

# The Civic Side of School Choice: An Empirical Analysis of Civic Education in Public and Private Schools

David E. Campbell\*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social scientists have long had an interest in the civic education of adolescents, although research on the subject has waxed and waned over the last three or four decades.<sup>1</sup> After a flurry of research in the 1960s and early 1970s, studies of civic education slowed to a trickle, but have picked up again in recent years.<sup>2</sup> In the words of one recent review article, “[a]fter decades of neglect, civic education is back on the agenda of political science in the United States.”<sup>3</sup> These decades of neglect, however, have meant that “the field [of civic education] as a whole provides disappointing theoretical and empirical bases for undertaking the educational reforms that might strengthen the role of schools in the making of citizens.”<sup>4</sup> At a time when education reform tops policy agendas, it is unfortunate that there is relatively little empirical evidence regarding possible civic consequences of various reform proposals. The relative lack of

---

\* David E. Campbell is the John Cardinal O’Hara, C.S.C. associate professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, a fellow of the Institute for Educational Initiatives, and the founding director of the Rooney Center for the Study of American Democracy.

1. For a more technical version of this analysis, see David E. Campbell, *Making Democratic Education Work*, in CHARTERS, VOUCHERS, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION 241, 241 (Paul E. Peterson & David E. Campbell eds., 2001); for a more succinct version, written for a general audience, see David E. Campbell, *Bowling Together: Private Schools, Serving Public Ends*, 3 EDUC. NEXT 55 (2001).

2. See RICHARD G. NIEMI & JANE JUNN, CIVIC EDUCATION: WHAT MAKES STUDENTS LEARN 204 (Yale Univ. Press. 1998); Diane Owen, *Service Learning and Political Socialization*, 33 POL. SCI. & POL. 639, 639–40 (2000).

3. William A. Galston, *Political Knowledge, Political Engagement, and Civic Education*, 4 ANN. REV. POL. SCI. 217, 217 (2001).

4. Pamela Johnston Conover & Donald D. Searing, *A Political Socialization Perspective*, in REDISCOVERING THE DEMOCRATIC PURPOSES OF EDUCATION 91, 91 (L. M. McDonnell, P. M. Timpane & R. Benjamin eds., 2000).

research on the subject of civic education is particularly lamentable as a national conversation—often, a heated argument—takes place over proposals to provide state-funded vouchers to pay private school tuition (with a few such programs already in existence).

With several voucher programs already in existence, and with the Supreme Court's decision in *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*<sup>5</sup>—which held that a state funded voucher program in Cleveland passes constitutional muster—it is likely that voucher programs will proliferate. Thus, it has become increasingly important to explore the empirical effects of voucher programs on schools' abilities to provide civic instruction to students.

Given that public spending on elementary and secondary education is at least partly justified as a means to “impart the knowledge and skills of citizenship” and “inculcate a set of civic values,”<sup>6</sup> it is imperative to ask how a major reform like the widespread availability of publicly-funded vouchers will affect those aims. Some opponents of vouchers raise alarms that private schools do not prepare their students for engagement in a pluralist democracy, and that school vouchers will therefore have adverse consequences for the civic development of those who move from public to private schools.<sup>7</sup> For example, in his dissent in *Zelman*, Justice Stevens articulated these concerns by predicting that state-funded vouchers for private, specifically religious, schools will “weaken the foundation of our democracy.”<sup>8</sup> To date, however, little empirical evidence exists to test whether public and private schools differ in the civic education they provide their students. As Macedo laments: “The comparative success of different types of schools at teaching civic virtues is not much studied.”<sup>9</sup> This paper seeks to fill that void by comparing the civic attitudes and behavior of students in private and public schools, using data from a large national telephone survey of parents and their adolescent children.

Part II draws upon previous literature to define the specific purposes of civic education and to show how civic instruction

---

5. 536 U.S. 639, 644 (2002).

6. BRIAN P. GILL ET AL., RHETORIC VERSUS REALITY: WHAT WE KNOW AND WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VOUCHERS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS 199 (2007).

7. *Id.* at 244.

8. *Zelman*, 536 U.S. at 686 (Stevens, J., dissenting).

9. STEPHEN MACEDO, DIVERSITY AND DISTRUST: CIVIC EDUCATION IN A MULTICULTURAL DEMOCRACY 234 (2000).

contributes to civic involvement. Specifically, a civic education facilitates future participation in political activity by cultivating community service, civic skills, political knowledge, and political tolerance. Conventional wisdom advocates public schooling as a means of creating an informed and engaged electorate, and there is concern among scholars that private schooling will stray from the civic dimension of education and, instead, indoctrinate children to particular, less than democratic, ideals. Other scholars, however, argue that private schools foster civic values by cultivating communities where people actively participate in an ideal democracy.

Part III explores test results indicating that private schooling has either a neutral or positive impact on civic values. Using data from a large national survey of parents and adolescent children, this Part analyzes the civic effects—in particular, the effects of education on community service, civic skills, political knowledge, and political tolerance—of public versus private schooling. Part IV analyzes these results and shows that students in private schools generally perform better on multiple indicators of civic education. Finally, this Article investigates what these results mean for the civic consequences of voucher programs and recommends further empirical studies, with a special focus on charter schools.

## II. PREVIOUS LITERATURE

Two important questions arise when examining how different types of schools potentially vary in the civic education they provide. First, what constitutes a “civic” education? And second, how might we expect public and private schools to differ in providing it? A fundamental difficulty in any study of civic education is defining it, as the term *civic* is notoriously vague and often controversial.<sup>10</sup> I begin by defining civic education as instruction that provides preparation for participation in political activity. More precisely, I draw upon empirical literature in political science to define four objectives of such preparation:

- (1) Participation in public-spirited collective action (community service)

---

10. See Galston, *supra* note 3, at 217–19.

- (2) The capacity to be involved in the political process (civic skills)
- (3) An understanding of the nation's political system (political knowledge)
- (4) Respect for the civil liberties of others (political tolerance)

It should also be noted that rigorous instruction in subjects such as mathematics, history, and literature contributes to a young person's civic development. As Galston puts it, "All education is civic education in the sense that individuals' level of general educational attainment significantly affects their level of political knowledge as well as the quantity and character of their political participation."<sup>11</sup> Existing literature amply demonstrates how these four components of civic education directly contribute to both the extent and character of one's civic involvement and thus merit the following analysis.

#### *A. Community Service*

Recent years have seen increasing attention paid to participation in non-remunerative community service as an important component of civic engagement. Putnam, for example, describes collective action, such as volunteer work, as providing individuals with templates for collaboration, thus facilitating further collective action in a "virtuous circle."<sup>12</sup> In a similar vein, Barber argues that "[c]ivic education rooted in service learning can be a powerful response to civic scapegoatism and the bad habits of representative democracy."<sup>13</sup> With the growing popularity of service learning programs in American high schools, many educators have been convinced that secondary schools should encourage community service. While some observers have suggested that young people turn to community service as an expression of their alienation from the political system,<sup>14</sup> existing evidence suggests otherwise: among American youth, the

---

11. *Id.* at 219.

12. ROBERT D. PUTNAM, MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK: CIVIC TRADITIONS IN MODERN ITALY 170-71, 173-75 (1993).

13. BENJAMIN R. BARBER, AN ARISTOCRACY OF EVERYONE: THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICA 252 (1992).

