Civic Purpose in Late Adolescence: Factors that Prevent Decline in Civic Engagement After High School

Abstract

This study investigated the effects of internal and demographic variables on civic development in late adolescence using the construct *civic purpose*. We conducted surveys on civic engagement with 480 high school seniors, and surveyed them again two years later. Using multivariate regression and linear mixed models, we tested the main effects of civic purpose dimensions (beyond-the-self motivation, future civic intention), ethnicity, and education on civic development from Time 1 to Time 2. Results showed that while there is an overall decrease in civic engagement in the transition out of high school, both internal and social factors protected participants from steep civic decline. Interaction effects varied. Ethnicity and education interacted in different ways with the dimensions of civic purpose to predict change in traditional and expressive political engagement, and community service engagement.

Key Words: Civic Development; Adolescence; Purpose; Political Development

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The depressed state of civic engagement in the United States is well-established (for example, see National Conference on Citizenship, 2009; Putnam, 2000). The question of how people become committed civic actors has been a concern of developmental psychologists for some time, especially among those who study adolescent civic development (e.g., Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). Adulthood civic commitment is generally precipitated by participation in civic activity during adolescence (e.g. Hart et al., 2007; McFarland & Thomas, 2006; Nasir & Kirshner, 2003; Youniss & Yates, 1999), however, the connection between high school civic engagement and patterns of civic commitment among adults in the United States is not clear. Although community service requirements in high school get adolescents engaged in civic life and correlate with later participation in both political and community activity (Hart et al., 2007), there is significant decline in civic engagement from high school into early adulthood (e.g., Kirby, Kawashima-Ginsberg, & Godsay, 2011). This transition is a vulnerable time for civic development, when many young people lose the path to civic commitment that they had started on in the structured environment of high school.

Civic educators need to better understand why some adolescents sustain their civic engagement into adulthood, and under what circumstances, so that the supports and opportunities that promote sustained civic commitment can be offered accordingly. In this article, we examine the factors that influence the trajectory of civic development in late adolescence. We emphasize the factors of *motivation* and *intention* as potential supports for civic commitment through the transition out of high school by using a new framework to study youth civic development. This framework, *civic purpose*, goes beyond traditional analyses by positing that unique paths of civic development result from the integration of civic intentions, engagement in civic activity, and

specific sources of motivation. By using the civic purpose framework, and examining how purpose interacts with other factors, such as ethnicity and education, we aim to understand how diverse young people not only become engaged in civic activity, but also sustain their commitment to civic life through challenging life transitions.

Civic Development in Adolescence: Theoretical and Empirical Foundation

Adolescence is a critical time for civic development. In their review, Youniss et al. (1997) argued that this is because civic identity takes shape in adolescence and acts as the mechanism for developing enduring civic commitment. They demonstrated that civic participation in adolescence helped youth develop civic identity, which then led to higher levels of civic engagement in adulthood. A more recent study found that participation in school government or community service in high school affects civic engagement 15 years later or longer (Obradović & Masten, 2007). Students who participated in these activities in high school were more likely to vote and join community organizations as adults than those who did not, apparently because adolescent civic engagement supported academic and social competence, which in turn predicted early adulthood civic engagement.

Although the research clearly shows that adolescent civic participation promotes civic commitment, the overall trends indicate that the path from adolescent to early adulthood civic engagement is uncertain; service activity in high school has increased over recent decades, while civic engagement among young adults has declined (Putnam, 2000; Sax, Astin, Korn, & Mahoney, 1998, 1999; Sherrod, 2003). Moreover, the quality of civic learning experiences may have a greater impact than simply whether or not students were involved in civic activities, suggesting that there is more to civic development than early civic participation. For example, in one study justice-oriented service that exposed students to social inequities was more likely than

general helping activities to raise students' awareness of civic issues and support long-term civic commitment (Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003). In another study, participation in activities rated as high quality, in which students solved real-world problems, interacted with perspectives different from their own, and analyzed the experience, had a more lasting impact on civic engagement than low quality participation (Ferreira, Azevedo, & Menezes, 2012). Mere participation in civic activity had little impact on students' ability to analyze to construct personal meaning from the experience.

Civic development is not only impacted by the amount, type, and quality of civic participation that young people engage in. Adolescents in the United States have different experiences daily, based on racial and socioeconomic inequalities in society, that shape their evolving sense of themselves as citizens and contribute to formation of different civic identities. Whereas Caucasian and affluent youth experience congruity between their daily experiences and the ideals expressed in civic texts, many urban youth of color experience disjuncture between civic ideals and the reality of their lives (Rubin, 2007). From this backdrop of congruity or disjuncture, diverse youth develop differing attitudes toward civic participation. Furthermore, ethnic minority youth experience unequal access to civic learning and opportunities at school and in their communities that lead to lower civic engagement compared to those who live in more affluent and homogeneous communities and attend schools with more college-bound students (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Despite these disparities in adolescent civic participation, high school students from all backgrounds are more involved in civic volunteering than young adults (Kirby et al., 2011), indicating that the transition out of high school is a particularly vulnerable time for civic development regardless of the circumstances. Civic engagement among young adults is lower

