

## School-Based Required Community Service and Civic Development in Adolescents

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*This study focused on the role of school-based required community service in promoting adolescents' prosocial behavior and intended future civic involvement when service is differentiated by types and by adolescents' perceived experience. A longitudinal data set of high school students (N = 603) was analyzed to investigate the developmental steps from types of service through intended civic behavior. Results showed that service involving direct interaction with people in need led students to judge that they had made contributions to sponsoring organizations and, consequently, altered their self-awareness. In turn, changed awareness enhanced reports of helping behavior toward strangers, which then led to the likelihood of future volunteering and of voting, working on a political campaign, and demonstrating for a cause. Additional causal analyses supported the directional sequence that began with service experiences, led to prosocial behavior, and eventuated in intended future civic involvement.*

The aim of this study was to explore some of the conditions under which school-based required service can have a positive impact on adolescents' civic development. Since the 1970s there has been renewed interest in having schools promote citizenship through civics courses, community service, and other activities (*The Civic Mission of Schools*, 2003). One of the chief causes for this movement is contemporary youth's apparent lack of formal involvement in electoral politics and disinterest in government (Flacks, 1988; Galston, 2001; National Association of Secretaries of State, 1999). Whereas courses in civics and history would seem to provide an obvious antidote by promoting essential knowledge (Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta, 1995), mandatory community service has a less obvious role to play and requires further justification. In fact, calls for service have sparked controversy for being at odds with the American tradition of autonomous volunteerism (Bennett, 2003; Finn & Vanourek, 1995), for instilling charity rather than promoting critical thinking about the causes of social problems (Kahne & Westheimer,

2003; Piliavin, Grube, & Callero, 2002), and more pointedly for lack of supporting empirical evidence (see reviews by, e.g., Andersen, 1998; Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Yates & Youniss, 1996).

As to the evidence, for almost each study in which positive effects of voluntary and required service have been reported, there is another study in which null or mixed findings were obtained. This was true 2 decades ago when, for example, Conrad and Hedin (1981) observed positive effects on measures of academic and social development in 27 service programs nationwide but, in contrast, Newmann and Rutter (1983) found far fewer effects with similar measures in eight different programs. Inconsistency has remained the rule more recently as, for example, Allen, Philiber, Herrling, and Kuperminc (1997) observed positive effects for school achievement and reduced risk-taking in 695 students from 25 high schools who were randomly assigned to a self-development program that featured community service along with health education and career counseling. In counterpoint, however, Melchior and Bailis (2002) reported inconsistent or null findings on measures of social responsibility, attitudes toward diversity, and leadership in an evaluation of three national service programs with about 2,900 youth in multiple sites.

Why have findings not been more consistent over this period of time? Melchior and Bailis (2002) offered some clues that seem worth pursuing. One is the apples-and-oranges problem insofar as service has been

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defined variously within and across studies. In any of the previously mentioned large scale evaluations, service may have included a variety of activities ranging from tutoring to environmental lobbying, recipients may have varied from classmates to homeless strangers, settings may have ranged from schools to church-managed soup kitchens, and purposes may have ranged from fulfilling membership obligations to advancing social justice. Such heterogeneity is hardly conducive to producing homogeneous results.

Consider, for example, the civic indicator of likelihood of voting in the future, first for students whose service consisted in organizing a school dance, and then for another group of students who worked with a lobbying organization committed to conserving the natural environment. If service is a basis for promoting the intention of civic engagement, it would not be surprising were these two groups to show differential responses on the voting item given that students performed different activities, under different organizational sponsorship, for ostensibly different purposes, one being more patently political than the other. Unless all types of service are inherently equal in terms of civic impact, it would follow that service needs to be differentiated more sharply in future assessments.

Melchior and Bailis (2002) also noted that large scale evaluations of service programs fall short on specifying service from the perspective of participating youth. If service has an impact on participants, then we need to know more about the process through which servers experience political awakening, acquire a sense of agency, or become committed to the community. Whereas some researchers have observed youth on line as they did their service (e.g., Youniss & Yates, 1997), most researchers have had to deal solely with after-the-fact, somewhat static depictions that lack experiential content. Consider, for example, two students who report the seemingly same service of having tutored peers for a school assignment. One student may have been challenged to devise clever strategies to motivate and sustain interest in her classmate-tutee but the other tutor may have done a pro forma job simply to complete an assignment with the result that neither tutor nor tutee became engaged.

Newmann and Rutter (1983) taking note of such variation, suggested a way to compensate for lack of direct observations and to bring equivalence to different kinds of service. They asked participants to describe whether and the degree to which service experiences challenged and affected them. Although few researchers have followed up on this suggestion, it still appears promising as a means to gain entry to participants' perceptions, thus, providing a reasonable estimate of whether and the degree to which service as an intervention was delivered and was effective from the viewpoint of the participants.

