



The Role of Adolescent Extracurricular Activities in Adult Political Participation

By Mary Kirlin
California State University, Sacramento
mkirlin@csus.edu

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Approach to the Review

This literature review is specifically interested in empirical research addressing the relationship between adolescent participation in extracurricular activities and adult political engagement. Relevant research is found in political science, psychology, education and sociology. In order to capture the literature most directly related to the main question we screened known research, searched bibliographic references, reviewed databases including major social science fields and searched for the work of authors with a history of working on this question. In addition, we reviewed the following journals manually, going back at least thirty years wherever possible: *American Political Science Review*, *Social Science Quarterly* and *American Political Science Review*. We reviewed the indexes for several other relevant journals.

There have been two challenges to finding the relevant literature. First, much of the relevant literature is either quite dated or very new. Some is thirty to forty years old now, making it harder to track down and occasionally less relevant (for example some of the early findings relative to gender are quite out of date). A significant quantity of research has been completed in the last five years but most is unpublished. As a result, a handful of recent unpublished conference papers constitute an important part of this review. Second, participation in adolescent extracurricular activities will occasionally show up as a control variable in a political participation or civic education study that at first glance appears to be unrelated. Given the volume of such work, finding these smaller bits of relevant research has been the proverbial needle in the haystack search. Because of these

factors, the much older or very recent dates of some research, and the obscure nature of some of the appropriate research, I am not 100% confident that we have captured every piece of potentially relevant work; I am comfortable that we have the majority of the work that most directly addresses the specific question.

The question of interest examines activities at two points in life, extracurricular activities during adolescence and political participation during adulthood. Both points require definition. Research on adolescent community service and service learning has been reviewed comprehensively elsewhere (see Perry and Katula 2001) and is not included here. Literature on volunteering that did not specifically include political volunteering was deemed too broad to be helpful for this review. Research that focused on sports as a form of extracurricular participation is the subject of a separate literature review and was excluded from this review unless sports participation was subsumed under a broad extracurricular participation label. For adults, our interest is in the behaviors associated with political participation. As a result, research exploring political attitudes is considered tangential and research about behaviors (such as volunteering) that did not clearly include some form of political participation was excluded.

Some clarification of terminology used here is also important at this point. The terms political engagement and political participation are used interchangeably throughout the paper. Civic engagement or civic participation is used when political activities are included along with other community-based activities.

Background on the Question

Individuals, organizations and institutions are increasingly expressing concern about reported declines in civic and political engagement on the part of Americans. In widely cited work, Putnam (1995 and 2000) traces decline in a variety of measures of political engagement including voting, serving as an officer or member of a local organization, attending community meetings and writing letters to elected officials; participation in these activities has declined between 10 percent and 42 percent over the past twenty to thirty years. Although academics do not universally agree on the source, extent, or severity of the decline (see among others Ladd 1998; Schudson 1998), most concur that active political engagement on the part of citizens in democratic societies is desirable.

Income and education consistently play the most significant roles in predicting political participation, with higher levels of engagement associated with individuals whose parents had higher levels of income and education or who have achieved higher levels of income and education themselves (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Higher education levels are also consistently associated with higher incomes. As a result, one would hope that the increased levels of education attainment over the past several decades would result in increased civic engagement. Putnam (2000) found the opposite; that even as education levels have risen, participation has declined. Galston (2001) observes a similar phenomenon in the relationship between education levels and political knowledge; education levels have increased as political knowledge has decreased.

After the importance of income and education, researchers have generally understood that there was a relationship between participation in extracurricular

activities during adolescence and adult political and civic participation. Recent years have brought an increase in research on the role of involvement in organizations as a pathway to civic engagement but the interest is not new. Socialization researchers were interested in adolescents during the 1950's but in the 1960's and 1970's they turned their attention to adult political behaviors, leaving aside the question of political socialization during adolescence. By 1977, Niemi and Sobieszek explicitly urged colleagues to return to exploration of pre-adult periods and their role in political socialization. Three important political socialization studies appeared in the 1980's but the majority of relevant work appeared in the education literature, addressing political socialization impacts only tangentially.