than other age groups, and has declined since the 1970s (Galston, 2001; Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012). However, this decline has primarily been experienced by non-college bound youth (NCBY) (Zaff, Youniss, & Gibson, 2009). Young adults who attended college reported higher rates of involvement in most civic activities, including voting, volunteering, boycotting, and "buycotting" than their peers who did not attend college (Jenkins, 2005; Lopez, Kirby, Sagoff, & Kolaczkowski, 2005). Lopez and colleagues proposed two possible reasons for the steeper decline among non-college bound youth: (1) the unbalanced distribution of educational, political, and/or civic resources and opportunities for civic and political activities; and (2) the decrease in community-based avenues for NCBY to engage in civic and political activity (e.g., religious congregations, social movements, and voluntary associations).

These findings are evidence that civic development varies according to the experiences youth are having in society, which are strongly influenced by factors such as ethnicity, education, and the civic opportunities they encounter at school and in their communities. Missing from this body of research is an examination of individual factors, such as motivation, personal goals, and values, and how these factors interact with known significant social factors in early civic development. In this paper, we examine change in civic engagement from late adolescence into early adulthood using a dynamic *civic purpose* framework that integrates the individual factors of personal motivations and intentions with the social and demographic factors known to impact civic development.

Purpose Development

Purpose is an aspiration to do something meaningful with one's life. It is a response to the big life questions, such as *why am I here?* And, *what is my life about?* We have purpose when we strive to understand the ways that we can make a positive difference through our

unique interests and abilities, and actively work to accomplish something that will contribute to the world beyond the self. Purpose typically emerges in adolescence and is believed to give direction and momentum to development (Damon, 2008).

The developmental precursors of purpose are found in the emotional responses of empathy and compassion. In early childhood, we experience these emotions when we see others suffering, and recognize that their suffering can be both caused by and alleviated by human behavior (Malin, Damon, & Ballard, 2015; Malin, Reilly, Quinn, & Moran, 2014). Moral values develop when young people reason about the issues that stir their empathy, for example, by seeking to understand the underlying injustice causing the homelessness they see in their neighborhood (Hoffman, 2000). Throughout adolescence, these emergent moral values shape moral identity (Damon & Gregory, 1997), as this is the time in life when values exploration results in identity formation (Erikson 1968; Marcia, 1966). Purpose can develop when young people reflect on their emerging moral values and set intentions to act on those values to be consistent with their forming identity. This process overlaps with emerging thoughts about what makes life meaningful, and consideration of the domains of life where one can find meaning (DeVogler & Ebersole, 1983).

Civic purpose, defined as a sustained and engaged intention to contribute to the world beyond the self through civic or political action, is specifically a response to issues and concerns that lead to activity in the civic domain, such as through community service, responsible citizenship, or political action. The underlying motivation for civic purpose is the moral values associated with social responsibility, such as helping others, fairness, justice, equality, and rights (Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). Generally, young people develop civic purpose in response to local issues, specifically those that impact their family, friends, and neighbors, or issues that

impact a community that they identify with, such as an immigrant community or the LGBT community (Malin et al., 2015).

Purpose as a Developmental Framework

The purpose framework is built on recent theoretical and empirical work that identified three dimensions that together make up the purpose construct: (1) an *intention* to accomplish something, (2) motivated by a desire to contribute to the world *beyond the self*, and (3) meaningful *engagement* toward accomplishing the intention (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003; Moran, 2009). These three dimensions have been operationalized for research and used to study the presence and development of purpose in adolescence.

The first dimension of purpose is a future-oriented, higher-order aspiration that gives one direction and forward momentum. It is a general intention in that it can be fulfilled in different ways, but also is specific enough to allow for planning and goal-directed action (e.g., the general desire to alleviate poverty could be fulfilled by starting a housing program, donating to a food bank, or studying economic theory). The second dimension is meaningful engagement in activity to accomplish the intention. Without engagement, the intention is a dream or vision of what could be, but is not adequate to provide a sense of purpose. Third, purpose is motivated by a desire to contribute to something larger than the self. This beyond-the-self dimension distinguishes purpose from life goals that are primarily motivated by self-interest or personal gain. Self-fulfilling goals may be important, but they do not give one a sense of purpose in life.

When individuals report having (1) an intention that is (2) motivated by a desire to contribute beyond the self, and (3) engagement in meaningful activity to achieve the intention, we say they have fully realized purpose (Damon et al., 2003). Those who describe having one or two of these dimensions are said to have a precursory form of purpose. For example, those who

have a beyond-the-self intention that they are not acting on are said to be *dreaming*, those who are engaged in beyond-the-self oriented activity without future intentions related to that activity are said to be *dabbling* (Moran, 2009). These precursory forms are not sequential steps to full purpose. They can emerge and disappear in any order and combination. Their presence indicates that an individual is exploring potential purpose, and developing the necessary elements that, if fully integrated may give them a sense of purpose.