### **This Study**

We reasoned that if there were a developmental path from doing required service to becoming civically engaged, then it begins with the type of service that is done and students' experience of it. According to reports of service from a nationally representative sample of youth (Nolin, Chaney, Chapman, & Chandler, 1997), common types of service include tutoring, raising money for charity, coaching, cleaning the litter pickup, volunteering at soup kitchens, and doing functional work for nonprofit organizations. It is evident that these types involve varied activities, recipients, locations, and a gamut of experiences that might range from challenging to not very arousing of reflections about the self, the individuals being served, or underlying political issues. It follows that researchers ought to systematize the term *service* so that the relationship between service and civic engagement can be clarified. For instance, tutoring classmates seems less likely to be civically engaging than, say, working with an environmental organization on a conservation project in that the latter may provoke reflection on environmental policy and citizens' roles in it.

To differentiate among types of service with regard to engagement, we made use of previous findings that identified some dimensions of service that have proven efficacious in stimulating engagement: One is service that involves direct contact with recipients of service compared with no direct contact or abstract contact, say, collecting clothes for the needy. The other involves recipients who are in obvious states of need compared with recipients in lesser states of need (Andersen, 1998; Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003). These are not the only dimensions that are important but they have proven germane to civic engagement, are measurable, and seem replicable. To wit, Metz and colleagues (2003) reported that serving food to and interacting with homeless people in a soup kitchen led to greater change on measures of civic engagement than did, say, tutoring classmates or working behind the scenes at fund raising events.

Although we were not able to observe students in the process of their doing service, we employed a supplemental measure that tapped students' experience of their service, as was recommended by Newmann and Rutter (1983). Following the literature further, we reasoned that experiences might be meaningfully parsed into two aspects. Although service is frequently sponsored by value-bearing organizations, one pertinent dimension was the degree to which students believed their service contributed to a sponsor's purpose; for example, advancing the religious aims of the Salvation Army by attending to the needs of homeless people at one of its urban Missions (Allahyari, 2000).

The second aspect pertains to a sense of self-achievement or arriving at a new realization about

oneself. This commonly reported outcome of service (Hart & Fegley, 1995; Yates & Youniss, 1996) is found in students' beliefs that their service changed them as afterward they saw themselves differently, for instance, rising to the occasion or having discovered a new side of themselves (Singer, King, Green, & Barr, 2002). In defining type, first through direct contact and recipient need, second by assessing students' own appraisals of their service, we planned to get beyond the apples-and-oranges problem of treating service as a homogeneous category and to approximate replicable dimensions that might be associated with enhanced civic engagement.

We reasoned next that the experience of effectively assisting others in need might lead students to envision themselves as prosocial actors in a broader sense. Penner (2002) and Piliavin et al. (2002) reported that after doing service—for instance, donating blood—individuals perceived themselves as prosocial actors able to fill the general role of volunteer. We measured this consequence of service with self-reported acts of assistance to strangers that occurred during a period after the service experience. Our hypothesis was that the experience of assisting others in need might lead students to want to help people in general, even strangers.

The last step in this hypothetical sequence was reasoned to be civic engagement in the form of students' estimates that they would want to do volunteer service in the future or that they would participate in political processes such as voting in the future. Both of these measures are known to follow from the actual experience of having done certain types of volunteer service (Metz et al., 2003; Penner, 2002; Piliavin et al., 2002). However, neither measure has been established with respect to types of school-based required service that, as was already noted, is believed by some critics to counteract civic engagement.

## Method

### Design

We envisioned the foregoing concepts in terms of sequence starting with types of service and eventuating in civic engagement. We were able to put this model sequence to a developmental test because we had data that specified the type of required service students did in Grade 11 and their intended civic engagement 1 year later, at the end of Grade 12.

### Sample

The data came from our assessment of service in two suburban Catholic high schools near Washington, DC, from 1994 to 1998. These schools enrolled a middle- to upper middle-income population of families.

Both schools had a yearly requirement of from 20 to 30 hr of service and both framed this requirement within the teaching of religion–social justice. Our role in this was to help the schools by describing what students did for service and how they reacted to experience. In return for supplying the schools with feedback, we were allowed to assess questions such as those posed by the hypothetical developmental model.

