Promoting Positive Citizenship:
Priming Youth for Action

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Executive Summary

Purpose of Study

Researchers have theorized that programs to promote positive citizenship should begin with an opportunity for adolescents to participate in civic activities, such as community service or political volunteering. In this report, we expand this theoretical perspective by arguing that programs to promote positive citizenship may need to begin by focusing on: social interactions in youths' lives, such as interactions with parents and peers; the environment in which youths live, such as neighborhoods and schools; and on promoting civic values. We hypothesize that these influences in early adolescence lead to civic engagement in late adolescence. Civic engagement in late adolescence then leads to civic engagement in young adulthood.

We test the full theoretical model, from early adolescence to young adulthood, incorporating insights from two previous studies of civic engagement that examine the first and second halves of the model. These insights helped refine the model to maximize our results using the available data set. We estimate a structural equation model to test this revised model, in which we posit that social contextual influences and altruistic/communal values in 8th grade each uniquely predict civic participation in 11th grade. Civic participation in 11th grade, as well as peer and parental influences, predict civic participation in young adulthood. In a sub-analysis of the African American sample, we examine the influence of ethnicity-related factors on civic engagement.

Methodology

We used the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS) to test our hypotheses. Started in 1991, approximately 1,000 youth from a Maryland suburb (and an accompanying primary caregiver) were followed from 7th grade into early adulthood (three years post-high school). This is a diverse sample, comprised of 51% males and 61% African Americans. The youth come from families that represent a broad range of socioeconomic statuses and live in urban, suburban and rural settings. Fifty-four percent of primary caregivers are high school graduates, with 40% having graduated from college. The survey measures that we use in our analyses include variables from multiple domains: individual, parent, friend, school, neighborhood and cultural.

Results/Conclusions

- *Previous civic participation predicts future civic participation.* Our analyses are

consistent with previous research, which has shown an association between participating in civic activities as a youth and participating in civic activities in later adolescence and young adulthood. This relation with later participation, also present for previous participation in other extracurricular activities, remains after controlling for relevant demographic, individual and social contextual factors.

- *Social context influences youth civic engagement above and beyond previous civic participation.* Parental modeling of civic behaviors, friends who have positive aspirations and attitudes, and friend who give support to youth appear to create a social atmosphere that promotes civic participation. However, the specific process underlying this influence is not clear.

- *Cultural context is important for policy makers and program developers to understand.* Aside from social interactions, the culture in which youth live, in this study defined by ethnicity, appears to influence levels and types of altruism. Matching program activities to these cultural values as well as making these activities salient and related to youth's goals and values could prove to be more effective than generic program packages.

- *Promoting youths' values and goals could further promote youth and young adult civic behaviors.* We found a direct relation between communal/altruistic values in early adolescence and civic engagement in later adolescence. Though more research is needed to confirm this finding, we suggest that youth's value systems could be an integral target outcome of youth development programs.

- *More comprehensive measures of citizenship behaviors, attitudes and values should be created.* The proxy that we used in this study for positive citizenship is restricted to a relatively small number of possible behaviors. Developing and assessing additional ways in which youth and adults can be positive citizens could result in more refined models for how to promote citizenship. At the same time, while our measure of values is rudimentary, we do not know of any longitudinal surveys that have used anything more complex or of any valid scales that have been created. The creation of values measures, therefore, is essential to have a greater understanding of the individual attributes that lead to civic engagement.

- *There is not yet an understanding of how social capital promotes youth and young adult civic behaviors.* The social contextual variables that we included could be considered proxies for social capital present in youth's lives. However, we used measures on an individual level, so we do not know whether social capital on a family, community or cultural level uniquely promotes civic engagement. In addition, we do not know the specific mechanism through which social capital influences civic engagement, whether through modeling of behaviors, providing an infrastructure for civic activities or creating social norms that are consistent with civic engagement, among other possible pathways.

Researchers have theorized that programs to promote positive citizenship should begin with an opportunity for adolescents to participate in civic activities, such as community service or political volunteering. In this report, we extend the theory by arguing that programs to promote positive citizenship may need to begin by focusing on social interactions in youths' lives, such as with parents and peers, on the environment in which youths live, such as neighborhoods and schools, and on civic values. We hypothesize that these influences lead to civic engagement in late adolescence. Civic engagement in late adolescence subsequently mediates the relation between factors in early adolescence and civic engagement in young adulthood. We use a diverse, longitudinal dataset to test these hypotheses. The implications of our findings will be discussed in the context of program and policy development.

Importance of Positive Citizenship

Adolescents have the capacity to be positive citizens in their communities. They can act to make their homes, communities, schools, and/or society a better place by being environmentally active, volunteering in community or political organizations, and committing smaller prosocial acts such as helping someone carry their groceries. Adolescent positive citizenship has the dual effect of providing needed services to the community and society, and promoting psychological, social, and intellectual growth for the young citizen (Aguirre International, 1999; Conrad & Hedin, 1982; Janoski, Musick & Wilson, 1998; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer & Snyder, 1998).

Unfortunately, relatively few youth participate in civic activities. For instance, although there is a trend toward greater youth participation in community service (Faison & Flanagan, 2001), fewer than 50% (and, depending on the data cited, closer to 30%) of youth actually participate in volunteer activities (e.g., Child Trends, 2002; Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csap, & Sheblanova, 1998; Harris Interactive, 2001; National Association of Secretaries of State, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1999; Zaff, Moore, Papillo & Williams, in press).

The relatively low rates of volunteering are consistent with the low rates of another component of civic engagement, political involvement. Recent data suggest a decrease in political involvement and an increasing cynicism among youth about the political process (Putnam, 2000). This is particularly important, considering, as de Tocqueville (1969) posited, that broad participation in the political process results in the strongest democracies. According to the National Election Studies, only 46% of voting eligible youth born in 1975 or later went to the polls in the 1996 presidential election, with a drop to 38% in the 2000 election. That percentage is significantly lower than for voters born between 1959 and 1974 (62%) and all other older Americans (over 80%). Non-presidential, federal election years give an even bleaker view of youth political involvement, with 20% and 15% of youth voting in 1994 and 1998, respectively. Political involvement can also take the form of political activism and club membership. However, in one nationally representative study, only 14% of adolescents and young adults between 15 and 24 years of age reported ever participating in a club or organization that directly deals with politics or the government (National Association of Secretaries of State, 1998).

These low rates of political and community involvement do not mean that adolescents are disengaged from society. In fact, nearly 80% of youth report being members of clubs, such as sports teams or academic and arts clubs (Ehrle & Moore, 1999; National Association of Secretaries of State, 1998). The key issue, then, is not how to engage youth in general activities, but how to engage youth in civic activities.

What We Know and What Still Needs to be Learned

There has been a recent increase in efforts among social scientists, policy makers and practitioners to improve rates of youth civic engagement. The National Educational Goals for 2000, adopted by Congress, set forth youth community service participation as an objective for preparing the country's young citizenry; the American Political Science Association has made youth civic

education one of its major initiatives; and the present Presidential administration has issued a call-to-arms for Americans of all ages to be involved in civic activities. Furthermore, several foundations and universities have developed centers and institutes, such as the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), assigned with the task of measuring and researching the antecedents of civic engagement.