Development of full purpose in adolescence depends on life circumstances that influence all three dimensions of purpose. These circumstances include social factors that support or hinder engagement in meaningful prosocial activities, identity formation processes (such as role exploration that causes dramatic shifts in identity in mid-adolescence), and life transitions that catalyze, disrupt, or alter the course of purpose development (Malin et al., 2014; Moran, Bundick, Malin, & Reilly, 2013). In this study, we focus on one of these factors: the life transition that occurs when a young person leaves high school. Existing qualitative research on youth purpose suggests that this transition destabilizes commitment to purpose, but the beyond-the-self motivation driving purpose at this age may contribute to sustained engagement in purposeful activity even when goals and relationships are changing (Malin et al., 2014). In other words, we expect that young people with strong other-oriented civic values, as indicated by beyond-the-self motivations for civic activity, are more likely to sustain their civic engagement through a transition that derails many adolescents from their civic development path.

The Present Study

The present study was designed to see if civic purpose could be used as a framework to better understand civic development from adolescence to adulthood, in particular how the dimensions of civic purpose interact with other influential factors, such as ethnicity and

education, to impact civic development during this time. In an earlier phase of this study, we found that a small but notable percentage of youth are finding civic purpose in their senior year of high school (Malin et al., 2015). They showed purpose in three different types of civic engagement: political activity, community service, and expressive activity. These purposeful adolescents were supported in their civic development by several factors. They had strongly held values about society that compelled them to take civic action, became involved in civic activity in response to identity issues, and were invited to participate in civic activity by adult supporters. In addition to those who were fully purposeful in their civic engagement, some were dabbling in civic activity (moderately engaged but lacking future civic intention), dreaming (expressed future intention but were not currently engaged), or pursuing self-fulfilling civic goals (currently engaged and expressed future intention, but only for self-interested reasons). For each type of civic engagement, about half of the youth sampled did not show any dimensions of civic purpose.

Those preliminary findings provided an overview of the state of civic purpose among older adolescents and the background needed to examine the trajectory of civic development through the transition out of high school. We focused the present analysis on this transition from adolescence to adulthood to improve our understanding of the decline in civic engagement that happens during this time, as demonstrated in the lower levels of civic engagement seen in early adulthood compared to high school students. We used a longitudinal survey design to address the following questions:

1. How do demographic, environmental, and motivational factors impact change in civic intention and civic activity over the transition out of high school?

2. How does civic purpose in high school impact the change in civic activity over this transition?

3. How does civic purpose interact with demographic and environmental factors to impact change in civic activity over this transition?

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were initially recruited from seven high schools in different regions of California. Schools were selected for ethnic, immigrant, and socioeconomic diversity. The first data collection (Time 1) occurred in fall of 2011, when participants were starting their senior year in high school. At that time, 1,578 students completed the survey at school, which is greater than 95% of those who were invited to participate.

The present analysis was conducted with a subset of the original sample that also completed the survey almost two years later. We contacted participants by email and phone to invite them to take the survey again, and 480 of the original participants completed the survey at Time 2. Attrition was largely due to the challenge of locating participants a year after high school graduation. Of the 480 who make up the sample for this analysis, 60.7 % were female, 40.4 % Latino, 34.5 % Asian, 4.7 % Black, 6.1 % white, 9.1 % mixed ethnicity, 5.3 % identified as other ethnicity; and 15.9 % were first generation immigrants. The Time 2 survey took place a year after they had completed high school, and 92% indicated that they were planning to attend college the coming year. Using the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000), 25% self-identified as low socioeconomic status (SES), 62% identified as middle SES, and 1% identified as high SES (12% declined to respond).

Time 1 data collection occurred at the high schools, where students completed the survey online in a computer lab during their economics or government class. Members of our research team were on site during the survey administration to provide instructions and answer questions. At Time 2, we emailed participants a link to the online survey so that they could complete it on a computer of their choosing.

Measures

Civic activities. A 22-item inventory of civic activities was adapted from the Youth Inventory of Involvement (Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Alisat, 2007). Participants were asked to rate how frequently they participated in each activity since starting high school on a 4-point scale (never to regularly). At Time 1, a Principle Axis Factor analysis with Varimax rotation was used with polychoric correlations of the 22 items. The factor analysis confirmed that 15 of the 22 items could be factored into three types of civic engagement: traditional and leadership-oriented political activity, expressive activity, and community service. We repeated the factor analysis with the Time 2 data and found the same categories.

Political activities. For the present analysis, we used six items for political activity (e.g., "run for student government," "represent students at a city council or school board meeting," "attend a demonstration;" Time 1 $\alpha = .71$, Time 2 $\alpha = .79$).