14. ASS'N OF SECRETARIES OF STATE, NEW MILLENNIUM PROJECT: A NATIONWIDE STUDY OF 15-24 YEAR OLD YOUTH 22 (2000).

correlation between volunteer activity and political engagement is positive and, over the last two decades, unchanging.<sup>15</sup>

### *B. Civic Skills*

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady present considerable evidence that political participation is facilitated by the acquisition of civic skills, namely, experience in performing tasks like holding meetings, writing letters, and making public statements.<sup>16</sup> Their work focuses on how adults acquire these skills on the job or in voluntary associations.<sup>17</sup> However, schools arguably constitute the main source for development of adolescents' civic skills.

### *C. Political Knowledge*

Researchers have accumulated extensive evidence demonstrating that political knowledge is an important component of political involvement. Zaller, for example, uses indices of factual political knowledge as a critical measure of political awareness.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in their exhaustive analysis of the causes and consequences of political knowledge, Delli, Carpini, and Keeter conclude that it is the key to full participation in democratic politics.<sup>19</sup>

### *D. Political Tolerance*

Liberal democracy is defined as much by respect for minority rights as governance by majority rule.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, there is a long line of research into individuals' willingness to respect the rights of free expression, association, etc. to members of unpopular groups, or in other words, *political tolerance*. In the words of Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus: "Though liberal societies may be divided by intense conflicts, they can remain stable if there is a general adherence to the

---

15. David E. Campbell, *Social Capital and Service Learning*, 33 POL. SCI. & POL. 641, 642 (2000).

16. SIDNEY VERBA, KAY LEHMAN SCHLOZMAN & HENRY E. BRADY, VOICE AND EQUALITY: CIVIC VOLUNTARISM IN AMERICAN POLITICS 37-48 (1995).

17. *Id.* at 49-81.

18. See JOHN R. ZALLER, THE NATURE AND ORIGINS OF MASS OPINION 6-39 (1992).

19. MICHAEL X. DELLI CARPINI & SCOTT KEETER, WHAT AMERICANS KNOW ABOUT POLITICS AND WHY IT MATTERS 60-61 (1996).

20. Mary C. Segers, *Where Are We Now? "The Catholic Moment" in American Politics, in A NATION UNDER GOD?: ESSAYS ON THE FUTURE OF RELIGION IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE* 132 (R. Bruce Douglass & Joshua Mitchell eds., 2000).

rules of democratic or constitutional procedure. Tolerance in this sense implies a commitment to the ‘rules of the game’ and a willingness to apply them equally.”<sup>21</sup>

The question of how adolescents acquire political tolerance is especially relevant to a study of schools because decades of research into this subject have established that tolerance increases with education, although the actual process by which this change occurs largely remains obscure.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, normative theorists have identified the promotion of tolerance as fundamental to the mission of public education, underscoring its relevance to the question of how private schools perform in providing a civic education to their students.<sup>23</sup>

### *E. Schools and Civic Education*

While it is fairly straightforward to cull important elements of civic education from the existing literature, it is far more difficult to use existing theory to generate expectations about the features of schools that might contribute to or detract from civic instruction. The development of theory to explain the causal processes of political socialization within schools has been stunted by the periodic attention paid to the subject by social scientists. Nonetheless, early research suggested that courses devoted to “civics” had little impact on adolescents’ preparation for engagement in political participation.<sup>24</sup>

More recently, however, Niemi and Junn have demonstrated that taking courses with political content causes students to perform better on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics test, a gauge of their knowledge about politics.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, beyond this straightforward finding—which is itself

---

21. JOHN L. SULLIVAN, JAMES PIERESON & GEORGE E. MARCUS, *POLITICAL TOLERANCE AND AMERICAN DEMOCRACY* 2 (1982).

22. NORMAN H. NIE, JANE JUNN & KENNETH STEHLIK-BERRY, *EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP IN AMERICA* 65–72 (1996).

23. AMY GUTMANN, *DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION* 54–56 (2d ed. 1999); MACEDO, *supra* note 9, at 231–53.

24. *See, e.g.*, Kenneth P. Langton & M. Kent Jennings, *Political Socialization and the High School Civics Curriculum in the United States*, 62 *AM. POL. SCI. REV.* 852, 852–54 (1968).

25. NIEMI & JUNN, *supra* note 2, at 21–23.

the subject of some dispute<sup>26</sup>—research to explain what schools do to promote civic development is scarce. While social scientists have long noted that educational attainment is a potent predictor of almost every aspect of civic and political activity, as Torney-Purta notes, the processes by which schools facilitate political engagement remain a “black box.”<sup>27</sup>

One area in which there has been discussion—albeit limited—of how schools might provide civic education is in regards to the differences between public and private schools. Galston summarizes what has perhaps been the conventional wisdom: “Public schools have been regarded as the most appropriate sites for forming citizens, while private schools have been regarded with suspicion as sources of separatism, elitism, and antidemocratic principles.”<sup>28</sup>

This view echoes the original justification for public schools. Historically, public, or “common,” schools were created in order to forge a common citizenry within a nation of immigrants. Even though the standards of what constitutes good citizenship are considerably different now than when Horace Mann first advocated the common school, the general objective of public schools to prepare students for democratic engagement has not changed. Currently, many state constitutions justify the existence of public schools by invoking the need for an informed and engaged electorate.<sup>29</sup> Nor is this concern merely a quaint anachronism: contemporary public opinion data show that the vast majority of the general public embraces the civic dimension of education. A 1996 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll found that 86% of Americans reported that “preparing students to be responsible citizens” is a “very important” purpose of the nation’s schools, which is more than the 76% who attached the same level of importance to the statement that schools should “help people become economically self-sufficient.”<sup>30</sup>

---

26. Jay P. Greene, *Review of Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn*, 81 SOC. SCI. Q. 696, 696–97 (2000).

27. Judith Torney-Purta, *Review Essay: Links and Missing Links Between Education, Political Knowledge, and Citizenship*, 105 AM. J. EDUC. 446, 456 (1997).

28. Galston, *supra* note 3, at 231.

29. See, e.g., MICH. CONST. art. VIII, § 1; MO. CONST. art. IX, § 1(a).

30. Stanley M. Elam, Alec M. Gallup & Lowell C. Rose, *The 28th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools*, 78 PHI DELTA KAPPAN 41, 55–56 (Sept. 1996).

But while most of the discussion regarding the civic consequences of public and private education refers only to generalities, Gutmann's work is an exception. She moves beyond bromides about public education and stereotypes about private schools to provide a theoretical grounding for the argument that private schools will fall short in the civic education that they provide their students.<sup>31</sup> Gutmann articulates the minimum requirements of what she labels a *democratic education*, which includes religious toleration and respect for individual rights.<sup>32</sup> She also expresses concern that private schools, which are largely immune from the democratic process, will ultimately stray from these ideals.<sup>33</sup> Because private school policies and curriculum are not subject to democratic deliberation by the general public, but are governed only by the beliefs of a particularistic group, there is no way to ensure that they promote civic objectives valued by the public.<sup>34</sup> In addition to Gutmann, Macedo also questions private schools' commitment to the democratic process, mentioning in particular private schools founded by religious fundamentalists.<sup>35</sup>

A second perspective on private schools turns Gutmann's argument on its head. Moe argues that *because* public schools are subject to public control, they are unable to serve as models of democratic deliberation and thus cannot be expected to inculcate any values held in common by the electorate.<sup>36</sup> Relying on insights from the social choice literature, Moe contends that because public schools are situated in a political system, they are hopelessly mired in bureaucracy, the antithesis of democratic deliberation.<sup>37</sup> Referring to theorists who write about the democratic purposes of schooling (and citing Gutmann specifically), Moe writes that "[t]he schools they want are ideal training grounds for democracy—small, flexible, participatory communities that encourage active involvement,

---

31. Amy Gutmann, *Why Should Schools Care*, in REDISCOVERING THE DEMOCRATIC PURPOSES OF EDUCATION 73, 73–88 (L. M. McDonnell, P. M. Timpane & R. Benjamin eds., 2000).

