

Conservative Protestant Schools and Civic Education

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Concern over the role of public schools in American democracy and the challenges to the civic mission of schools in a multicultural society has spawned seminal theoretical work on the civic mission of schools, especially with regard to the dimensions of civic mission in schools (Butts 1989; Gutmann 1987; Macedo 2000). One of these dimensions is, not surprisingly, the civic curriculum. The research focus on this dimension has led to the promulgation of a fresh set of curricular standards and guidelines for revitalizing civic education curriculum in America's classrooms (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement 2003).

While most civic education researchers focus on the quality of instruction in civics, they affirm the importance for civic learning of a dimension that is variously referred to as school environment, school climate, and affective learning (as opposed to cognitive learning). Influenced by the work of Robert Dreeben (1968) on the hidden curriculum, theorists of democratic education argue that nonacademic experiences of students at school are important for civic education. Not only explicit teaching about democratic institutions, but other forms of school socialization are believed to shape the

development of civic virtues, including norms for participation in civic life. Butts (1989) explained that civic learning:

...includes not only the curriculum, textbooks, and formal teaching in the classroom, but also the whole range of learning experiences taught by the governance and environment of the school itself...It involves the whole context of social interaction among teachers, students, administrators, parents, government, and community agencies (Butts 1989: 40).

Another seminal work argues that the

context of instruction or the hidden curriculum may be a major force in the development of political attitudes and willingness to participate in the political process....The context includes not only the method of interaction and discourse in the classroom but also the overall 'school climate' (Niemi and Junn 1998: 15).

Amy Gutmann (1987) in her landmark piece on democratic education pointed to the school environment as one of the most important ways in which schools teach civic virtue.

Evaluating conservative Protestant schools and democratic education requires a comprehensive look at opportunities for civic education in public and religious school sectors. It requires an analysis of the role of a hidden civic curriculum, which results from the organizational culture of the school, on the effectiveness of civic education. Beyond student experiences at school, opportunities for civic skill building may be hindered by an authoritative pedagogy in conservative religious schools. There may also be differences by sector in traditional forms of civic education, such as classes that pay attention to civic

matters and student government. Finally, community service and volunteering are an important aspect of civic socialization. The last section of this paper provides a detailed analysis of the extent and type of community service and volunteering in various sectors. Differences by school sector in the opportunities for civic education are linked to theories of variation in school organizational culture.

Conservative Protestant schools are not centrally located in the public sphere and therefore have disadvantages in preparing students for democratic citizenship. The conservative Protestant culture may be associated with less emphasis on civic education classes and lower levels of support for free speech ideals. In addition, an authoritarian organizational culture of conservative Protestant schools (Peshkin 1986) may reduce the extent that students are active participants in school governance and classroom activities. And the high boundary between Conservative Protestant schools and the local community is likely to reduce the extent that conservative Protestant schools facilitate student community service and volunteering.

The collective identity and normative climate of conservative Protestant schools, however, may offer important civic lessons. Students in this organizational environment are more likely to learn civic norms through the practice of sociability and sense of respect for others. Students experiencing a communal organization (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993) are more likely to acquire norms for placing the collective good above personal self-interest. These experiences of community may be particularly important since schools are one of the first and most comprehensive socialization settings outside the family. School experiences may affect whether students see their adult public involvement as a means to achieve individualistic and self-interested ends, rather than the

pursuit of the common good in the public arena. Informal civic education in school is likely to shape whether students expect to find or work toward solidarity or a struggle of all against all in institutions outside the family.

Hidden Civic Curriculum: Latent Civic Socialization in Schools

Despite recognition of the importance for civic education of socialization into civic norms through everyday routines in school, which reflect a particular type of school organization, there have been few attempts to investigate the relation of school organization and civic learning. The work of Butts (1989) and Niemi and Junn (1998) focus on civic instruction. Gutmann (1987) acknowledges the importance of sociological studies of school environment for understanding democratic education, but must rely on a handful of citations to the sociology of education and political socialization literature to support her case. The civic education literature has not systematically addressed the role of characteristics of schools, such as school culture, and the nature of relationships in school, which indirectly teach norms, values, and orientations to public life. What is needed is more in-depth analysis of the relation of school organization, student socialization, and civic learning.

In 1968 Robert Dreeben argued that what is learned in schools is not explicitly taught but emerges from a hidden curriculum, the routine practices of classroom life that socialize students into adult roles. These forms of learning have important implications for civic participation, since the hidden curriculum establishes norms and patterns for participation in public institutions outside the school.

Dreeben argued that the student learns through school that the norms and practices of life outside the family are very different than life in the home. Children learn that the particularistic values of the home, in which, for example, personal relationships govern reward and punishment, must give way in public life to universalism. Universalistic values demand that each person is treated interchangeably as a member of a general category without regard for his or her particular characteristics and relationships. Children also learn that they will be treated as autonomous individuals rather than as persons embedded in families and communities, and they learn norms for individual achievement through recurrent evaluation in school (Dreeben 1968).

Dreeben pointed theorists of democratic education to the hidden curriculum, but his model must be expanded to account for the relation between socialization in schools and civic participation in the United States. School experiences that affect levels of social trust and sociability are important, since, as democratic theorists have argued, a vital democracy depends on norms that require putting collective purposes above private interests. The experience of a functional community in schools teaches these public orientations.

It is not clear that individualism and universalism are the only value orientations learned in school that affect adult civic participation. Beyond learned values of universalism, the general experience of school life, especially the character of relationships in school, may shape how children view other public institutions and how they expect to operate within them. To the extent that conduct in political institutions is organized as a struggle of competing private interests and outcomes depend on coalition formation and majority votes, there is a clear connection between the norms of

universalism and individualism and most types of civic participation. But other orientations to public life also are important for civic participation. A healthy democracy makes room for social action oriented to the common good and collective purposes. A hidden curriculum that only teaches universalism and individualism would not equip citizens to participate in civic action to achieve a collective good, as opposed to individual self-interest. Thus many democratic theorists have argued that persuasion and debate, and social trust and personal sacrifice, are central civic skills for democratic participation (Verba et al. 1995; Gutmann 1987). Effective participation in civic life depends on developing civic skills, including social trust and sociability, and the willingness to set aside personal self-interest in public debate over the common good.

By focusing on achievement, individualism, and universalism, Dreeben misses the importance of collective identity formation in schools for civic participation in adult life. Much of Dreeben's focus is on teacher's activities in the classroom, which sanction particular norms for behavior outside the family. School-level processes come into play in his model, but are primarily limited to issues of class size, age grading and promotion, and evaluation. Collective identity formation in school, in which community members develop a sense of "we" (Waller 1932), must be considered to understand the relationship between school socialization and adult civic participation.

What would not contribute to effective civic socialization, then, is an experience of school as a collection of isolated individuals or small cliques. This type of school experience may also increase cynicism about and mistrust of public institutions and may diminish the expectation that public institutions are about the pursuit of the common good. Civic socialization is also hindered in a school that is organized around an

individualistic and competitive struggle to get ahead. What students may learn in school is that educational institutions are a staging ground for the private pursuit of elite colleges, and high status and well-paying jobs (Cookson and Persell 1985; Lawrence-Lightfoot 1978). Or the school may be experienced by students as an individual pursuit of prestige among peers (Coleman 1961). These aspects of school organization are inevitable to some degree. But if this organizational culture dominates, and is not balanced with collective purpose and mission at the school, the hidden curriculum in schools may reinforce the view that participation in public life is about the competitive and individualistic struggle for private advantage.

These negative cases imply that effective civic socialization depends on a sense of collective identity among students, school personnel, and parents. A strong collective identity at school improves civic education to the extent that it becomes a significant part of individual identity formation for students. In this case, students learn civic lessons about expectations and norms for behavior outside the family that include solidarity and contributing to the collective good. Moreover, the culture of schools with a strong collective identity, which Bryk et al.(1993) call communal organizations, fosters civic skills that may improve participation in public life in the adult years. For example, schools with stronger collective identities are likely to increase social trust among students. As Putnam (2000) argues, social trust is a key dimension of social capital and active civic participation. School organizational cultures that temper competitive individualism, professionalism, and bureaucracy with relational trust, which is predicated on mutual respect, perceived competence, personal regard for others, and integrity (Bryk

and Schneider 2002), create a school environment that models the best of democratic civic life.

A sense of collective identity is more likely to shape student identity formation in a school where students have a meaningful role in shaping how the school is run. The student experience in school should have some elements of a participatory democracy, if students are to receive an effective civic education (Apple and Beane 1995). A school organization following bureaucratic procedures or a hierarchical conception of professionalism may leave little room for students to exercise voice (Hirschman 1970). Democratic theorists have been critical of religious schools on this score, since they are believed to be authoritarian and dogmatic, leaving little room for students to develop civic skills of reasoning, debate, and persuasion (Gutmann 1987; Peshkin 1986). The hidden civic curriculum must be judged within schools by whether students feel a sense of respect from teachers and administrators at the school. Civic education at school is in part a function of whether students feel that their voice matters in school affairs.