We worked with the chairpersons of the religion departments to devise and administer surveys in the Fall and Spring of each school year. The chairpersons distributed the surveys to teachers who administered them during class hours. To be assessed by our model, any student would have to provide a clean survey at 3 successive administrations: At the end of Grade 11, the beginning of Grade 12, and the end of Grade 12. Because we had no control over the day teachers administered surveys or whether they administered them at all, the sample we were able to assess with our model was smaller than the potential sample we might have obtained had every teacher administered surveys to each student during the appointed times and had each student not been absent and had cooperated fully. It is noted that to be included in this study, three teachers would have been involved for any one student over 2 school years and that for any administration, about 15 teachers were involved.

The potential sample was  $N = 2,003$  but, with the previously described restrictions, for this study  $N = 620$  (48% male students and the majority White with about 19% Latino, African American, and Asian). Seventy-four percent of the fathers and 66% of the mothers had higher than high school degrees. To assess our longitudinal model, we divided the sample randomly into two, Samples A and B. Whereas we could have combined A and B into one large  $N$ , we chose the division so that the model's reliability could be tested.

After assessing the model, we also checked for causal direction of particular steps in the path. For this purpose, we had to drop Sample A and added another sample, C, which was comprised of those students who had the relevant measures at the pertinent times, as will be explained in the Results.

## Measures

### Type of Service

Students could choose, within limits, the type of service they submitted for credit each school year. Types reported by the students in this study corresponded to types found in nationally representative samples of high school students (Nolin et al., 1997). Types included tutoring, coaching, raising money, doing clerical labor, working at soup kitchens, doing environmental clean up, entertaining elderly citizens in

residential settings, and the like. For present purposes, service type was obtained from students' reports taken at the end of Grade 11. Students were asked to write a description of the service that gave them the "best moment" as they fulfilled that year's requirement. The descriptions were coded independently into types by two experienced coders (Cohen's  $\kappa = .74$  on 150 randomly selected cases). Focus was on whether service put students into direct contact with recipients and whether recipients were in obvious states of need. As in our previous work, these dimensions were readily ascertainable from most written descriptions. Examples when both dimensions were present are serving homeless recipients at a soup kitchen or coaching handicapped youngsters for Special Olympic events. The most common example of direct contact without obvious need involved tutoring classmates. And the most common example when neither dimension was present was doing functionary clerical work or physical labor for a nonprofit service organization.

In the statistical analyses that follow, we dichotomized service types into two categories: Either students had direct contact with others in need or their service lacked one or both of these dimensions.

### Contribution to an Organization

The next immediate section on the survey asked students to rate items that depicted their service experience ranging from 1 (*I strongly disagree*) to 5 (*I strongly agree*). There were 7 items drawn from Newmann and Rutter's (1983) Developmental Opportunity scale. Exploratory factor analysis (PCA-method) yielded a 2-factor solution. Three items comprised a dimension we labeled contribution to an organization; for instance, "I felt I made a contribution to the organization" ( $\alpha = .75$ , for Sample A and  $.84$  for Sample B).

### Self-Awareness

Four other items cohered as a dimension ( $\alpha = .79$  and  $.85$ , for the two respective samples). Example items were "I re-examined my attitudes and beliefs about myself" and "I was exposed to new ideas."

### Prosocial Helpfulness

In the Fall of Grade 12, about 4 months after the students had provided the foregoing data on their Grade 11 required service, we presented another survey with a new set of questions. One section of this survey assessed the behavioral aspect of Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, and Freifeld's (1995) measure of prosocial personality. We used three of their items asking how often (1 = *Never* to 5 = *Very often*) students did each of the following: "I gave directions to a stranger," "I gave money to a stranger," and "I delayed an elevator for a stranger" ( $\alpha = .67$  and  $.77$  for the two respective samples).

### Intended Civic Engagement

About 8 months later, near the end of Grade 12, students were given another survey with items that assessed how likely (1 = *No chance* to 5 = *Definitely will*) students were to participate in standard civic acts in the future. Items assessed were as follows: voting, working in a political campaign, and boycotting a product or service. Alphas for these items were  $.54$  and  $.67$ , for Samples A and B, respectively.

### Intended Future Volunteer Service

We also asked the students how likely they were to do volunteer service in the future (1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Definitely will*). There were two items, one asking about service "during college" and the other asking about service "when you are an adult" (Pearson  $r = .76$  and  $.85$ , for the two respective samples).

### Control Variables

Parent education was included in the model by adding father's and mother's education, when high school was dummy coded as 0 and more than high school as 1. The proportions of parents with more than a high school degree were 71% of fathers in Sample A and 78% of the fathers in Sample B; 63% of the mothers in Sample A and 73% of the mothers in Sample B.

### Data Analysis Strategy

Our main strategy was to test longitudinal models in which type of required service was the independent variable and intended future civic engagement and future volunteering were the dependent measures. The mediators were perceived contribution to an organization, self-awareness, and helpfulness, in that order.

