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Differences in the Importance of Conventional Citizenship by
Race, Gender, and Socioeconomic Status
Among 14-Year-Olds

presented by

Shanetta Latrise Martin

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

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DIFFERENCES IN THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVENTIONAL CITIZENSHIP BY
RACE, GENDER, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS
AMONG 14-YEAR-OLDS

BY

Shanetta Latrise Martin

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ABSTRACT

DIFFERENCES IN THE IMPORTANCE OF CONVENTIONAL CITIZENSHIP BY RACE, GENDER, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AMONG 14-YEAR OLDS

By

Shanetta Latrise Martin

This study compares differences by race, gender, and socioeconomic status (SES) in the importance of conventional citizenship among African American and White American 14 year olds in the U.S. This investigation utilizes existing U.S. data from the IEA Civic Education study of nationally representative samples of 14 year-olds from 28 countries collected in 1999. ANOVA and t-test were used to analyze the conventional citizenship scale and individual citizenship items from the IEA data. Hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

No racial differences were found on conventional citizenship. Gender differences were found. Particularly, low SES girls, defined as having a "low number of books in the home" and "low educational aspirations," value conventional citizenship more than low SES boys. No gender differences within racial groups were found.

In Dedication to my Mother and the Village that Raised Me

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I am very proud to have earned a degree from the Department of Family and Child Ecology within the College of Human Ecology at Michigan State University. With my interest in positive youth development and public policy, the foundation of the human ecological perspective has had particular utility for me in understanding the role of the family as well as the larger community, including policymakers, in shaping young people's development.

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Scope of the Problem

While voting in the 2004 presidential election increased among young people between the ages of 18-25, voting trends from 1972 to 2000 showed a steady decline in political participation among this age group with only 42 percent participating in voting in 2000 (Levine and Lopez, 2002). This percentage is fairly low when compared to the 70 percent voting rate among citizens age 25 and older. Youth voting rates are important but only represent one aspect of political participation. Relatively little is known about how young people view other forms of political participation as most youth civic engagement research has focused on volunteerism and voting. An informed and engaged citizenry is important to hold policymakers accountable and to help shape sound policies that are in tune to the needs of the people. Too often young people's voices are missing from policy debates, yet they are affected by deficit-oriented policies that focus too heavily on preventing youth problems rather than promoting the healthy development and well-being of young people (Benson et al, 2004, p. 785; Pittman, 2003).

The evidence base has grown over the last several years to make the case for what young people need to ensure they are doing well by achieving specific developmental outcomes (Gambone et al, 2002; Irby et al, 2001; National Research Council, 2002). Participation in decision-making about their lives in the early teens, particularly in the home setting, has been shown to increase good developmental outcomes later in life (Gambone et al, 2002, p.37). To maximize the development of young people, researchers have called for

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settings where young people spend their time to increase the personal and social assets of young people by providing appropriate supports and opportunities for them (Pittman, 2003; Benson, et al, 2004; National Research Council, 2002). Empowerment is one such asset where youth are valued in communities and are viewed as resources through the provision of meaningful roles (Benson et al, 2004). As young people grow in their civic identities, increasing opportunities for empowering youth by supporting their engagement in decision-making on issues that affect their lives could lead to a positive affect on their attitudes towards political participation (Youniss et al, 1997).

This study compares differences by race, gender, and socioeconomic, status (SES) in the importance of conventional citizenship among African American and White American 14 year olds in the U.S. For this investigation, this study utilizes existing U.S. data from the IEA Civic Education study of nationally representative samples of 14 year-olds from 28 countries collected in 1999.

Topics in this research include a human ecological perspective to youth involvement in civic life, youth attitudes toward adult conventional citizenship behaviors; and civic participation in marginalized communities from a social justice perspective. This study is an exploratory study that will hopefully provide insights into how much young people value conventional citizenship; what differences exist between racial, gender, and socioeconomic groups; and options to incorporate youth voices into policymaking. The central question guiding this study is how do youth view good adult citizenship behaviors.

Literature Review

Research discussed in this review include quantitative and qualitative studies on youth attitudes toward political participation and also includes contemporary perspectives from a growing body of literature offering theoretical frameworks on strategies for civic engagement in marginalized communities. Scholarly disciplines that inform this review include social and community psychology, education, political science, and sociology.

The review is organized in four sections. First, the review begins with an overview of the human ecological perspective, which is the theoretical lens for the current study. Second, the definition of conventional citizenship is provided and is followed by a review of several empirical studies that explore youth attitudes toward this concept. Next, several theoretical frames and empirical studies that address political participation in marginalized communities are reviewed. The final section concludes with a summary of existing gaps in the literature and is followed by research questions that guide the current study.

Human Ecological Theory

From a human ecological perspective, the basic theoretical question is "how does the particular combination of environmental and personal characteristics defining a particular ecological niche operate to influence human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 194)? Bronfenbrenner's nested model addresses this theoretical question by providing a framework in which to understand development in context. The nested model ranges from the microsystem that contextualizes the conditions and interactions experienced by

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the developing person in a single setting, to the mesosystem that contextualizes the conditions and interactions experienced by the developing person in multiple settings, to the exosystem that contextualizes the influence on the developing person of settings that do not contain them, and the macrosystem that contextualizes the influence of prevailing values or patterns in society on the developing person.

Microsystem. The nested model begins with the microsystem at the inner most core, which describes the "pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships experienced by the developing person in a given face to face setting" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 227). Elements of the microsystem include physical and material features as well as other persons. An example of a microsystem for an adolescent is the home environment where face to face interactions take place with other family members in the physical environment in which they live. According to Bronfenbrenner, the developing person assigns meaning to those experiences and are shaped developmentally by the roles they play, their perceptions of their interpersonal relationships and the activities in which they are involved within a single setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pp. 22-25).

Mesosystem. Up one level is the mesosystem, which comprises the "linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 227). According to Bronfenbrenner, the mesosystem is a system of microsystems. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggest that development is enhanced as a direct function of the number of structurally different settings that are linked by the developing person as an

active participant and potentially encourages the growth of trust, positive

orientation, goal consensus between settings, and an evolving balance of power

in favor of the developing person (p. 212). The community is an example of a

mesosystem (see Figure 1). The community is comprised of multiple settings that

are linked by the developing person that participates in those settings. For young

people, the community includes places where they spend significant amounts of

time (e.g., schools, neighborhoods, the home, recreation centers, churches, etc).

The interconnections between these settings not only play a role in shaping

developmental outcomes for young people but also in influencing attitudes and

beliefs of young people as they navigate the boundaries between settings within

the mesosystem.