Although there is a relative dearth of research on the predictors of youth civic behaviors, there is enough research to suggest important contributing factors in youths' lives. Researchers have taken the theoretical perspective that engaging youth in civic activities is the most effective way to promote civic identity formation and subsequent civic engagement in adulthood (Youniss & Yates, 1999). However, the available research findings are subject to self-selection bias, and experimental research (the gold standard of proving causality) has not produced consistently positive results (Zaff & Michelsen, 2002). According to Colby and Damon (1999), parents, peers, culture and society socialize individuals to have a sense of morality (or lack of morality). Subsequently, when presented with a given situation, an individual with a certain sense of morality may respond differently than a person with a different sense of morality. For instance, one individual might have been socialized to have a moral commitment to making society a better place, while others may have been socialized to have other priorities. Based on this assumption, factors exist within the youth, such as values, and external to the youth, such as socializing agents, that act to promote or deter civic engagement.

Family, peer and individual-level variables. Parent, peer, gender, ethnicity, religious participation, societal and cultural variables have all been found to be associated with civic engagement. For instance, parents who act as role models, who reinforce volunteering behavior in their children, and who participate in general activities with their children have children who are more likely to be involved in volunteering activities (Dunham & Bengston, 1992; Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998; Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos, 2000; Hashway, 1998). Other relationships, such as positive relationships with peers, can have

similar implications for civic behaviors (Wentzel & McNamara, 1999; Yates & Youniss, 1998). Participation in religious activities is also related to a greater likelihood of participating in community service activities (Serow & Dreyden, 1990; Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates, 1999). These associations are consistent with the theory of social capital in which social connections and social organizations create norms and an infrastructure to support civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). On an individual level, females are generally more likely to participate in community service and to be more knowledgeable about politics (Flanagan et al., 1998; NCES, 1999) and European American youth are more likely to vote and to volunteer in community service than African American and Hispanic American youth (Johnston, Bachman & O'Malley, 1999).

Values. A desire to act for the greater good appears to be a good predictor of civic engagement. For example, research suggests that collectivism, defined as putting the community goals ahead of individual goals, is more predictive of civic engagement than individualism (Avrahami & Dar, 1993; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996). There has been little or no research on morality as a contributing factor to civic engagement, though having a moral commitment to community service has been linked to participating in civic activities (Colby & Damon, 1995; Faison & Flanagan, 2001; Hart, Yates, Fegley, & Wilson, 1995; Serow & Dreyden, 1990). However, like other civic engagement research, these studies have generally used correlational or longitudinal designs with limited controls and small, non-representative samples. In addition, previous studies have not included altruistic/communal values as a potential mediator between social contextual variables and later civic engagement.

Research also suggests that the social contextual variables discussed above have been found to promote the types of values that predict civic engagement. For instance, parenting strategies and parent civic behaviors are related to youth moral development (e.g., Hoffman, 1975; Gunnoe, Hetherington & Reiss, 1999; Pratt, Arnold, Pratt & Diessner, 1999), peers and siblings can model empathy, morals and values (Eisenberg, in press; Volling, in press), and the society and

culture in which youth are raised may promote either individualistic or collectivistic values (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1988).

Positive Citizenship Identity and the Fulfillment and Enjoyment of Positive Citizenship Activities.

Researchers have hypothesized that civic engagement predicts the development of a positive citizenship identity (Youniss, McLellan, Su & Yates, 1999). This identity then predicts future civic engagement. This hypothesis is consistent with Erikson's theory of development in which he posits that an identity search begins in early adolescence and that internal and external experiences during childhood and adolescence are accumulated and lead to a commitment to particular values and beliefs (Erikson, 1966). To examine this theory with regard to civic engagement, researchers have focused on whether participation in non-civic and civic activities lead to a positive citizenship identity, beginning with the assumption that civic engagement is an indicator of a positive citizenship identity. For instance, participation in extracurricular activities, in general, during high school has been found to be related to a greater likelihood of voting and volunteering in young adulthood (Glanville, 1999; Zaff, et al., in press). Research results also suggest that engaging youth specifically in civic activities in adolescence predicts future positive citizenship identity and civic engagement (Hahn, Leavitt & Aaron, 1994; Youniss, McLellan, Su & Yates, 1999). Caution should be taken when interpreting these results, because civic engagement is not necessarily equivalent to a sustained commitment to positive citizenship values. Other researchers provide evidence for an association between identity development and later activity participation, such as an emerging arts or athletics identity being associated with continued participation in the arts and athletics (Fredericks, Alreld-Liro, Hrnde, Eccles, Patrick & Ryan, 2002), a vocational identity being associated with future vocational activities (Vondracek & Skorikov, 1997), and a more developed racial identity being associated with participation in campus organizations committed to racial causes (Mitchell & Dell, 1992). In summary, then, the association between present and future civic engagement is potentially more complex than a direct relation, with a commitment to positive citizenship

values potentially mediating the relation between past civic engagement and future civic participation.

A positive citizenship identity might only be one mediator of future civic engagement, with another potential mediator being how fulfilling and enjoyable the initial activity was. For instance, research suggests that youth are more likely to benefit from activities they find engaging and which require considerable concentration and skills (Larson, 2001). Additional support for this finding comes from research on flow (i.e., a balance of challenge and skill in an activity that leads to an optimal experience), which has shown that youth who have high enjoyment in their respective activities, who are challenged by the activity and who have an undivided interest in the activity are subsequently the most engaged in their respective activities (Askawa & Csikszentmihalyi, 1998; Moneta & Czikszentmihalyi, 1996; Rathunde, 1993). These findings of fulfillment and enjoyment are particularly salient since happiness predicts an increased commitment to volunteer activities (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001).

In summary, the existing literature suggests that parents, peers, the culture and society in which youth develop all promote civic behaviors. However, little is known about the specific causal processes involved in promoting civic engagement. There is the possibility that there are many direct and indirect relations between antecedents and the desired outcome. For instance, as the research literature suggests, parenting strategies, parental modeling of civic behavior, peer influences, and cultural socialization may predict civic values. However, without the opportunity to participate, values would, in essence, be irrelevant. Therefore, a civic opportunity must be present in order to have civic behaviors. If the youth is fulfilled by and enjoys the civic activity, then research would suggest that the youth would be more likely to participate in civic activities in young adulthood.

To test this theory, we analyze data from a large, longitudinal survey of youth who were followed throughout high school and into young adulthood in

order to address the following hypotheses about the structure of civic engagement promotion: 1) individual characteristics, social contextual factors such as parent, peer and societal influences, and cultural socialization predict the development of civic engagement in late adolescence; and 2) civic engagement in late adolescence is related to civic engagement in young adulthood.

We are fortunate in our research to use a data set that spans the Million Man March, a naturally occurring opportunity for a majority of the youth in the study sample to participate in a civic activity. Prince George's County, MD, the location of the study sample, was one of the areas where the populace was significantly involved in the organization of the march.

Method

Data

Overall description. The Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study (MADICS) was conducted for two main purposes: to examine how social context influences psychological determinants of behavioral choices, and to examine various developmental trajectories during adolescence and into adulthood. This survey is intentionally rich with information on family background, parenting, peer influence, schools, neighborhoods, ethnic socialization, and several individual-level characteristics. The data happened to be collected during a historical period in which a major opportunity to participate in a civic activity was present: The Million Man March. Much organization of the march took place in Prince George's County, the location of MADIC, and Prince George's County borders Washington DC, the location of the march.

Many of the questionnaire items were derived from other large-scale longitudinal studies and from previously validated scales. A multitude of open-ended questions were also asked in order to allow for richer responses to under-explored areas of youth development, such as the youths' motivations and values.