Finally, in the late 1990's researchers interested in civic engagement returned to the questions of adolescent political socialization and in the past 3 years alone, five studies have been reported (Conway and Damico 2001; Jennings and Stoker 2001; Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins and Zukin 2002; Kirlin 2001; Stolle and Hooghe 2002). While the early work identified the relationship between adolescent extracurricular participation and adult political participation, more recent work has begun to explore the reasons for the relationship.

What the literature says

The volume of directly relevant research is relatively small. Approximately thirty studies can be considered potentially relevant; only eleven empirical studies address the question explicitly and, of those, only six have been published in academic journals or books. Four unpublished papers given at the American Political Science Conference (Conway and Damico 2002; Jennings and Stoker 2001; Kirlin

2001; Stolle and Hooghe 2002) are included as is a study conducted for the United States Department of Agriculture (Laedwig and Thomas 1987).

Table 1 details the findings of relevant research. The table places research with findings directly related to the question at the beginning of the table, organized by year of publication. Following this are the studies with relevant findings that must be considered somewhat tangential to the central question, usually because they address only one of the time periods of interest or do not disaggregate political participation in a way that is useful for this review. Many of the studies in the second group are important for future research. These are also sorted by year. Full citations for all items in the table are found in the bibliography.

Table 1. Research related to Adolescent Extracurricular Activities and Adult Political Participation

Author	Year	Focus	Methodology	Sample	Findings specifically relevant to political participation	Other findings relative to adolescent participation (for example political participation may be included but is not disaggregated)
Hanks, Michael	1981	Effects of adolescent participation in voluntary organizations	Empirical	Panel sample of 1955 sophomores followed up in 1970	Independent of social origins, ability and academic performance, participation in EC activities has relatively strong direct effect on participation in adult secondary associations, which in turn increases voting behavior and decreases political alienation.	Instrumental organizations more effective than expressive
Beck, Paul and M. Kent Jennings	1982	Impacts of parental SES, political activity and civic orientations plus adolescent EC involvement on adult political participation	Empirical	1272 parent-child interviews in 1965 (as seniors) and 1973	High school activity is .17 of total effect, parent SES is .24 including .02 through high school activities, parent participation is .1	Parent SES important but indirect, parent civic orientations important but also indirect
Laedwig, Howard and John K. Thomas	1987	Impacts of participation in 4-H	Empirical	710 4-H alumni and control group of 1052 surveyed in 1985	4-H alumni twice as likely to be involved in community activities and attend meetings regularly than non members, three times as likely to be officers or committee members	
Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady	1995	Influences throughout life on adult political involvement	Empirical	15,000 individuals by phone, subset in more lengthy interviews	EC predicted .19 of direct and indirect effects on political participation as adults. Only education more significant for age group.	
Youniss, James, Jeffery A. McLellan and Miranda Yates	1997	Explores how civic identity is developed	Theoretical	n/a	Argues that existing literature points to a developmental process occurring in adolescence that is critical for civic identity development that leads to adult civic participation	