Evidence on Student Experience in School

How do students in the United States experience their schools? This section documents the degree to which schools are alienating to students, or are experienced as functional communities (Coleman and Hoffer 1987), marked by mutual respect, a normative communal order, and relational trust (Bryk and Schneider 2002). It also shows how student reports of their experiences in school vary systematically by school sector.

The National Household Education Survey (NHES, conducted by the National Center of Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education. National Center for

Education Statistics 1996), provides some insight on student experiences. The youth file of the NHES is a nationally representative telephone survey of American teenagers from the sixth through twelfth grade. The analysis below uses the 1996 version of the NHES, which includes questions on school climate. The total sample size is 7,940. Missing values are imputed by the NCES according to a hot-deck routine.

The 1996 NHES dataset includes five questions that capture student perceptions of their school. These perceptions are important to civic socialization, since they provide an indication of overall student perception of school climate, whether the school is believed to operate as a functional community, and whether students experience some measure of participatory democracy in school. Students are asked to agree or disagree with the following statements:

“I enjoy school.”

“In my school, most students and teachers respect each other.”

“In my school, the opinions of the students are listened to.”

“My teacher maintains good discipline in the classroom.”

“The principal...maintains good discipline in my school.”

The first statement offers a general measure of school climate and gives some indication of whether students are alienated from the school community. It is not a strong measure of a sense of collective identity, since information is not available on what students enjoy about the school. Net of student academic success, however, enjoyment of school is likely to indicate the experience of a positive school community.

The next two statements capture student perceptions of the quality of the school community, including the level of trust among members of the community. Relational

trust within schools depends on respect for community members (Bryk and Schneider 2002), and this should especially be reflected in the respect among students and teachers and the respect for student voices at school. That students feel that they have a voice in school also indicates whether the school organization makes room for student participation in the governance and direction of the school.

The last two measures are indicative of effective authority within the school community. In terms of relational trust in schools, perceived competence is a key factor in maintaining institutional trust, and, for school personnel, this is indicated by their ability to maintain an effective order in school (Bryk and Schneider 2002). Further, a school climate without effective authority is likely to alienate many students, and likely to disrupt the building of an effective communal organization (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1983; Bryk et al. 1993; McFarland 2001).

One advantage of the NHES data is the large sample size, which provides a reasonably high number of cases in each of five school sectors. The five sectors include: 1) students in local or neighborhood public schools (N = 6,112), and 2) public schools of choice (N = 1,018), which includes families whose children attend a magnet or charter school, or who chose their public schools under a school district or statewide open enrollment plan. The private school students are divided into three groups: 3) private nonreligious school (N = 199), 4) Catholic school (N = 424), and 5) non-Catholic religious school (N = 187). In this dataset, it is not possible to further specify the type of religious school attended by the respondent. A reasonable assumption is that 70 percent of the non-Catholic religious school students in the sample would be in conservative Protestant schools.

Note that the univariate results from these questions, without controls, are of interest to those concerned with civic socialization in schools. Many democratic theorists would argue that the higher percentage of students who experience a functional community in school, the better are the prospects for participatory democracy. The percentages offer some insight into whether schools are able to achieve norms that are cooperative, communitarian, and democratic (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development and Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents 1989; Oakes 2000).

The results show that about 81 percent of all students are positive about their experience in school, reporting that they enjoy school at least somewhat. Most students do not find school entirely alienating, which increases the likelihood that schools can provide an effective democratic education for students. Chart 1 shows the percentage of students in each sector that report enjoying school. The differences across school sector are not large, though the local public school students are the lowest on this measure of attachment to school. About 80 percent of local public school students report that they agree or strongly agree that they enjoy school. The students at non-Catholic religious schools are highest on this measure; 89 percent agree or strongly agree with the statement. In terms of providing a social context that is conducive to positive civic socialization, it appears that non-Catholic religious schools, which consist primarily of conservative Protestant schools, are doing quite well.

---Chart 1 about here---

The absolute percentages are somewhat less encouraging when considering respect between teachers and students. Only 17 percent strongly agree that they are experiencing a school in which student-teacher relations embody the “decent community”

ideal (Powell 1996). It seems likely that contractual trust rather than relational trust dominates teacher-student relationships in most schools. Under these conditions, the hidden civic curriculum is not likely to contribute to positive norms for public life.

The percentage of students in each school sector that report mutual respect between teachers and students differ rather markedly (see Chart 2). About 31 percent of religious school students, which includes Catholic and non-Catholic religious school students, strongly agree that students and teachers respect one another. The public school percentage is about half that of the religious schools. Non-Catholic religious schools experience a schooling environment in which it is clear that students and teachers respect each other. This important component of relational trust is strongly felt by a significant percentage of students in these religious schools.

---Chart 2 about here---

Whether the school functions as an effective community and a participatory organization may also be indicated by the extent that students feel they have some say in school affairs. NHES has an interesting measure of whether students experience school as a centralized power in which students have no voice. One might expect that the authoritarian organizational culture of conservative Protestant schools would result in a disenfranchised student body. Results show that 15 percent of students strongly agree that student voices are listened to at their school, and 28 percent feel that student opinions are not listened to. The bivariate results (Chart 3) reveal that non-Catholic religious schools have the highest percentage of students strongly agreeing that student opinions are listened to (25 percent). Catholic and nonreligious private schools are not far behind (22 percent), though local public schools are again about half as likely as religious schools to

strongly agree that students have a voice at school (12.9 percent). The results alleviate concerns that religious schools on the whole are overly authoritarian. The results do not allow us to conclude that conservative Protestant schools are doing any better on this score than other schools, since the non-Catholic religious school students are not much different from Catholic school students. But they are clearly not reporting an authoritarian environment compared to public school students.

---Chart 3 about here---

The raw percentages for the variable on discipline in the classroom show that 22 percent of students strongly agree that the classroom is a disciplined environment, while 17 percent do not see the classroom as disciplined. Chart 4 reveals that the religious schools are well above the public school sectors on this score (about 35 percent to 20 percent strongly agree); though the private nonreligious sector is doing nearly as well in perceptions of teacher discipline (32 percent strongly agree).

---Chart 4 about here---

About 32 percent of students strongly agree that the principal of their school maintains discipline, while 10 percent do not agree that the principal maintains discipline. The percentages in Chart 5 show that almost half of non-Catholic religious schools strongly agree that their principal maintains good discipline. The Catholic schools are nearly as high on this measure, but the local public schools are much lower; only about 30 percent of local public school students strongly agree that the principal maintains good discipline.

---Chart 5 about here---

Religious Schools and the Hidden Civic Curriculum

How should school sector differences in student experiences be interpreted? What do they suggest about the relation between school organization and the hidden civic curriculum? These results may point to a religious school advantage in civic education that is rooted in a communal organizational culture. However, these interpretations must be guarded, since longitudinal data are not available that would show the impact of school organization on the development of student norms for democratic participation across the student career.

In terms of school socialization, private schools may offer some advantages in civic education over today's public schools. The advantage is based on differences in governance and school organization across public and private school sectors. Private schools operate in a far less complex organizational environment than public schools (Scott and Meyer, 1984). Private school governance and funding is primarily located at the level of individual institutions, rather than being located in general institutional connections across schools (U.S. Department of Education, 1997). Power remains centered in individual schools (Chubb and Moe 1990; Levy 1987); private schools tend to have more on-site control of key administrative decisions (Baker et al. 1996). Even the financial precariousness of most private schools contributes to building community (Powell 1996: 61). This difference in governance provides conditions in which collective identity is more likely to encompass students within the school community.

School-based governance, along with the tendency of private schools to be organized by value consensus and traditional authority (Salganik & Karweit, 1982), contributes to a school organization that is less bureaucratic and more communal. A communal organization is structured less by hierarchical, contractual, and single-purpose

relations than by multidimensional and personal relations marked by mutual obligation. In Catholic schools, for instance, professionalism is more likely to be tempered in favor of a personalism that focuses on meaningful relationships within the school (Bryk et al. 1993). The communal organization provides a stronger basis for developing relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), in which the school culture embeds respect and personal regard for others. This school environment has a number of positive effects on civic education, perhaps most important is that students are more likely to have a personal stake in a community in which their voice matters.

This discussion makes clear that private schools have advantages and disadvantages in civic education. Among the disadvantages, some would argue that traditional authority in religious schools may inhibit an effective education for democratic participation (Macedo 2000; Peshkin 1986). If the hidden curriculum of a communal organization is considered, however, traditional authority and value consensus in private schools may have a net positive effect on civic education since they make possible a communal form of organization in which students gain a sense of belonging at school. This private school culture is more likely to offer a setting in which students experience and practice civic-mindedness. The importance of a collective identity at the school level increases the likelihood that students will find opportunities at school to practice sociability and learn norms of cooperation and collective service.

The data presented thus far seems consistent with the more charitable view of the hidden civic curriculum in private schools. The evidence is consistent with the claim that conservative Protestant schools share a religious school advantage in hidden curriculum. The results support the view that conservative Protestant schools are more likely than

public schools to be participatory environments in which students feel they play significant roles in school governance.