32. *Id.* at 79–82.

33. GUTMANN, *supra* note 23, at 115–26.

34. *Id.* at 117–23.

35. MACEDO, *supra* note 9, at 149–52.

36. TERRY M. MOE, *The Two Democratic Purposes of Education*, in REDISCOVERING THE DEMOCRATIC PURPOSES OF EDUCATION, *supra* note 31, at 127, 127–28.

37. *Id.* at 139–42.

information exchange, debate, deliberation, and self-governance.”<sup>38</sup> What they get, however, are schools in which the preferences of politically dominant groups are institutionalized through rule-bound bureaucracy. According to Moe, “[a] bureaucratic ‘community’ is artificial, built on formally specified relationships, rights, and responsibilities that literally obstruct the development of a true community.”<sup>39</sup>

Moe further argues that replacing the current education system with one that allows parents to choose freely among many different types of schools (i.e., a voucher system) would “tend to promote the emergence of schools as true communities. As parents choose their schools, they are more likely to identify with them, to share their values and missions, to trust one another, to participate, and to have respect for teachers and principals.”<sup>40</sup> The implication in Moe’s argument is that schools of choice provide the kind of education that families want, forging a stronger sense of community, one that will foster the civic values important to that community. Furthermore, by invoking the term “true communities,” Moe implies that these schools’ organizational structure will serve as a model for democratic involvement, enhancing their ability to prepare students for civic engagement.<sup>41</sup>

Given their opposing views regarding the value of private education, it is ironic that upon closer inspection Gutmann’s and Moe’s arguments actually have much in common. Moe argues that a voucher system would create tightly-knit communities in which individual members share clearly defined values.<sup>42</sup> Essentially, Gutmann worries that he is right. Gutmann’s concern is that groups sponsoring private schools embrace values that do not meet the criteria of democratic education, and that these groups pass such values on to their students.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, Macedo worries that private school communities are “liable to be less concerned about reinforcing our overarching civic ideals and more concerned about educating children in their particular ideals.”<sup>44</sup>

---

38. *Id.* at 141.

39. *Id.*

40. *Id.* at 144–45.

41. *Id.* at 144.

42. *Id.* at 144–45.

43. GUTMANN, *supra* note 23, at 120–23.

44. MACEDO, *supra* note 9, at 253.

Turning from theory to empirics, the few studies that have examined the civic education in private schools do not lend support to the concerns raised by Gutmann and Macedo. This literature contains a relatively small set of studies that have examined some of the components of civic education detailed above. For example, Wolf and his colleagues present evidence that when compared to their publicly educated peers, college students who received their secondary education in private schools score higher on measures of political tolerance.<sup>45</sup> Greene finds that students in private schools are more likely to participate in volunteer service than those in public schools, and that administrators in private schools are more likely to report that their schools promote citizenship than do their public school counterparts.<sup>46</sup> Note that both of these studies only make a blunt comparison between public and private schools.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, Niemi, Hepburn, and Chapman find that students who attend “church-related” schools are more likely to engage in community service than students in public schools.<sup>48</sup> The 1998 NAEP Civics Report Card for the Nation reports that students in private schools have higher average scores on the NAEP civics test than their public school peers.<sup>49</sup> However, this conclusion is based on simple cross-tabulations without statistical controls for possible confounding factors like parents’ education.<sup>50</sup> Coleman and Hoffer did control for family background, and although the differences were not statistically significant, they found that students in Catholic and non-Catholic private schools scored higher on the High School and Beyond civics test than public school students.<sup>51</sup>

---

45. Patrick J. Wolf et al., *Private Schooling and Political Tolerance*, in CHARTERS, VOUCHERS, AND PUBLIC EDUCATION 268, 281 (Paul E. Peterson & David E. Campbell eds., 2001).

46. Jay P. Greene, *Civic Values in Public and Private Schools*, in LEARNING FROM SCHOOL CHOICE 83, 100–02 (Paul E. Peterson & Bryan Hassel eds., 1998).

47. See Wolf, *supra* note 45, at 44.

48. Richard G. Niemi et al., *Community Service by High School Students: A Cure for Civic Ills?*, 22 POL. BEHAV. 45, 52 (2000).

49. U.S. DEP’T OF EDUC., NAEP 1998 CIVICS REPORT CARD FOR THE NATION, NCES 2000-457, at 45 (1999), available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main1998/2000457.pdf>.

50. *Id.* at 120, 131.

51. JAMES COLEMAN & THOMAS B. HOFFER, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOLS: THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITIES 60–79 (1987).

The studies listed above are illustrative, not exhaustive. In a comprehensive summary of twenty-one separate studies comparing the civic values of students in public and private schools, Wolf concludes that the general results “suggest that the effect of private schooling or school choice on civic values is most often neutral or positive.”<sup>52</sup> Consider the present analysis to be a complement to Wolf’s article. Whereas he provides breadth by summarizing multiple studies of varying quality, this paper provides depth by discussing the results of one study in detail.

Of the existing studies summarized by Wolf, many often do not differentiate among various types of schools within the private sector and even fewer do so within the public sector.<sup>53</sup> Since the selectivity of a school is likely a factor in whether it promotes civic education, perhaps selective public schools (e.g., magnet schools) are more similar to private schools than non-selective (assigned) schools. One objective of the current study, therefore, is to examine whether magnet and assigned public schools differ in the civic education that they provide to their students. While doing so, this paper will also draw distinctions among private schools.

### III. DATA

The analytical strategy employed in voucher studies is straightforward. Students in public and private schools—and subcategories within each—are compared on measures of the four elements of civic education detailed above.<sup>54</sup> However, because private school populations are highly self-selected, it is very difficult to ensure that observed differences relate to the school a student attends and not to other factors. To address this challenge, I employ the 1996 National Household Education Survey (NHES). Administered by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education, the NHES consists of large, nationally representative samples of both parents and their adolescent children.<sup>55</sup> Adults and students completed extensive telephone

---

52. Patrick J. Wolf, *Civics Exam*, 7 EDUC. NEXT 66, 68 (Summer 2007).

53. *See id.*

54. *See* U.S. DEP’T OF EDUC., *supra* note 49.