Two kinds of structural equation models were assessed using Lisrel (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). One was a prediction model that included the previously described factors in the order listed. These models did not control for prior scores on the dependent measures, hence, causal interpretations were not allowable. The aim of these models was to specify a hypothetical developmental sequence in which type of required service set in motion a path leading to intended civic engagement and volunteering. We assessed the sequence first with Sample A and then with Sample B to establish the reliability of the sequence.

Given the positive findings with these paths, we then went on to assess the direction of influence among the mediators and between them and the dependent measures. For this task, we could use only Sample B because students in Sample A had not taken the surveys that would allow a test of direction. Specifically, Sample A was lacking scores at the beginning of Grade

12 that would have permitted this assessment. We did, however, have other students, not included in A or B, who had the appropriate measures at the correct times. We call this group of students Sample C (N = 261). Thus, we tested for directionality with Sample B and then tested for reliability of the findings with this new Sample C.

We were able to test for directionality in two ways. One was from self-awareness to helpfulness and vice versa, the other was from self-awareness to intended future volunteering and vice versa.

### Results

Because type of required service was our focus, we needed to determine first whether there was self-selection in the type of service that students did. There were a host of factors that might lead students to do one rather than another type: one was opportunity, another was peer influence, and still another was suggestions from individual teachers (McLellan & Youniss, 2003). Nevertheless, it might be assumed that students who were more politically active or students with prior volunteer experience would be more likely to choose service that involved direct interaction with recipients and entailed recipients in obvious states of need.

To check for this self-selection possibility, we looked at students' scores on the dependent measures at the start of Grade 11, before students chose their service for that school year. Means were almost identical between students who chose to do service involving direct contact with needy recipients and students who chose to do all other types of service. There were no significant differences between these two groups on likelihood of voting, working on a campaign, or boycotting either in Sample A or Sample B.

We next looked at prior volunteer service as a factor that might have determined choice of type of service in Grade 11. We used students' reports of their prior volunteering at the start of Grade 11. This measure did not differentiate students who then chose to do different types of service during the year. Insignificant chi-square were obtained for comparisons within Sample A and Sample B.

Because these two results established that students who chose the two types of service did not differ at the beginning of Grade 11, we proceeded to test the path models that tracked students from the required service they did during Grade 11 through their intended civic engagement and future volunteering at the end of Grade 12.

### Path for Intended Civic Engagement

The predictive model with intended civic engagement as the dependent measure is reported in Figure 1. The analyses for Samples A and B are presented in one figure with the upper coefficients representing the empirical results for A and the lower coefficients representing the empirical results for B. Theoretically assumed paths that were not significant are indicated with dashed lines.

The first part of the model shows that type of required service done during Grade 11 differentially predicted students' beliefs that their service had contributed to the sponsoring organization. We know from the students' written descriptions that these organizations included the school, churches, and various nonprofit groups in the local community. The path from type of required service to contribution to an organization was significant for both samples.

A possible path from type of service to self-awareness was insignificant for both samples. However,

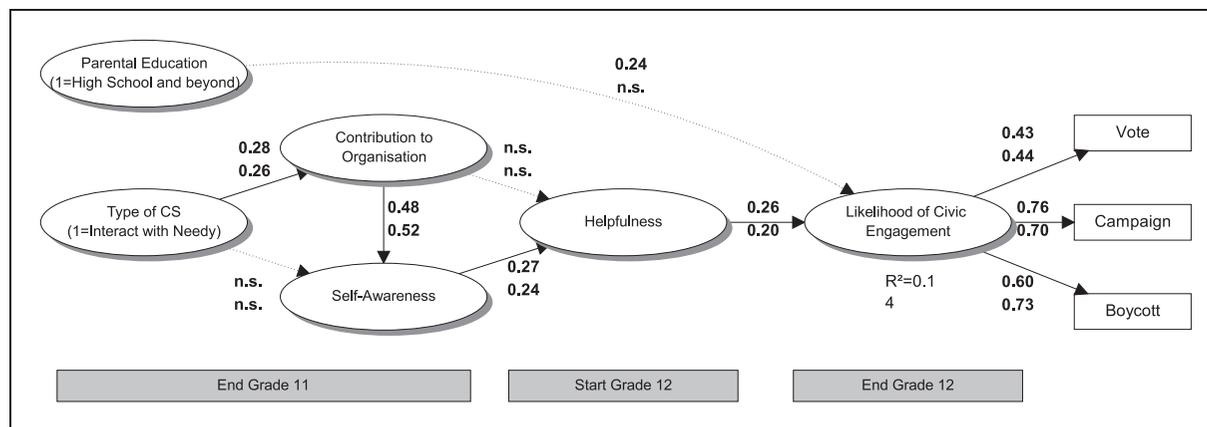


Figure 1. Empirical models to predict the likelihood of civic engagement at the end of Grade 12. Sample A (upper coefficient):  $\chi^2 = 19.14$ ;  $df = 17$ ;  $p = 0.32$ ; RMSEA = 0.014; GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.042. Sample B (bottom coefficient):  $\chi^2 = 17.35$ ;  $df = 17$ ;  $p = 0.43$ ; RMSEA = 0.011; GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.039. All coefficients are significant at the 5% level. n.s. = not significant; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