   Exosystem. Up two levels is the exosystem, which is the region in the

environment under concern for this study. The exosystem is defined by the

"linkages of two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the

developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p.227). According to Bronfenbrenner,

events occur in the exosystem, typically in formal and informal power settings,

that influences the processes in a person's immediate setting. Applicable to both

the mesosystem and exosystem, Bronfenbrenner (1979) says the following about

power settings and their affect on developing persons:

   The developmental potential of a setting is enhanced to the extent that

   there exist direct and indirect links to power settings through which

   participants in the original setting can influence the allocation of resources

and the making of decisions that are responsive to the needs of the developing person and the efforts of those who act in his behalf. (p.256)

Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasizes the importance of connecting the immediate settings of the developing person to power settings. The effectiveness of the exosystem to promote development depends on opportunity for developing persons or those who act on their behalf to enter that system and their position of influence once in that system (pp. 255-256). Ideally, the developing person or those acting on his behalf would be positioned to define the situation and their experiences for themselves, to articulate their needs and for those with decision-making power to be responsive to those needs.

The exosystem is the locus of this study because it contains decision-making structures or power settings that young people, particularly those that are marginalized, are affected by but not necessarily connected to (see figure 1). The ecological structure varies for each individual. For example, disconnected youth, defined as either unemployed or not in school, may not be connected at all to any of the systems within the mesosystem. In regards to power settings, youth voices are often missing from the policymaking process (e.g., policy decisions at the federal, state, county and city levels, etc.) because there are often no avenues to facilitate their participation in governance structures. Similarly in communities, beyond community service, there are often few opportunities for young people to be directly involved in decision-making. Oftentimes, young people have limited access to decision-making structures in communities such as school boards, city councils, county commissions, etc.
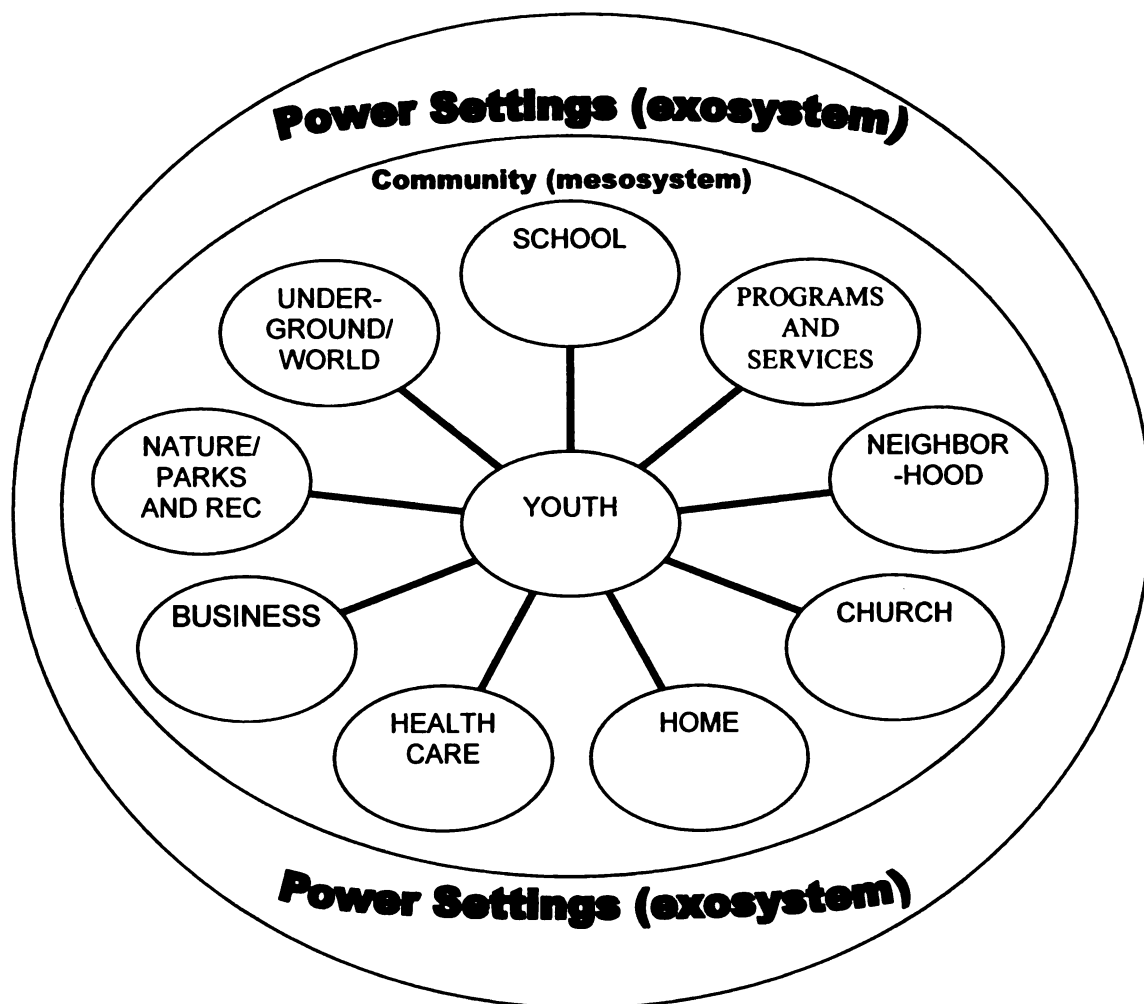
Figure 1: Youth Ecological Structure (micro-, meso-, and exosystems) ©

Macrosystem. At the outer most core is the macrosystem, which is defined as consisting of the "overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context that are related to the developmentally-investigative belief systems, resources, or hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 228). Each generation experiences a different social context, social values and belief systems. The decline in civic participation as a social value has been noted in recent years with particular concern over the disengagement of young people in political life.

In summary, the nested model provides a framework in which to study development in context. The exosystem is of particular interest for studying the connection of young people to that system since they are not typically active participants in decision-making structures.

Conventional Citizenship

Definitions. Articles reviewed in this study define citizenship as conventional forms of civic participation such as voting, engaging in political discussions, political awareness, etc (Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2004; Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2003; Hahn, 1996; Conover and Searing, 2000). The broad definition of citizenship could be defined as developing an awareness of self in relation to others in the immediate setting (microsystem), then making a

connection between that setting and the larger community (mesosystem) and connecting that context to political structures (exosystem) where citizens act either as a collective or as individuals to inform and influence decisions of policymakers that could result in policies to improve the quality of life at the community level and/or to change the "social blueprint" or overarching values and patterns of society (macrosystem). This is reflected in citizens being actively engaged in either traditional or nontraditional forms of civic participation. Several studies have investigated young people's concept of the "good citizen", whether or not they value conventional forms of civic participation, and their view of what makes a responsible citizen.