55. U.S. DEP’T OF EDUC., *THE CIVIC DEVELOPMENT OF 9TH THROUGH 12TH GRADE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1996*, NCES 1999-131, at iii (1998) [hereinafter *CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY*].

surveys relating to their involvement in civic and political activity. Some questions were asked of students in grades six through twelve, resulting in 7101 respondents—a much larger number than is typical in a national survey.<sup>56</sup> Most of the other questions were asked of students in grades nine through twelve, totaling 3784 respondents, which is still a large sample.<sup>57</sup> The NHES is particularly appropriate because parents and their children were asked many of the same questions, allowing the analysis to control for civic influences in students' homes, and thereby isolate the effect of their schools.<sup>58</sup> In addition, the survey describes both the family's demographic characteristics and the school the student attends.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the size of the NHES sample means that it includes an analytically useful number of private school students.<sup>60</sup>

#### IV. CIVIC CONSEQUENCES OF PRIVATE EDUCATION

##### *A. Community Service*

This Article will address each component of civic education in turn, beginning with community service. Simple cross-tabulations reveal that more private than public school students report doing volunteer work in the last year, by a margin of 66% to 47%.<sup>61</sup> Obviously, however, this difference may be due to a myriad of factors correlated with attending a private school, like parental education for example. It is therefore necessary to account for these factors by controlling for them in the statistical analysis. In other words, all survey results from this point forward report the differences between public and private school students after

---

56. *See id.*

57. *See id.*

58. *See* U.S. Dep't of Educ., National Household Education Survey of 1996: Adult Civic Involvement Interview (1996) [hereinafter ACI Questionnaire], *available at* [http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/pdf/civic/96\\_adultCI.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/pdf/civic/96_adultCI.pdf); U.S. Dep't of Educ., National Household Education Survey of 1996: Youth Civic Involvement Interview (1996) [hereinafter YCI Questionnaire], *available at* [http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/pdf/civic/96\\_youthCI.pdf](http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/pdf/civic/96_youthCI.pdf);

59. *See* CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, *supra* note 55, at 37–39.

60. According to the documentation provided by the National Center for Education Statistics, the response rate for parents' interviews for the 1996 NHES was 63%; the rate for youth was 53%. *Id.* at 64.

61. U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., NAT'L. CTR. FOR EDUC. STATS., STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITY, NCES 97-331, at 13 (1997).

controlling for all the other variables which have been included in the statistical models.

*1. Statistical controls*

The list of control variables is extensive, as the objective is to ensure that all potentially confounding factors have been incorporated into the analysis.<sup>62</sup> The demographic variables account for social advantage, given the longstanding observation that social status corresponds with a variety of important factors. These factors include: whether English is spoken at home, academic performance of the student (reported by the parent), the student's own academic expectations (whether she expects to attend college), race (whether the respondent is African-American), Hispanic ethnicity, parents' education level, household income, and whether the student lives in a home with two parents.<sup>63</sup> A control for living in the South is also included, owing to the finding that levels of civic engagement are generally lower in the Southern United States.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the model accounts for the age and gender of the student, given that past research has found that females are more likely to engage in community service, as are students of both genders in the later years of high school.<sup>65</sup> The model also controls for the number of hours students spend working at a job,<sup>66</sup> as we might expect a significant time trade-off between a job and volunteer activity. Additionally, the model controls for students' general inclinations toward engaging with the community at large by including an index measuring the frequency of consumption of news in print and on television.<sup>67</sup>

Civic engagement within the student's family is accounted for with controls for parental religious service attendance, whether a parent volunteers in the student's school, and an index of parental

---

62. For details about how questions were worded, see U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD EDUCATION SURVEY OF 1996: PART 5: USER'S MANUAL, at A1–A79 [hereinafter USER'S MANUAL].

63. *Id.*; see generally SIDNEY VERBA & NORMAN H. NIE, PARTICIPATION IN AMERICA: POLITICAL DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL EQUALITY 125–208 (1972).

64. USER'S MANUAL, *supra* note 62, at 19; ROBERT D. PUTMAN, BOWLING ALONE: THE COLLAPSE AND REVIVAL OF AMERICAN COMMUNITY 292–93, 346–49 (2000).

65. USER'S MANUAL, *supra* note 62, at 9; Niemi et al., *supra* note 48, at 50–52.

66. USER'S MANUAL, *supra* note 62, at A47.

67. *Id.* at A41, A63.

political participation.<sup>68</sup> Also, the model includes a measure of whether the student has a parent who engages in community service.<sup>69</sup>

With all of the above variables, we can account for a wide range of factors potentially correlated with both attending a particular type of school and engaging in community service. However, the NHES survey actually allows the analysis to extend further, and examines whether the particular characteristics of a school influence the kind of civic education it provides. First, there is a control for whether the school arranges service opportunities,<sup>70</sup> an intuitively and empirically important factor affecting the likelihood of student participation in community service.<sup>71</sup> The model also controls for the racial composition of the school, whether the respondent feels students have a voice in school governance, whether the school has a student government, and whether the student has taken a course that required attention to current events within the last two years.<sup>72</sup> Each of these controls could plausibly have a bearing on whether a student engages in community service. For example, research by Alesina and La Ferrara suggests racial homogeneity at the metropolitan area fosters civic involvement, a finding that may or may not extend to the school environment.<sup>73</sup> Thus, survey questions regarding the extent to which schools encourage community involvement account for the degree to which the school fosters civic involvement. Finally, the model accounts for the school's size,<sup>74</sup> although the expectation for this variable is not clear *a priori*. Smaller schools are probably more likely to foster a sense of community, while larger schools may have more resources to make students aware of opportunities to get involved in community service.<sup>75</sup>

---

68. *Id.* at A71–A72.

69. *Id.*

70. CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, *supra* note 55, at vi.

71. *Id.* at 48–49.

72. CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, *supra* note 55, at 30.

73. Alberto Alesina & Eliana La Ferrara, *Participation in Heterogeneous Communities*, 115 Q.J. ECON. 847, 891 (2000).

74. U.S. DEP'T OF EDUC., NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD EDUCATION SURVEY OF 1996: PART 6: GUIDEBOOK TO USE OF THE DATA, at 23.

75. M. Kent Jennings, *American Political Participation Viewed Through the Lens of the Political Socialization Project*, in 1 ADVANCES POL. PSYCH. 1, 7 (Margaret G. Hermann ed., 2004). Note that the question about community service was asked of students in grades seven through twelve. Also, the small percentage of students who are home-schooled were excluded

## 2. Community service data analysis

The results demonstrate that, *ceteris paribus*, 61% of students in private schools engaged in community service within the last year, compared to 50% of students in public schools.<sup>76</sup> This is essentially the same as the gain in the probability of volunteering (ten percentage points) that results when the responding parent switches from not being engaged in community service to being a volunteer. As a rough gauge of the impact of this gain, it compares in magnitude with variables like expected college attendance and frequency of church attendance.

One could reasonably argue that the above results are misleading because many schools require their students to perform community service. Normatively, it is not clear whether mandatory service contributes positively to an adolescent's long-term civic activity. Empirically, however, it seems clear that facilitating community service by imposing a mandatory requirement is qualitatively different than encouraging it through other means. However, when students whose schools require them to perform community service are dropped from the analysis, the result is still very similar. The size of the impact for private schools drops slightly but remains statistically significant.<sup>77</sup>

If this paper merely sought to compare the blunt categories of public and private schools, the above analysis would suffice. However, in order to explore the more subtle and potentially significant differences between schools, these broad categories need to be divided further. The NHES makes it possible to distinguish between five types of schools: assigned public, magnet public, Catholic, religious but not Catholic, and private secular.<sup>78</sup> Even with this large sample, though, we are left with the somewhat clumsy

---

from the model. The NHES sample is drawn using cluster sampling, which is accounted for by a weight variable (FYWT). See CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, *supra* note 55, at iii.

76. *Infra*, app. tbl. 1. These are results from a probit model, compiled by the author, of the likelihood of a student performing community service within the previous year. The reported percentages are estimated from the probit coefficients, holding all control variables constant at their means. This same procedure will be followed for all results reported in this paper.

77. *Id.* More precisely, its p value remains below 0.05, the standard threshold for statistical significance. As with all tests of statistical significance reported in this paper, this p value refers to a two-tailed test.