Similarly, the higher levels of teacher-student respect at non-Catholic religious schools compared to all types of public schools would be consistent with a student experience of a communal organization at school, as would the nearly identical results for the question of whether student opinions are respected in the school. Finally, the private-public divide on providing a disciplined environment is likely an outcome of a communal organization, in which students believe school authorities are legitimate. Here the findings reveal that religious schools do significantly better than nonreligious private schools. Most likely, the principal in conservative Protestant schools is embedded in a religious community which enhances his or her moral legitimacy with students. This may provide an indirect positive effect on civic education that is mediated through the hidden civic curriculum.

Alternate Explanations for Sector Differences in the Hidden Curriculum

From the perspective of most theorists of civic education, the average differences in the hidden curriculum by school sector are taken seriously, since democratic vitality depends on the absolute percentage of students who are equipped for civic participation. But there is also interest in the causes of this variation. To what extent is the religious school advantage due to smaller school size and the socioeconomic distribution of student bodies? This section attempts to deal with these alternate explanations, though data limitations preclude more definitive conclusions.

Regression models were used to eliminate some rival explanations by including control variables. Table 1 provides the distribution of selected independent variables.

---Table 1 about here---

Variables in the models as controls include several family and parent-level variables. Standard demographic characteristics of parents account for differences that select families into public schools of choice and private schools. Since most schools are fairly homogenous in terms of social class, the parent education and income controls also tap some of the variation in socioeconomic status of schools. The highest education level of the parent(s) is included (1 = less than high school; 5 = more than college graduate). Other demographic controls are income per year (1 = \$5,000 or less; 11 = \$75,000 or more), marital status, and race. Work status of the mother is measured with binary variables for mothers working full-time, part-time (less than 35 hours per week), looking for work, and not in the labor force. The models control for the educational expectations of the parents for the child, which is measured with a binary variable that is unity if the parent expects their child to graduate from college. A related control is the extent that parents talk to their child about future college or work plans. If parents have talked with their child about future course or work plans in the last month, this binary variable is coded as 1. The educational expectations variables should capture some of the differences in school success and investment in education that may affect assessments of schools. They also should help to control for the factors that lead parents to choose private schooling in the first place. For similar reasons, the models control for civic participation of parents. Civic participation is measured as a 9 point index that sums parent involvement in community organizations, voting, political meetings, giving to political

causes, political campaigns, and so on. Family differences are also captured with variables for parent church attendance (1 = never; 5 = nearly every week), home ownership, and receipt of food stamps. The models add contextual variables, including the poverty and racial distribution of the family's residential neighborhood as well as dummy variables for regions of the United States. The contextual variables are based on zip code information provided by the respondent.

To estimate the school sector effect, the models control for the effect of several other child-level factors that may be related to school sector and assessment of school. Among these are age, sex, and race of the child, work hours of the child during the school year, child's grades (1 = mostly Fs; 5 = mostly As), and child participation in out-of-school activities. The size of the school student body may affect students' perception of the school climate, and therefore the models account for the parents' report of school size. The ethnic distribution of the school is also reported by the parent and coded as 1 if the school is less than 25 percent the same race as the child, and 3 if the school is more than 75 percent. Table 2 includes a complete list of control variables. The model for enjoyment of school adds indicators for whether the child thinks the parents are too much involved in their school, and one indicator for those who think that parents are too little involved in school. Parent involvement in school is likely to differ by sector, and this could shape student enjoyment of school.

---Table 2 about here---

Table 2 provides the results from the regression models. The models use an ordered logistic procedure, which is appropriate for the four category dependent variables (answers for most questions ranged from strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly

agree). The models in Table 2 compare students in each of the private sectors to the local public school population.

After accounting for demographic and contextual factors, the analysis in Model 1 (Table 2) shows that non-Catholic religious school students compared to local public school students remain positively related to enjoying school, though this is just short of the usual standards of statistical significance. The coefficients for Model 1 reveal that the strongest effect on enjoying school is for the nonreligious private schoolers (.34); with the non-Catholic religious schoolers close behind (.28).

After controlling for relevant factors, students in all school sectors are significantly more likely to agree that teachers and students respect each other than are students in local public schools. Catholic and nonreligious private schoolers report almost one point higher on average on this 4-point scale, even after controlling for a large set of other factors that might affect student reports. Non-Catholic religious schools are not quite as strong as the other private school sectors (.75), but the effect for these religious schools is more than double the size of the effect for public schoolers of choice.

The regression analysis in Model 3, which predicts whether students are listened to, shows that the non-Catholic religious schools remain the highest on this measure, net of the other variables in the model. The coefficient for each of the religious school sectors is more than twice the size of the coefficient for the public school choice sector.¹ At least in creating a participatory environment, which provides an important civic education in itself, conservative Protestant schools are doing much better than local public schools.

¹ A test of the statistical significance of these differences reveals that private nonreligious schoolers are significantly different from public schoolers of choice at the .1 level, and Catholic schoolers are nearly so.

In the regression model reported as Model 4, with the extensive set of controls, private schools are significantly more positive on teacher discipline than local public schools. In this case, substantial differences by type of private school are not found, which seems to indicate that there is no special boost to a functional community provided by adding a religious dimension to private schools.

The regression analysis (Model 5) on school discipline reveals that only the Catholic and other religious schools are significantly different from the local public schools. Even with the controls, the religious schools show higher levels of principal discipline. Being in a religious school increases the average level of principal discipline by about .8 on a 4-point scale. On this measure, the religious schools are distinctive, which may indicate that religious school students experience school to a greater extent as a functional community. Since conservative Protestant schools are embedded in a larger religious community, they are likely to be more effective in uniting family and school, which provides legitimacy for authorities in the school.

To attempt to sort out the sources of the school sector variation in student perceptions of school climate, a set of nested regression analyses were conducted. These analyses use latent variables to account for measurement error in the dependent variable. The latent variable for the experience of a communal organization by students is indicated by the measures of student-teacher respect, of whether student voices are listened to, and the two measures of effective discipline in the classroom and school.

A second latent variable was created to capture the extent that parents report that the school is open and welcoming to them. This latent variable was indicated by three questions asked of the child's parent about the extent that parent participation in school is

welcomed, the extent that the school makes it easy to get involved, and the extent that the school lets parents know about opportunities to get involved in school. This serves as an indicator of a communal school organization, which is expected to account for the sector differences in student perceptions of the school climate.

The results of this analysis are reported in Table 3. The model fit statistics are well within the acceptable range for each of the nested models (RMSEA < .05). The first model shows the school sector differences in student perceptions, without controls. Model 1 reveals fairly large and significant differences between local public schools and private schools. Model 2 adds controls for student grade and the size of the student body. It also adds four binary indicators of whether or not the parent reports that the school is 75 percent or more the same race as their child. The schools that are predominately non-Hispanic white tend to have students who report higher levels of a communal organization, and this finding is relatively consistent across all the models. School grade shows that students become more pessimistic about the school climate when they are in high school compared with the junior high school years. Interestingly, the size of the school does not affect perceptions of school climate in this model.

Most importantly, the model shows that these variables account for none of the private nonreligious school effect, for a small portion of the Catholic school effect, and for a somewhat larger amount of the non-Catholic religious school effect. The results reveal that school sector differences in student perceptions are not entirely due to the smaller average size of private schools.

Model 3 adds the latent variable for parent reports of the extent that the school operates as a communal organization. This variable has a strong positive effect on student

perceptions of school climate. A reasonable interpretation is that a communal school organization, in which parents are integrated into the school community, has a strong positive effect on student perceptions of school climate. What is most interesting is that Model 3 shows that the difference between school sectors has been cut nearly in half for the private nonreligious school effect, and has been cut by over half for the religious school effects. It appears from these data that about half of the difference between public and private school student perceptions of school climate can be attributed to differences in the average extent of communal organization. Model 4 adds controls for student race, grades, student-parent discussion about future plans, parent socioeconomic status, region, and urbanicity. It also adds measures of the social context of the student residential area, including the number of non-Hispanic blacks, the extent of poverty, and the extent of racial homogeneity. These residential variables are measured at the zip code level. Adding these controls, however, does not account for any of the remaining gap between private school student reports and local public school student reports of their school experience. This result provides some evidence that school sector differences in student perceptions of school climate are not the result of socioeconomic distributions in schools and levels of school funding.

Findings on the Hidden Civic Curriculum

Taking the findings together, religious and nonreligious private schools tend to be distinctive on these measures of the school environment. One measure shows a unique religious school effect: that of the discipline maintained by the principal. This may result from the higher likelihood that religious schools operate within a stronger functional

community, and this effect of communal organization may be beneficial for the hidden civic curriculum. Beyond that, student perceptions in private nonreligious schools seem to reflect organizational characteristics, particularly student-teacher respect, that would contribute to an effective civic education. Perhaps this confirms the view that many private nonreligious schools, such as the private school focused on character-building in Brint et al.'s (2001) analysis, have a strong sense of collective identity similar to religious schools. The structural equation with latent variables models provide evidence consistent with the claim that private schools, and especially religious schools, improve student experience of school through a communal form of organization.