Author	Year	Focus	Methodology	Sample	Findings specifically relevant to political participation	Other findings relative to adolescent political participation (for example included but is not disaggregated)
Smith, Elizabeth S.	1999	What influences political involvement in adulthood	Empirical	NELS data, 25,000 individuals nationwide beginning in 8th grade then every two years for 6 years	Participation in EC is most significant predictor of greater political and civic involvement in young adulthood; also tests academic proficiency, involvement of parents in young persons life, religious participation, self-concept and locus of control.	Theories that self-concept and locus of control explain participation do not hold true.
Glanville, Jennifer	1999	Is self-selection critical in EC participation?	Empirical	6,300 participants in High School and Beyond national study in 1980 and 1986	Personality traits and political attitudes only partially account for the association between EC activities and political participation in adulthood. Instrumental (vs. expressive) organizations significant.	
Conway, Margaret M and Alfonso J. Damico	2001	Different types of adolescent participation and effects on adult participation	Empirical	8,970 or more participants in National Center for Education Statistics longitudinal study beginning in 1972	Involvement in government/media, and vocational EC activities positively related to adult political participation. Expressive, athletic, and academic clubs not related to adult participation.	
Jennings, M Kent and Laura Stoker	2001	Generational influences and civic engagement	Empirical	Up to three generations beginning with 1965 high school seniors surveyed periodically since. Samples vary from approx. 250 to almost 1,000.	Adult involvement in voluntary organizations has roots in pre-adult experiences, but effects of high school involvement may take decades to manifest in adult involvement.	What inspires involvement in civic life will differ over the life cycle.
Kirlin, Mary	2001	Model Legislature participation and later civic engagement	Empirical	1069 alumni ages 19-71 surveyed 2000	Alumni significantly more likely to participate in nine measures of political participation than US population independent of income and education of parents or adult alumni.	
Plutzer, Eric	2002	Life cycle effects on development of voting behaviors	Empirical	1089 individuals at senior yr, 8 years out of high school and 17 years out	Does not find long term impacts of EC participation on voting behavior	Interesting usage of panel data allows more complete picture of developmental framework.

Author	Year	Focus	Methodology	Sample	Findings specifically relevant to political participation	Other findings relative to adolescent political participation (for example political participation may be included but is not disaggregated)
Stolle, Dietlind and Marc Hooghe	2002	Whether networks or trust levels help explain relationship between adolescent and adult participation	Empirical	1,341 interviews of multi-age Belgians, 958 participants in all three waves of panel data	Network connections and relationships have larger explanatory effect on lasting impact of youth associational effects than trust	
Ziblatt, David	1965	EC and attitudes towards politics	Survey	526 sophomores and seniors in 1957		Findings are relative to political attitudes, found no relationship between political attitudes and participation in EC. Participation was related to greater feeling of integration, social trust. It is social trust, not participation, which is linked to positive attitudes towards politics.
Jennings, M. Kent and Richard G. Niemi	1974	Influence of family and school on adolescent political character	Unknown			In end note, indicate their analysis of relevant data indicated no relationship between EC activities and political attitudes
Rogers, David L., Gordon Bultena and Ken H. Barb	1975	Mobilization hypothesis tested for adults	Empirical	383 adults surveyed		Relationship between organization involvement and political participation stronger for instrumental than for expressive groups. Organization membership more significant that political attitudes for political participation. Good definition of mobilization vs. selection, instrumental vs. expressive organizations. Excellent model but tests adults.
Otto, Luther	1976	EC and status attainment in high school	Survey	340 17 yr. old males in 1957 and 1972.		Finds that EC have effects on education and occupational attainment independent of aspirations
Niemi, Richard G. and Barbara I. Sobieszek	1977	Reviews state of field of political socialization research	Literature review			Argues for return to research on adolescent time period as important to political socialization

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Hanks, Michael and Bruce K. Eckland	1978	Effect of adolescent EC activities on adult voluntary association participation	Empirical	1872 individuals surveyed as sophomores in 1955 and again in 1970		Participation in adolescent activities stronger direct effect on adult voluntary association membership than education, occupation or income. Education important but not larger effect on membership than adolescent activities.
Ehman, Lee H.	1980	Role of American school in the political socialization process	Literature review	n/a		Finds classroom climate, EC participation and school organization climate main factors in political attitudes of hs students, no studies examining adult behavior and EC participation.
Beane, James, Joan Turner, David Jones and Richard Lipka	1981	Long term effects of community service participation	Empirical	26 alumni from community service program surveyed 30 years after participation, control group of 102		Participants more likely to be involved in all types of organizations than non-participants.
Cuccia, Nick J.	1981	Differences between EC participants and non-participants	Empirical	689 sophomores and seniors in nine high schools		Finds participants (includes sports) have more positive views of school and politics than non-participants regardless of SES
Eyler, Janet	1982	Political attitudes and high school participation	Empirical	2456 high school students		Finds that pre-disposition to interest in politics and confidence are in place prior to joining organizations. Uses political attitudes to predict joining behavior rather than suggesting participation leads to joiners.

