, an independent researcher who is an Adjunct Professor at GPPI. The evaluation team is charged with using the most rigorous methods possible to determine (1) how many and what kinds of schools and students are participating in the program; (2) what impacts, good or bad, the program is having on such things as student achievement, school safety, and parental satisfaction; and (3) what impacts, good or bad, the program is having on District public schools and the students who remain in them.

In March 2004, the federal government hired the Washington Scholarship Fund to administer the Opportunity Scholarship Program. Implementation began at the end of April, several months after most private schools had closed their admissions and many parents had already settled on their child’s schooling options for the coming year. As a result, the decision was made to partially implement the program with an initial cohort of students in 2004 and fully implement it with a second cohort in 2005. The following information is from the initial report to Congress on who participated in the program during the first year project launch.

What was the level of participation in the initial year?

School choice programs require participation by both participating students and recipient schools. Applications were submitted on behalf of nearly 2,700 students. A total of 1,848 students were deemed eligible for the program. Scholarships were award-
The DC Opportunity Scholarship Program

ed to 1,366 students, and 1,027 recipients (75 percent) used them to attend a private school of their parent's choosing in the fall of 2004. A total of 58 of the 109 private schools in DC chose to participate in the program in the first year. The program was oversubscribed in grades 6-12, where scholarships had to be awarded based on a lottery because of a scarcity of private school slots.

To what extent is the program serving its intended clientele of disadvantaged students?

The highest service priority for the program is students attending public schools in need of improvement. In the spring of 2004, only 15 schools in DC had been designated as in need of improvement, and only 79 students from those schools applied for the program. All of them received scholarships. A total of 535 eligible applicants were attending public schools that either were designated or about to be designated in need of improvement. Of these students, 433, or 81 percent, were awarded scholarships. The average family income of eligible applicants was just $18,742.

What kinds of private schools are accepting scholarship students?

A majority of the participating schools are Catholic (51 percent). Another 21 percent of schools are affiliated with a non-Catholic religion, and 28 percent are independent nonsectarian schools. Compared to District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), the participating private schools are considerably smaller, more racially diverse, and have lower student/teacher ratios.

What might we expect regarding the impact of the program on participants?

At this point we do not know what the impacts will be, since the program just started. Previous evaluations of school voucher programs have reached mixed conclusions regarding their impacts on student achievement, although all prior studies have concluded that parents who exercise school choice are significantly more satisfied with their child's school and tend to rate it higher than non-participating parents regarding such things as safety, order, and discipline.

What might we expect regarding the impact of the program on DCPS and non-participating District students?
The short answer is probably very little. Overall, public school applicants do not differ from non-applicants in their average test scores and they are more likely to be low-income, suggesting that the most advantaged public school students are not exiting DCPS by way of the program. The program also does not appear to be putting much competitive pressure on public schools to improve or risk losing a large number of students. One-fourth of DC public schools lost no students to the program and 82 percent lost 2 percent of their student population or less. The DCPS system received an extra $13 million in federal funds through passage of the act, and individual public schools that lose students and therefore funding as a result of the program are being reimbursed dollar-for-dollar. Thus, the program currently is not draining financial resources from the public sector.

What happens next?

Data are being collected on the more than 2,700 new eligible applicants to the program that comprise Cohort 2 and will complete the staged two-year implementation of the program. Since all grade levels are now oversubscribed, lotteries are being designed and run to award scholarships to this second cohort of students. The Cohort 2 applicants who do not receive scholarships will populate a large enough control group for the evaluation team to conduct a longitudinal experimental evaluation of program impacts — widely considered the "gold standard" of public policy research. Thus, in a few years we will know a lot more about what happens to students and schools when low-income families are permitted to send their children to private schools at public expense.

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The Man Who Could Have Been President

A BOOK REVIEW OF
SCOTT STOSSEL'S
Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver

"The politics of death is bureaucracy, routine, rules, status quo. The politics of life is personal initiative, creativity, flair, dash, a little daring. The politics of death is calculation, prudence, measured gestures. The politics of life is experience, spontaneity, grace, directness. The politics of death is fear of youth. The politics of life is to trust the young to their own experiences."