These interpretations remain tentative, however, since better measures of school organization and socioeconomic distributions of the student body are needed. Yet the public and private school differences hold up even after accounting for racial distribution in the school, and several contextual variables, which provide some indication of school funding and socioeconomic distribution of the local public school. This analysis is not complete, however, since these results cannot shed light on whether civic socialization in private schools affects orientations toward and actions within civic institutions later in life. The results here show only that private school students experience their schools in a way that offers the opportunity for building collective identities and practicing sociability within their schools. Finding evidence that connects school experience and adult orientations to public life is left for future research. In addition, it is still possible that the decision to attend private school arises out of and reinforces a cultural orientation that values private means to achieve individual and family goals. In contrast, the decision to participate in public schools may reflect an orientation that values institutions designed to

bring together people from all walks of life without regard to religious or economic differences (Cookson 1994; Gutmann 1987). Private education has no connection to public purposes, in this view. The stronger hidden civic curriculum in private schools may be overwhelmed by a privatized conception of education (Butts 1989; Coleman and Hoffer 1987) that is reinforced by the decision to abandon public schools and by participating in private schools. This possibility, too, deserves further research. The results so far, which show fairly low average levels of functional community and relational trust within local public schools, would indicate that the more likely scenario is that the public nature of choosing public schools is overwhelmed by the weak hidden civic curriculum in neighborhood public schools.

Pedagogy and Civic Education

Besides the direct effects of the hidden curriculum on civic socialization, schools are a key setting for building civic skills that are useful for civic engagement. Whether schools are successful in developing student civic skills depends on classroom instructional techniques. In particular, an instructional style that makes ample room for active student participation and debate builds student civic skills. A vital democracy depends on citizens' ability to represent interests and deliberate public policy questions, and civic skills lay the foundation for this democratic deliberation. And, simply by making room for student participation, a classroom environment reinforces the value of participatory democracy. An experience of a relatively democratic classroom provides a model of the importance of individual participation in public institutions.

Some teachers offer direct opportunities for building civic skills in classroom activities. Students may be asked to make presentations in class, participate in debate, and write letters to public officials. These opportunities to speak in class and persuade others through debate, along with writing activities, are classic democratic civic skill-building exercises. In addition, a pedagogy that contributes to civic education emphasizes group activities in the classroom rather than lectures, during which students are often passive observers. Any opportunities for students to exercise leadership in class may improve civic education, and group activities are likely to provide these opportunities. A democratic classroom may enhance sociability of students and provide space for practicing civic skills, including organizational skills.

How do classroom activities vary by school sector? One might expect that public school teaching techniques are oriented to equipping students for democratic participation. We would expect that religious schools would be weak on this dimension of civic education. For example, there is evidence of an emphasis on traditional teaching styles in Catholic schools (Bryk et al. 1993). Teacher-centered learning in religious schools may be rooted in views of authority. In conservative religious schools, truth is grounded in church tradition or scripture. This authoritative orientation to truth may have its parallel in authoritative teaching styles—increasing the number of teacher-centered classes and thereby reducing opportunities for “practicing” civic skills.

The NHES survey asked whether students gave a speech or oral report in class. The bivariate results show only marginal differences across school sectors. About 84 percent of non-Catholic religious school students reported giving a speech or oral report, while 76 percent of students in local public schools did so. However, when controlling

for student characteristics, the regression models do not reveal significant differences by school sector.

A separate question asked students if they had “...taken part in a debate or discussion in which you had to persuade others about your point of view?” This provides a classic measure of civic skill building in a nonpolitical institution that is likely to be transferable to political activity. Here, the non-Catholic religious schools appear somewhat low given their more advantaged clientele. This finding may reflect the authoritative teaching style favored by religious conservatives, which may not value student participation. Persuasion and debate within the religious school community may be seen as making absolute truths appear relative and contested. However, the regression results on persuasion and debate do not reveal strong differences across school sector.

Civic Education Classes

A good civic education would include direct opportunities for building civic knowledge through civic education classes. Through discussion of national affairs and learning the history and workings of democratic institutions, students gain familiarity with the civic and political public sphere in the US that removes barriers to participation and may improve the quality of democratic debate. Civics courses have an indirect effect on civic education: requiring or encouraging a civics class communicates the priorities of school, which may under some circumstances improve student interest in or awareness of civic obligations.

School sector differences in civic curriculum would not be surprising. Public school legitimacy depends on its role in fostering democratic citizenship. Research has

shown that public schools do well in offering civics courses and focusing on diverse government-related topics and current events (Niemi & Junn, 1998). This tradition of public schools may correspond to a greater number of public school students taking a civics course. Public schools may be more likely to require a civics course, especially relative to private schools.

Non-Catholic religious schools are often thought to be religious enclaves, which are isolated from public life. This may reduce school and student interest in civic education classes. The extreme case is the Amish or conservative Mennonite schools, which are isolationist by design and have religious reasons for separation from political affairs. These schools may place less emphasis on traditional civics courses. There is an important counter-argument to consider. Theorists in the neo-institutionalist camp (Meyer 1977; Meyer and Rowan 1977) argue that schools tend to follow cultural models about what it means to be a school. This perspective is consistent with the expectation that in formal structure and curriculum religious schools would follow public school models, including cultural norms for civic education classes. Conservative Protestant schools are very similar to public schools in the number of English and science classes that they require of students (Sikkink 2001). As Wagner (1990) argued, religious schools tend to be a collage of Christian and American cultural strands. Even the most conservative Christian schools absorb much from the surrounding cultural milieu. On average, then, we would expect less student interest in or requirements for a course on government and politics in the non-Catholic religious schools, but this effect may be countered by cultural models of schooling that demand civics classes in order to maintain cultural legitimacy.

The NHES asked students, “During the past school year, have you had any courses that required you to pay attention to government, politics, or national issues?” The bivariate results show that about half of students in each sector say they have had a course the dealt with civic matters. The non-Catholic religious school students are actually slightly higher than the other sectors (55 percent), but the local public school is close behind (53 percent). The regression results, which compare the neighborhood public school to each of the other sectors, show that there is only one sector that is significantly different from the neighborhood public sector. The public school choosers are significantly less likely to have such courses.

The evidence would support the view that all schools follow cultural models of what it means to be a school. Conservative Protestant students are participating in courses that discuss government and national affairs at similar rates as public school students. There is still the concern about what is being taught in the civics course. One might argue that the religious schools are not teaching the right things in civics class. But there is not evidence that the religious school students are lacking exposure to civic education relative to public schools.

Democratic Values

Another concern of democratic theorists is whether religious schools support core democratic values. What are students learning in civics class? Does this enhance democratic citizenship? The specific concern here is whether students are encouraged to value basic democratic principles, such as free speech. Many would expect that

conservative religious schools would reinforce intolerance and authoritarianism, rather than support democratic values.

The NHES asked one of the standard tolerance questions, whether the respondent would allow a person to make a speech in their community against churches and religion. This question overstates differences in tolerance between religious and nonreligious students, since a nonreligious person may register his or her opposition to religious viewpoints, rather than an abstract commitment to free speech principles. Unfortunately, the survey does not have a comprehensive set of measures on attitudes toward free speech.

The descriptive statistics show high average levels of free speech support. The Catholic school students are especially high on this measure. But the non-Catholic religious schools have, not surprisingly, the lowest average student score. Interestingly, these differences are not related to school sector, but are entirely accounted for by student characteristics. Conservative religion may reduce support for free speech, but there is not evidence here that attending a conservative religious school has any additional effect.

A second measure asked whether students would allow a book in the library that says it is okay to take illegal drugs. In the regression model, the non-Catholic religious school students are strongly opposed to allowing this book in the library. The odds that a non-Catholic religious school student opposes this book are 2.3 times that of the local public school student. The results show evidence of lower support for free speech principles among non-Catholic religious school students.

Political Interest and Efficacy

A civic education that builds citizenship skills should increase interest in political life. Political interest has been shown to be an important determinant of participation in civic life (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). The level of political interest appears to be dropping rapidly among the youngest cohorts (Shulman). Public schools may have a slight edge on this score, since civic education is a major aspect of public school legitimacy. And religious schools in comparison may be at a disadvantage. In the conservative religious schools, alienation from a secular state, and suspicion of government, may reduce the political interest of students. It would seem more likely, then, that civics courses in conservative Protestant religious schools would be taught in a way that denigrates government institutions and public service. This may reduce the effectiveness of civics course in increasing student political interest.

The NHES asked students whether they became more interested in politics and national affairs after taking civic education courses. The raw data show only small differences by sector in the percentage of students who say that the civics course increase their interest in politics “a great deal.” The local public schools are highest on this measure, with 88 percent saying that the course increased political interest “some” or “a great deal.” After accounting for differences in student characteristics, the results do not show significant differences between the school sectors. The Catholic school sector appears to do a slightly better job of increasing student interest than the local public schools, but this effect is not statistically significant. Conservative Protestant schools do not stand out on this measure.

Schools may foster political efficacy, which plays a key role in generating civic engagement (Niemi and Junn 1998). For example, whether a person participates in

politics depends on their political knowledge (Ii Carpini and Keeter 1996). The traditional civic role of public schools may lead to greater emphasis on learning how government works, and this knowledge may increase an obligation and a willingness to participate in democratic institutions. Conservative Protestant suspicion of a secular state and fundamentalists attempt to separate from worldly endeavors may make political knowledge a lower priority in conservative Protestant schools.