Research Findings. Hahn (1996) did a case study of two civics classes to study gender differences based on five questions related to political attitudes and behaviors among ninth graders. This study built on a larger study of students (n=1,156) enrolled in a one-semester civics course in a large suburban school system in the southeastern United States that completed a questionnaire containing a classroom climate scale. (Hahn, 1996, p. 30) Hahn selected from one of the high schools that participated in the study two ninth-grade civics classes taught by different teachers whose classroom climate differed in degrees of openness. (Hahn, 1996, p.15) Hahn used quantitative data to investigate if there were gender differences in political attitudes of interest, efficacy, confidence and trust and if there were gender differences in political behaviors of media use, participation in political discussions and reports of intended future political participation. To answer those questions, Hahn compared 164 male and

female responses on an administered questionnaire that contained scales used in political socialization research to measure students' political attitudes and behaviors. Quantitative data was also used to find out whether or not students supported women holding political office. This variable was measured using the support for women's scale in the questionnaire. (Hahn, 1996, p.16)

Additionally, Hahn used qualitative data to explore the treatment of gender as a curricular topic in civic courses and to explore if male and female students enrolled in civics classes perceive the political world differently. To investigate the treatment of gender as a curricular topic, Hahn observed one civics class of each teacher once or twice per week over a 16 week semester. To investigate students' perceptions of the political world, Hahn interviewed 22 of 23 students for one class (12 males and 10 females) and 14 of 33 students in the other civics course (8 males, 6 females). Students were asked to talk about their civics class, and about government, politics, politicians, and their interest in current events. Students were also sometimes asked about their after-school lives and future plans. (Hahn, 1996, p. 16)

Of particular relevance to this study are Hahn's findings on political attitudes of interest, efficacy, confidence and trust; political behaviors of media use, participation in political discussion, and reports of intended future political participation; and students perceptions of the political world. Hahn found no significant gender differences among students on political attitudes and behaviors as measured in the study. On measures of conventional citizenship (i.e. media use, participation in political discussion, and reports of intended future

political participation), Hahn's qualitative findings upheld the lack of gender differences found in the quantitative analysis. Subjects in Hahn's study defined good citizens as "good neighbors, people who help one another, giving money to help the homeless, and keeping up with current events." (Hahn, 1996, p. 20) Voting was also viewed as important by students.

Hahn concluded that both males and females have low levels of trust and negative views toward politics and politicians but may differ in their perceptions of political issues. Females in the study showed more interest in social issues. In contrast, males were more interested in national and international issues. Hahn (1996) also concluded that males and females with a high degree of political interest shared several characteristics: "They are regular consumers of news, they often talk about current events, and many had been involved in school or local politics" (pp. 26-27). Hahn (1996) suggested that those outside influences were as important as classroom factors in affecting the attitudes and behaviors of youth with a high degree of political interest (p. 27).

Cooks and Epstein (2000) qualitative study explored the concept of citizenship among African American youth in a low-income school district on West coast. Fourteen students were selected from a pool of 60 eighth grade students that participated in a summer writing program. Data was collected in the form of written assignments completed by the subjects that focused on the following four sets of questions: "1. What is a good citizen? 2.) Do you have a responsibility to the nation? Does the nation have a responsibility to you? 3. Do you have a responsibility to the African American community? Does the African

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American community have a responsibility to you? 4. Is everyone treated equally in America?" (Cooks and Epstein, 2000, p. 13). Oral interviews were conducted with the subjects in follow up to written assignments that further explored young people's ideas about citizenship (Cooks and Epstein, 2000, p. 13).

Cooks and Epstein's findings revealed that African American students "did not equate citizenship with neither national loyalty nor political participation". (Cooks and Epstein, 2000, p.14) In fact, according to the researchers, the second and third questions about personal and social citizenship responsibilities yielded the fewest responses while the question about equality in America yielded the greatest number of responses. African American students in the study identified racism, white privilege, and discriminatory acts as evidence of unequal treatment of particular groups in America. Students also acknowledged their awareness of the unfavorable social, political and economic conditions of African Americans as signs of inequality (Cooks and Epstein, 2000, p. 13).

Similar to Hahn's study, Cooks and Epstein's subjects defined the "good citizen" as "obeying the law, returning or "giving back" to the community, getting a good job, and respecting other people. (Cooks and Epstein, 2000, p.14) Most of the subjects in Cooks and Epstein's study felt they had a responsibility to the nation. However, their conceptualization of their responsibility had less to do with conventional forms of political participation and more to do with personal and community responsibilities such as keeping themselves safe, avoiding conflict, upholding family obligations, staying in school, and becoming employed. (Cooks and Epstein, 2000, p. 15)

Cooks and Epstein (2000) concluded that the term "citizenship" was interpreted by African American students as meaning personal development and commitment to their neighborhoods and the larger African American community (pp.15-16). They also noted that although African American students were cynical in their attitudes toward traditional forms of political participation, they expressed a sense of personal agency particularly in terms of their commitment to high achievement as a way to give back to their community (p.16).

With the exception of voting in Hahn's study, young people did not identify conventional forms of political participation as part of their definition of a good citizen in either study. In both studies, young people's concepts of citizenship are confined to the neighborhood and community level having more to do with adhering to social rules and helping other people versus being involved in decision-making. Limited measures of citizenship in Cooks and Epstein's study may have resulted in the narrow responses from their subjects. The questions posed to their subjects lacked depth that could have elicited more cogent responses to help reveal students concept of citizenship. Race and gender were not simultaneously considered in the analysis of either study.

Conover and Searing's (2000) qualitative study of students concept of citizenship (n=100) across four communities (e.g., suburban, rural, urban and immigrant) revealed that over half identified having rights and duties as part of their basic definition of citizenship. (p. 100) Over three-quarters of students identified voting in elections and patriotic acts (e.g., loyalty to the country, respect for the flag, and military service) as central to the practice of citizenship when

asked to sort thirty-six kinds of citizen behaviors into four categories (e.g., political, communal, social and patriotic). With the exception of voting, a little over a third of the students across communities felt that staying informed, participating actively in politics and in public discussions was central to the practice of citizenship. (Conover and Searing, 2000, p.103) Consistent with the findings from the aforementioned studies, Conover and Searing (2000) found that young people identified obeying the law and minimum participation in their school and community as their idea of the "good citizen" (p.104). They also found that students had difficulty describing what they might do as adults as far as citizenship behaviors. (Conover and Searing, 2000, p. 104) The analysis did not include gender differences. Hispanic youth represented in the immigrant community were the only ethnic group focused on in the analysis.