Author	Year	Focus	Methodology	Sample	Findings specifically relevant to political participation	Other findings relative to adolescent participation (for example political participation may be included but is not disaggregated)
Dailey, Ann Ricks	1983	School or schooling important for later political attitudes and educational attainment	Empirical	Youth in Transition data set, 729 white males in sophomore, junior, senior yrs, then one and five years after high school		Assesses attitudes towards politics, not participation. Finds a negative relationship between high school EC activity and later political interest but positive relationship between college plans and political interest. Types of EC are not specified.
Lindsay, Paul	1984	Effect of high school size and EC participation on young adult social participation	Empirical	National Longitudinal Study of 8952 members of Class of 1972 surveyed again 1,2,4 and 7 years out of high school		Higher participation in adolescence associated with higher participation as young adults. Broad range of social activities considered, not limited to political organizations. Adolescent participation more important than SES as predictor of young adult participation.
Haensly, Patricia A., Ann E. Luskowski and Elaine P. Edlund	1986	Role of EC activities in education	Empirical	515 seniors in three Texas high schools		High academic achievers report much higher rates of EC participation than do low academic achievers. Results held for out of school activities. Motivation for involvement centered on leadership factors for high achieving students, related to experience and career advantages for lower achieving students.
Holland, Alyce and Thomas Andre	1987	Effects of EC participation during high school	Literature review	n/a		Identifies five key areas of knowledge about effects of EC participation: personal-social characteristics, academic achievement, educational aspirations and attainments, participant's role in activities, and environmental social context. Identifies several problems with research techniques. Identifies key areas for further study: presage (predictor) variables for participation, contextual variables, process variables, outcome variables.

Author	Year	Focus	Methodology	Sample	Findings specifically relevant to political participation	Other findings relative to adolescent political participation (for example included but is not disaggregated)
Quiroz, Pamela Ann, Nilda Flores Gonzalez and Kenneth A. Frank	1996	Formal and informal constraints on participation in EC	Empirical	112 structured interviews with students and teachers, school records and statistics		Creation of EC slots, many with entrance criteria, in addition to informal selection and encouragement by faculty and peers leads to "hypernetworking" of a small number of students and exclusion of many others.
Rosenthal, Saul, Candice Feiring and Michael Lewis	1998	Antecedents to adult political volunteering	Empirical	105 participants in larger longitudinal study		Young adult political volunteers were more likely to have volunteered during adolescence
McNeal, Ralph B. Jr.	1999	How school context effects participation in EC activities	Empirical	5772 students from 281 schools; High School and Beyond database		School factors including size and pupil/teacher ratio affect student participation in EC.
Flanagan, Constance A. and Nakasha Faison	2001	Implications of civic development research for social policy	Theoretical argument and literature review			Discussion of roles of socialization in civic development. Importance of teaching tolerance, values etc.
Keeter, Scott, Molly Andolina, Krista Jenkins and Cliff Zukin	2002	Factors contributing to civic and political engagement among high school and college students	Empirical	536 individuals 15-25 year olds surveyed by phone or internet in spring 2002		Current hs students' largest predictor of civic engagement was membership in political organization in hs. explained .23 of variance. Religious service attendance not related. HS students much more likely to participate in EC than college students. Relevant but surveys current activity; is not longitudinal. Data have not been fully analyzed yet.
McDonnell, P. Michael Timpane and Roger Benjamin	2002	Role of education in the political socialization process	Empirical	400 hs students, plus their teachers, parents and community leaders. Additional 125 randomly selected adults.		Highest correlation to sense and practice of citizenship was with ec activity, more highly correlated than discussion of politics in school or classes. Differences in ec participation rates important. Rural and suburban high; urban and immigrant communities low.

ings. First, there is a strong correlation between adolescent extracurricular participation and adult political and civic behaviors. Second, when controlling for type of organization, adolescent participation in instrumental organizations is correlated with later political and civic participation while adolescent participation in expressive organizations is not. Third, although most adolescent members of extracurricular groups come from higher SES families, extracurricular participants who do not come from high SES families have similar adult political and civic engagement patterns. Finally, research utilizing path analysis and/or longitudinal panel data is proving to be the most powerful for explaining the complex set of forces that shape politically active adults.