there was a significant path from having made an organizational contribution to self-awareness. This path was significant for both samples and was the strongest one in the entire model. The reverse path from self-awareness to contributing to an organization was also tested but it resulted in an inferior fit and produced the lowest coefficients in the entire model. Thus, adolescents who believed that their service made a contribution to an organization were very likely to have changed their attitudes and beliefs about themselves.

The next step in the model addressed organizational contribution and self-awareness at the end of Grade 11 in relation to acts of helping at the start of Grade 12. No path was found between organizational contribution and helping but a significant path occurred between self-awareness and helping. Students who experienced change due to their Grade 11 service were more likely to have helped strangers 5 months later at the start of Grade 12. The coefficients for this step were moderate but significant for both samples, and, hence, were judged reliable.

The last step pertained to helping at the start of Grade 12 and intended civic engagement at the end of Grade 12. This pathway proved to be significant and replicable across the two samples. Students who reported having helped strangers had higher scores on the 3 civic items 8 months later.

It is apparent that coefficients for relationships within Grade 11 were higher than coefficients for relationships from Grade 11 to Grade 12. Explained variances for the entire model were 14% for Sample A and 8% for Sample B.

### Path for Intended Future Volunteering

The model with future volunteering as the dependent measure is shown in Figure 2, again with upper and lower coefficients for Samples A and B, respectively.

The significant steps replicate the foregoing model for intended civic engagement with two differences. First, there was a direct path from type of required service to self-awareness, but this occurred for Sample A only. Second, parent education was unrelated to future volunteering in both samples, whereas parent education was associated with intended civic engagement for Sample A (see Figure 1).

The coefficients for each part of this model resembled the sizes obtained for previous models that predicted intended civic engagement. The explained variances were 14% for Sample A and 16% for Sample B, the latter being higher than in the previous model.

### Directionality

Given that these models met criteria for standard indexes of fit (Backhaus, Erichson, Plinke, & Weiber, 1996; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993), we proceeded to assess the direction of influence between factors. We were able to assess directionality only for intended civic engagement and only for Sample B because of availability of appropriate measures at relevant times. However, we found we could bring in an independent sample of 261 students who could provide the pertinent data.

According to Clegg, Jackson, and Wall (1977) and Oud (2004) a path can be called directional if the coefficient in one direction of influence is higher than in the reverse direction and if the higher coefficient occurs when auto-correlations for each variable are controlled. The directionality between self-awareness and helpfulness is reported in Figure 3. It can be seen that whereas self-awareness at the end of Grade 11 predicted helpfulness at the beginning of Grade 12, the reverse was not true. The differences between the cross-lagged coefficients seem too small to warrant a causal interpretation. Nevertheless, the stability of the coefficients is suggestive of a one- rather than two-way direction of influence.