Conover and Searing concluded that students have limited concepts of themselves as future citizens. Of particular concern was the lack of vision among the students of their "possible selves" as citizens, which the researchers felt were essential to motivate students to become active citizens and to guide personal change (Conover and Searing, 2000, 104). For urban youth, Conover and Searing suggested that the personal experiences along with the historical and sociocultural context were important in cultivating a vision of what they could be as future citizens.

Summary. The literature previously discussed show that young people in the past five to 10 years consistently demonstrate limited concepts of themselves as future citizens and that traditional forms of political participation is of little

importance to them. In all of the studies previously discussed, young people's concept of citizenship was defined in passive and reactive ways rather than with purpose that would lead to a more proactive orientation to political participation. The literature also showed that urban youth, particularly low-income African American youth, tend to hold more cynical attitudes toward political participation yet demonstrate a sense of agency which appears to be directly linked to their experiences as a marginalized group.

Engaging Marginalized Communities

Theoretical Perspectives. A recent trend in research on civic engagement in marginalized communities is found in research related to social justice forms of civic participation. Community psychology, social psychology, sociology, and a few research-based civic groups provide conceptual frameworks on the sociopolitical development of marginalized youth and young people of color. Common themes among them include a strong social justice orientation, activism in response to oppression for disenfranchised groups, critical awareness of social inequality, identity development, and youth empowerment. Most of these theories purport that marginalized youth are more effectively engaged with activities that include social justice forms of civic participation.

Emerging theories in community psychology offer broad frameworks that focus on expanding civic engagement opportunities to include pathways for youth to develop critical awareness skills that results in collective action in promotion of a just and equitable society. Prilleltensky and Fox (2003) assert that wellness and justice are linked and are central to the good society. They suggest that

wellness is achieved when there is balance and satisfaction of personal, relational and collective needs of developing persons. The balance in meeting those needs hinges on whether or not justice is achieved in each of those domains (Prilleltensky and Fox, 2003, p.17). According to the researchers, the challenge in achieving that balance has to do with a number of cultural distortions that undermine personal wellness and impede justice. To counteract this, psychopolitical literacy is suggested as a way to engage individuals, groups and communities in understanding the impact of injustice on their lives and to be agents of change (Prilleltensky and Fox, 2003, p.11).

Similarly, Watts and Flanagan (in press) offer a theoretical perspective that acknowledges structural barriers to youth participation in creating change in their communities and calls for the expansion of the concept of good citizenship beyond traditional community service and conventional forms of civic participation to include sociopolitical activism (p. 23). Regarding structural barriers, particular attention was called to the mediation role that community institutions play between individuals and the state. They suggest that while community institutions empower some young people they may contribute to the oppression of others (Watts and Flanagan, in press, p. 5). That study builds on Watts' Sociopolitical Development (SPD) theory that integrates a liberation perspective into psychology.

Grounded in African American culture and liberation traditions, SPD has a strong activist orientation in that it is a process whereby oppressed groups develop a critical awareness of social inequity and acquire the analytic skills to

understand their experiences in a socio-historical context along with the capacity to move toward collective action to create a more just society (Watts et al, 2003). Watts (2003) suggest that "empowering attitudes give emerging activist the drive to act as well as sense of agency needed to create or make beneficial change in social systems." (p. 5)

The previously mentioned theories all suggest that social justice-oriented citizenship connects particularly well with marginalized populations and should be accepted as a legitimate form of civic participation. Social justice-oriented citizenship is viewed as a way to effectively engage marginalized and oppressed communities and to facilitate their participation in power settings (exosystem) that could result in addressing root causes of issues they face and help bring about a more just and equitable society. Both theories also suggest that marginalized youth should understand the context in which they live by raising their critical awareness and should also understand their roles as agents of change.

In line with the social justice tradition, youth organizing has emerged as an alternative strategy to engage marginalized youth. Researchers in the youth organizing community do not view conventional forms of political participation as the most effective way to engage marginalized youth. Sullivan et al (2000), suggest a five stage continuum of youth engagement where youth organizing takes traditional youth engagement strategies (e.g. intervention services, youth development, youth leadership, etc.) a step further by engaging youth in direct action and political mobilizing to create systemic change. Sullivan et al, purports "for marginalized youth, who are most isolated and frequently discriminated

against, youth organizing has particular utility." (p. 9) In sociology, Ginwrights' (2002) Social Justice Youth Development theory purports that a more equitable society can be built through engaging young people of color based on the following principals: analyzing power within social relationships, making identity central, promoting systemic change, encouraging collective action, and embracing youth culture. (p. 36-37)

Sullivan and Ginwright's theoretical perspectives suggest that traditional youth engagement strategies often fail to help marginalized youth address the root causes of challenges faced in their communities. Opportunities for marginalized youth that include critical analysis to affect change in the broader society by taking action and holding political systems accountability are viewed as more effective. All four theories mentioned here argue to help young people of color and other marginalized youth move into power settings by expanding strategies and opportunities for engagement in civic life.

Research Findings. In a rare study of supports and opportunities for diverse youth from a developmental perspective, Gambone's (2004) survey research of 257 participants examined differences in outcomes for young people between youth organizing, identify-support and traditional youth development programs. (p. 2) Gambone et al, (2004) found that youth organizing and identity support agencies have "significantly higher proportions of diverse youth demonstrating optimal levels of civic activism outcomes (e.g., civic action, efficacy, and capacity for community problem solving) than do traditional youth development agencies." (p. 8) For youth organizing, Gambone et al, also found

significant differences on all three measures of youth involvement - decision making, youth leadership, and belonging (p. 11). To increase opportunities for meaningful community involvement, Gambone et al concluded that marginalized youth in particular are more engaged when given the opportunity to take direct action in community change work. These finding support Ginwright and Sullivan's theories that marginalized youth respond well to activism oriented programs and activities. In addition, Gambone et al concluded that developmental outcomes may be enhanced when youth experience the proper supports and opportunities for meaningful involvement.

Summary and Gaps in the Research. Few quantitative studies exist that focus on differences by race and gender in young people's concepts of citizenship. While several theories have emerged on the sociopolitical development of marginalized youth, few quantitative studies exist that explore the attitudes of African American youth toward activism and other forms of political participation. In addition, most studies that focus on concepts of citizenship among African American youth are heavy on theory and use narrow measures of civic participation. This study builds on prior research and explores the idea of the "good citizen" by examining the importance of conventional forms of civic participation among adolescents and compares differences for the first time by race, gender and SES. The following research questions were investigated:

1. Are there racial differences on conventional citizenship?

2. Are there gender differences on conventional citizenship?

3. Are there differences between SES groups on conventional citizenship?

4. Are there gender differences of similar magnitude within different SES groups on conventional citizenship?

5. Are there gender differences of similar magnitude within different racial groups on conventional citizenship?

6. Do views on conventional citizenship by gender and SES vary as a function of race?

Research Design

From an ecological perspective, variables selected for this study will explore the "active orientation toward and interaction with the environment," particularly what Bronfenbrenner (1989) calls the "disposition to manipulate, select, elaborate, reconstruct, and even to create environments for self and others and a concept of the self as an active agent in a responsive world" (p. 219). Conceptual and operational definitions for the independent and dependent variables are as follow:

Variables

Dependent Variable. Conventional Citizenship is the dependent variable. Conceptually, conventional citizenship refers to political activities young people feel is important to participate in as an adult (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). Operationally, the following questions related to citizenship responsibilities will be used to measure the importance of conventional citizenship which will be interpreted as "valuing" these behaviors:

An adult who is a good citizen...