Of the eleven empirical studies that address the relationship between adolescent extracurricular participation and adult political participation, eight find positive correlations with extracurricular participation. (Sample sizes are quite large for all studies although other methodological issues exist and are discussed later in this review.) Results for the eight studies with positive findings are consistently strong on the fundamental relationship between adolescent and adult participation. Two studies are quite similar, attributing .17 (Beck and Jennings 1982) and .19 (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995) of the direct effect of adult political participation to adolescent extracurricular participation. The remaining studies do not suggest causation but strongly support a correlation. Stolle and Hooghe (2002) reported that 43% of individuals active in an adult political organization were members of youth political organizations.

Laedwig and Thomas (1987) found that national participants in 4-H clubs or other extracurricular organizations are statistically significantly more likely to be

members or leaders in political organizations and committees concerned with community affairs as adults, than non-participants (Laedwig and Thomas 1987). Another study compared participants in the California YMCA Youth & Government program to the general United States population (Kirlin 2001). This study found participants to be statistically significantly more active than the general US population on the following nine self-reported participation measures: registering to vote, voting, contacting elected officials, making campaign contributions, volunteering for a political campaign, protesting or marching, attending a meeting of a local board of council, working informally with others on a community issue and being a member of a board or commission. The one study that does not find a relationship does not specify what is included as "high school activity" and is limited to impacts on habitual voting during adulthood (Plutzer 2002). Despite the Plutzer (2002) finding, the fundamental relationship between adolescent extracurricular participation and adult political and civic engagement appears to be well established.

As a side note, two studies that are occasionally referred to as evidence that adolescent extracurricular participation is related to adult civic engagement actually frame the question a bit differently. Beane, Turner, Jones and Lipka (1981) do not disaggregate adult political participation from other forms of organizational participation. In addition, the study uses participation in a community service project as it's gauge of adolescent extracurricular participation and is more appropriately considered with that body of literature. Otto (1976), also cited, finds a positive relationship between extracurricular activities and adult educational/occupational aspirations but does not address adult political participation.

A second consistent finding is the distinction between the impacts of instrumental and expressive organizations. Instrumental organizations, those with a collective goal beyond individual participation, have stronger linkages to political participation than expressive organizations. Instrumental organizations are usually defined to include student government, newspaper, yearbook, political clubs, debate, community organizations, and vocational clubs. Expressive activities generally include athletics, cheerleading, band and orchestra, chorus and hobby clubs. Rogers, Bultena and Barb's (1975) findings that adults involved in instrumental organizations are more involved in political activities than adults involved in expressive organizations has been replicated for participants in youth organizations by Hanks (1981), Glanville (1999) and Conway and Damico (2001). Several researchers believe this is suggestive of the skills or habits acquired through participation in organizations that require interaction, cooperation and collective decision making to achieve a shared goal (Kirlin 2002; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Youniss, McClellan and Yates 1997). Warren (2001) suggests that organizations vary in their effectiveness at teaching skills based on ease of entry and exit from the organization, whether members have an active voice in the organization and whether the organization is created specifically as oppositional force to an issue or group. Ultimately, the question of why there is a difference between instrumental and expressive organizations remains unanswered.

Third, despite the concentration of adolescents from high SES families in extracurricular organizations, adolescents from lower SES families who choose participate in extracurricular activities participate in adult civic and political activities at rates similar to their higher SES counterparts. Five studies have controlled for

parent SES and still produced positive correlations (Hanks 1981; Beck and Jennings 1982; Glanville 1999; Kirlin 2001; and Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995). Kirlin (2001) explored SES further by examining adult alumni from an extracurricular organization who themselves were lower SES. Her results found the lower SES adults participated at rates similar to their higher SES alumni in all activities except giving campaign contributions.