The survey was begun in 1991 and consists of a total of six waves (two in

7th grade, and one each in 8th grade, 11th grade, one-year post-high school and three-years post-high school). We used only waves three, four and five for the present study, because these waves took place during the transition into high school, at the end of high school and the transition into young adulthood, respectively. The investigators used a mixture of self-administered questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and telephone interviews to collect the data. For the purposes of the present study, the respondents were the target youth and the primary caregiver.

Participants

Approximately 1,000 youth (and accompanying primary caregiver) were followed from 7th grade into early adulthood (three years post-high school). The sample is composed of 51% males and 61% African Americans. The youth come from families that represent a broad range of socioeconomic statuses, with a median income for African Americans between $50,000 and $55,000 and for European Americans between $60,000 and $65,000. Fifty-four percent of primary caregivers are high school graduates, with 40% college graduates. Furthermore, the participants come from a diverse mix of neighborhoods, including: low-income, high-risk urban; middle class suburban; and rural. Ninety-two percent of the primary caregivers are female (see Table 1 for a breakdown by ethnicity).

Measures

We use measures that assess individual, parent, peer, and cultural constructs. Following is a brief description of the different constructs included in our analysis:

Demographics. The following demographic variables were included: measures of gender (male or female), ethnicity (African American, European American or mixed/other) and parent education (i.e., highest educational attainment in household). We used data only from the European American and African American participants.

Youth activity participation at wave 3. We used two measures at wave 3 to assess the level of activity participation among youth. The first measure, for civic engagement, assessed the level of participation in civic activities by asking about participation in civic activism and volunteering for community service. The index was summed resulting in a civic engagement index ranging from 0 to 2. The other type of activity engagement is other extracurricular activities, such as sports or clubs. This was measured on a scale from 0 to 6, based on the number of activities in which the youth were involved.

Youth activity participation at wave 4. This measure of activity participation is comprised of civic participation and participation in other extracurricular activities. Civic participation includes six questions from wave 4 on civic activism and volunteering. Civic activism includes a question asking if the youth had participated in the Million Man March and a question asking if they had participated in any other form of civic activism. For the Million Man March question, we considered positive responses to be either attendance at the March or intentionally watching the March on television. We included intentionally watching the March as an indicator of civic engagement so that we could include the responses of females since the attendance at the Million Man March was restricted in its mission to males. A third question asked if the youth had volunteered for any community service activities. Other questions included whether youth had participated in service activities, participated in religious organizations, or whether they had tutored another student. A civic participation index ranging from 0-6 was then created based on the total number of activities in which the youth were involved, with each activity given equal weighting. The other type of activity engagement is other extracurricular activities, such as sports or clubs. This was measured on a scale from 0 to 4, based on the number of activities in which the youth were involved.

Family involvement. There were multiple questions pertaining to family involvement, all measured at both waves 3 and 4. Unless otherwise noted, the measures pertain to attitudes and behaviors when youth were in 8th grade (for wave 3) and 11th grade (for wave 4). The first is how often parents had been

involved in their parent, teacher, student association (PTSA). The second question from wave 4 asked whether they had been engaged in the Million Man March when their children were in the 11th grade. These two measures were summed together to form a parent civic participation index. The other family-level question pertains to ethnicity-related activities. This question asks the youth about the types of ethnicity-related activities in which they were involved with their family (alpha = .71). Finally, a youth religiosity measure was included that asks about the types of religious activities in which youth were involved with their family (alpha = .72); this measure was standardized.

Importance of ethnicity. Two measures from waves 3 and 4 were used to assess the importance that ethnicity plays in the lives of youth and their families, when they were in the 8th and 11th grades, respectively. The first measure (alpha = .84) includes questions on how often they talk about their racial background, how often they celebrate special days connected to their racial background, how important their racial background is to their daily life, among others. The second measure (alpha = .74) includes questions on how much pride they have in their racial background, how important their racial background is to their daily lives, and how much knowledge they have of their racial background.

Social support. These measures, taken from waves 3 and 4, tap the different types of supports that youth had in their lives in 8th and 11th grades. The first measure deals with positive peer influences, asking questions such as how important school, church and college is in their peers' lives (alpha = .81). A second peer question about communication and support asks youth about the different issues that they may discuss with their friends, such as how things are going in their life or with their families and whether they are having problems in school (alpha = .85). Another measure asks about social support from adults in school, such as whether they seek help from tutors or teachers with schoolwork (alpha = .64).

Altruism/communalism values. This measure assesses the desire that

youth have to better society. This measure was constructed from open-ended questions asking what youth would do if they had three wishes, what they would do if they had one million dollars and what type of person they wanted to be when they are older. The subsequent measure was a count of any mention on the three indices that suggested altruism (i.e., the desire to be helpful for the common good and the desire to avoid being detrimental to the common good). Five judges reviewed the coding schemes for face validity. Agreement averaged .90 for the three codes. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved by the authors of this paper. We use this measure, which ranges from 0 to 3, as an indicator of altruism/ communalism values at wave 3.

Civic engagement in young adulthood. This index, measured at wave 5, is the dependent variable in the present analysis. It is comprised of a question asking how often participants had participated in a range of nine forms of civic activity, including social activism, helping friends, running for student government, giving money to charity or to a political group, and engaging in a political discussion. The response categories ranged from 0 to 5 (never participated in the past two years to participated 10 or more times in the past two years). A mean score was derived from the responses to the nine choices and the index is the dependent variable in the present analysis.

Theoretical Model and Hypotheses

Original model. Our original theoretical model (see Figure 1) consists of five components that illustrate the mechanisms through which we theorize positive citizenship is formed. The first component is the social contextual background factors of the youth. These include parent and peer influences, ethnic and cultural traditions, and religious participation. We include individual-level factors such as ethnicity and gender as additional factors that may predict civic engagement.

The second component of the model is the values of the youth. This construct comprises what we consider to be a primed youth; that is, a youth who is ready to become a positive citizen. We hypothesize that the social contextual factors will predict the development of a primed youth.

The third component of the model is a positive citizenship opportunity in adolescence. The opportunity could be community service, political volunteering, environmentalism, or any other positive citizenship activity; though in the present study we restrict the scope of activities to volunteering and civic activism. We theorize that without the opportunity to participate in a positive citizenship activity, the youth will not be able to realize his or her full potential as a positive citizen. We hypothesize that being primed leads to participating in positive citizenship activities as an adolescent.

The fourth component consists of the perception of participating in a positive citizenship activity in adolescence. For this, we include whether the youth feels as if he or she was fulfilled and engaged by the positive citizenship activity and whether the youth develops a positive citizenship identity. We hypothesize that the fourth component, in part, leads to participating in positive citizenship activities as a young adulthood. The fifth section, then, is whether the individual engages in positive citizenship activities.

Revised model. We revised our positive citizenship model based on the findings of two earlier analyses that examined the first and second halves of the full model, respectively (Zaff, et al., 2002a, Zaff, et al., 2002b). We made these revisions (see Figure 2) in order to integrate the results into the full model and to fit the available data best. Both previous analyses used hierarchical regression to test mediation models. The following is a brief discussion of the results.