- votes in every election

- joins a political party

- knows about the country's history

- follows political issues in the newspaper, radio or TV

- shows respect for government representatives

- engages in political discussions

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Operationally the importance of conventional citizenship will be measured at the ordinal level using the following scale:

    0 = "don't know" (counted as missing data)

    1 = "strongly disagree"

    2 = "disagree"

    3 = "agree"

    4 = "strongly agree"

The IEA Study team conducted Confirmatory Factor analysis and then constructed IRT scales with a mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 2 (Torney-Purta, 2001). The IRT scale for Conventional Citizenship is used in this analysis. See Appendix B for more background information on the IEA Civic Education Study.

Independent Variables. There are three independent variables in this study. The first is race which is defined as African American youth and White American youth. The second independent variable is gender meaning girls and boys. Race and gender are both measured at the nominal level.

The third independent variable is socioeconomic status (SES). Conceptually, SES refers to the home environment and educational resources (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). Earlier IEA studies have shown that "substantial home literacy resources" and "expected future education" are strong influences on civic knowledge and on some aspects of attitudes or values (Baldi, et al, 2001). Operationally, SES will be based on a composite of the "number of

books in the home" and "educational aspirations" and was measured at the ordinal level by the following survey questions:

- About how many books are there in your home? Do not count newspapers, magazines or books for school; check one box only.

  Scale:

  None...............[ ]1

  1 – 10...............[ ]2

  11 – 50.............[ ]3

  51 – 100............[ ]4

  101 – 200......... [ ]5

  More than 200....[ ]6

- How many years of further education do you expect to complete after this year? Please include vocational education and/or higher education. Check one box only.

  Scale:

  0 years..................[ ]1

  1 or 2 years.............[ ]2

  3 or 4 years.............[ ]3

  5 or 6 years.............[ ]4

  7 or 8 years.............[ ]5

  9 or 10 years...........[ ]6

  More than 10 years....[ ]7

Subjects. A secondary data analysis was done on data from the IEA Civic Education study. The sample population of black and white students was randomly selected from the data pool. Out of 2,811 subjects in the original study, the number of Black subjects is relatively small with roughly 600 students identifying as black as part of their racial identity (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001; Baldi et al, 2001). To obtain a comparable sample of black and white students, all subjects identifying as Black only and a random sample of white subjects selected to match the proportions of SES in the Black sample was used. Categories for SES include: 1.) LOW: Low number of books and low educational aspirations. 2.) MEDIUM: low number of books OR low educational aspirations 3.) HIGH: high number of books and high educational aspirations (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). The sample population consisted of 476 Black students and 476 white students for a total of 952 comprising the sample size. Of the 952 that reported their gender, the sample size included 471 boys and 468 girls. The sample did not include those who self-identified as more than one ethnicity or race (e.g. both Black and White or both White and Hispanic).

Hypotheses. The null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H_1 There are no significant differences in attitudes toward conventional citizenship between African American and White American youth.

H_2 There are significant differences in how African American youth value conventional citizenship in comparison to White American youth.

H_3 There are no significant differences in attitudes toward conventional citizenship between boys and girls.

H_4 There are significant differences in attitudes toward conventional citizenship between boys and girls.

H_5 There are no significant differences in attitudes toward conventional citizenship between low, medium and high SES groups.

H_6 There are significant differences in attitudes toward conventional citizenship between low, medium and high SES groups.

H_7 There are no significant differences in the magnitude of gender differences within different SES groups on conventional citizenship.

H_8 Gender differences on conventional citizenship are larger within at least one SES group than in the others.

H_9 There are no significant differences in the magnitude of gender differences within racial groups on conventional citizenship.

H_{10} Gender differences on conventional citizenship are larger within one of the racial groups.

H_{11} There are no significant differences on conventional citizenship in the magnitude of racial differences within gender and SES groups.

H_{12} There are significant differences on conventional citizenship in the magnitude of racial differences within gender and SES groups.

A $p < .05$, two tailed test was used to reject the null hypothesis and accept the working hypothesis.

Procedure. Analysis of Variance was used to assess whether or not there were significant differences on the basis of race, gender, and SES on the importance of conventional citizenship of youth. A level of significance at the .05 level was used. Seven groups were compared – race (white and black), gender (girls and boys) and SES (3 categories based on the number of books in the home and educational aspirations). The Cronbach reliability coefficient is .67 for the conventional citizenship scale.

Results

Conventional Citizenship Scale. In this study, young people were asked about their idea of "the good citizen" where conventional citizenship is defined as adult political behaviors (see Appendix A for source table). ANOVA was used to test racial differences on conventional citizenship (see Table 1). The null hypothesis that there are no significant differences on conventional citizenship between African American youth and White American youth was accepted ($F(1, 934) = .256$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that significant differences would be found between African American youth and White American youth on conventional citizenship was rejected.

Table 1: Mean differences and standard deviations on conventional citizenship by race (N = 936)

	Conventional Citizenship			
Race	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Cohen's *d*
African American	10.45	2.35	.613	n.s.
White American	10.18	2.44		

Second, ANOVA was used to test gender differences on conventional citizenship (see Table 2). The alternative hypothesis that there are significant differences between gender groups was accepted with girls scoring higher on conventional citizenship than boys ($F(1, 922) = 7.78$, $p < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences on conventional citizenship was rejected.

Table 2: Mean differences and standard deviations on conventional citizenship by gender (N = 924)

Gender	Conventional Citizenship			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Cohen's d
Girls	10.62	2.39	.005	.2
Boys	10.18	2.40		

Third, ANOVA was used to test differences between different SES groups on conventional citizenship (see Table 3). The null hypothesis that there are no significant differences between low, medium, and high SES groups was accepted $(F(2, 910) = .750, p > .05)$. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that there are significant differences between low, medium, and high SES groups was rejected.