Fourth, and not surprisingly, studies that utilize a developmental approach to political socialization are providing the most insight into the relationship between adolescent extracurricular participation and adult political engagement. As modeling becomes more sophisticated, and multiple wave panel data are available, the origins of adolescent participation and the life cycle implications of such participation are becoming more apparent. One recent effort is particularly noteworthy. The work of Jennings and Stoker (2001) with multi-generational panel data has led them to conclude that the roots of adult voluntary participation are indeed planted in pre-adult experiences but, even more interestingly, that the impact of participation may not be felt until individuals are in the 30's and 40's. One of the limitations of some of the research to date, even panel studies finding positive relationships, is the limited time frames for which data are available. Some surveys study participants during high school but then conduct their follow-up as soon as 2 years later. These shortcomings are discussed further in the methodology section.

Two other findings are worth noting although they are not found as consistently as those above. Two researchers have found extracurricular activities are a more important predictor of adult political engagement than academic perform-

ance during high school (Hanks 1981; Smith 1999). Researchers have often suggested that more sociable individuals naturally join organizations and maintain their sociability into adulthood. However, Glanville (1999) found that personality characteristics such as sociability only partially accounted for the relationship between extracurricular activities and adult civic engagement. This finding is tempered by the findings of other authors relative to adolescent self-selection into organizations; these are discussed more fully below.

Unanswered Questions and Conflicting Evidence

While existing research provides some consistent and hopeful findings, a critical question remains unanswered by the current literature: why does the relationship between adolescent extracurricular activities and adult political participation exist? Is there causation or is some other force at work? Similar causal questions are raised about the positive impacts of years of education on political participation (Galston 2001) and the linkages between associational involvement, trust and political participation generally (Stolle 1998).

Two general approaches suggest different possible reasons for the relationship. One line of thinking, consistent with the mobilization approach (Rogers, Barb and Bultena 1975), suggests that participation provides opportunities to develop civic skills (Kirlin 2002; Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995, Conover and Searing 2002), network connections (Stolle and Hooghe 2002), or civic attitudes and habits (Youniss, McClellan and Yates 1997). While some of these ideas are supported by research, there are significant missing pieces. For example, while Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) found that civic skills were important for adult politi-

cal participation, and that adolescent extracurricular participation is correlated with adult political participation, they have no empirical evidence for the development of civic skills through extracurricular participation. Further, the notion of civic skills, while quite persuasive, is not consistently or well defined. A recent paper (Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins and Zukin 2002) reports on a survey conducted in Spring 2002 that includes several questions beginning to examine the civic skills of adolescents. However, in the absence of a clear definition of civic skills, and more complete analysis of recent data, the civic skill acquisition explanation remains underdeveloped and under analyzed.

Those who suggest that mobilization occurs through the development of network connections during adolescence are on equally tentative ground. Here again, Verba, Schlozman and Brady's (1995) seminal work found an important relationship, this time between adult network connections and political participation. However, the relationship between adolescent networks and adult political participation is as preliminary as is the relationship between civic skill development and adult political participation. Questions remain about whether the networks themselves stay in place and serve important roles or whether the skill of developing network relationships is the crucial factor. Only one study (Stolle and Hooghe 2002) explicitly suggests a relationship between adolescent network connections and adult political participation. They suggest networks play a role based on the fact that several self-selection factors were controlled; however, controlling for self-selection this leaves open the possibility of other explanations including civic skill development or other unidentified explanations. This work, like the Keeter et

al (2002) work on civic skills, is so new that it is not yet published.