The NHES asked students to respond to a five factual questions about politics. For example, students were asked, “Whose responsibility is it to determine if a law is constitutional or not?” and “How much of a majority is required to override a veto?” After summing the answers to five questions, the average correct for all students is 1.8—not too encouraging, but this averages scores from students from sixth to twelfth grade. The Catholic and non-religious private schoolers had the highest average score. The non-Catholic religious students had the lowest. After adjusting the scores for student characteristics and other controls, Catholic schoolers are significantly higher on political knowledge—about a quarter point higher on average.

The non-Catholic religious school students are much lower than local public school students on political knowledge. The gap is about a half a point, which is fairly substantial for this five-point scale (the standard deviation is .29). The size of the gap is reduced considerably when the extent that students read newspapers is added to the model. Lower levels of political knowledge among non-Catholic religious school children results in part from their aversion to reading the papers. This is the strongest evidence available in the NHES data that some religious schools create an enclave that

ill-prepares students for democratic participation. These results may reflect qualms about political pursuits among many religious conservatives.

Does a civics course improve political knowledge? If the student reports having had a course that focused on politics or national affairs, the average score is only a quarter-point higher, net of the other controls in the model. More importantly for our purposes is the question of whether civics courses are more effective in some school sectors. The results show no evidence that a civics course increases political knowledge more or less in any of the sectors. There are no significant interaction effects between school sector and taking a civics course. This would support the view that civics courses are as effective in generating political knowledge among non-Catholic religious school students as they are among students at local public schools.

Student Government

Schools often provide rudimentary experiences in formal democratic processes. For example, participation in student government is associated with democratic participation in later life (Brady et al. 1995). By participating in student government, students may learn to express positions on public issues, and learn the nuts and bolts of organizing. These experiences offer opportunities for building civic skills outside the classroom. Students may have some say in significant school decisions, which may provide a sense of satisfaction in participating in a “public” activity within school. Public schools are expected to emphasize student government, but the emphasis on adult authority in religious schools may reduce interest in student government. Authoritative conservative Protestant schools may place a high priority on traditional forms of

authority, including respect for the authority of school personnel, which may reduce openness to student involvement in school administration. The lack of student participation in school governance may have a corollary in less emphasis on student government.

The NHES asked students whether their school had a student government. Interestingly, only 57 percent of non-Catholic religious school students reported a student government compared to 82 percent of local public school students. This finding may be misleading, since non-Catholic religious schoolers are more likely to be in smaller schools, which may reduce the likelihood of having a formal student government. However, even after controlling for school size, the results show that non-Catholic religious schools are much less likely to have a student government. The odds of a student government in these schools are multiplied by .29—a very strong effect.

Besides having a student government, schools may foster an environment that encourages participation in student government. After accounting for student characteristics, do students in some sectors have a higher probability of participating in student government? Admittedly, this measure depends on opportunities to participate, since there are usually a limited number of seats available in a student government. Still, the fact that some schools encourage broader participation would be a positive sign for democratic education. Extent of participation in student government is one measure of the school's success in providing opportunities for building civic skills.

If the student reported a student government in their school, the NHES asked students if they participated in it. Surprisingly, the highest percentage of participants is found in the non-Catholic religious schools at 31 percent. This may be a school size

effect. After controlling for other factors, only the Catholic schoolers are significantly different from local public schoolers. The odds that a Catholic school student participates in student government are 1.5 times that of the public school student.

The concern about non-Catholic religious schools does not extend to the probability of participation; students in this religious sector are just as likely to participate as local public school students—if the school has a student government. The Catholic schools do a better job of encouraging participation in student government than the other sectors.

Community Service

Lastly, democratic education can be promoted in schools through opportunities for community service and volunteering. Student volunteering may increase civic skills and norms for civic participation (Youniss and Yates 1997). These opportunities are important for democratic citizenship not only for developing civic skills, but also to link students to volunteering role models and recruitment networks. Though learning to care is mostly a family endeavor (Wuthnow 1995), certain types of involvement, especially involvement that includes interaction with recipients of services, may reinforce an empathetic orientation that increases altruism over the life course.

Schools with an organizational culture that supports volunteering and community service contribute to an effective democratic education. Schools may be more or less successful in creating conditions that nurture volunteering and community service among students. An organizational culture that builds a sense of belonging to the school community may help to mobilize students into community service. Binding students to a

school collective identity makes norms of service more effective and meaningful. Secondly, a school with stronger links to organizational recruitment networks will improve the odds that students participate in volunteering. A tight link to community organizations creates a pathway for student involvement, a bridge from student experience and knowledge to community organizations. For example, Catholic school connections to parishes, Catholic relief organizations, and other community social service organizations may provide this bridge. These bridges may improve school support for volunteering and student willingness to participate.

Schools may facilitate student participation in volunteering and community service by making students aware of opportunities for volunteering, providing transportation to service opportunities, or organizing a volunteering opportunity for the students. In addition, many schools have requirements for volunteering and community service. Service requirements are controversial, since they may simply breed cynicism among students. While in general service requirements may not be an effective form of democratic education (Wuthnow 1995), the impact on students perhaps depends on whether the requirement is embedded in the culture and social organization of the school or is simply another graduation hoop to jump through. While it is difficult to disentangle differences in orientations to service requirements with the survey data available, service requirements may be an indicator of a school that is more likely to embed community service into the mission of the school, and private schools may have an advantage here.

Religious schools may have an advantage in facilitating the kind of volunteering or community service that contributes to democratic education. For example, religious schools may be better able to incorporate the normative discussions in which community

service and other forms of civic participation are given a larger purpose. This service learning approach has a more positive impact on students than isolated and individual volunteering (Wuthnow 1995). A strong positive ethos (Grant 1988), which includes an explicit normative school mission, facilitates normative discussion and reflection about service and volunteering. In this type of school, teachers may be more likely to incorporate normative discussions in class about student service experiences. Within a moral community with definite boundaries, students and teachers may feel more comfortable doing so, since they assume that agreement on the meaning and obligations of community service can be worked out. Trust generated through a strong collective identity in religious schools facilitates the incorporation of these normative discussions within classes and through service learning opportunities.

Moreover, the religious school may have an advantage in that a school requirement for community service is likely to have greater legitimacy with families and students. Requirements that are embedded in a moral community may mitigate the problem of student cynicism. Community service becomes an expression of the collective identity of the community, rather than an external, formal rule.

In general, we would expect that conservative Protestant schools have many of these advantages in fostering student volunteering and community service. But it is likely that conservative Protestant schools differ from Catholic schools on the organizational bridges to the community and social service organizations. The bonding social capital may mobilize conservative Protestant school students into volunteering, but a religious enclave effect among these schools may lessen community service.

The NHES data does not find particularly strong effects of non-Catholic religious schools on arranging volunteering opportunities for students. Catholic schools and private nonreligious schools, however, are much more likely than local public schools to arrange or offer volunteering or community service activities for students. The Catholic effect may be due to religious organizational networks, but the emphasis on character formation at many nonreligious private schools leads to a similar result. Private schools in general are much more likely to have requirements for service than public schools. Catholic schools are especially high on this measure; students in Catholic schools are 7 times more likely to report that their school requires community service.

The NHES has some measures of the extent that schools integrate volunteering and community service into the curriculum, including service learning opportunities. These efforts help to make service activities meaningful in a way that should contribute to building democratic citizenship skills. Opportunities to reflect on the service experience improve the effects of community service on learning to care. The NHES asked students if they discussed service activity experiences in class, or wrote a journal about service activity. The survey also asked if service activity counted toward a class grade. Catholic schools are highest on each of these measures—significantly higher than the local public schools. The discussion of service is also somewhat higher in private nonreligious schools than local public schools, and is higher—but not significantly so—in non-Catholic religious schools. These findings may reflect the normative mission at Catholic schools and many non-religious private schools (Grant 1988; Bryk et al. 1993; Brint et al. 2001), which creates an organizational culture in which it is natural and expected to speak normatively about service experience. The private school advantage

may reflect the greater likelihood that community service is an integral part of the collective mission of the school, which tends to make service meaningful for students. Non-Catholic religious schools are not distinctive on this measure, but appear to be doing somewhat better than public schools.

The important question is whether and how student volunteering and community service varies by school sector. Are students in some schools more likely to participate in volunteering activities, all else being equal? The NHES data asked students, “During the past year, have you participated in any community service activity or volunteer work at your school or in your community?” About half of students claimed to have participated. The religious schools tend to be highest on this measure: 71 percent of Catholic school students reported volunteering. After controlling for school and community characteristics and basic social background variables that may affect volunteering, the results in Table 7, Model 1 show that students in all private and public school sectors are significantly higher on volunteering than are students in neighborhood public school. Catholic school attendees are nearly three times as likely to volunteer compared to local public schoolers. Students in non-Catholic religious schools are nearly twice as likely to volunteer.