In the first preliminary report (Zaff, et al., 2002a) we found that altruistic/ communalistic values uniquely predicted civic participation in late adolescence, above and beyond other individual and social contextual factors. Other significant early adolescent factors predicting late adolescent civic participation include higher parental education, parent participation in civic activities, youth participation in religious activities, positive characteristics of peers, and social support from adults in school. However, we did not find that altruistic/communalistic values mediate the association between the individual and contextual variables in early

adolescence and civic participation in late adolescence. Being African American was also related to increased civic participation in late adolescence.

In the second report (Zaff, et al, 2002b), we found that civic participation in late adolescence predicts civic participation in young adulthood after controlling for multiple individual and contextual variables. We also found that youth participation in other extracurricular activities, having open communication and support from friends, and higher parental education predicts civic participation in young adulthood. We did not find that positive citizenship identity or enjoyment of civic participation in late adolescence mediates the association between late adolescent and young adulthood civic participation. In a sub-analysis of the African American sample in which we included ethnicity-related factors, we found that parent participation in the Million Man March and family involvement in ethnicity-related activities were associated with civic participation in young adulthood.

As mentioned, we revised our full model based on these previous findings, but we kept the same theoretical grounding that individual and social contextual factors in early adolescence predicts civic participation in late adolescence. This civic participation subsequently leads to civic engagement in young adulthood. We did not include youth's altruistic/communalistic values as a mediator between social contextual factors and later civic engagement, as originally hypothesized. We included additional pathways between early adolescent and late adolescent variables that are based on previous studies on predictors of positive friendships and participation in extracurricular activities (Bukowski, in press; Heath, 1998) in order to have a more complete picture of the process for promoting civic engagement in adolescence and adulthood. Furthermore, we conducted a separate analysis on the African American sub-sample of youth in order to examine the potential influence of ethnicity-related factors on the development of civic engagement.

Data Analysis and Model Testing

We utilize structural equation modeling (SEM) in order to test the full

positive citizenship model (see Figure 1). SEM is a statistical method of simultaneously testing multiple pathways within a proposed model. Each pathway is tested while controlling for the effects of the other pathways. SEM also enables us to assess whether our full model best fits the data or whether an alternative model is better. For the present study, we test whether individual and social contextual factors predict the development of civic engagement in late adolescence and whether late adolescent civic engagement leads to civic engagement in young adulthood.

The model was estimated using Amos 4.0 (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999) with direct maximum likelihood using all available data, thereby allowing for the ability to maximize the sample size for the study. Given that each of the various goodness-of-fit indices operates on differing assumptions, it is suggested that multiple indices of overall fit, conveying a consistent evaluation, be included (Hoyle & Panter, 1995). Therefore, the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA: Browne & Cudek, 1993) were used in the present study. The CFI ranges from 0 to 1 with 0 indicating the absence of model fit and 1 indicating perfect model fit. Values of approximately .9 or above are usually interpreted as evidence of good model fit (Bollen, 1989; Hoyle & Panter, 1995). Root mean square error of approximation values of less than .05 are generally accepted as indicators of good model fit in the social sciences; those between .05 and .08 are indicative of an adequate model fit (Browne & Cudek, 1993). In addition, because the chi-square statistic is sensitive to both sample size and model complexity, the chi-square ratio, which adjusts for model complexity, is reported. Although the cutoffs for interpreting this statistic vary, in general, a chi-square ratio between 1 and 3 indicates good fit (Arbuckle & Worthke, 1999).

Results/Discussion

Descriptive statistics

Table 2 lists the descriptive statistics for the predictor and outcome variables used in the analyses. At wave 3, females were more engaged in civic activities, and had more friends with positive characteristics (such as engaging in positive activities and having positive attitudes). Females were also more engaged in civic activities and reported more friend support at wave 4. There are some differences between the African American and European American samples, as well. First, ethnicity questions were only asked of the African American participants. Second, the European American parents participated at higher rate in the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). Furthermore, while the European American youth were more likely to have participated in civic activities at wave 3, the African American youth were more likely to have been engaged in such activities at wave 4. The European American youth participated in more other extracurricular activities at both waves 3 and 4.

SEM Analysis/Summary

The SEM analysis corroborates the results from our two previous studies on civic engagement in early and late adolescence (Zaff et al., 2002a, Zaff et al., 2002b), as well as supporting our hypothesis that individual and social contextual variables in early adolescence promote civic participation in late adolescence and that positive activity participation in late adolescence mediates the relation between factors in early adolescence and civic engagement in young adulthood. More specifically, for the full sample, race ($\underline{B}$ = -.23, $\underline{p}$ < .001), parent education or SES ($\underline{B}$ =.16, $\underline{p}$ < .001), parents' modeling of civic behavior ($\underline{B}$ =.11, $\underline{p}$ < .001), high proportion of friends with positive characteristics ($\underline{B}$ =.12, $\underline{p}$ < .001), previous civic behavior ($\underline{B}$ =.11, $\underline{p}$ < .001), and religious participation ($\underline{B}$ =.16, $\underline{p}$ < .001 are all significant predictors of 11$^{\text{th}}$ grade (W4) civic engagement ($\underline{R}^2$ =.29; $\underline{R}^2$ = .13 for civic engagement in young adulthood (W5)). Altruistic/communal values also uniquely predict civic engagement ($\underline{B}$ =.12, $\underline{p}$ < .001). These findings are

consistent with previous results illustrating the influence of individual, parent and peer level factors on youth civic engagement (e.g., Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998; Jennings, Stoker & Bowers, 2001; Wentzel & McNamara, 1999; Serow & Dreyden, 1990; Yates & Youniss, 1998; Youniss & Yates, 1999). We also find that wave 3 civic participation is related to wave 4 other extracurricular activity participation ($\underline{B}$ =.13, $\underline{p}$ < .001). An interesting structural finding is that wave 4 friend support leads to wave 4 other extracurricular activity participation (B = .10, $\underline{p}$ < .001) and that wave 4 other extracurricular activity participation leads to wave 4 civic participation ($\underline{B}$ =.17, $\underline{p}$ < .001), which then leads to wave 5 civic engagement. This structural finding makes sense since previous research suggests that participating in positive activities and associating with positive peers predicts participating in other positive activities (e.g., Zaff & Moore, 2002). This process might commence because youth who are influenced by positive social forces might seek out (or be prodded to seek out) other positive contexts; or, at least, that associating with positive peers perpetuates positive characteristics that the youth already has.

Another interesting finding is that parent education (our indicator for socioeconomic status) predicts youth civic engagement in late adolescence ($\underline{B}$ =.16, $\underline{p}$ < .001) and young adulthood ($\underline{B}$ =.15, $\underline{p}$ < .001), which is consistent with previous research showing that being in a family and neighborhood with a low SES may act as a barrier to civic engagement opportunities (Hart, Atkins & Ford, 1998).

Our analysis shows that youth who start participating in civic activities as young adolescents tend to participate throughout high school ($\underline{B}$ =.11, $\underline{p}$ < .001) and into adulthood ($\underline{B}$ =.15, $\underline{p}$ < .001). Of course, we are not certain that youth who participated in civic activities at wave 3 have not, in fact, participated in similar activities before 8th grade or that there were not other circumstances earlier in childhood that resulted in 8th grade participation. Therefore, the conclusion should be tempered that getting youth involved in civic activities in early adolescence starts a snowball effect for lifelong civic engagement.

Consistent with our initial hypothesis, various individual and social contextual variables at wave 3 predict wave 4 civic participation, such as parents' civic participation ($\underline{B}$ =.11, $\underline{p}$ < .01), and Wave 3 activism ($\underline{B}$ =.11, $\underline{p}$ < .001) among others. This suggests that positive social contextual and individual factors in early adolescence may begin a process of civic development that continues into young adulthood.