78. *Id.*

category of “religious/non-Catholic schools,” as it is not possible to further distinguish among these schools. Additionally, even if such differentiation were possible, the small number of respondents in each category would likely make any statistical comparisons tenuous.<sup>79</sup> This group is thus a residual category of sorts, and includes everything from Jewish to Quaker to Fundamentalist Christian schools.

Magnet public schools refer to public schools that select students on a basis other than geography.<sup>80</sup> This distinction between public schools is justified because of evidence that simply being able to choose a school increases social capital among parents;<sup>81</sup> perhaps this is true for students as well, leading to a greater likelihood of volunteer activity. Since the overwhelming majority of American students attend assigned public schools, this is the excluded category. Again, the model only includes respondents whose schools do not mandate community service.

The results indicate that students in Catholic schools drive the private school effect, although it should be noted that the impact for religious/non-Catholic schools is positive and approaches statistical significance.<sup>82</sup> There is a gap of ten percentage points between assigned public and Catholic school students, the same as between public and private school students.<sup>83</sup> Notably, this is also identical to the change in probability between a student whose parent reports volunteering and one whose parent does not.<sup>84</sup>

It is important to stress that whatever it is that Catholic schools do to promote voluntarism, it is over and above the school-level factors included in the model, including the school’s size, whether the school arranges service for students, has a student government, or encourages discussion of current events in classes (all of which,

---

79. *See id.* Only 2% of students surveyed could be classified as “Religious/non-Catholic.”

80. The term “Magnet” is here used as a catch-all term for all public schools that use some means other than geography to determine eligibility for enrollment. It is unlikely that many charter school students are included in this sample, as the survey was administered in 1996, before the current proliferation in charter schools.

81. Mark Schneider et al., *Institutional Arrangements and the Creation of Social Capital: The Effects of Public School Choice*, 91 AM. POL. SCI. REV. 82, 88–93 (1997).

82. *Id.*

83. *Id.*

84. *Id.*

except school size, are themselves statistically significant factors predicting participation in community service).

Because many Catholic schools have made community service integral to their mission, perhaps we should not be surprised that their students are the most likely to participate in such service. But what about other components of civic education? Do private schools, Catholic or not, differ from their public counterparts?

### *B. Civic Skills*

The next area of civic education examined is what Verba, Schlozman, and Brady call “civic skills.”<sup>85</sup> More specifically, the NHES asked students in grades seven through twelve:

*During this school year, have you done any of the following things in any class at (your current) school . . .*

- (1) *written a letter to someone you did not know*
- (2) *given a speech or an oral report*
- (3) *taken part in a debate or discussion in which you had to persuade others about your point of view*<sup>86</sup>

Responses were combined in an additive Civic Skills Index. Again, the analysis accounts for all of the potentially confounding factors discussed above, except for a few that do not contribute to the acquisition of civic skills in school.<sup>87</sup> Once more, the parental measure that echoes the outcome (in this case, civic skills) is also included. For this model, the parental control consists of an index of two questions that ask whether the parent feels that she could write a letter on behalf of a cause and whether she could give a speech at a meeting.<sup>88</sup>

The comparison between public and private schools shows that private school students are more likely to learn civic skills in school.<sup>89</sup>

---

85. VERBA, *supra* note 16, at 304 (noting that civic skills are “the communications and organizational abilities that allow citizens to use time and money effectively in political life.”).

86. YCI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 11.

87. These are the student’s news consumption, time spent at a part-time job, whether the student has a parent who volunteers in the school, and whether the school arranges volunteer work. See USER’S MANUAL, *supra* note 62, at A41, A47, A63.

88. Because the dependent variable is a multiple item index, ordered probit is used as the estimator. See ACI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 3.

89. See CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, *supra* note 55, at v–vi.

This outcome mirrors the results for community service because differentiation among schools reveals that only students in Catholic schools have a significantly higher score on the civic skills index—although again the coefficient for religious/non-Catholic schools is positive. The difference in the index scores of Catholic school students and their counterparts in assigned public schools is admittedly modest (about 1/10 of the index's standard deviation), although by way of comparison, it is only slightly smaller than the increase in the mean score of a student who has taken a course which required attention to current events, presumably an important source of instruction in civic skills.<sup>90</sup>

The careful reader will also note that the parental measure of civic skills for the models does not match the student measure precisely. While the students were asked whether they had exercised the three civic skills in question, their parents were asked whether they felt confident exercising similar skills.<sup>91</sup> This raises the question of whether students feel that they could exercise those same skills outside of the classroom, which is related to but nonetheless distinct from having exercised them in the classroom. To that end, students in grades nine through twelve were asked:

- (1) *Suppose you wanted to write a letter to someone in the government about something that concerned you. Do you feel that you could write a letter that clearly gives your opinion?*
- (2) *Imagine you went to a community meeting and people were making comments and statements. Do you think that you could make a comment or a statement at a public meeting?<sup>92</sup>*

Both items are combined in a Civic Confidence Index. While the impact for magnet public schools is small and insignificant, those for each of the three types of private schools are positive and statistically significant.<sup>93</sup> As with the Civic Skills Index, the substantive

---

90. *Infra*, app. tbl. 2.

91. *See* ACI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 3.

92. *See* YCI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 8.

93. *Infra*, app. tbl. 2.

differences are modest but comparable to other factors that the current literature suggests are important. For example, the increase in the mean Civic Confidence Index as the type of school changes from assigned public to religious/non-Catholic school students is the same as the increase when a parent's civic confidence increases from its minimum to maximum (1/4 of a standard deviation).<sup>94</sup>

### *C. Political Knowledge*

While reasonable people might disagree over whether secondary schools should promote certain aspects of civic education, like voluntarism, it is presumably uncontroversial to claim that schools are to impart knowledge, including political knowledge. Even though common sense would lead us to expect that instruction offered in school affects the level of political knowledge among students, for decades scholars could find little evidence of such a relationship.<sup>95</sup> This was due to a combination of factors: poor methods of teaching civics in the classroom, the fact that students learn about politics outside of the classroom (in a way that they are unlikely to learn about other subjects like chemistry or math), and the relatively poor means of measuring political knowledge.<sup>96</sup> With the publication of Niemi and Junn's *Civic Education: What Makes Students Learn?*, there is now considerable evidence that common sense is correct after all: instruction in school can contribute to civics knowledge.<sup>97</sup>

The NHES tests whether public and private schools differ in the civics knowledge they impart to their students. Respondents to the NHES, both parents and students in grades nine through twelve, answered five factual questions about American politics.<sup>98</sup> To avoid contaminating the "test" by having parents and their children answer the same questions, parents and children in a single household were

---

94. *Id.*

95. NIEMI & JUNN, *supra* note 2, at 3 ("Studies conducted from the mid-1960s on concerning what impact high school classes in American government and civics have on political knowledge have, for the most part, found that there is little or none.")

96. *Id.* at 3, 4, 13-14.

97. *Id.* at 13 ("There is virtual unanimity on one point: formal education is the strongest, most consistent correlate . . . of political knowledge.")

98. See ACI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 3-5; YCI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 8-10.

asked different questions.<sup>99</sup> The analysis is based on a tally of correct responses. The same previously mentioned control variables are included in this analysis, but in addition, this model includes a control for the amount of time students spend reading the newspaper and/or watching television news,<sup>100</sup> two important means by which students obtain politically-relevant information.