Expressive activities. Four items were identified as expressive political activity (e.g., "use art to express a political opinion," "contact a representative;" Time 1 $\alpha = .70$, Time 2 $\alpha = .75$).

Community service. Five items were identified as community service (e.g., "volunteer in the community," "help out with a fundraiser;" Time 1 $\alpha = .83$, Time 2 $\alpha = .83$). See appendix for full sets of items for all measures used in this analysis.

Civic intention. We measured commitment to future civic intentions with a five-item scale that asked participants to rate how meaningful civic activities were to their life goals on a 5-point Likert scale (Not at all Meaningful to Extremely Meaningful). Items included "being involved in politics," "making a difference through volunteering," and "having an impact on a social or political issue." (Time 1 α = .77, Time 2 α = .81).

Civic motivation. Motivation for civic engagement was measured with a set of 12 items, from which participants selected and ranked their top three. Six of the 12 items were beyond-the-self oriented (e.g., "I wanted to take action on my beliefs," "to do something about an issue I care about") and six were self-oriented (e.g., "it was required for a class," "it sounded fun"). These items were developed through pilot interviews conducted with high school students. Participants in the present study who reported civic involvement were asked to rank their top three civic motivations from these 12 items twice—first for their motivation to political activity, and second for their motivation to volunteer activity.

Demographic and social factors. Participants were asked to select one of the following ethnicity categories: Asian American, African American, Hispanic or Latino, White, mixed ethnicity, and other. They were also asked to indicate whether they and their parents were born in the United States. The Macarthur Scale of Subjective Social Status was used as an indicator of socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000). At Time 2, participants also indicated whether they were planning to attend college the year that they completed the survey.

Analysis

We used several approaches to analyze the change in civic engagement over time, starting with a t-test for a quick overview of our data, followed by multivariate regression to examine how our test factors impacted change in future civic intention and current civic activity,

and finally a series of mixed model analyses to see how dimensions of purpose and other variables might integrate to impact the change in civic activity over time. Prior to running these models, we took the following steps: (1) conducted an attrition analysis to check for bias in the missing data; (2) conducted a nested data analysis to check the potential impact of school attended on our results; and (3) identified the form of civic purpose for each respondent.

Attrition analysis. We examined whether participant attrition from Time 1 to Time 2 was biased by demographic factors (gender, immigrant status, ethnicity, and parents' education) or civic outcomes (civic intention scores, civic activity scores) through Chi-squared tests and correlation analysis. Chi-squared tests indicated that there were significant differences in participants' responding trend at Time 2 according to their demographic features: girls [$\chi (1) = 21.29$, $p < .001$, $V = .12$], second-generation immigrants [$\chi (2) = 15.84$, $p < .001$, $V = .07$], and Asian Americans [$\chi (6) = 30.50$, $p < .001$, $V = .06$] were more likely than others to complete the Time 2 survey. Correlation analyses showed significant positive associations between Time 2 survey participation and initial civic intention [$r (1501) = .12$, $p < .001$], political activity engagement [$r (1430) = .15$, $p < .001$], and community service activity engagement [$r (1544) = .09$, $p < .001$]. However, although the attrition showed some significant biases, the calculated effect sizes were smaller than the guideline for small effect size (.10 for both the chi–squared value and correlation coefficient). This suggests that the statistical significances were due to the large sample size ($N > 1500$), and the attrition biases were very small in practice.

We also examined whether there were significant differences in T1 civic purpose indicators between participants who responded to T2 survey and those who did not. We used a t-test to compare T1 civic intention, political activity engagement, community service engagement and expressive activity engagement between those two groups, to test whether study

participation was correlated with civic intention and engagement in general. The results, shown in Table 1, demonstrated that there were significant differences in T1 civic intention, political activity and community service between T2 respondents and non-respondents, but not in expressive activity. However, effect sizes as determined by Cohen's *d* were small or very small in all domains. Given these small effect sizes, the statistically significant differences are likely due to the large sample size and not the actual size of the differences. Thus, although T2 respondents might have stronger civic intention and more frequent civic engagement compared to non-respondents, the differences between these two groups are not large in practical terms.

In addition to testing for attrition bias from Time 1 to Time 2, we also controlled for potential bias in all subsequent analyses using inverse probability weighting.

Nested data analysis. We conducted a mixed effects model analysis to see if students were nested in schools, as a way to determine whether our results were influenced by school environment factors. To do so, we ran the model with school attended as a random effect, and checked to see if the effect was significant and the interclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was large (> 10%). We found that the random effect of school attended was insignificant in all civic domains ($p > .1$). The calculated ICC values were also very small in all cases (ICC < 1%). Given these results, it is unlikely that the school students attended had an impact on their change in civic activity from Time 1 to Time 2.