There are other notable significant pathways in our model. Both having communal/altruistic values ($\underline{B}$ =.11, $\underline{p}$ < .001) and having friends with positive characteristics ($\underline{B}$ =.17, $\underline{p}$ < .001)are related to having supportive friends in later adolescence. These findings are consistent with the theories that having positive friendships predicts future positive social relationships and that youth, who themselves have positive characteristics, seek out similarly minded peers (Bukowski, in press). These pathways are particularly interesting since having supportive friends in late adolescence predicts wave 5 civic engagement ($\underline{B}$ =.14, $\underline{p}$ < .001).

There is a large effect for race ($\underline{B}$ = -.23, $\underline{p}$ < .001) on positive citizenship in adolescence such that African-Americans were participating more in civic activities in the 11th grade. This included the Million Man March which was a primarily ethnic, primarily male event. Multi-group SEM analyses indicated that the model for whites and blacks differs: chi-square (105, N's of 879 and 450)=159.69, $\underline{p}$<.001. We therefore estimated the model for African-Americans separately, adding variables on ethnicity available only for the black sample. For this SEM model, the statistics also reflect a very good fit, although not all the paths are equally significant: chi-square (23, N = 897) = 36.297, $\underline{p}$ =.038; CFI =.99; RMSEA =.025; chi-square/df = 1.578.

The SEM analysis on the sub-sample of African American youth provides greater insight into the importance of ethnicity-related factors in the promotion of civic engagement, at least for this particular African American sample. For instance, youth religiosity ($\underline{B}$ =.18, $\underline{p}$ < .001) and youth other participation in other extracurricular activities in early adolescence ($\underline{B}$ = .18, $\underline{p}$ < .001) lead to

participating in ethnicity-related family activities. Participating in ethnicity-related family activities in late adolescence then leads to wave 5 civic engagement ($\underline{B}$ =.18, $\underline{p}$ < .01). Having parents who participated in the Million Man March ($\underline{B}$ =.12, $\underline{p}$ <.05) also predicts civic engagement in young adulthood. Furthermore, parent civic participation in early adolescence does not predict parent participation in the Million Man March, muting the argument that civic-minded parents continue to participate over the years in all other civic activities; though the Million Man March may have also drawn-out a new group of civic participants.

In summary, the SEM analysis supports our initial hypothesis that multiple individual and social contextual variables in early adolescence predict civic participation in late adolescence (as well as other activity participation). Civic and other activity participation in late adolescence subsequently leads to civic engagement in young adulthood. In addition, social contextual variables, such as friend support, parent civic participation and participation in ethnicity-related activities, continue to be significant predictors of civic engagement in adulthood. These findings are particularly important since they illustrate the need for program developers to include social contextual elements in their program models, such as engaging parents and peers in civic activities, instead of solely implementing civic activities as their strategy.

Limitations and Next Steps

There are a few notable limitations to our study. First, our data was derived from a regional sample of African American and European American youth. Although this was a relatively large sample, the reader should recognize that the results are not necessarily generalizable to all regional and ethnic sub-groups in the United States.

Second, we used an open-ended set of questions to generate our indicator of altruism/communal values, our indicator of a *primed* youth. This approach may be too broad to obtain a sensitive measure of such values. Future research on the predictors of citizenship should use quantitative measures of altruistic/communal

or citizenship values although they are expensive to collect and code. At present there are few, if any, measures of citizenship values that are appropriate for a large-scale survey though there is currently a measure of youth character under development by Christopher Peterson and Katherine Dahlsgaard.

In addition, we were only able to include a limited range of positive citizenship behaviors as our outcome variable. All youth do not have an equal opportunity to participate in civic activism and community service, and some youth might find other forms of civic activity to be a better match for their skills and personality. For instance, being an environmentalist, participating in student government and staying after school to help teachers clean-up the classroom are citizenship behaviors, but do not necessarily fall within the confines of the questions that we used for our analysis. Also, opportunities to volunteer are limited for youth from low-income neighborhoods (Hart et al., 1998). Future research should assess a wider variety of civic activities. In addition, because of progressively smaller sub-groups, we were not able to conduct sub-analyses on specific types of civic behaviors.

Fourth, creating latent variables might have added insight into underlying factors that promote civic engagement. For instance, a positive activity variable, including civic, other extracurricular and religious activities, might have demonstrated greater predictability than each of the variables separately. However, for the present study, we were interested in how different types of activities related to civic engagement. We also could have created latent variables using the individual items of the variables. Future studies should maximize this strength of SEM.

We also did not examine the content of the activities in which the participants were involved. As researchers and practitioners of service-learning theorize, engaging youth in activities and teaching them about the importance of their participation should be the most effective method for promoting citizenship. Our data did not allow for this level of specificity.

Finally, as we alluded to in the summary, there is not a clear understanding

of the influence of social capital on civic engagement. Future research should take into account aggregate measures of family, community and cultural social capital to which youth are exposed. There is also the possibility that youth contribute to the growth of social capital on these various levels.

Implications

The results from our analysis provide an important first step toward supporting the theory that multiple social contextual influences and individual level factors contribute to the development of civic engagement from early adolescence into adulthood. It should be noted however that the coefficients are moderate in size . However, the relations are significant and hold for both subgroups of whites and blacks. Specifically, there are four main findings: 1) early positive activity participation begets later positive activity participation, 2) youth's values predict civic participation; 3) youth's social contexts are important socializing agents that promote civic engagement and 4) ethnicity-related factors may create a cultural level civic ethos.

Positive activity participation. Regarding positive activity participation, early adolescent civic participation and other extracurricular participation is associated with participation in later adolescence, and civic participation in later adolescence is associated with civic participation in young adulthood (although one of the paths is not significant for the African American sub-sample). Therefore, we conclude that engaging youth in positive activities, and particularly civic activities, predicts future civic participation. This is consistent with previous research (e.g., Youniss et al., 1999; Zaff et al., in press) and with the emerging youth development research and practice fields (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2002), which both acknowledge the necessity of providing youth with safe, supportive and engaging activities in order to promote adolescent well-being and a smooth transition into adulthood. Program developers and policy makers should not, however, misconstrue this finding as indicating that previous civic

engagement, alone, results in future civic engagement. Indeed, the coefficient is relatively small and there are multiple other factors that we found to be significant predictors. There is also a strong possibility that experiences in childhood promoted the initial civic behaviors in early adolescence. Furthermore, researchers have found, in accordance with our findings, that it is important to engage youth in the specific activities that are desired for the future (Youniss & Yates, 1999; Zaff & Moore, 2002).

Civic values. Program developers and policy makers should also be aware that promoting youth's values and goals can lead to later civic engagement. More specifically, our research is consistent with those of other studies showing that communalistic and altruistic ideologies in early adolescence are associated with citizenship among older adolescents and adults (Avrahami & Dar, 1993; Batson & Shaw, 1991; Colby & Damon, 1995; Omoto & Snyder, 1995). There is a plethora of local, state and national character education initiatives designed to instill these values and goals. What are needed now are good quantitative measures of values and goals so that these initiatives can be evaluated accurately. Our measure of civic values is relatively rudimentary and we are not convinced that it is the most valid measure. We also acknowledge that other, more individualistic motivations may predict civic behaviors, as well. For instance, we could imagine that youth looking to improve their college application might participate in community service activities. Moreover, many schools require students to volunteer.