-Sargent Shriver

The study of politics is a formalized science, but every now and then a book reminds us of its true and untidy nature — that politics is in fact an eccentric game, dependent on individuals that are sometimes out of step with public opinion and even public knowledge. Like most great endeavors, politics is implicitly linked to the charisma and persuasiveness of those that participate in it.

In his biography of Sargent Shriver, Sarge: The Life and Times of Sargent Shriver, Scott Stossel, senior editor at The Atlantic Monthly, tells of a night on John F. Kennedy's Presidential campaign when Shriver all but forced the nominee into an action that eventually assured him the Presidency. Kennedy's Catholicism had been hurting him in opinion polls for months when, on October 19,
1960, Martin Luther King was arrested for demanding to be served lunch in the segregated Magnolia Room. His pregnant wife, Coretta King, was terrified that her husband would not survive the ordeal. Three days later, Shriver persuaded Kennedy to call Mrs. King and tell her that he would press to get her husband released from jail. Kennedy was distracted at the time; he had a plane to catch in forty-five minutes and he was skeptical about making the call. Shriver insisted that it was both the strategic and humane thing to do. Kennedy needed the African American vote and he believed in the Civil Rights cause. Sarge dialed Coretta King and handed his brother-in-law the phone. When Kennedy took the phone from Shriver he set in motion a series of events that culminated in the Presidency. At the time, Sarge was told by Kennedy’s closest aides, “You just lost us the election.”

A successful biography of a political figure has three features: revelation, authenticity, and immediacy or contemporary significance. After seven years of working on 'Sarge', Stossel succeeded on all three fronts. Shriver’s relationship with the Kennedys is particularly revelatory. Stossel’s portrayal of Shriver’s complex seven year courtship of Eunice Kennedy has echoes of the Old Testament story of the first seven years Jacob had to work to win the hand of Rachel. The final coming together of Eunice and Sarge is the one of many crescendos that arc through the book. The book is more than a biography of one man—it is a chronicle of a bold and innovative America in the twentieth century. Shriver’s youth is set against the Depression. His years in the Navy provide a rolling tableaux of the Second World War. In the middle of the century he moves from the Kennedy campaign to the post Kennedy era of political machination and Johnson’s experiments in social change. Through the telling of Shriver and Eunice Kennedy’s work, the reader is reminded of the remarkable transformation in human rights practice and law that was arguably the great achievement of the twentieth century.

For youth today, it is not Shriver’s past, but his lasting legacy that is most pertinent. 178,000 young men and women have worked with the Peace Corps in 138 countries since Shriver helped found the organization in 1961. Portia Hensley, a graduate student at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute, explains why she joined the Peace Corps in Paraguay:
I knew I wanted to go to graduate school, but thought it wise to take a couple of years off. I wanted something progressive, to help people, something I couldn't do later in life when I was more established and had a family.

The Peace Corps gave me things I never expected going into it. It provided me with a completely different perspective on the world and the way it works. How different it is from the way that America works. I had lived abroad before but never had an experience where my assumptions were challenged.

When I say this, I don't mean it to be a value judgment. At home, if something breaks, we buy a new one, and family doesn't mean the same thing. Living in Paraguay helped me understand that you can be poor and you can be happy. I think that in America we think that poor people aren't as happy as rich people. I grew a lot—I had to step out of my comfort zone and that's why I grew. I would never have stepped out of the house in Paraguay if I wasn't willing to do that. I have more confidence, more compassion. They have a different perception of what we are through the media—they expect Hollywood. I was the weird person who stood out, always making mistakes when I first spoke Spanish—it was very humbling.

Much of the legitimacy of Shriver and Eunice Kennedy's work lies in its cross-cultural authenticity. Their work is both rooted in America and embedded in a larger global human rights movement. Their international efforts with the Peace Corps would ring hollow without Shriver's domestic commitment to ending poverty. Shriver helped build Head Start which has assisted the education of 20 million children since 1965. Shriver's commitment to problems at home as well as abroad still resonates with today's youth. As an American student recently observed: "After I did the Peace Corps, I worked in development abroad for a few years, but then I decided to come home because I could not continue to espouse American traditions when I knew how much poverty we
still have in America. I needed to know we practiced what we preached. That’s why I want to study Public Policy and want to work at home."