Table 3: Mean differences and standard deviations on conventional citizenship by SES (N = 913)

SES	Conventional Citizenship			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Cohen's d
Low books and low educational aspirations	10.43	2.59	.473	n.s.
low books OR low educational aspirations	10.48	2.24		
high books and high educational aspirations	10.22	2.41		

Fourth, Univariate Factorial Analysis was used to test gender differences within different SES groups (see Table 4). The alternative hypothesis that there are significant differences in the magnitude of gender differences within at least one SES group was accepted $(F(2, 905) = 3.35, p < .05)$. Gender differences on

conventional citizenship are larger within low SES youth than medium or high

SES youth with low SES girls scoring higher than low SES boys (see Figure 2)..

Therefore, the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the

magnitude of gender differences within racial groups was rejected. It would follow

that the significant main effect for gender previously noted in Table 2 is due

almost entirely to the result of the lower scores of boys in the low SES group

Table 4: Means and standard deviations for gender differences within different SES groups on conventional citizenship (N = 911)

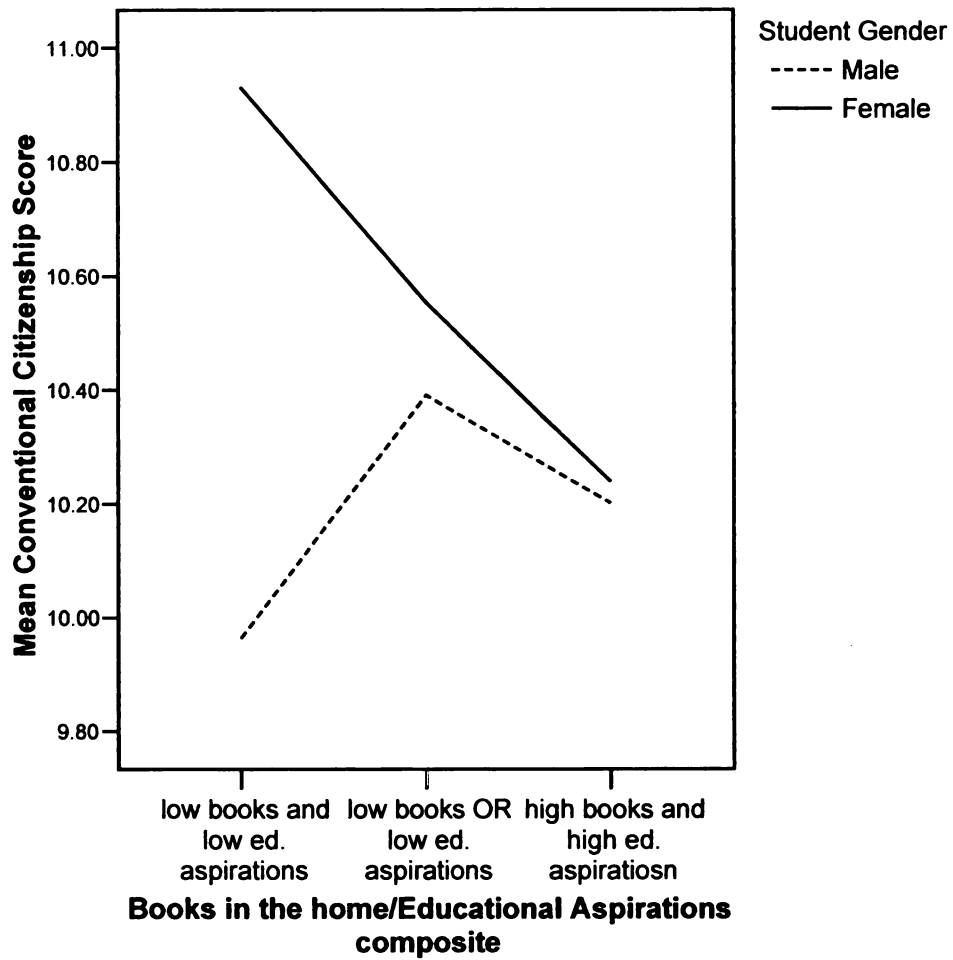| SES by Gender | Conventional Citizenship | | | |
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Cohen's d
Low books and low educational aspirations				
Girls	10.93	2.64	.036	.007
Boys	9.96	2.47		
low books OR low educational aspirations				
Girls	10.55	2.22		
Boys	10.39	2.27		
high books and high educational aspirations				
Girls	10.24	2.25		
Boys	10.20	2.58		

Figure 2: Gender difference within different SES groups on conventional citizenship

Fifth, Univariate Factorial Analysis was used to test gender differences within racial groups (see Table 5). The null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the magnitude of gender differences within racial groups was accepted ($F(1, 920) = .123$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that there are significant differences in the magnitude of gender differences within racial groups was rejected.

Table 5: Means and standard deviations for gender differences within different racial groups on conventional citizenship (N = 924)

Race by Gender	Conventional Citizenship			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Cohen's d
African American				
Girls	10.68	2.44	.726	n.s.
Boys	10.19	2.25		
White American				
Girls	10.56	2.34		
Boys	10.18	2.54		

Sixth, Univariate Factorial Analysis was used to test a 3-way interaction of gender, race and SES groups (see Table 6). The null hypothesis that there are no significant differences on conventional citizenship in the magnitude of racial differences within gender and SES groups was accepted ($F(2, 911) = 1.25$, $p > .05$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that there are significant differences on conventional citizenship in the magnitude of racial differences within gender and SES groups was rejected.

Table 6: Means and standard deviations for gender differences within different SES groups by race on conventional citizenship (N = 911)

	Conventional Citizenship			
SES by Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha	Cohen's *d*
African American				
low books and low educational aspirations				
Girls	11.08	2.42	.288	n.s.
Boys	9.97	2.30		
low books OR low educational aspirations				
Girls	10.79	2.40		
Boys	10.40	2.23		
high books and high educational aspirations				
Girls	9.77	2.39		
Boys	10.16	2.29		
White American				
low books and low educational aspirations				
Girls	10.75	2.88		
Boys	9.96	2.63		
low books OR low educational aspirations				
Girls	10.34	2.04		
Boys	10.38	2.33		
high books and high educational aspirations				
Girls	10.71	2.02		
Boys	10.24	2.86		

Individual Citizenship Items. In addition to the conventional citizenship scale items previously discussed, there were nine other citizenship items not scaled. There were no hypotheses for these items. These items were examined to place the conventional citizenship items in context. T-test was used to test differences between racial groups on all 15 citizenship items. Table 7 shows the ranking of the means of these items, including the conventional citizenship items,

for African American and White American students. Both African Americans and White Americans students were most likely to say that obeying the law and working hard were important for citizenship. Conventional citizenship items ranked low for both racial groups.