Identifying civic purpose. The theoretically-derived construct of purpose used for the mixed model analysis is categorical, as described above (Damon, 2008; Moran, 2009). Therefore, the first step of this phase of our analysis was to determine the form (category) of purpose for each participant. In the present analysis, civic purpose is a predictor variable,

calculated for Time 1 and then used to predict change in civic activity from Time 1 to Time 2, so we only determined the form of purpose for Time 1.

Purpose is indicated by (1) presence of a stable intention or goal, (2) activity directed at achieving the goal, and (3) motivation to contribute to the world beyond the self. Because purpose is indicated by presence of these dimensions, rather than level of the dimensions relative to others, we created binary variables for each of these three dimensions of purpose, assigning a value of "1" to those who highly endorsed the variable and "0" to those who did not. For civic intention, a "1" was assigned to those who scored 4 to 5 on the civic intention scale (indicating that civic life goals were "meaningful" or "extremely meaningful"); for each type of civic activity, a "1" was assigned to those who scored in the top quartile; and for civic motivation, a "1" was assigned to those who ranked one of the beyond-the-self items as their most important motivation for political or volunteer activity. We then used these binary variables to group individuals into forms of civic purpose for each type of civic activity, resulting in variables indicating the categorical form of political purpose, expressive purpose, and community service purpose for each respondent. Those who were high on all three dimensions were labeled *Purpose*, those who were high on civic intention and engagement but lacking beyond-the-self motivation were labeled *Self-fulfilling*, those who were high on civic activity but low on engagement were said to be *Dabbling*, and those who were high on civic intention but lacking engagement were said to be *Dreaming*. Figure 1 shows the outcome of this grouping for each type of civic engagement at Time 1.

Longitudinal analysis. We examined change in the dimensions of civic purpose over time, first using paired t-tests to look for significant change from Time 1 to Time 2 in civic intention, political activity, community service activity, and expressive activity. Following the t-

tests, we used multivariate regression to investigate the factors that contributed to change in the dimensions of civic purpose. Specifically, we ran separate regression models, using the change score from Time 1 to Time 2 for civic intention and each activity type as the outcome variables, to see how each was impacted by demographic factors, college attendance, and the Time 1 scores on each dimension of civic purpose.

Next, we examined the impact of having civic purpose in high school on civic development beyond high school. We used a linear mixed models approach with the purpose category variables (indicating dabbler, dreamer, self-goal oriented, full purpose, or no purpose) to analyze the effect of having expressive, political, or community service purpose in high school on change in the level of the corresponding civic activity. We also used the mixed models to examine how the interaction of purpose, ethnicity, and education impact civic development. A linear mixed models approach is appropriate for use when data is collected from the same individuals at two different time points because it accounts for the non-independence of repeated measures on the same subjects. Additionally, it has the advantage of treating each observation as a separate variable, so fewer cases are lost to missing data deletions.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations for all study variables at both time points.

Overall Change in Dimensions of Civic Purpose

To find out what happens to civic purpose as adolescents transition out of high school, we first conducted paired t-tests to see if there was significant change in civic intention and each type of civic activity (political activity, expressive activity, and community service) from Time 1

to Time 2. Table 3 shows the t-test results, which indicate that there was significant decline in all types of civic activity and non-significant decline in future civic intention. Because the overall decline seen in civic activity may indicate regression to the mean, we conducted further analyses using interaction effects, to see if some interactions might result in greater or lesser decline than others (described below).

Predictors of Change in the Dimensions of Civic Purpose

Next we examined the factors that predicted decline in the dimensions of civic purpose after the transition out of high school. We used multivariate regression models to test whether demographic characteristics, college attendance, level of civic intention at Time 1 and frequency of civic activity at Time 1 predicted change over time in the level of civic intention and frequency of engagement in each type of civic activity. The outcome variables for each model were the change scores (Δ) from Time 1 to Time 2 in civic intention and each type of civic activity.

The regression showed that having a higher score on each civic variable (civic intention and civic activity) at Time 1 predicted steeper decline in the corresponding change variable. For example, having a higher score on civic intention in high school predicted a steeper decline in civic intention after high school. Additionally, attending college had a protective effect, significantly reducing the decline in all civic variables from Time 1 to Time 2, except for traditional political activity. Finally, participants who identified as Asian American had a steeper decline in expressive political activities, especially compared to African American and Latino participants. Table 4 shows the full results of the regression analyses.

Civic Purpose as a Predictor of Early Adulthood Civic Outcomes

Following on the significant overall decline in civic activity found in the regression models, we used mixed model analyses to determine whether being a civic dreamer, dabbler, self-fulfiller, or fully purposeful in high school contributed to or protected students from decline in civic activity after high school. These forms of purpose take a step beyond analyzing each dimension of purpose independently by testing if the integration of dimensions of purpose impacts the trajectory of civic development. Figures 2-4 show the graphs of the main effect of having political, expressive, or community service purpose in high school on the change in the corresponding type of civic activity after high school. Because ethnicity and college attendance were significant predictors of change in civic activity scores in the regression models, we entered these factors into the models as interaction effects. For each type of civic activity (political, expressive, and community service), we first tested the control variables of ethnicity and college attendance, and then entered the form of purpose as the main effect. We used Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) to identify the model with the best fit and conducted post hoc tests using a Sidak adjustment for multiple comparisons.