Another line of thinking, consistent with the selection model (Rogers, Barb and Bultena 1975) suggests that selection factors play a significant role in screening adolescents into organizations, in effect selecting those that are already on a path towards civic involvement for adolescent extracurricular activities. In fact, participation in extracurricular activities varies significantly. First, high academic achievers report much higher rates of all types of extracurricular participation, both in school and out of school, than do low academic achievers (Haensly, Lupkowski and Edline 1986). Smith (1999) found that parental involvement in the school life of the adolescent is positively correlated with adolescent extracurricular activity and, subsequently, adult political participation.

School and community factors also appear to influence adolescent participation in extracurricular activities. Smaller school sizes provide more opportunities for participation, as does a smaller student-to-teacher ratio (McNeal 1999). Conover and Searing (2002) found that participation rates are much higher for adolescents in rural and suburban communities than for urban or immigrant communities. The limited number of "slots" for participation and formal and informal selection criteria by faculty and peers can also lead to a small number of "hyper-networked" students who participate in multiple activities while most others are excluded (Quiroz, Gonzalez and Frank 1996). Finally, while Cuccia (1981) found participants in all types of extracurricular activities to have a more positive view of their school and politics generally, Eyler (1982) reported that a pre-disposition to interest in politics as well as self-confidence, were in place prior to adolescents

joining organizations, suggesting the phenomenon of “joiners” exists even in adolescence.

Research supporting the selection hypothesis is compelling and suggests that longitudinal panel research may have to begin even earlier than high school in order to appropriately sort out the impacts of selection and mobilization. It also suggests the two approaches might learn from each other; while extracurricular research starting from the selection approach has explored very individualistic factors such as feelings about school and self-confidence, the mobilization approach has focused on historically significant indicators of political engagement such as SES and parental political activities. A combination of the two approaches may be more productive.

In summary, the existing research points positively to adolescent participation in extracurricular activities as a gateway to adult political participation. However, there are significant questions left unanswered and methodological issues must be addressed as we progress.

Methodological Issues

As with most research involving human subjects, the analysis and methods often fall short of answering the questions posed. Earlier research had two primary problems; 1) recall issues when adults were asked to recall their activities during adolescence and 2) sample issues when only white males and/or college track students were studied, enhancing the self-selection issues already present in

this line of inquiry. Since the early research on extracurricular activities, the data sources have significantly improved. In particular, three longitudinal data sets (High School and Beyond, the National Education Longitudinal Study and the panel data collected by M. Kent Jennings and colleagues) have been successfully utilized to help overcome sample and recall biases. The Jennings data is proving useful in addressing the self-selection issues. The use of these databases has changed both the reliability of the data and our understanding of the socialization forces at work. Path analysis continues to be particularly useful for sorting out the direct and indirect effects of variables leading to and from adolescent extracurricular participation. However, at least two significant issues remain.

First, the recent Jennings and Stoker (2002) work highlights again that our timeframes for study may be woefully short. Political scientists have long understood that political participation is usually relatively low during college years but increases as individuals have children, buy homes, and settle into communities, usually sometime in their thirties. Four panel studies include individuals over thirty in their work (Hanks 1981; Conway and Damico 2001; Jennings and Stoker 2001; and Plutzer 2002) but only Jennings and Stokers most recent study includes individuals over 40 years old. Several studies with interesting findings are limited to individuals under 26, making their findings preliminary at best (Beck and Jennings 1982; Smith 1999; and Glanville 1999).

Cross-sectional data are available for a wider range of adult ages but these are tempered by the recall biases (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995 and the control group for Laedwig and Thomas 1987) and self-selection because they

sample known alumni from organizations (Kirlin 2001 and Laedwig and Thomas 1987). Longitudinal panel data will clearly be most advantageous in the long run but the individuals will require time to mature, meaning that some of our questions will take years to answer. Additionally, as researchers change their understanding of the types of questions and activities that prove important during high school, we will still be limited to existing data for our older panels.

A second challenge of the existing research is the variety of definitions of important variables, in particular, extracurricular activity during high school and civic and political participation during adulthood. Existing research demonstrates important differences between instrumental and expressive organizations (with particular attention to sports) as precursors to civic and political participation, but not all research reports breakdowns in categories of organizations for adolescents. Most research also does not distinguish between membership and leadership in adolescent organizations, a possibly important factor.