Given the significance of Shriver’s life and accomplishments, it is important to ask whether this book can reach a wide youth audience given its daunting length. Numerous biographies jostle on the shelf demanding attention. UN Under-secretary General Shashi Tharoor’s Nehru, for example, is an elegant and slim volume. It brings out the urgency of Nehru’s legacy for today’s world—international cooperation, secularism, rationality and democracy, but also the devastating impact of misplaced idealism and socialism. At 700 pages, Stossel’s work may lack the brevity needed to engage a youth audience. There are, however, many biographies of Nehru—three new ones in 2004 alone—and only this one work on Shriver’s prolific life. The only other Shriver biography was written in the 1960s and it was an extended magazine article put together as part of a campaign strategy for a possible run at the Vice-Presidency. With a large task before him, Stossel gracefully fills the expanse—his detailed stories create a vivid historical account.

Stossel confesses that “there is always a danger, when writing about someone like Shriver, who has done so much, of sliding into hagiography—an idolizing biography... It implies a lack of perspective on the part of the biographer.” He makes an interesting clarification here because the meaning of the word hagiography is the biography of a saint. Stossel’s book certainly does not suffer from hagiography. In fact, there are a few uncomfortable moments in it, where readers enter a very private space they are unlikely to leave with a positive opinion. Yet, there are other moments when Shriver’s unbounded enthusiasm and lack of guile are surprisingly saint-like. There is also Shriver’s public presence—he is now 89 years old but his speeches rouse audiences across the world, and his connection with them, particularly with strangers, is still strong.

Shriver, like Nehru and Kennedy and King, had an idealism that was sometimes an asset in public life, but occasionally a curse. He lived through points in history when young people risked their lives in civil disobedience—stepping into the streets, into jails, into wars. Today, some political commentators lament the end of the youth activism of the 1960s and 1970s. Could it be that
institutions like the Peace Corps have channeled this activism? Shriver’s legacy, the institutionalization of young energy into organizations like the Peace Corps, and the tremendous surge in legitimate political channels and non-profits could be part of the reason why youth respond differently today than in the 1960s.

At Columbia University on November 20, 2003, Noam Chomsky gave a lecture, ‘After the War’, to a packed hall of students. At the end, one of them asked him, "But what’s the point of it all? I feel so helpless, I have no power." Chomsky answered, "You live in the greatest democracy in the world, and you have no power—look around you at the world, see the political movements in places which are not even half as democratic. We think we can bring about change by going to one rally and then going home and not doing anything for the rest of the year. That is not how you change the world." In other words, Chomsky implied not enough was at stake to do what it took to oppose what was hated.

Does it mean then that the youth of today’s America who dissent with the administration cannot be revolutionaries? Democrats are asking themselves a similar question when they attempt to reinvent their party. What advice would the vanguards of the Democratic Party like Shriver give them?

Shriver was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s recently. When Stossel asked him whether he feared that the public’s view of his earlier work would be diminished by the disease as Reagan’s work occasionally was, Shriver replied, "Reagan had a much worse affliction than I did. Hard-core conservatism. Whatever I’ve got now, I never suffered from that."

Shriver’s faith in his church, his country and his family drove him to greatness. Shriver says he often asks himself, "Am I living my life as Christ would want me to?" Shriver’s brand of philanthropy and public service is particularly remarkable for its lack of self-aggrandizement and his own political naivé. Stossel cleverly weaves John F. Kennedy’s life with Shriver’s story. Early in the book, he mentions that they went to the same school, but the young Kennedy was unhappy and maladjusted. Shriver was the star. Stossel reflects that if at that time someone had asked which of these boys would grow up to be President, Shriver would have been the choice. This is a poignant theme. The greatest prize for a man of Shriver’s political stature is the Presidency. Yet even though this office eluded him, he didn’t need the title of president to leave a lasting legacy.