Religiosity in early adolescence, assessed in part as youth participation in religious activities, also predicts civic engagement in young adulthood. Religiosity could be considered a proxy of altruistic values since most religions place an emphasis on charity and kindness; though we do not know whether the religious tenets were internalized by the youth while they were participating in religious-related activities. Additional research that focuses on civic identity and religiosity is necessary to have a more concrete understanding of the effects of religiosity and civic identity development on later civic behaviors, including whether youth have begun to internalize these values by late adolescence.

Social context. Program leaders and policy makers should be aware of the potential power of social interactions and social contexts on the development of adolescent behaviors and attitudes, though these influences appear to differ by the age of the youth. Two possible reasons for these socializing effects are that parents and peers can model behaviors that, through vicarious reinforcement, result in the youth engaging in similar behaviors (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963) and that these socializing agents create social capital within the youth's environment, thus creating civic opportunities and norms. The answer is probably some combination of these two reasons. Regardless of the mechanism of change, program designers should develop initiatives that promote these social interactions. For instance, promoting parental participation in civic activities could have the dual effect of both helping the community and promoting civic engagement in their children, at least when they are young adolescents. This is consistent with Jennings, Stoker and Bowers' (2001) finding that there is parental transmission of political ideology to their children, and McDevitt and Chafee's (2000) research on the dialectical relationship that occurs between child and parent when discussing politics that results in both child and parent increasing their civic knowledge. This implication is important to note, because many civic engagement programs focus solely on the youth and the youth's school and neighborhood environment. More research is necessary to uncover the transmission process of civic behaviors from parents to youth to determine, for instance, whether the influence is based on modeling of behavior, taking youth with them to civic activities, or other ways. Also, there is no research on the family system as an influence on youth civic engagement. For instance, families in which grandparents, parents and siblings are civic minded might create a civic ethos that influences the civic opportunities and subsequent behaviors of youth. Creating family-level aggregate measures that include civic involvement of siblings, parents and extended family members could help answer this question.

Our analyses further illustrate that friends are important supporters of youth civic engagement. Young adolescents who have friends having positive academic,

social and health aspirations and engaging in civic behaviors are more likely to be engaged in civic behaviors. In addition, having friends with positive characteristics in early adolescence predicts civic participation in later adolescence. Also, supportive and communicative friends in later adolescence are associated with civic participation in young adulthood. We do not know whether youth who have such positive aspirations and engage in positive behaviors seek out youth with the same attributes, but there is the possibility that having such friends is predictive of future civic engagement over and above earlier levels of engagement. Regardless, we are confident that promoting such friendships perpetuates civic attitudes and behaviors. Program developers and policy makers should be aware, therefore, of the potential supportive role that friends play, whether the interactions take place within a structured program or in more informal settings.

Ethnicity. Finally, our results suggest that ethnicity-related variables can significantly predict youths' civic behaviors, though the coefficients were relatively small. Youth having parents who had been involved in the Million Man March is one predictor of civic engagement in young adulthood. One possibility for this finding is that the Million Man March is highly salient for the African American youth and therefore their parents' participation could be a strong socializing agent. The importance of ethnicity in youths' families is also a significant predictor of civic engagement, providing additional support for ethnic socialization in African American families leading to future youth civic engagement. This makes theoretical sense since the African American community is traditionally considered to be more communalistic than the European American community (Nobles, 1973). Based on the assumption that different cultures have different social norms, we suggest that program developers and policy makers take into account the cultural context within which their targeted youth are raised. One action would be to promote positive values and goals consistent with that culture. However, teaching values does not necessarily mean teaching collectivist values, but rather ensuring that the message and civic activity are salient and related to the youth's goals and values. Further research is needed on the relation between different cultural ideologies and a variety of forms of civic behaviors, including the aggregate norms

and social capital of ethnic and cultural communities.

In summary, the present study is a first step toward demonstrating the relation between multiple social contextual factors and the development of civic engagement. We found that parents, friends and ethnicity are all significant contributors. Individual level factors, such as having altruistic/communalistic values are also important. These findings have potentially important program and policy implications, suggesting that civic engagement initiatives should take a more holistic approach than only implementing civic activities for youth.

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Table 1. Demographics of Survey Sample.

	African American	European American
Sample Size	N=612	N=323
Median Family Income (1993)	$50-55,000	$60-65,000
Highest Education in Household	38% College Degree	60% College Degree
Family Structure	51% Intact	71% Intact

*p <.05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics by Gender and by Ethnicity (N).

	Total	Males	Females	Blacks	Whites
Youth Civic Engagement					
Wave 5 civic engagement	.55 (781)	.54 (297)	.55 (478)	.57 (413)	.50 (277)
Wave 3 Civic engagement	1.26 (1044)	1.19 (535)	1.33** (509)	1.15 (622)	1.48*** (333)
Wave 3 Other participation	1.31 (1060)	1.35 (536)	1.27 (513)	1.25 (626)	1.43*** (334)
Wave 4 civic engagement	2.18 (1025)	2.08 (505)	2.28 (514)	2.33 (598)	1.87*** (316)
Wave 4 other participation	1.43 (1053)	1.42 (513)	1.44 (533)	1.36 (616)	1.55** (323)
Family Involvement					
Wave 3 Parent PTSA Participation	0.61 (989)	0.59 (498)	0.63 (491)	0.55 (566)	0.72*** (347)
Wave 4 Parent Million Man March participation	2.17 (925)	2.01 (267)	1.97 (269)	2.00 (523)	--
Ethnicity Importance					
Wave 3 Importance of ethnicity for parent	0.00 (687)	-0.02 (360)	0.02 (327)	0.01 (623)	N/A
Wave 3 Importance of ethnicity for youth	3.49 (719)	3.48 (381)	3.51 (338)	3.54 (625)	N/A
Wave 4 Importance of ethnicity for parent	--	3.24 (269)	3.41* (267)	3.32 (527)	--
Wave 4 Importance of ethnicity for youth	--	3.41 (274)	3.36 (272)	3.40 (533)	--
Social Support					
Wave 3 positive characteristics of friends	3.21 (1041)	3.09 (532)	3.34*** (509)	3.22 (620)	3.19 (333)
Friend communication & support	3.95 (960)	3.51 (467)	4.36*** (493)	3.92 (557)	3.99 (306)
Wave 3 school social support from adults	2.92 (1048)	2.86 (535)	2.98 (513)	3.02 (625)	2.74 (334)
Positive Citizenship Values					
Communal/ Altruistic values	2.21 (1048)	2.10 (536)	2.33 (512)	2.22 (625)	2.20 (334)

*p <.05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Figure 1.
Model of Positive Citizenship Development