Political purpose in high school predicting later political activity. In the analysis of political activity, the model with form of purpose and college attendance was the best fit, and the three-way interaction (time*college attendance*political purpose) was significant (χ^2 (3) = 19.42, $p < .001$). Those who were political dabblers in high school (involved in political activity but low on future-oriented civic intention) declined less in political activity than those who were highly involved in political activity *and* high on future-oriented civic intention. High school political dreamers (high on future civic intention, but not currently engaged in activity) also declined significantly. The interaction with college status was evident in the small number of non-college-bound participants who were highly involved in political activity. Non-college-

bound dabblers increased in their political activity, while non-college-bound participants who were highly engaged *and* high on future civic intention declined. Table 5 shows the full results of the mixed model analysis of change in political activity.

Expressive purpose in high school predicting later expressive activity. In the analysis of expressive political activity, the model with form of purpose and ethnicity was the best fit. However, while the interaction of time with form of purpose was significant (χ^2 (4) = 78.25, $p <$ .001), the three-way interaction was not (χ^2 (15) = 11.20, $p =$ .74). Among all ethnic groups, those who had *beyond-the-self* expressive purpose (showing all three dimensions of purpose) were protected from the significant decline in expressive activity seen in those who were highly involved but lacked future-oriented civic intention (dabblers) or beyond-the-self motivation (self-fulfillers). African American participants, unlike all other ethnic groups, did not decline significantly in expressive activity regardless of their form of expressive purpose in high school. Table 6 shows the full results of the mixed model analysis of change in expressive activity.

Community service purpose in high school predicting later community service activity. In the analysis of community service, the model with college attendance and form of purpose and ethnicity was the best fit, and the three-way interaction (time*ethnicity*community service purpose) was significant (χ^2 (14) = 36.56, $p <$ .001). In the overall, those with the lowest levels of community service involvement in high school declined less than those who were highly involved in high school, indicating a floor effect. However, Caucasian participants who were fully purposeful showed less decline than those with any other form of community service purpose. Table 7 shows the full results of the mixed model analysis of change in community service.

Discussion

This study looked at civic development in the transition out of high school using a purpose framework. Purpose is comprised of three integrated factors: (1) a generalized and stable *intention* that reflects one's most deeply held values, (2) *motivation* to contribute to something larger than or beyond the self, and (3) sustained *action* to accomplish the intention. When young people develop purpose by cultivating and integrating these three dimensions, they increase the likelihood that they will stay committed to their goal pursuit over the long run, because they see meaning to what they are doing and are future-directed in their activities. In other words, purposeful young people see their activities and shorter-term goals as part of a larger picture of how they matter in the world and what role they will play in the world looking forward. We analyzed the dimensions of purpose (intention, motivation, activity) in the civic domain as internal factors, interacting with social and demographic factors that are also believed to contribute to civic development and decline at this stage of life. We focused on two factors known to impact civic engagement during late adolescence and early adulthood: ethnicity and education.

Overall, we saw a significant decline in all types of civic activity over the transition out of high school. This result was consistent with previous findings about civic engagement in late adolescence and early adulthood (e.g., Kirby et al., 2011). We also found, consistent with prior research, that ethnicity predicted somewhat different paths of civic development, but college attendance was a stronger predictor than ethnicity of civic engagement after high school (e.g., Zaff et al., 2009). It bears noting, however, that most of our sample (92%) was already attending or planning to attend a two-year or four-year college in the autumn following our summer data collection, and therefore this is not a meaningful finding in itself. The post-high-school civic decline seen in this study and others, especially among non-college-bound youth, likely reflects

the decline in civic requirements students face when they leave the structured high school environment, and lends support to the argument that structured opportunities for civic involvement provided in a school setting are vital to supporting young people's civic development (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003; Flanagan & Levine, 2010). It also likely reflects the specific transition that non-college-bound youth make after high school, as they are more immediately faced with the need to find work and establish adult relationships and livelihood, all of which leave little time to focus on civic participation.