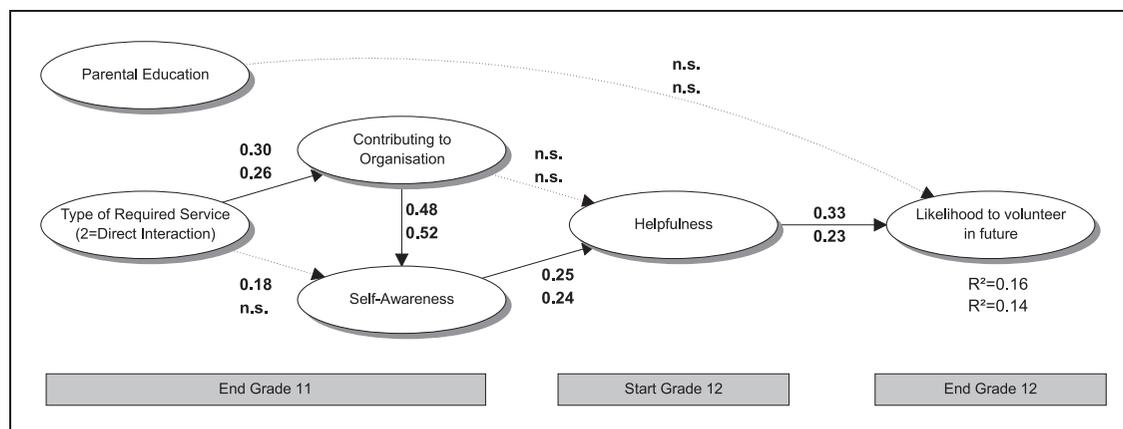


Figure 2. Empirical models to predict the likelihood to volunteer in the future at the end of Grade 12. Sample A (upper coefficient):  $\chi^2 = 12.26$ ;  $df = 7$ ;  $p = 0.09$ ; RMSEA = 0.035; GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.045. Sample B (bottom coefficient):  $\chi^2 = 9.17$ ;  $df = 7$ ;  $p = 0.24$ ; RMSEA = 0.032; GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.042. All coefficients are significant at the 5% level. n.s. = not significant; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

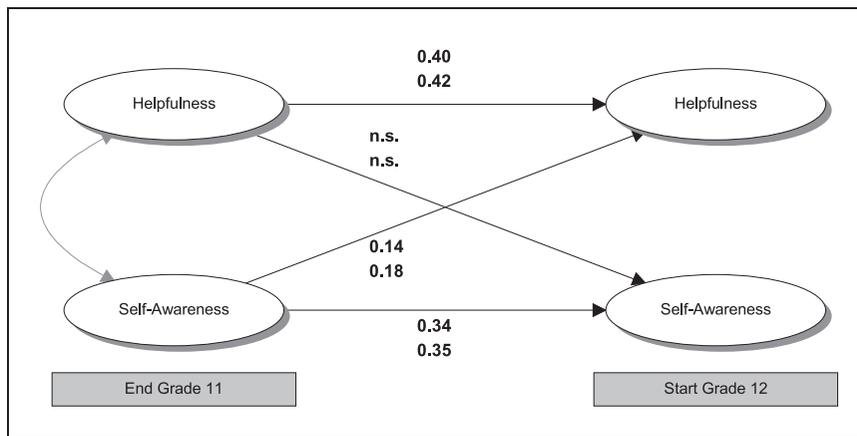


Figure 3. Causal models to predict helpfulness at Grade 12. Sample B (upper coefficient); Sample C (bottom coefficient).

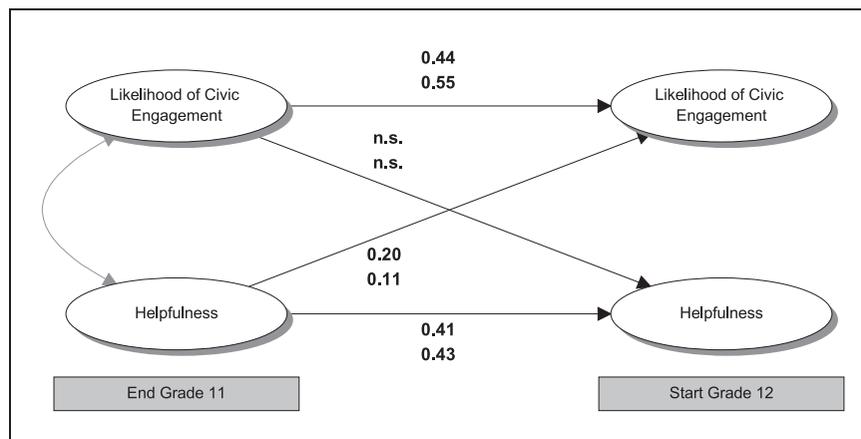


Figure 4. Causal models to predict the likelihood of civic engagement at Grade 12. Sample B (upper coefficient); Sample C (bottom coefficient)

We next addressed whether helpfulness led to a higher probability of intended civic engagement or vice versa. The results are shown in Figure 4. With auto-correlations controlled, the coefficients of influence from helping to intended civic engagement were significant whereas the reverse path was not significant. This and the foregoing analysis help to verify the sequences in the models reported in Figures 1 and 2.

### Discussion

We have organized this discussion around two major points: Ways in which the findings help to clarify some confusions in the literature and ways results provide leads for future research and offer potential insights for educational policy.

#### Clarification of Definitional and Methodological Issues

As was noted at the outset, findings with regard to the impact of either required or voluntary service have

been inconsistent across and within studies over the past 20 years. These results help to resolve some of the variability in two ways. One is the demonstration that not all service is alike insofar as service involving direct interaction with recipients with obvious needs proved more efficacious on civic measures than did service lacking one or both of these dimensions. This finding agrees with reviews of the literature (e.g., Andersen, 1998), critiques of methods (Melchior & Bailis, 2002), and results of a short-term longitudinal study on volunteer service with students in a public high school (Metz et al., 2003). In this study, feeding and meeting homeless people at a shelter or tutoring children in a high poverty neighborhood proved to be more civically efficacious than collecting food for the hungry, raising money for charities, or tutoring classmates.