A more stringent test adds additional controls that may affect volunteering, including an extensive set of social background characteristics and a variable that assesses educational expectations of parents (Model 2).). These results show that the effect of attending a non-religious private school and a public school of choice is mediated by the social background and educational expectations variables. In this model, only the religious school students remain significantly different from local public school

students. To further strengthen the conclusions from these models, Model 3 adds a variable for the extent of parent civic participation. This variable is an index of political involvement, community service, and volunteering. Including this variable provides a conservative test of difference in student volunteering by school sector, since school sector influences parent civic participation. Still, the substantive findings for school sector differences hold even after including this control.

Not all of the religious school effects hold after accounting for the religious service attendance of the parent (Model 4). In this model, the Catholic school effect is attenuated but still strong. The non-Catholic religious school effect, however, is not statistically significant. It may be that this is simply a sample size issue, since there are relatively few students in this school sector and the size of the effect appears to remain relatively large (though not statistically significant) even after controlling for religious service attendance. Barring that possibility, the finding is consistent with the claim that civic participation among non-Catholic religious schoolers is generated through church rather than school contexts. Model 5 seems to confirm this. It adds a variable for participation in an outside-of-school activity, such as music lessons, a religious youth group, or organized team sports. As with church attendance, this type of involvement provides an alternate context that may generate civic participation of youth. The non-Catholic religious school effect has lessened in strength in this model, but the Catholic school effect remains very substantial. Moreover, the Catholic school students are significantly higher than every other school sector, not only the local public school sector. Whether the comparison is with local public school students or non-religious private school students, Catholic school students show significantly higher odds of

participating in volunteering. And these effects hold even after accounting for whether the community service is required.

Community service and volunteering has a much stronger effect on democratic education if it is done on a regular basis. The NHES results show that the main findings on school sector and volunteering hold even when considering service that is done on a regular basis. Again, students in Catholic schools are especially likely to have done *regular* community service. In the bivariate results, 40 percent of Catholic school students reported regular service compared to 20 percent of local public school students. The regression results show that even after accounting for school, community, and family characteristics, Catholic school students are 1.8 times more likely to participate in regular volunteering activities. But that finding does not hold for non-Catholic religious schools.

Community Service, Religious Schools, and Religious Families

One weakness of the NHES data for understanding religious schools and community service is the relative lack of information on the religious activities and identity of parents and teenagers. The National Survey of Youth and Religion (NSYR), conducted in 2002, surveyed 3,300 teens aged 13-17 and interviewed one parent from each family. It included a question on whether the teenager participated in community service or volunteering activity. The advantage of the NSYR data is that it provides multiple religion control variables for the teen and his or her parent. Included in the models are the religious tradition reported by parent (conservative Protestant, mainline Protestant, Catholic, etc.). In addition, the teen's worship service attendance, involvement

in other activities in the congregation, and involvement in a religious youth group, as well as teen religiosity, are included in the models.

The dataset provides information on characteristics of the teenage respondent's five closest friends. The model includes a variable for the proportion of the teen's friends that are in same religion as the respondent, which provides a measure of bonding social capital that is rooted in religious contexts. Besides increasing bonding social capital, perhaps attending a private school reduces the likelihood that a teenager has friends who are deviant, and not interested in volunteering or community service. If a school merely brings together "good kids" who become friends, we would hardly credit the school context for promoting democratic education. The NSYR includes measures of the proportion of a teen's friends who are involved in some form of deviance. Further, since many teenagers serve in order to belong (Wuthnow 1995), what a teen's friends are doing may matter for a teen volunteering more than the school context. Whether to control for this variable when estimating the school sector effects is debatable, since a school that successfully encourages volunteering by most students would indirectly increase the proportion of friends that are volunteering. The school context may have a causal effect on whether a teenager has friends who volunteer. As a conservative test, the model includes the proportion of a teenage respondent's friends who volunteer, and estimates the school sector effects net of these network variables.

The models also control for family characteristics, including the standard demographic variables for education, income, and so on. To better account for family effects, which may vary by school sector, the models include a variable that captures whether parents encourage volunteering and one that captures the educational

expectations of the student. College aspirations motivate volunteering and community service, and expectations are likely to vary by school sector.

The regression models compare the public school sector (as a whole) with the private non-religious, Catholic, non-Catholic religious and homeschooling sectors. Without controls, private nonreligious and Catholic schools are significantly different from public schools. After adding the extensive set of controls, the Catholic school students remain significantly positive on volunteering compared to public school students. Several models show that non-Catholic religious school students are significantly *less* likely to participate in volunteering and community service than are public school students. This finding does not imply that non-Catholic religious school students are not doing their fair share of volunteering. But it is consistent with the interpretation that volunteering among non-Catholic students is generated through involvement in religious congregations, rather than through religious school contexts. Non-Catholic religious school contexts actually reduce the extent of volunteering, net of the control variables in the model.

What explains why Catholic school students are volunteering more than the other sectors? What are the mediating variables? The results show that part of the Catholic school effect is due to the relatively higher proportion of friends of Catholic school students who are volunteering. As mentioned earlier, having friends who volunteer is in part a school effect. Catholic school students have friends who volunteer in part because the school as a whole is doing more volunteering and students tend to have their close friends in school. The results also show that Catholic school students tend to have higher network religious homogeneity within their circle of friends, but this does not explain

away the entire Catholic school effect. One might expect from Coleman and Hoffer's work (1987) that intergenerational network closure would be higher among Catholic school students, and that this would explain the Catholic school effect. However, the results show no strong differences in intergenerational closure by school sector. Perhaps surprisingly, the Catholic school advantage is not explained by a lower likelihood of having deviant friends. There do not appear to be differences in deviance in friendship networks by school sector, though the results show that higher levels of deviance in one's friendship networks is associated with reduced odds of volunteering.

In sum, the Catholic school effect seems to operate beyond religion, family, and friendship characteristics. This would favor a claim that the organizational culture of Catholic schools has an important impact on this form of democratic education. The evidence is consistent with the claim that organizational bridges and the normative climate in Catholic schools mobilize students into volunteering.

The NSYR data has one further contribution to make to our understanding of democratic education and religious schools. Democratic theorists would lead us to expect that volunteering through religious schools would be oriented to a homogenous religious community, rather than bringing students into contact with social differences in the community. The NSYR data provides some evidence on this question. It asked teenagers whether their volunteering brought them into contact with people of different races and economic backgrounds. While this does not answer all the concerns that volunteering in religious schools is inwardly focused, it does allow a preliminary analysis. The regression results show that, rather than the religious sectors, volunteering of students in the non-religious private school sector is significantly less likely to bring students into contact

with people of different races and economic backgrounds. It appears that religious schools per se are not promoting a form of volunteering that contributes to a religious enclave. Perhaps the elite social status of the nonreligious private school clientele explains why volunteering among students in this sector does not promote interaction with social differences. Besides the non-religious private school sector, there are no other school sectors that are significantly different from the public school sector on this indicator.

School Sector and Democratic Education

Civic education in schools is not only about what is learned in civics class, but also what students learn through their school experience about what to expect and how to behave in institutions beyond the family. Dreeben (1968) has shown that citizens are formed through the hidden curriculum. Extending that model, this paper has argued that the hidden civic curriculum is not limited to the organizational characteristics that instill the value orientations of individualism, universalism, and achievement. While these are important aspects of a civic education in school, and likely influence the capacity of citizens to participate well in the polity later in life, school experiences for children include the extent and nature of collective identity formation at the school, which contributes to developing civic norms of mutual respect, active participation in the community, and placing the common good above personal interest. An alienating school environment, one without a strong functional community, teaches civic lessons as well. In an alienating school environment, all the training in civics class about participating in democratic life for the common good may be contradicted by a student's school experience. Perhaps cynicism and disengagement from civic participation of the younger

generation is not due to the lack of civics training in class, but to the experience of alienation and isolation in school organizations. Whether students participate out of self-interest later in life, or whether they drop out of public life altogether, may depend on how they experienced schooling in their formative years.

Schools are of course not the sole or perhaps even the most important site for civic socialization. Certainly religious institutions and perhaps even bowling leagues could play a role here. But for most children, schools are their induction into public institutions, and for that reason may have a disproportionate influence on youth expectations for life outside the family. And, simply in terms of time commitment, school is clearly the most significant institution in a child's life beyond the family. The role of schools in socializing children outside the family increases the import of public schools for democratic education (Gutmann 1987). What a student learns in school is likely to have important long-term effects on the nature and extent of their participation in public life. If this is true, the hidden civic curriculum takes on added significance.

Understanding democratic education in schools, then, requires asking questions such as: Are students participating in the building of a collective identity within the school? Are they learning that at times it is necessary, important, and personally satisfying to contribute to the common good? Consideration must be given to whether the school is organized in a way that contributes to developing sociability and to learning to move beyond self-interest. In general, it is necessary to know whether the organizational culture of schools is teaching the importance of participating in the discipline or social control of a group that transcends the self, through which the self is given purpose and

direction. The experience of this type of organization is an important way in which schools can provide an education for civic life.

In this light, conservative Protestant schools may have some advantages in civic education. The communal form of organization at religious schools provides a setting in which collective identity and relational trust allows sociability and other civic orientations to grow and flourish. On measures of relationships between teachers and students, and of student voice in school, conservative Protestant schools appear to be doing well. The difference between religious schools and public schools may reflect the fact that relationships in public schools tend to be constrained by a bureaucratic school organization and contractual forms of trust.