Table 7: Mean ranking and standard deviations on all citizenship items by race

	African American			White American	
Item	M	SD	Item	M	SD
An adult who is a good citizen...					
Obeys the law	3.71	.66	Obeys the law	3.75	.65
Works hard	3.51	.79	Works Hard	3.55	.77
Participates in activities to benefit people	3.37	.77	Patriotic and loyal to country	3.42	.80
Engage in environmental activities	3.29	.81	Participates in Activities to benefit people	3.30	.78
*Shows respect for government	3.25	.86	Engage in environmental activities	3.19	.86
Takes part in human rights activities	3.23	.86	Takes part in human rights activities	3.18	.82
*Votes in every election	3.16	.93	*Votes in every election	3.14	.88
Patriotic and loyal to country	3.11	.96	*Shows respect for government	3.12	.93
Would participate in peaceful protest	3.01	.99	Willing to serve in the military	3.05	.97
*Knows about country's history	2.96	1.01	*Knows about country's history	2.97	.91
Willing to serve in the military	2.81	1.08	Would participate in peaceful protest	2.87	.94
*Engages in political discussions	2.66	.96	*Follows political issues in the media	2.70	.89
Ignore laws violating human rights	2.64	1.16	*Engages in political discussions	2.60	.94
*Follows political issues in the media	2.59	.96	Ignores laws violating human rights	2.56	1.16
*Joins a political party	2.41	.99	*Joins a political party	2.34	.96

* conventional citizenship items

Significant racial differences were found on three of the citizenship items (see Table 8). Unlike White American youth, African American youth were less likely to believe that being patriotic and serving in the military are important for

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citizenship and more likely to say that citizens should show respect for the

government.

Table 8: Top three mean differences for all citizenship items by race

Item	Mean Difference	Mean (African American)	Mean (White American)	Alpha
An adult who is a good citizen...				
Patriotic and loyal to country	.309	3.11	3.42	.001
Willing to serve in the military	.247	2.81	3.05	.001
Shows respect for government	.136	3.25	3.12	.025

Discussion

Summary and Discussion of Findings

Gender differences. The goal of this study was to compares differences by race, gender, and socioeconomic status (SES) in the importance of conventional citizenship among African American and White American 14 year olds in the U.S. When compared on how they viewed good adult citizenship behaviors, no differences were found between African American youth and White American youth on conventional citizenship. Contrary to Hahn's study, girls were found to value conventional citizenship more than boys. Particularly, low SES girls, defined as having a "low number of books" in the home and "low educational aspirations," value conventional forms of political participation more than low SES boys. No racial differences within gender groups were found on conventional citizenship.

Even though an apparent gender gap between low SES girls and boys, it is important to keep in mind that the overall trend showed that most young people do not value conventional citizenship more than other forms of citizenship. Moreover, previous research in U.S. adult populations has shown that social class is a predictor of civic participation with those that are poorer being less active than those that are more advantaged (Schlozman et al, 1999). Perhaps that helps to explain why the gender difference appeared among low SES youth and not mid- or high SES youth. I suspect that for low SES boys, the difference could be due to them having low feelings of political efficacy. An earlier study on political participation among non-college attending youth age 18-25

revealed that this group was less likely to view voting as important and less likely to believe that political leaders pay attention to the concerns of people like themselves (Lopez and Kolaczkowski, 2003). Likewise, in a study on political efficacy among homeless adults, self esteem and critical awareness were related to perceptions of the political system as being responsive to individual and collective demands for change (Yeich & Levine, 1994). Given their position in a low SES group, perhaps boys do not feel they will have the power as adults to influence political systems or that the political systems will not be responsive to their needs (Yohalem & Pittman, 2001).

In terms of low SES girls valuing conventional citizenship more than low SES boys, perhaps girls possess several of the characteristics identified by Hahn among youth with a high degree of political interest (i.e., regular consumers of news, talk often about current events and are involved in school and local politics). Low SES girls might also possess more personal and social assets than boys which might lead to a higher level of resiliency (Benard, 2004). What the data does not show is whether or not conventional citizenship behaviors are something girls will be motivated do themselves as adults.

Differences on All Citizenship Items. Overall, conventional citizenship was not as valued as some other forms of citizenship regardless of race. Consistent with findings from previously discussed studies, obeying the law and working hard were valued most as being good adult citizenship behaviors by both African American and White American youth. However, the two groups differed significantly on their value of citizenship activities that show allegiance to the

country with African Americans being the least likely to say that patriotism and willingness to serve in the military were important to them. African American youth did value showing respect for the government more than White American youth.

These findings suggest that 14 year-olds do not show a strong interest in conventional citizenship and instead appear to value more passive forms of civic participation. With obeying the law and working hard being valued most by 14-year-olds, this could be a reflection of where they are developmentally as they are socialized at a young age to obey authority and are just at the point of formulating and testing out their own beliefs as distinct from their parents. It would be interesting to see how these young people view conventional forms of civic participation as older youth.

The lack of interest among African American youth in serving in the military and in being patriotic might be attributed to their awareness of the historical experiences of inequality by the larger African American community. It is important to note that the data reflects youth attitudes prior to the tragic events of 9/11. Similar to what was found in earlier research, the attitudes of young people growing up in marginalized communities could also be affected by their own lived experiences and may result in their lack of interest in patriotism and associated acts. In addition, African American youth holding a higher value for showing respect for government may have a lot to do with the values they are taught by their parents that is to have respect for authority (Spencer and Dornbusch, 1990).

Implications. Findings from this study suggest that particular attention should be given to the development of appropriate interventions for low SES boys to help cultivate positive attitudes toward civic participation. Perhaps the social justice and youth organizing approaches to civic participation could be used as a way to foster empowering attitudes and critical awareness that leads to action for justice in low SES boys. To help all youth broaden their idea of good citizenship beyond obeying the law and working hard, opportunities for meaningful engagement along with more hands-on experiences should be created that involve young people in power settings. For example, youth advisory councils for governor's and mayor's offices are direct ways young people can gain hands-on experience to influence the policymaking process. However, opportunities for meaningful engagement is undermined at times because these groups often lack adequate resources to function well, diversity in representation particularly in regards to engaging non-traditional leaders, and enough opportunities for youth voices to be taken seriously.

Limitations. For the current study, measures of adult conventional citizenship behaviors could be expanded to include more questions related to direct participation in power settings such as contacting elected officials, holding policy makers accountable, keeping track of laws that affect them, attending and testifying at public hearings, participating in political campaigns, etc. It would have also been interesting to examine what young people think they will actually do as adult citizens. In regards to African American youth specifically, measures

should have been expanded to include social justice-oriented forms of citizenship.