Given the array of activities that typically constitute service by high school students today, the differentiation of types is important for research and for policy. We do not claim that the dimensions of direct contact and recipients' needs are the only ones of importance for discriminating among types of service in their role

for promoting civic engagement. Other possibilities may be the deliberate value-system in which service is framed (Allahyari, 2000) or the collective form in which service is done (Youniss & Yates, 1997), among others (Andersen, 1998; Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988). The larger point is that service is not a homogeneous term but covers a variety of activities done for many purposes in multiple settings with diverse recipients. If headway is to be made in future research, it should begin with efforts to define types of service according to dimensions that have validity for the ecology in which adolescents confront the world outside in their daily routines (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999).

Our use of a modified version of Newmann and Rutter's (1983) Developmental Opportunity scale allowed a further distinction to be made. In this study, as in most research on this topic, data on service came from students' or third parties' after-the-fact descriptions. This limitation contrasts with on-line observations of students in the process of doing service (Allahyari, 2000; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Newmann and Rutter tried to compensate for this deficiency by using students' perceptions of their service experience that could be cast in characterizations that transcended specific kinds of service. In this manner they hoped to find a common language in which servers could express their experiences. For example, whereas there is a literal difference between tutoring an inner city child who is failing reading and serving as a personal trainer for a blind adult, the two may be equivalent in stimulating self-awareness and a sense agency.

The two factors that this scale produced fit well with the existing literature. Feeling that one's service has made a contribution to an organization concurs with the reality that most service, especially that involving recipients in states of need, takes place at the sites of sponsoring clinics, churches, and other nonprofit organizations (Raskoff & Sundeen, 1999). Although only some of the students' descriptions in this study specified the site and sponsor, it is reasonable to assume that service done outside of school was framed in terms of sponsors' values and purpose (Allahyari, 2000). It follows that students would consider their service as furthering the sponsors' purpose and, thus, see their service advancing that mission. It is worth noting again that two of the most frequently mentioned activities were working at a soup kitchen that was sponsored by a religious group, which emphasized social justice to its volunteer help, and doing compensatory educational work with minority children in the inner city when the sponsor was a coalition of churches seeking racial harmony. Given that adolescents readily take up moral-religious causes, it is not surprising that their participation in such sponsoring organizations made a decided impact on them (Kerestes, Youniss, & Metz, 2004).

The second factor of the Newmann and Rutter (1983) scale was self-awareness that, in our path mod-

els, followed from service type and organizational contribution. Reports of changes to the self are a common outcome of service (e.g., Hart & Fegley, 1995; Yates & Youniss, 1996). It appears that certain kinds of service help young people discover aspects of themselves they were not conscious of and stimulate them to see new relationships between themselves and society. Such realizations would follow from the experience of having to meet unfamiliar people different from the self who are in unusual states of need that provoke reflection, for example homeless individuals whom one might ordinarily pass by quickly on the street. The experience of having to deal with these people and then being able to assist them with food, instruction, or counseling could have an obvious impact on perceptions of the self's capacity for doing good for others.

Singer, King, Green, and Barr (2002) described a possible dynamic that underlies this perception. When individuals find themselves able to assist others in difficult straits, they retrospectively find that they have risen to the occasion. The implication is that they faced a challenge and met it successfully and, thereby, discovered talents and competence not available in the self's everyday experiences. To wit, in this study, after doing challenging service, students readily endorsed items such as "I reexamined my beliefs and values about myself," or "I was exposed to new ideas and learned new ways of seeing the world."

The next part of the path also concurs with other researchers' reports of consequences of service. Penner (2002) and Piliavin et al. (2002) proposed that a positive experience of service may lead to adopting a posture or role of the self as helpful person. Hart and Fegley (1995), Youniss and Yates (1997), and others, suggested that this may be especially true for adolescents who are in the midst of developing their identities. As a consequence, finding that they can assist others in need, adolescents may begin to picture themselves as having a general capacity of being useful and helpful. Penner (2002) proposed that this capacity has two components, one being dispositional and the other being behavioral. In this study we assessed only the latter via self-reports of helping strangers that proved to follow from changes in self-awareness as Penner predicted.

One of the more important features of this step is that helpfulness to strangers can be considered as a logical progression from assisting unfamiliar people in states of need under the sponsorship of an organization that endorses such acts as part of a larger value-outlook. On accepting the challenge, students viewed themselves differently and, even some months later, found themselves still acting in expression of this new-found self. This speculation exceeds the evidence but it adheres to Selman's (2003) outline of gradual development toward societal perspective taking and agrees with our check on directionality insofar as help-

fulness was found to follow from self-awareness and was not a disposition that preceded self-awareness.