Besides general school climate, there are other important ways that schools educate for civic life. On many of traditional measures of civic education in this paper there is little difference between public and non-Catholic religious schools. The general conclusion is that conservative Protestant schools follow the general model of civic education adopted by public schools. This is consistent with claims of institutional isomorphism within and across school sectors. Public and private schools are quite similar in the percent of students who have had courses that involve issues of politics and government, and the opportunities available in the classroom for building civic skills. Persuasion and debate, and a democratic environment in the classroom is not precluded in an authoritative religious school. It may be that the communal organization in many religious schools offsets the potential negative effect of an environment that demands respect for school authority, and, by extension, school personnel.

The school climate described above facilitates the kind of classroom environment that contributes to a good civic education. For example, teachers are free to include students in classroom life without concern about threats to teacher's authority. Researchers have shown that public schools loss of an effective authority is actually detrimental to a participatory educational experience (Grant 1988; Arum 2003; Damon 1995). Clear roles for school authorities and unquestioned relations between teachers and students may have a positive byproduct for civic education. It is not clear that schools that attempt to create informal and egalitarian relations between teachers and school personnel make communication across positions more likely (Grant 1988). However, the data presented here is not conclusive on this interpretation. The other alternative is simply that egalitarian relations and a participatory classroom environment is embedded in a general cultural model of doing school that is institutionalized within public and private school alike. Whatever the explanation, the result is that there is less difference in some forms of civic education across religion and public sectors than democratic theorists would suggest (see Gutmann 1987; Macedo 2000). At least in the structure of civic education in religious schools and in the higher levels of facilitation and practice of community service and volunteering, religious schools—both Catholic and conservative Protestant—are effective in building the civic skills important for civic participation, which should in turn enhance our democracy.

Conservative Protestant schools may have some civic education advantages, especially in their capacity to pull youth into various types of civic participation. The communal organization at religious schools is more effective in building a strong sense of collective identity. Norms for student civic participation tend to have more legitimacy in

religious schools. Because community service and other forms of civic participation are institutionalized within the communal organization, students are more effectively mobilized into volunteering and community service as an expression of a meaningful collective identity. This contributes to building civic skills, and at least provides opportunities for the practice of altruistic behavior—both of which contribute to forming citizens able to participate in and uphold democratic institutions.

That said, there is little doubt that the results in this paper point to a downside of social capital (Portes and Landolt 1996) in some religious schools, particularly conservative Protestant schools. Bonding social capital helps to solve the mobilization problem, bringing parents and students into a social network of trust and reciprocity, but is not enough. Collective identity built in religious moral communities does not facilitate volunteering and community service unless the school is embedded in “bridging” organizational networks. While non-Catholic religious schools, which would be dominated by conservative Protestant schools, generally follow public school models, there is some evidence of a weaker civic education in these schools. Though the measures are somewhat suspect, the results show some evidence of lower levels of support for free speech among students in non-Catholic religious schools. The fact that student government is not as likely to be found in these schools perhaps reflects the authoritative orientation of conservative Protestant schools. The lower levels of political knowledge of these religious school students may be an outcome of conservative religious communities ambivalence toward secular public life, and this ambivalence may be reinforced in non-Catholic religious schools. The cultural boundary between religious and political worlds is detrimental to civic education. Finally, students in these schools have relatively high

levels of community service participation, but this appears to be generated by church involvement. The non-Catholic religious schools do not promote and seem to diminish civic participation among these students. This may reflect the enclave mentality of some conservative religious groups that are marked by high levels of bonding social capital. At the very least, it reflects the lack of organizational bridges to community service organizations and networks—which are a strength of Catholic schools.

Civic education depends not only what is taught in civics class, but the practices, roles, and expectations that emerge from the organizational culture of the school. Democratic education depends on student experiences of schooling organization as much as on civic curriculum. The organizational basis for civic education of youth may not be found in performance oriented bureaucracies, but the type of collective identity that is rooted in moral communities, which is found in some types of religious schools, in particular Catholic schools. An organizational culture that builds collective identity enhances democratic education by improving opportunities for civic skill building, especially through student government and volunteering experiences. Democratic education will be enhanced to the extent that schools find ways to build meaningful collective identities and foster relational trust and solidarity.

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Chart 1: Students Enjoy School