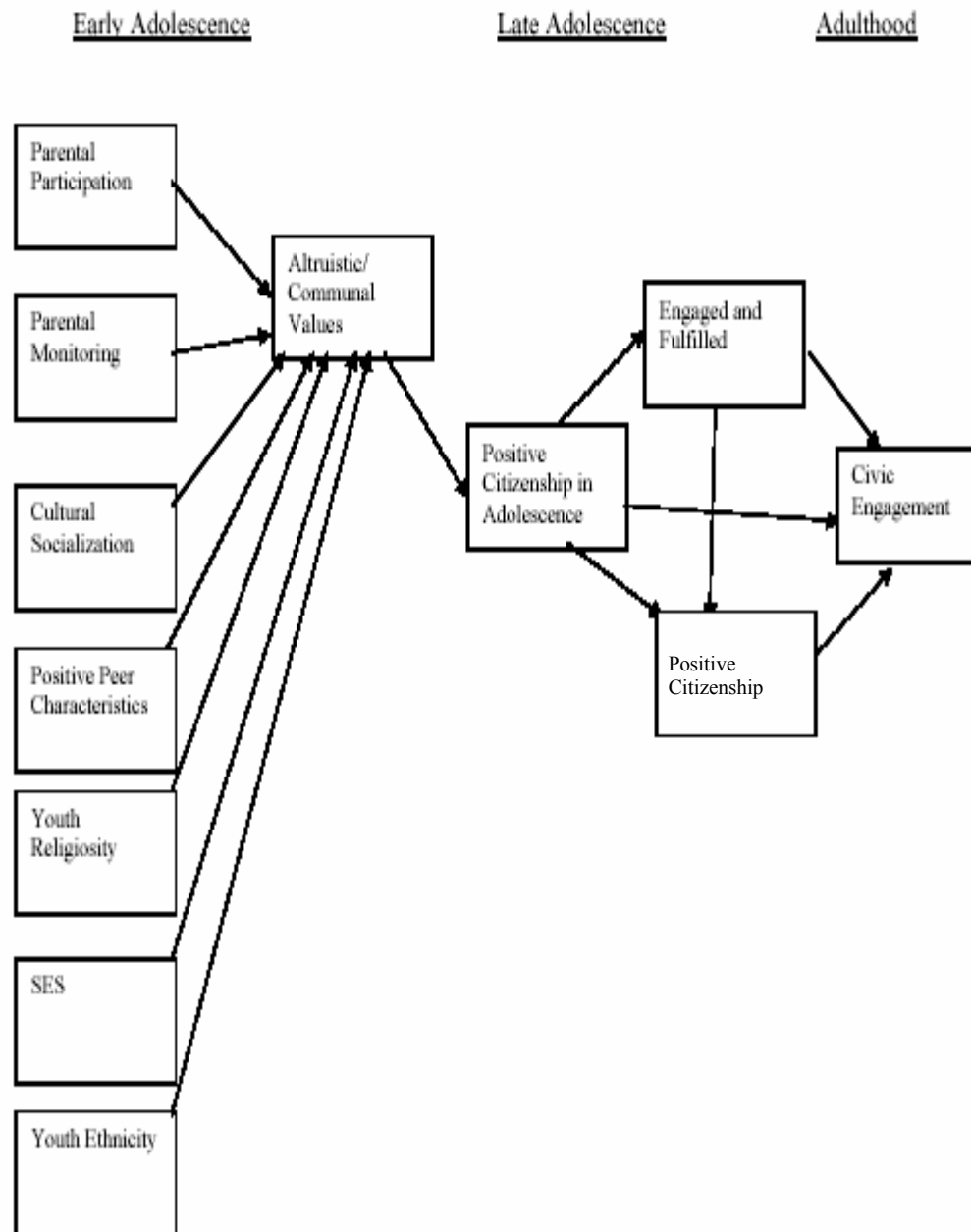Early Adolescence   Late Adolescence   Adulthood