The impact for attending a private school is positive and statistically significant,<sup>101</sup> and ranks in magnitude with being a native English speaker and planning to attend college. When we further differentiate among types of schools, it turns out that only students in Catholic schools are significantly different from their peers in assigned public schools. The gap between assigned public and Catholic school students' scores on the Political Knowledge Index is comparable to the increase in political knowledge that results from taking a course where current events are discussed (about 1/3 of a standard deviation).<sup>102</sup>

#### *D. Political Tolerance*

The NHES also allows us to examine whether public and private education differ in the extent to which they promote political tolerance, the element of civic education where perhaps private schools are most suspect. The questionnaire, which includes two items modeled after the standard measures of tolerance included on the General Social Survey and similar surveys, asks the following questions to students in grades nine through twelve:

- (1) *If a person wanted to make a speech in your community against churches and religion, should he or she be allowed to speak?*
- (2) *Suppose a book that most people disapproved of was written, for example, saying that it was all right to take*

---

99. See ACI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 3–5; YCI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 8–10.

100. USER'S MANUAL, *supra* note 62, at A41, A63.

101. CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, *supra* note 55, at v–vi.

102. *Infra*, app. tbl. 4.

*illegal drugs. Should a book like that be kept out of a public library?*<sup>103</sup>

The first question is especially significant, as Gutmann specifically cites “religious toleration” as an essential component of a democratic education.<sup>104</sup> It also provides a particularly strong test of political tolerance among students in religious schools, since the hypothetical situation involves advocacy of a position that they will almost certainly reject.

Responses to these questions were coded so that a “tolerant” response equals 1 (yes to (1) and no to (2)), and the opposite responses equal 0.<sup>105</sup> The responses were then added together to produce an index. As before, the test incorporates virtually all of the same control variables used throughout this analysis.<sup>106</sup> And, as has been the case, the model accounts for civic influences in the home—in this case the possibility that students learn political tolerance from their parents—by including an index of the parent’s response to the identical questions.<sup>107</sup>

Results reveal that, on average and *ceteris paribus*, private school students have higher tolerance scores than students in public schools.<sup>108</sup> However, the blunt public-private distinction conceals the differences among types of private schools. Students in private secular schools score substantially higher on the tolerance index than students in assigned public schools, while students in religious/non-Catholic schools score substantially lower.<sup>109</sup> Students in Catholic schools score slightly higher.<sup>110</sup> In substantive terms, the gap between the tolerance scores of students in assigned public and private secular schools is greater than the effect of a parent’s tolerance index score changing from the lowest to the highest value (1/2 a standard deviation versus 1/3).<sup>111</sup> The corresponding gap

---

103. YCI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 8.

104. GUTMANN, *supra* note 23, at 301.

105. YCI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 8.

106. The only exception from the model for political knowledge is that the parental political participation index has been dropped.

107. See USER’S MANUAL, *supra* note 62, at 9–13.

108. See CIVIC DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, *supra* note 55, at 44.

109. *Infra*, app. tbl. 5.

110. *Id.* However, the difference is only statistically significant at the .10 level.

111. *Id.*

between assigned public and religious/non-Catholic students is of a similar magnitude, but in the opposite direction.<sup>112</sup>

The conclusion to be drawn from this analysis is that the verdict on private schools and tolerance is mixed. Students in private secular and Catholic schools appear to have higher levels of tolerance than students in public schools, while religious/non-Catholic school students' tolerance levels are lower.

The work of Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus leads us to ask whether these results are an artifact of the particular questions that were asked.<sup>113</sup> These authors show that when evaluating responses to survey questions about civil liberties, one must take the *content* of the question into account.<sup>114</sup> Because one of the questions on the tolerance index deals specifically with the rights of a speaker who is opposed to religion, we might expect students in religious schools to be especially wary of granting full freedom of expression. This is not to diminish the importance of respect for religious differences as an important component of political tolerance, but only to suggest that other questions might provide more of a "hard case" for students in secular schools. Despite this presumption, however, results not shown suggest that the low tolerance exhibited by students in religious schools outside of the Catholic tradition is not a function of the question about an anti-religious speech. Rather, the differences between the types of schools are driven more by the second survey question, which involves banning an unpopular book.<sup>115</sup>

It would seem from these results that Gutmann and Macedo are right to be concerned that some private schools do not provide instruction in what Gutmann calls a "common democratic character."<sup>116</sup> However, it is also clear that it is not private education *per se* that facilitates intolerance: private secular schools are home to students with comparatively high political tolerance scores. Nor is it the case that private religious schools foster attitudes out of the civic mainstream, as students in Catholic schools also exhibit comparatively high levels of tolerance.

---

112. *Id.*

113. *See generally* SULLIVAN, PIERESON & MARCUS, *supra* note 21.

114. *Id.*

115. *See* YCI Questionnaire, *supra* note 58, at 8.

116. AMY GUTMANN, *DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION* 118 (1987).

It is important to stress that these results should not be considered definitive because the NHES fails to account for a rival hypothesis—that the low level of tolerance is owing to the religious beliefs of the respondents independent of any experience in school. Unfortunately, the NHES contains only a single indicator of religious involvement—the frequency of church attendance.<sup>117</sup> It is thus impossible to account for denominational affiliation, which past research has found to be a significant factor affecting political tolerance.<sup>118</sup> Without controlling for religious affiliation, any causal claim regarding the effect of religious schools on political tolerance is tenuous at best.

To this point, the analysis has covered multiple aspects of civic education. When compared to students in assigned public schools and controlling for myriad confounding factors, Catholic school students score higher on community service, civic skills, political knowledge, and political tolerance. Students in all three types of private schools—Catholic, religious/non-Catholic, and private secular—also score higher on the Civic Confidence Index, a measure of whether they feel that they could successfully exercise their civic skills. Students in Catholic and private secular schools score higher on an index of political tolerance, while students in religious/non-Catholic schools score substantially lower than students in assigned public schools.

Admittedly, even with the numerous control variables included in each of these models, self-selection remains a real threat to causal inference. Strikingly, however, the conventional wisdom would seem to suggest that self-selection into private schools works against the findings reported here—that is, by selecting themselves out of the public sector, those who attend private schools have a questionable commitment to civic values, especially tolerance.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper has compared public and private school students on a set of measures that the empirical literature suggests contribute to preparation for active engagement in democratic life, with an eye toward determining whether school vouchers might hinder the civic

---

117. USER'S MANUAL, *supra* note 62, at A38.

118. Clyde Wilcox & Ted Jelen, *Evangelicals and Political Tolerance*, 18 AM. POL. Q. 25, 27 (1990).

education of participating students. A survey of students currently enrolled in private schools demonstrates that when compared to public school students, they are more likely to engage in community service, develop civic skills in school, express confidence in being able to use those skills, exhibit greater political knowledge, and express a greater degree of political tolerance. Based on these findings, it would appear that when compared to their publicly educated peers, students in private schools generally perform better on multiple indicators of their civic education. These findings are not unique to the NHES. In his survey of the existing research on civic education in public and private schools, Wolf concludes:

[T]he empirical studies to date counter the claims of school choice opponents that private schooling inherently and inevitably undermines the fostering of civic values. The statistical record suggests that private schooling and school choice often enhance the realization of the civic values that are central to a well-functioning democracy. This seems to be the case particularly among ethnic minorities (such as Latinos) in places with great ethnic diversity (such as New York City and Texas), and when Catholic schools are the schools of choice.<sup>119</sup>

When the analysis turns to more fine-grained distinctions between schools, however, the concerns raised by both Gutmann and Macedo about private, particularly religious, schools are perhaps warranted. In the NHES data, we find that students in religious/non-Catholic schools express a lower degree of political tolerance than students in assigned public schools, even while expressing a high degree of civic confidence. Concern might be raised about this potentially explosive combination, as it appears that these students are not receiving a civic education that simultaneously facilitates both civic engagement and political tolerance. However, the NHES data do not allow us to test whether the lower levels of political tolerance among students in these schools can be explained by their religious affiliation instead of the type of school they attend. The positive relationship between switching to a private school and political tolerance—even though over a third of those private schools would be classified as “religious/non-Catholic” in the NHES—suggests that it is simply not the case that religious schools of this type foster intolerance.