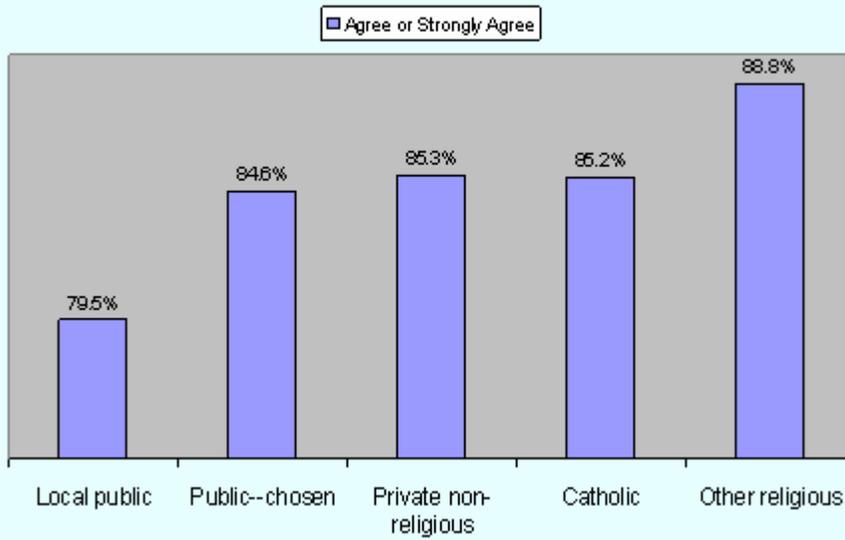


Chart 2: Teachers and Students Respect Each Other

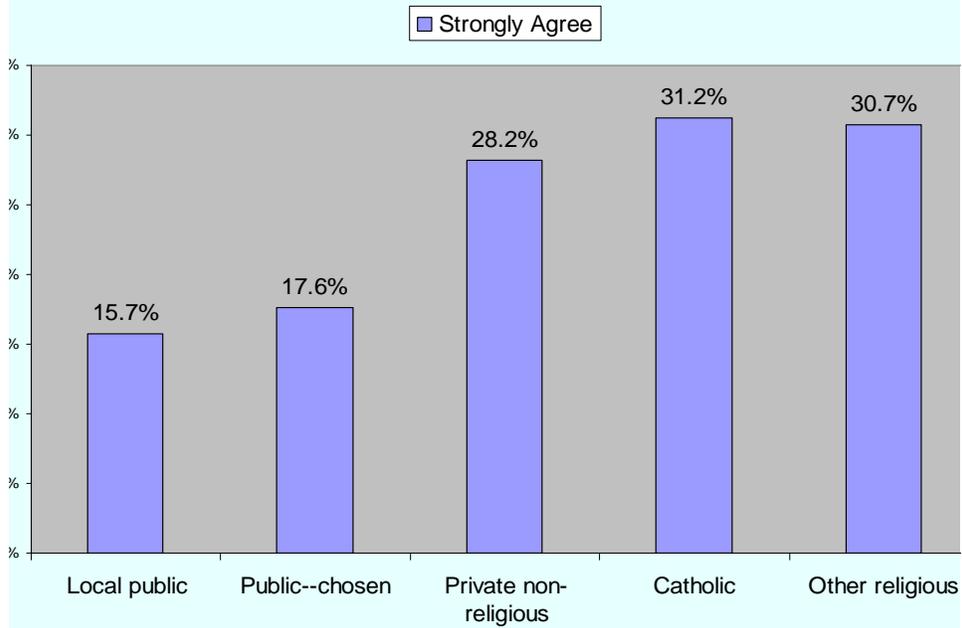


Chart 3: Student Opinions are Listened To

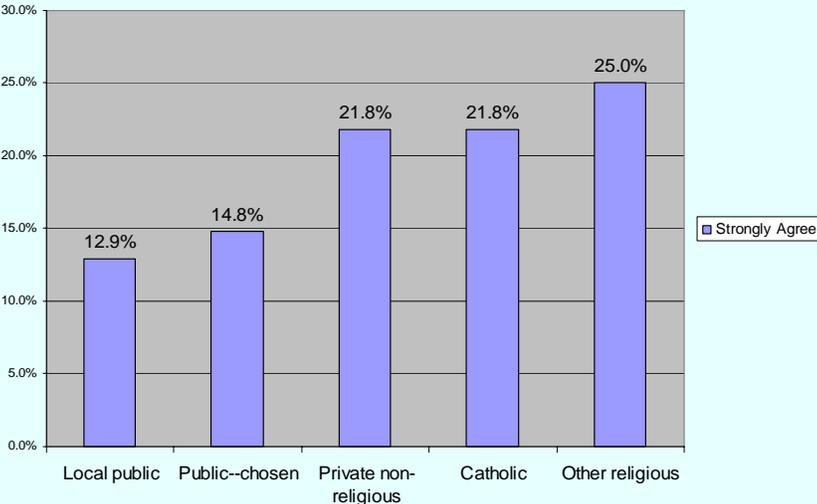


Chart 4: Teacher Maintains Classroom Discipline

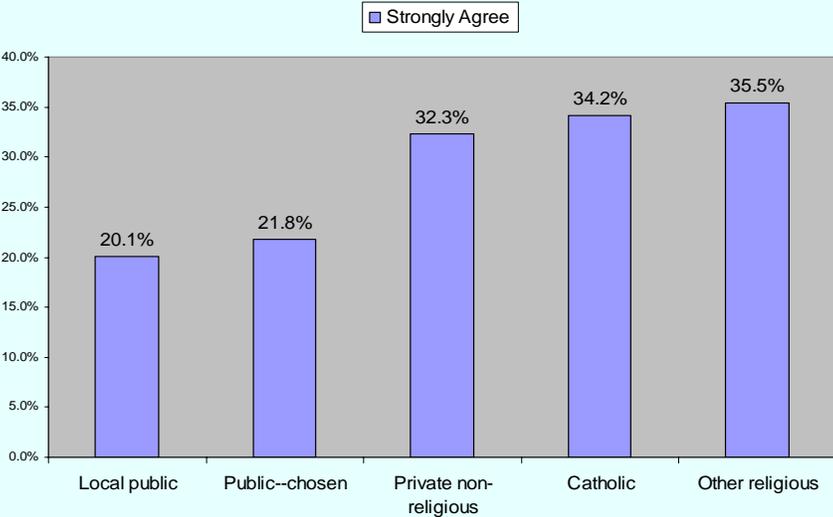


Chart 5: Principal Maintains Good Discipline

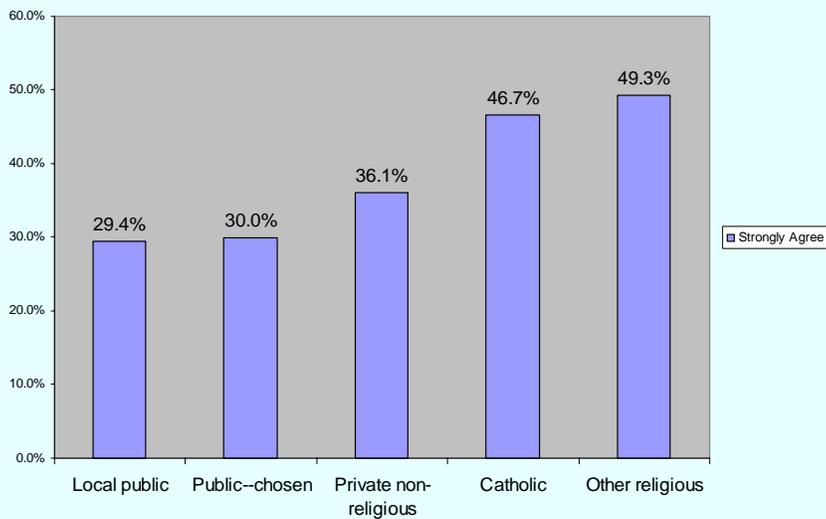


Table 1: Descriptive Data from the 1996 National Household Education Survey, Youth File (N=7,980)

	<u>Mean / Proportion</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>
Local public school	0.768	
Public school--chosen	0.128	
Private non-religious school	0.020	
Catholic school	0.050	
Non-Catholic religious school	0.021	
Age	14.348	
Female	0.488	
Interviewed in Spanish	0.019	
Looked for work in last school year	0.148	
Hours spent working during school year	5.206	0.121
Student grades	3.989	0.013
Discussed future courses or plans after high school	0.326	
Participated in activities outside of school	0.630	
School ethnic distribution	2.250	0.012
<u>Size of student body</u>		
300 to 599	0.299	
600 to 999	0.247	
More than 1,000	0.336	
<u>Residence</u>		
South	0.344	
Midwest	0.240	
West	0.212	
Urban, outside urbanized area	0.146	
Rural	0.249	
<u>Parent and Family Characteristics</u>		
Education	2.976	0.017
Household income	7.031	0.049
Rent home	0.327	
Not receive food stamps	0.847	
Traditional, two-parent family	0.690	
<u>Mother employment status</u>		
No mother in household	0.037	
Part-time work	0.197	
Looking for work	0.034	
Not in labor force	0.224	
Parent expects child to graduate from college	0.833	
Civic participation index	4.147	0.026
Religious service attendance	3.693	0.021

Table 2: Ordered Logistic Regression of School Climate on School Sector, 1996 National Household Education Survey, US 6th-12th Grade Sample (N=7,940)

	Model 1 Enjoy school	Model 2 Teachers & students respect each other	Model 3 Student opinions are listened to	Model 4 Teacher disciplines effectively	Model 5 Principal disciplines effectively
<u>School Sector</u>					
Public school—chosen	0.195*	0.291**	0.182*	0.121	0.090
Private nonreligious school	0.341+	0.905**	0.568**	0.616**	0.391+
Catholic school	0.209	0.910**	0.415**	0.594**	0.772**
Non-Catholic religious school	0.284+	0.751**	0.461*	0.547*	0.833**
<u>Child Characteristics</u>					
Female	0.199**	-0.085	0.007	-0.131*	-0.174**
Black non-Hispanic	0.134	0.417	0.002	0.415	0.415
Latino/Latina	0.374	0.649*	0.606*	0.736**	0.822**
Other race/ethnicity	0.645+	1.031**	0.224	0.723*	0.285
Discuss future plans with family	0.482**	0.107+	0.182**	0.158*	0.283**
Good grades in school	0.342**	0.184**	0.133**	0.176**	0.190**
Participated in out-of-school activity	0.263**	0.067	0.048	0.036	0.009
<u>Family Characteristics</u>					
Parent education	-0.015	-0.020	-0.042	-0.028	-0.010
Household income	-0.030+	0.016	0.017	-0.009	0.015
Not own home	0.033	-0.005	0.142+	0.083	0.175*
Received food stamps in last year	0.196	-0.212+	-0.040	-0.027	-0.169
Traditional family	0.052	-0.036	0.136	0.144+	0.011
Expect child to grad. from college	0.257**	0.022	0.028	-0.104	0.121
Index of civic participation	-0.009	-0.038*	-0.028	0.003	-0.022
Religious service attendance	0.009	0.014	0.050*	0.048*	0.041+
<i>Student view of parent inv. in school</i>					
Less than would like	-0.276*				
More than would like	-0.204*				

+ significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Models also control for age of child, school grade of child, hours child worked per week (logged), child looked for job in last year, interview conducted in Spanish, mother employment status (including mother looking for work), no mother in the home, school size, percent same race/ethnicity in school as child, interaction of percent same race in school and child's race/ethnicity, region, urban/rural residence, non-Hispanic black population in zip code of respondent, racial pluralism of zip code, families in poverty in zip code.

Table 3: Structural Equation Model of Student Perceptions of School Climate on School and Student Characteristics , 1996 National Household Education Survey, US 6th-12th Grade Sample (N=7,940)

	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 3</u>	<u>Model 4</u>
School openness to parent participation (latent variable)			0.399 ***	0.379 ***
<u>School Sector</u>				
Public school—chosen	0.037 +	0.060 ***	0.028	0.035 +
Private nonreligious school	0.226 ***	0.220 ***	0.128 **	0.158 ***
Catholic school	0.291 ***	0.276 ***	0.120 ***	0.140 ***
Non-Catholic religious school	0.315 ***	0.275 ***	0.124 **	0.141 ***
<u>School Characteristics</u>				
300-599 students		0.003	-0.010	-0.011
600-999 students		-0.007	-0.009	-0.008
1,000 or more students		-0.001	-0.003	0.003
75 percent or more nonHispanic white		0.061 ***	0.043 ***	0.053 ***
75 percent or more nonHispanic black		-0.101 ***	-0.090 ***	-0.049
75 percent or more Latino/a		0.083 **	0.087 **	-0.020
75 percent or more other race		-0.092	-0.076	-0.169
<u>Child Characteristics</u>				
Grade 7		-0.172 ***	-0.138 ***	-0.140 ***
Grade 8		-0.231 ***	-0.203 ***	-0.215 ***
Grade 9		-0.326 ***	-0.279 ***	-0.289 ***
Grade 10		-0.391 ***	-0.337 ***	-0.356 ***
Grade 11		-0.362 ***	-0.299 ***	-0.323 ***
Grade 12		-0.396 ***	-0.346 ***	-0.372 ***
NonHispanic black				-0.013
Hispanic				0.141 ***
Other race				0.133 ***
Grades				0.047 ***
Discuss future plans with family				0.054 ***
<u>Family Characteristics</u>				
Parent education				-0.008
Household income				0.003
Not own home				0.034 *
Received food stamps in last year				-0.032
<u>Residential Characteristics (zip code level)</u>				
South				0.021
Midwest				-0.010
West				-0.011
1-99 Percent urban				0.052 **

100 Percent urban	0.036	+
Families in poverty	0.000	
No. nonHispanic blacks	0.002	
Racial heterogeniety (6 races/ethnicities)	-0.129	**

+ significant at .1; * significant at .05; ** significant at .01; *** significant at .001