Suggestions for Further Research. Research and developmental frameworks for youth should be expanded to include the development of civic identities particularly as it relates to youth participation in power settings. Further research should be done on the politically efficacy of youth and youth engagement to influence public policy. For example, future research could explore young people's attitudes towards the inclusion of youth in public policy decisions and how that affects their level of civic engagement. How do young people view their role in policymaking? What are their opinions about policymakers and the process of policymaking? Do young people see it as worthwhile to voice their concerns to adults who make decisions that affect their lives? Are young people more likely to be active citizens as adults if they are engaged directly in the policymaking process in their teenage years? Connecting young people to power settings where they are given meaningful roles could be particularly important in their political socialization and help to expand their concept of themselves as future citizens and leaders.

Future research should also explore the perceptions of policymakers when young people are engaged in the process. How do they view young people's role in policymaking? Do they feel better informed on youth issues when they hear directly from young people? Do they factor young people's ideas and perspectives into their decision-making? Does the demand for youth voice among policymakers increase as a result of youth being involved in the process?

Do outcomes for youth improve as a result of policymakers being better informed about youth policy issues? Creating opportunities for policymakers to have face to face dialogue with young people could help them to view young people as resources and to create policies that are less punitive in nature and more positively aligned, supportive and in tune to what young people really need.

Young people need *facilitated opportunities* to be involved in the decision-making process particularly as it relates to public policy. Making room for young voices in decision-making may also help them to become *invested in policies* that are set for them. For African American youth and other marginalized youth, decision-makers can benefit from their authentic stories to help shape positive policies that promote change in communities and improve the quality of life for these young people as well as enhance their developmental outcomes. The goal of facilitated opportunities for young people in decision making should be to create the demand among policymakers for youth voices to demonstrate a value for youth perspectives, to build the skills needed for an active and engaged citizenry and to develop future political leaders.

APPENDIX A

Table 9: Means and standard deviations on all citizenship items by race, gender and SES

Item	African American N =		White N =		Male N =		Female N =		Low SES N =		Medium SES N =		High SES N =	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
An adult who is a good citizen....														
1. Obeys the law	3.71	0.66	3.75	0.65	3.64	0.77	3.82	0.50	3.65	0.74	3.76	0.60	3.82	0.53
2. Votes in every election	3.16	0.93	3.14	0.88	3.10	0.95	3.20	0.86	3.09	0.99	3.19	0.86	3.17	0.87
3. Joins a political party	2.41	0.98	2.34	0.96	2.32	0.99	2.41	0.95	2.41	1.00	2.38	0.96	2.30	0.96
4. Works hard	3.51	0.79	3.55	0.77	3.43	0.87	3.62	0.67	3.50	0.81	3.52	0.76	3.63	0.70
5. Would participate in a peaceful protest	3.01	0.99	2.87	0.94	2.87	0.96	2.99	0.97	2.90	0.99	2.98	0.92	2.93	0.98
6. Knows about country's history	2.96	1.01	2.97	0.91	2.94	0.98	2.99	0.95	2.98	1.01	3.01	0.89	2.84	1.00
7. Willing to serve in military	2.81	1.08	3.05	0.97	2.98	1.05	2.88	1.01	3.04	1.01	2.90	1.04	2.78	1.03
8. Follows political issues in the media	2.59	0.96	2.70	0.89	2.58	0.93	2.71	0.92	2.62	0.96	2.67	0.90	2.62	0.94
9. Participates in activities to benefit people	3.37	0.77	3.30	0.78	3.19	0.84	3.47	0.68	3.27	0.83	3.37	0.74	3.40	0.72
10. Shows respect for government	3.25	0.86	3.12	0.93	3.05	0.94	3.31	0.84	3.14	1.00	3.25	0.83	3.13	0.86
11. Takes part in human rights activities	3.23	0.86	3.18	0.82	3.09	0.86	3.31	0.80	3.15	0.89	3.21	0.79	3.28	0.81
12. Engages in political discussions	2.66	0.96	2.60	.094	2.60	0.99	2.66	0.91	2.62	1.02	2.64	0.88	2.62	0.97
13. Engages in environmental activities	3.29	0.81	3.19	0.86	3.13	0.89	3.35	0.77	3.21	0.87	3.26	0.79	3.25	0.87

Table 9 continued

14. Patriotic and loyal to country	3.11	0.96	3.42	0.81	3.20	0.93	3.34	0.86	3.21	0.94	3.27	0.90	3.36	0.92
15. Ignores laws violating human rights	2.64	1.16	2.56	1.16	2.56	1.17	2.63	1.14	2.52	1.15	2.64	1.16	2.64	1.18

APPENDIX B

IEA Civic Education Study

Background

The 1999 IEA Civic Education Study (CivEd) conducted in the United States was sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics. CivEd was an international assessment of the civic knowledge and skills of 14-year-olds in 28 countries. Additional survey items included measurement of students' concepts of democracy, citizenship, and government; attitudes toward civic issues; and expected political participation. Students also answered questions on their background characteristics and on the classroom climate. In the United States, the assessment was administered to 2,811 students across 124 public and private schools nationwide at the beginning of 9th grade. (Williams, et al, 2002, p.1-1)

Measures. The instrumentation of the CivEd Study consisted of separately administered student, teacher, and school components. The Student component consisted of a civic education assessment and attitude items, and a separately timed background questionnaire collecting basic demographic information and information on the student's civic instruction. (Williams et al, 2002)

The items developed for the CivEd study reflect a common core of topics. These include elections, individual rights, national identity, political participation, the role of the police and the military, organizations that characterized civil society, relation of economics to politics, and respect for ethnic and political diversity (Torney-Purta, Schwille and Amadeo, 1999). These topics were defined within the following three content domains:

Domain I: Democracy

What does democracy mean, and what are its associated institutions and practices? The three subdomains were:

- Democracy and its defining characteristics

- Institutions and practices in democracy

- Citizenship-rights and duties

Domain II: National Identity, Regional and International Relationships

How can the sense of national identity or national loyalty among young people be described, and how does it relate to their orientation to other countries and to regional and international organizations? The two subdomains were:

- National identity

- International/regional relations

Domains III: Social Cohesion and Diversity

What do issues of social cohesion and diversity mean to young people, and how do they view discrimination?

Data Collection. The Untied States uses external test administrators (called field supervisors) hired and trained by Westat, a contractor to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Each field supervisor was responsible for approximately 10 schools located in a geographic region. Supervisor responsibilities included calling the schools to confirm arrangement, visiting schools to select the class or student sample, preparing and distribution questionnaires, conducting the test sessions, collecting all assessment materials

and shipping everything for processing. The Student instrument was distributed

and collected during the assessment session. (Williams et al, 2002)

APPENDIX C

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