Notable in our study is the finding that African American and Latino participants were more engaged in expressive political activity and more likely to sustain their involvement in expressive political activities compared to other groups. This is an important finding, given that both groups have fewer opportunities for civic engagement and are less likely to have access to civic knowledge compared to their Caucasian and Asian American peers (e.g., Atkins & Hart, 2003; Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2010). Expressive political activities are key to organizing an effective community response to a social issue or concern, and the relatively strong commitment to expressive activities among Latino and African American participants may reflect the issues that were effecting their communities at the time of the study. For example, immigration policy reform such as the anti-immigrant legislation that passed in Arizona in 2010 inspired political involvement among Latino adolescents and young adults, and the shootings of Oscar Grant and Trayvon Martin stirred widespread civic response from African Americans. However, this finding is also in line with research that shows group differences in the impact of parental and cultural factors on youth political socialization. Factors that are socialized in Latino and African American families—religiosity, ethnic identity awareness, ethnic group attachment, and sense of obligation to family—are shown to support prosocial

behaviors and civic activities aimed at advocating for and empowering their own community (e.g., Brittian et al., 2013; Smetana & Metzger, 2005; Youniss et al., 1997; Zaff, Malanchuk, & Eccles, 2008). The socialization often seen among Latino and African American families appears to be an asset for their adolescents' engagement in, and enduring commitment to, certain types of political activities.

The pattern of sustained engagement in expressive political activities among Latino and African American participants was not seen in other types of civic activities. This is likely because young people have different experiences in society based on demographic markers, and these different experiences lead to different patterns of civic engagement. For example, youth in groups that traditionally experience exclusion or marginalization in society might be motivated to civic activity that supports the economic and political interests of their group more so than the interests of broader society (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002). Similarly, immigrant youth appear to be motivated to volunteerism for instrumental reasons more so than concern for social issues or helping others (Ballard, Malin, Porter, Colby, & Damon, 2015). Other research has found differences in civic attitudes and behaviors predicted by ethnicity. Rubin (2007), as cited above, found that youth develop different civic identities based on the congruence or disjuncture they feel between their experiences in society—marked by ethnicity, immigrant status, and socioeconomic status—and what they are taught about civic values in school; and Carlo, Knight, McGinley, Zamboanga, and Jarvis (2010) found that Mexican American and European American adolescents differed in the forms of prosocial behaviors they engage in, possibly related to cultural differences in attitudes about family and communality. Our findings contribute to this important growing body of knowledge about the different civic paths young people take based on

ethnicity, but cautions that ethnic differences are only a very small part of what determines civic development.

By using the civic purpose framework, we found that the internal factors that comprise the dimensions of purpose may also predict the extent of civic decline after high school. A mixed model analysis suggested that the dimensions of purpose, specifically beyond-the-self motivation and future civic intention, play some role in whether young people will sustain their civic engagement beyond high school. Based on previous qualitative findings, we anticipated that adolescents who find purpose in their civic engagement would be more likely to stay committed to it over time, and in particular we expected that beyond-the-self motivation would be a key factor to sustained civic involvement (Malin et al., 2015). Among our sample, this was true for each type of civic activity, though in the case of community service and expressive political activity, it depended on the interaction with ethnicity. Our findings suggest that persistence in each of these types of civic engagement is predicted by a unique interaction of internal and social factors.

Expressive Activities

Two of our categories of civic engagement—community service and political activity— aligned with previous research (e.g., Pancer et al., 2007), but expressive political engagement emerged as a new category in our analysis. The expressive category comprised activities that require cognitive or emotional involvement (contacting a representative about an issue, making art to express a social or political opinion, writing to a newspaper, and wearing clothes with political messaging), more so than the resource-intensive commitments of community service and political activity. These expressive activities are an important point of entry into political life for adolescents who do not have access to more traditional political activities, such as student

representation or leadership, because they require minimal time and political skill. Moreover, young people reinforce their nascent social and political values by developing and sharing them through expressive media, so expressive engagement is a way to develop and sustain a values-driven political identity.

Among our sample, traditionally marginalized ethnic minority youth (African American and Latino) were more likely than other groups to participate in expressive activities. African American youth were also likely to sustain their involvement in these activities regardless of what motivated them. Others were more influenced by the type of motivation that drove them to engage in expressive activities. Those with self-oriented motives decreased their expressive activity involvement more than those with beyond-the-self motives. This suggests that expressive activities are likely to be values-driven in adolescence, rather than being motivated by school requirements or the opportunities that school provides. As such, they may continue to promote civic development through the transition out of high school.

Political Activities

Before they reach voting age, young people are most likely to find opportunities for traditional political involvement at school, for example through student government and organization leadership. These activities show intense commitment from the student, as they require ongoing contribution of time and willingness to learn political skills. Opportunities for this type of engagement decline out of high school, and access to ongoing opportunities can be difficult, although as we saw in our analysis, the decline in these activities was matched by other, non-school-based civic activities. Among our sample, the decline in traditional political activities was mitigated somewhat (though not significantly) by beyond-the-self motivation. This suggests that young people who are engaging in politics to act on their values, or out of concern for moral

or social issues, may be seeking out opportunities for political engagement beyond those offered by their school. However, the decline was not significantly mitigated by beyond-the-self motivation, suggesting that the change in opportunity environment that occurred with the transition out of high school overpowered the motivational factors driving more time- and skill-intensive political engagement.