A major aim of this study was to determine whether and under what conditions school-based required service would promote adolescents' civic and political development. Present results demonstrate that service can stimulate this development even when it is done to satisfy a school requirement. In this regard, our results add to the findings of Metz and Youniss (2005) who worked with a sample of public high school students. Present results go a step further in outlining a developmental process leading from service to civic-political outcomes. We do not claim that this model is the only or most efficient process, but it sketches a path that coheres with social psychological theories about volunteerism in adults (Penner, 2002; Piliavin et al., 2002). Our results add the developmental dimension as it pertains to adolescents and, therefore, shifts the terms of their interpretations. Whereas they have spoken about adults' dispositions and roles, we have adopted a developmental language that focuses on young people coming to see themselves as civic and political actors. One could say that service has a function in promoting a civic identity in the sense that these adolescents are beginning to imagine themselves as future voters, campaign workers, demonstrators for causes, or volunteers (Youniss & Yates, 1997).

Although we can offer no evidence that intended future behavior has turned into civic actions, there are several longitudinal studies that document such a connection (e.g., Jennings, 2002). Zaff, Malanchuk, Michelsen, and Eccles (2003) found further that the link extends from service in high school to voting 6 years later.

### Policy Implications

During the past 15 years, increasing numbers of schools have adopted service requirements as part of the curriculum (Lopez, 2003; Nolin et al., 1997). This move has provoked criticism from those who see required service an oxymoron and, worse, an example of involuntary servitude (e.g., Finn & Vanourek, 1995). This critique has been buoyed by the argument that adolescents in the throes of seeking autonomy would naturally be averse to forced service, whereas they might want to do it of their own free choice (e.g., Stukas, Clary, & Snyder, 1999).

This and other findings (Metz & Youniss, 2005) counter these concerns by showing that a school requirement can be conceived as a form of strategic recruitment (Jennings, 2002; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). To adolescents who might otherwise not be exposed to service, a requirement may provide the opportunity to experience themselves as having the capacity to help others and to improve the larger community. In Jennings's (2002) view, school-based service

can be understood as a form of proto-activism that introduces adolescents to civic life by "instilling the habit of participation" (p. 322).

It follows from our results that not all service is equally effective in inducing civic engagement. Experience with recipients who differ from the students by way of their poverty, handicaps, addictions, feebleness, and the like, was a factor that, when coupled with direct interaction, proved developmentally effective. We do not know precisely how interactions unfolded during the course of service but students' ratings indicate that they aroused reflections about the self's and the service-sponsoring organizations' views on reality.

It is not incidental that in one of the two schools in this study, a teacher had the duty of locating and vetting sites so that students could be steered toward challenging types of service. In these cases, service was not an exercise in charity but was designed to stimulate reflection on issues of social justice. This aspect mirrors another effective service program studied by Metz and Youniss (2005) in which the public school required service so that students could learn about their obligations of citizenship to their local community. The service coordinator in this school also encouraged students to fulfill their requirement at sites thought most appropriate to advance the citizenship aim.

Service can be construed in multiple ways from noble obligation to reforming oppressive political structures (Boyte, 1991; Kahne & Westheimer, 2003). If the purpose of service is to facilitate the development of active citizenship, then it needs to be couched in a program germane to that outcome. This kind of clarity is frequently missing in schools that require service hours but neither coordinate it with strategic site selection nor articulate the purpose in clear moral or political terms (Furco & Billig, 2002). When these elements are missing, service may become a *laissez faire* activity that fails to reach the status of a program that leads to civic outcomes. Variation in programs may help explain the inconsistent results that have been previously reported and should become a central issue of concern for schools that are contemplating introducing a service requirement.

### Limitations

Several limitations of this study were already mentioned throughout the text. In particular we note limitations regarding our sample that was not representative but was based on students who provided completed surveys at certain times during a 2-year period. The replication of the model in two independent subsamples helps to substantiate our findings, but the issue of representativeness remains unresolved. With respect to results, the models were constructed as a chain of variables with significant but moderate path coefficients. We cannot determine the degree to which

the pathways found in our models are peculiar to our sample. With a different population, other chains might be found. Because the sample sizes were quite small, however, effects of the proposed chain of events are more likely underestimated than overestimated. Finally, the cross-lagged models did not justify an interpretation of causality. These models only gave evidence that influences adhered to the proposed directionality. Because causality is crucial for conclusions about implications of required service, further research is needed to confirm these results. This study gives some evidence that required service promotes students' civic engagement and hence enhances the chance to replicate the findings with other data and methods of analysis.

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