---

119. Wolf, *supra* note 52, at 72.

Noting these distinctions between schools suggests that researchers interested in learning how adolescents are prepared (or not) to be involved in civic life would benefit from considering the type of school they attend, a factor generally ignored in the empirical literature. The evidence presented here suggests that Catholic schools in particular excel in providing a civic education to their students, which is ironic given that Catholic schools were originally established as an alternative to the public school—an institution designed to teach a common set of civic values. Bryk, Lee, and Holland provide a starting point for understanding why Catholic schools succeed, as their research focuses on the way administrators and teachers within Catholic schools deliberately foster a sense of commitment to the wider community.<sup>120</sup> At this point it is unknown whether this is a unique Catholic effect, perhaps dependent on the religious character of these schools, or if it can be replicated in secular schools. To answer this question, a logical place to begin is with charter schools, as they seemingly strike a compromise between the differing philosophies of Gutmann and Moe regarding how schools should operate. Charter schools are public schools, and thus subject to some regulation, assuaging Gutmann's concern that all schools should have to conform to certain basic curriculum standards (including on civic matters).<sup>121</sup> But they are also free from most of the regulation facing other public schools, and they are explicitly chosen by parents—satisfying Moe's desire for schools that unite people with common interests.<sup>122</sup> Finally, charter schools that are oversubscribed must admit students on the basis of a lottery, making it feasible to conduct a randomized field trial of their effects on students—the gold standard of such evaluations.

This paper began with the lament that social science has little to say about the civic consequences of an education reform like school vouchers. Fortunately, however, the proliferation of education reform proposals now being implemented means that researchers are presented with an opportunity to examine how schools affect their students' civic preparation. In doing so, an important contribution can be made to the oft-neglected subject of civic education. From

---

120. ANTHONY S. BRYK, VALERIE E. LEE & PETER B. HOLLAND, *CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND THE COMMON GOOD* 10 (1993).

121. GUTMANN, *supra* note 116, at 117–18.

122. MOE, *supra* note 36, at 144.

this understanding, it could conceivably be possible to offer education reforms explicitly designed to improve the civic education received by today's youth.

TABLE 1. SCHOOL TYPE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE  
(PROBIT RESULTS)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Participated in volunteer work? (all)	Participated in volunteer work? (not mandatory)	Participated in volunteer work? (not mandatory)
<b>TYPE OF</b>			
Private	0.248*** (0.072)	0.183** (0.088)	
Magnet public			0.006 (0.066)
Catholic			0.246** (0.125)
Religious, non- Catholic			0.203 (0.153)
Private secular			0.068 (0.160)
Age	0.214* (0.116)	0.189 (0.126)	0.195 (0.126)
Female	0.161*** (0.040)	0.175*** (0.044)	0.174*** (0.044)
English-speaking	0.176** (0.088)	0.251** (0.101)	0.251** (0.101)
Live in South	-0.005 (0.042)	-0.020 (0.046)	-0.018 (0.046)
Academic performance	0.687*** (0.103)	0.686*** (0.113)	0.686*** (0.112)

## BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY LAW REVIEW

[2008

Academic expectations	0.218*** (0.071)	0.148* (0.076)	0.147* (0.076)
African American	-0.155** (0.065)	-0.096 (0.072)	-0.097 (0.072)
Hispanic	-0.149** (0.075)	-0.037 (0.083)	-0.039 (0.083)
Parental education	0.321*** (0.084)	0.289*** (0.091)	0.290*** (0.092)
Household income	-0.032 (0.089)	-0.073 (0.097)	-0.074 (0.097)
Two parent household	0.016 (0.051)	0.069 (0.056)	0.068 (0.056)
Religious service attendance	0.239*** (0.059)	0.179*** (0.064)	0.176*** (0.064)
Parental community service	0.243*** (0.046)	0.276*** (0.050)	0.275*** (0.050)
Parental participation index	0.029 (0.100)	0.021 (0.110)	0.022 (0.110)
Parent volunteers in school	0.115** (0.046)	0.103** (0.051)	0.100** (0.051)
Interest in news	0.286*** (0.070)	0.356*** (0.076)	0.356*** (0.076)
Hours spent at part-time job	.254* (0.145)	0.283* (0.158)	0.279* (0.158)
School arranges service	0.615*** (0.055)	0.578*** (0.058)	-0.041 (0.069)
School racial composition	0.004 (0.055)	0.026 (0.060)	0.026 (0.061)

487]

*The Civic Side of School Choice*

Students' opinions matter in school	-0.142 (0.087)	-0.202** (0.094)	-0.203** (0.094)
School has student Government	0.181*** (0.055)	0.161*** (0.058)	0.162*** (0.058)
Current events in classroom	0.095** (0.044)	0.077 (0.048)	0.077 (0.048)
Size of school	-0.051 (0.064)	-0.042 (0.069)	-0.041 (0.069)
Constant	-2.357*** (0.168)	-2.318*** (0.184)	-2.318*** (0.184)
Log likelihood	-4349.63	-3666.97	-3666.41
Significance of $\chi^2$	0.001	0.001	0.001
N	6971	5803	5803

Robust standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded as 0-1.

\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Source: 1996 National Household Education Survey

TABLE 2. SCHOOL TYPE AND CIVIC SKILLS INDEX  
(ORDERED PROBIT RESULTS)

	(1)	(2)
<b>TYPE OF SCHOOL</b>		
Private	0.102* (0.054)	
Magnet public		0.073 (0.052)
Catholic		0.137** (0.069)
Religious, non-Catholic		0.140 (0.105)
Private secular		0.024 (0.106)
Age	-0.485*** (0.088)	-0.490*** (0.088)
Female	0.157*** (0.033)	0.156*** (0.033)
English-speaking	0.046 (0.078)	0.046 (0.078)
Live in South	-0.027 (0.034)	-0.023 (0.034)
Academic performance	0.255*** (0.087)	0.250*** (0.087)
Academic expectations	0.068 (0.058)	0.068 (0.058)
African American	-0.090* (0.054)	-0.094* (0.054)
Hispanic	-0.116* (0.067)	-0.119* (0.067)
Interest in news	0.553*** (0.060)	0.557*** (0.060)
Parental education	0.093 (0.064)	0.090 (0.064)
Household income	0.059 (0.073)	0.063 (0.073)
Two parent household	-0.050 (0.043)	-0.048 (0.043)

487]

*The Civic Side of School Choice*

Religious service attendance	-0.035 (0.051)	-0.038 (0.051)
Parental community service	0.085** (0.038)	0.083** (0.038)
Parental participation index	0.163* (0.084)	0.156* (0.084)
Parental civic skills	0.224*** (0.085)	0.223*** (0.086)
School racial composition	-0.090* (0.046)	-0.086* (0.046)
Students' opinions matter in school	-0.056 (0.070)	-0.053 (0.070)
School has student government	0.141*** (0.047)	0.143*** (0.047)
Current events in classroom	0.253*** (0.037)	0.254*** (0.037)
Size of school	0.044 (0.052)	0.045 (0.052)
Cut 1	-0.322 (0.146)	-0.314 (0.147)
Cut 2	0.651 (0.147)	0.659 (0.148)
Cut 3	1.796 (0.149)	1.805 (0.149)
Log likelihood	-8700.49	-8698.140
Significance of $\chi^2$	0.001	0.001
N	6971	6971

Robust standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded as 0-1.