The question of what constitutes adult political participation is even more diffuse. Definitions of participation range from broad perspectives such as membership in community organizations to specific acts such as voting, talking about public issues or working on political campaigns or compilations of those acts. The clearest relationship appears to be between adolescent extracurricular participation and adult associational membership. However, the linkages to other political behaviors are consistent with the exception of Plutzer (2002) who found no relationship between extracurricular activities and voting. Plutzer does not detail

what is meant by extracurricular activities and his results may be influenced by large numbers of participants in expressive organizations.

The methodological issues are being quickly addressed by the advent of sophisticated modeling techniques and the use of longitudinal panel data. Clarity about "participation" at both the adolescent and adult levels is still needed.

Research Questions

So what does the literature tell us? The results are consistent in what they tell us and in what they leave unanswered. The correlation between adolescent extracurricular activities and adult participation is strong, but so is our uncertainty about causality. And if there is causality, what explains the impact of adolescent extracurricular participation? The final section of this review identifies three primary questions warranting further research.

First, the question of mobilization or selection warrants additional attention. Existing research suggests strongly that selection may be an important factor in adolescent extracurricular participation whether the origins of that selection are interest in politics, parental impacts through SES or community participation, school size, community type or recruitment by teachers and peers. A related question concerns the reason for the variation in impacts of different types of organizations. While participation in instrumental organizations is correlated with later political behaviors, there is no such correlation for expressive organizations. The results hold true for both adolescent and adult organization participation and discerning the differences may help researchers clarify what is being provided by

organization participation that is of importance for political participation.

Development models may hold the key to including both the mobilization and selection approaches. As Conover and Searling (2002) suggest, if we are interested in the practice of citizenship (rather than simply attitudes) the methods for study become more complex. Specifically they argue for a developmental model that understands both the ways in which political behavior develops over a time and the context within which the development takes place. More sophisticated longitudinal panel data sets will be an important contributor to this effort. Ultimately, I suspect that self-selection and mobilization will both play important roles in the march towards adult political participation. Sorting out them out should not be an either or proposition but rather an effort to utilize the powerful research from both perspectives to further our understanding.

A second line of inquiry should seek to understand the impacts of extracurricular activities. We have at least three hypotheses about the impacts of extracurricular activities (civic skill building, network development and attitude formation) and at least two are worth pursuing. The notion of civic skill development is particularly intriguing because so many authors point to this as critical and yet we have only the most preliminary notions of what actually constitutes "civic skills". The most well developed definition of civic skills so far (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995) was designed for use with adults. No such scale exists for adolescents. The developmental approach to political socialization suggests that civic skill acquisition may also be developmental, requiring a model with differing ex-

expectations from differing age groups. A second hypothesis suggests that it is the formation of network relationships that becomes important for later civic engagement. Whether this is through specific long lasting relationships or whether the network impacts are mediated through the process of developing social trust or skills at network development, the concept has received considerably less attention than civic skill development and warrants further study.

The third hypothesis, that the development of civic attitudes is an important contributor to later civic behaviors, is weakly supported by the existing empirical literature. While attitudes are obviously one component of a politically active adult, the consistent disconnect between attitudes and behaviors make this line of work less promising as we have explored it to date. A more viable approach may be to identify the attitudinal indicators which can be married with civic skills; in other words, search out the factors that allow us to link attitudes with behaviors.

The renewed interest in civic engagement, coupled with the diversity of fields that can contribute to our understanding of adolescent civic socialization, make this an opportune time to expand our knowledge. However, we will be better served by comprehensive, longitudinal research than by continuing to parse the broader question into discipline specific narrowly focused studies. True interdisciplinary approaches provide both significant challenges and significant opportunities for researchers. In the case of adolescent political socialization generally, and the role of extracurricular activities specifically, the rewards may be rich for those willing to invest the time.

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