Figure 2.
Revised model of youth positive citizenship development (full sample)
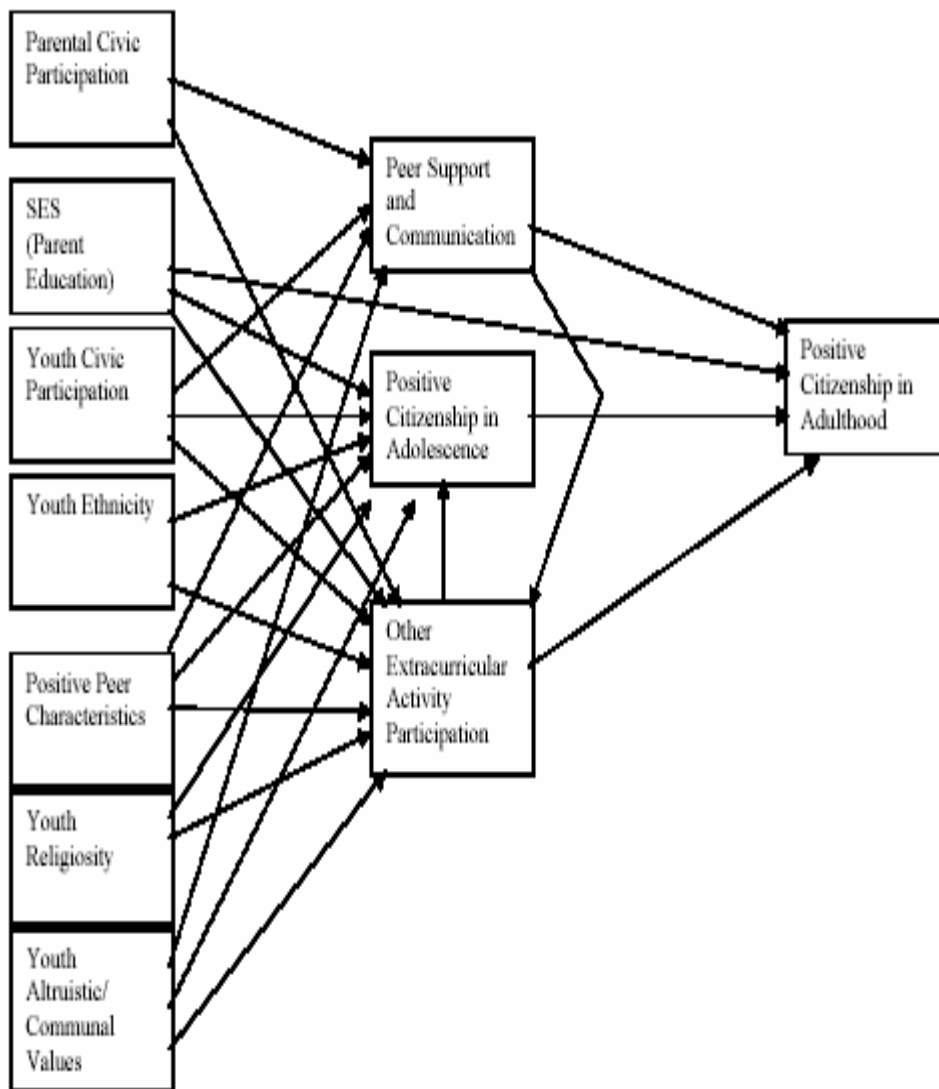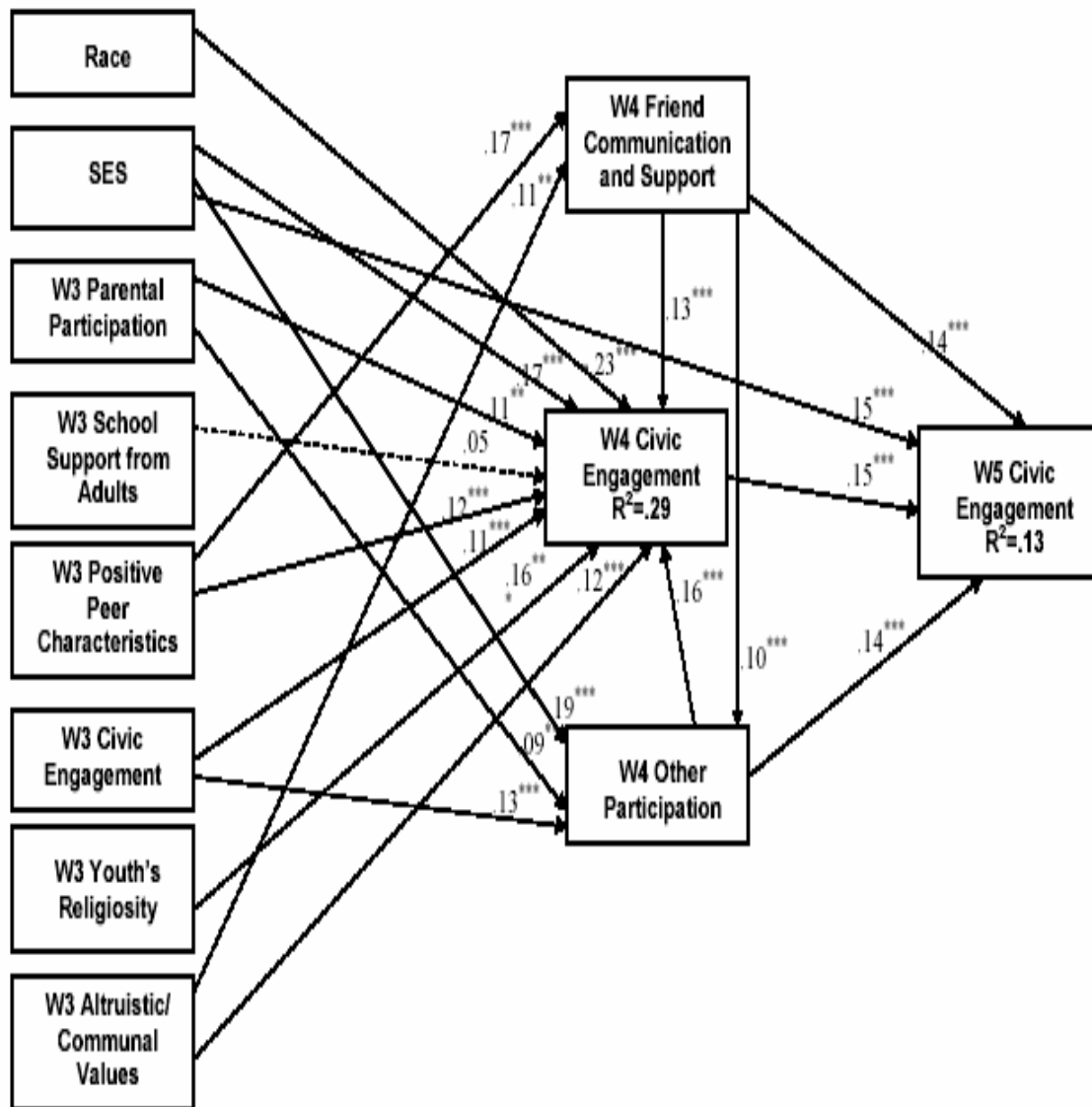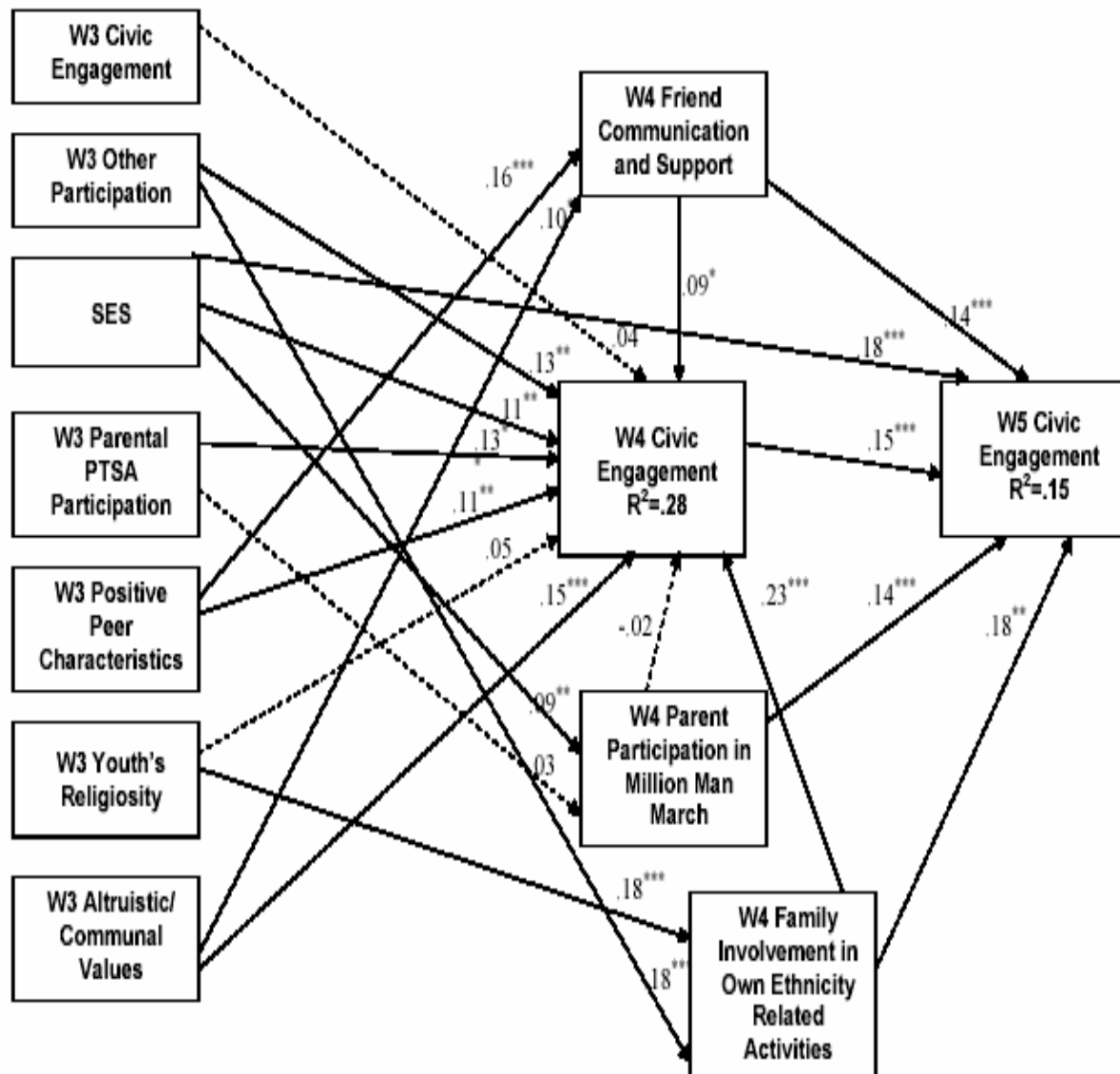
Figure 3.
Structural equation model of civic engagement development (full sample).

Maximum likelihood estimation of the model for promoting positive citizenship in adulthood. Model fit statistics: Chi-square(18,N=1482)=31.57, p<.025; CFI=.99, RMSEA=.022; chisqure/df=1.754. Standardized parameter estimates are reported. Correlations among exogenous variables (not shown) range from .01 to .27.

Figure 4.

Structural equation model of civic engagement development (African-American sample).