\*  $p < .10$ ; \*\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .01$

Source: 1996 National Household Education Survey

TABLE 3. SCHOOL TYPE AND CIVIC CONFIDENCE INDEX  
(ORDERED PROBIT RESULTS)

	(1)	(2)
<b>TYPE OF SCHOOL</b>		
Private	0.323*** (0.108)	
Magnet public		0.111 (0.087)
Catholic		0.239* (0.135)
Religious, non-Catholic		0.523** (0.225)
Private secular		0.434** (0.217)
Age	0.934*** (0.255)	0.924*** (0.255)
Female	0.195*** (0.060)	0.194*** (0.060)
English-speaking	-0.009 (0.144)	-0.004 (0.147)
Live in South	-0.225*** (0.060)	-0.225*** (0.060)
Academic performance	0.008 (0.153)	-0.004 (0.153)
Academic expectations	0.153 (0.094)	0.148 (0.094)
African American	0.081 (0.095)	0.080 (0.096)
Hispanic	-0.008 (0.120)	-0.011 (0.121)
Interest in news	0.681*** (0.100)	0.687*** (0.101)
Parental education	0.023 (0.124)	0.018 (0.124)
Household income	-0.066 (0.132)	-0.067 (0.132)

487]

*The Civic Side of School Choice*

Two parent household	0.049 (0.074)	0.057 (0.074)
Religious service attendance	-0.056 (0.084)	-0.053 (0.084)
Parental community service	0.140** (0.063)	0.137** (0.063)
Parental participation index	0.117 (0.144)	0.111 (0.144)
Parental civic skills	0.307** (0.132)	0.303** (0.132)
School racial composition	0.045 (0.079)	0.050 (0.079)
Students' opinions matter in school	-0.040 (0.038)	-0.038 (0.038)
School has student government	0.185** (0.091)	0.197** (0.091)
Current events in classroom	0.050 (0.063)	0.054 (0.063)
Size of school	-0.022 (0.089)	-0.008 (0.089)
Cut 1	0.428 (0.295)	0.395 (0.296)
Cut 2	0.746 (0.293)	0.781 (0.294)
Log likelihood	-2118.78	-2116.52
Significance of $\chi^2$	0.001	0.001
N	3727	3727

Robust standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded as 0-1.

\* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01

Source: 1996 National Household Education Survey

TABLE 4. SCHOOL TYPE AND POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE INDEX (ORDERED PROBIT RESULTS)

	(1)	(2)
<b>TYPE OF SCHOOL</b>		
Private	0.227*** (0.074)	
Magnet public		-0.039 (0.069)
Catholic		0.306*** (0.088)
Religious, non-Catholic		-0.033 (0.153)
Private secular		0.224 (0.148)
Age	1.253*** (0.183)	1.260*** (0.182)
Female	-0.449*** (0.047)	-0.450*** (0.047)
English-speaking	0.204** (0.096)	0.202** (0.096)
Live in South	-0.032 (0.046)	-0.029 (0.046)
Academic performance	1.221*** (0.121)	1.234*** (0.121)
Academic expectations	0.216*** (0.079)	0.216*** (0.079)
African American	-0.276*** (0.074)	-0.278*** (0.074)
Hispanic	-0.231*** (0.080)	-0.233*** (0.080)
Interest in news	0.681*** (0.079)	0.674*** (0.079)
Parental education	0.517*** (0.098)	0.520*** (0.097)
Household income	0.015 (0.107)	0.017 (0.107)
Two parent household	0.090 (0.058)	0.087 (0.058)

487]

*The Civic Side of School Choice*

Religious service attendance	0.058 (0.068)	0.061 (0.068)
Parental community service	-0.014 (0.053)	-0.011 (0.053)
Parental participation index	0.128 (0.115)	0.127 (0.114)
Parental knowledge index	0.576*** (0.085)	0.574*** (0.084)
School racial composition	-0.044 (0.063)	-0.042 (0.063)
Students' opinions matter in school	0.327*** (0.095)	0.327*** (0.095)
School has student government	0.367*** (0.081)	0.350*** (0.082)
Current events in classroom	0.385*** (0.054)	0.384*** (0.053)
Size of school	0.102 (0.073)	0.090 (0.073)
Cut 1	2.692 (0.206)	2.674 (0.207)
Cut 2	3.513 (0.207)	3.496 (0.208)
Cut 3	4.074 (0.209)	4.056 (0.210)
Cut 4	4.670 (0.214)	4.652 (0.215)
Cut 5	5.368 (0.220)	5.352 (0.220)
Log likelihood	-5736.18	-5733.26
Significance of $\chi^2$	0.001	0.001
N	3727	3727

Robust standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded as 0-1.

\* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01

Source: 1996 National Household Education Survey

TABLE 5. SCHOOL TYPE AND POLITICAL TOLERANCE INDEX (ORDERED PROBIT RESULTS)

	(1)	(2)
<b>TYPE OF SCHOOL</b>		
Attend private school	0.182** (0.086)	
Magnet public		0.068 (0.074)
Catholic		0.205* (0.107)
Religious, non-Catholic		-0.275* (0.156)
Private secular		0.649*** (0.199)
Age	0.851*** (0.213)	0.839*** (0.214)
Female	-0.054 (0.050)	-0.054 (0.050)
English-speaking	0.313*** (0.109)	0.316*** (0.109)
Live in South	-0.182*** (0.051)	-0.176*** (0.051)
Academic performance	0.102 (0.132)	0.117 (0.131)
Academic expectations	0.104 (0.078)	0.094 (0.078)
African American	-0.058 (0.077)	-0.065 (0.077)
Hispanic	0.022 (0.094)	0.022 (0.094)
Parental education	0.292*** (0.100)	0.291*** (0.100)
Household income	0.108 (0.110)	0.113 (0.110)
Two parent household	-0.026 (0.062)	-0.019 (0.063)
Religious service attendance	-0.291*** (0.070)	-0.274*** (0.070)

487]

*The Civic Side of School Choice*

Parental community service	-0.020 (0.054)	-0.015 (0.054)
Parental political tolerance	0.375*** (0.078)	0.371*** (0.079)
School racial composition	-0.055 (0.068)	-0.043 (0.068)
Students' opinions matter in school	0.182* (0.107)	0.194* (0.108)
School has student government	0.195** (0.082)	0.177** (0.082)
Current events in classroom	0.031 (0.057)	0.032 (0.057)
Interest in news	0.135 (0.085)	0.124 (0.085)
Hours spent at part-time job	0.229 (0.144)	0.239* (0.144)
Size of school	0.091 (0.080)	0.089 (0.080)
Cut 1	0.015 (0.226)	0.033 (0.226)
Cut 2	1.460 (0.225)	1.483 (0.226)
Log likelihood	-3178.55	-3166.84
Significance of $\chi^2$	0.001	0.001
N	3727	3727

Robust standard errors in parentheses. All variables coded as 0-1.

\* p < .10; \*\* p < .05; \*\*\* p < .01

Source: 1996 National Household Education Survey