Having future-oriented civic intention in high school correlated with a significant *decline* in political activity compared to those who did not aspire to long-term political involvement, and this was especially evident among non-college-bound participants. This unexpected finding warrants further research to better understand the relationship between the types of political activity that young people engage in and how they see politics playing a role in their future.

Community Service

Community service is often required in high school, or may benefit students by boosting their college applications. Service requirements are important to civic development. As young people develop empathy, social responsibility, and a sense of justice, they need structured opportunities to act on them, to develop civic efficacy and learn important civic skills (Malin et al., 2015). However, our findings suggest that high school students may too often be encouraged to participate in community service for instrumental reasons, either as a requirement for graduation or as something to write about on their college application. These self-oriented, instrumental motivations did not promote sustained civic development through the transition out of high school. Instead, we saw steep declines in community service among all our study participants, regardless of what motivated them. We saw a slight exception among Caucasian participants, who showed less decline in their community service activity if they were fully purposeful in their high school community service engagement. This suggests they may have

experienced some protection from decline in community service if they were motivated for beyond-the-self reasons.

The explanation for this across-the-board significant decline might be that community service is so frequently required in high school, making it more dependent than political forms of engagement on external motivators and supports. Moreover, high school students might see community service as a way to boost their college applications, making it unnecessary to continue after high school. This hypothesis, if true, would suggest that high schools are encouraging or requiring students to engage in community service for instrumental reasons, without supporting them in developing civic values in conjunction with those activities.

Implications

These findings support theory and exploratory research suggesting that: (1) extrinsic motivations for civic involvement may not sustain lasting civic commitment when the external motivator is removed, and (2) internal forces such as values and beliefs can support and sustain some types of civic commitment (Jones & Hill, 2003; Malin et al., 2015). The implication of these findings is that encouraging adolescents to engage in civic activities using external or self-serving incentives may result in momentary increase in civic participation, but they are unlikely to stay committed to their civic engagement without support in developing and internalizing civic values alongside their civic activities. While some young people experience goal transformation (Colby & Damon, 1992), in which they are exposed to or initiate civic activity for external reasons but then sustain their involvement because it aligns with internal values, this does not happen simply by offering or mandating community service in high school. If the goal is to support young people in developing a meaningful and enduring commitment to civic life,

the focus of civic learning should be on helping them to identify, process, and internalize civic and social moral values.

Limitations of the Study

Although the findings of the present study provide insight for understanding youth civic development, there are several limitations. First, the longitudinal attrition seen in the sample is large and biased according to key predictor and outcome variables. As discussed above, however, the effect sizes of these biases were below threshold, indicating that in practical terms there were no real biases. Second, the sample was selected for maximum diversity and is not representative of the adolescent population in the U.S., and therefore care should be taken in applying these findings. The sample was deliberately skewed in terms of ethnicity and immigration status to provide a much-needed body of data on civic engagement among typically marginalized and under-studied groups. Analysis of civic purpose in a broader sample of young people would be useful for understanding how civic purpose develops under different circumstances. Third, this analysis only considered data collected at two time points, which limits what we can learn about civic development. A longer study that followed adolescents further into adulthood would be valuable for understanding the longer-term outcomes of having civic purpose in adolescence. Moreover, our participants were studied before and after a critical life transition, so it is difficult to know whether our results are the effect of the upheaval of transition or the effect of development. Although there are important reasons for understanding what happens to civic development through such a transition, a longer study could follow participants for several years after high school to gain a better understanding of the effects of both the transition and development.

Conclusion

Civic development of adolescents and young adults is a pressing concern that impacts both the thriving of individuals and the thriving of our democratic society. Young people need support to develop a sense of social responsibility, and to manifest their sense of social responsibility in sustained and effective civic behaviors. Our research showed that external supports and structures for civic participation are vital to youth civic involvement, but are not the only factors to influence civic development in adolescence. We also found that sustained engagement depends on the type of civic activity that young people become involved in, and the type of activity integrates with internal and social factors to predict commitment to civic engagement beyond high school. In particular, being motivated for beyond-the-self, rather than self-oriented or instrumental reasons, increases the likelihood that young people will stay involved in expressive political activities. Moreover, ethnicity was a determining factor in commitment to expressive political activities and community service, but not traditional political activities. This suggests that we need to better understand what inspires diverse young people to not only become engaged in civic activity, but also develop an enduring and meaningful commitment to civic life.

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Table 1

Test of Attrition Bias in Key Variables from Time 1 to Time 2

	T2 Respondents			T2 Non-Respondents			
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*d*
Civic Intention T1	3.52	0.76	476	3.66	0.71	3.48***	0.18
Political Activity T1	1.71	0.62	476	1.56	0.58	4.53***	0.23
Community Service T1	2.83	0.74	476	2.57	0.78	5.84***	0.31
Expressive Activity T1	1.77	0.67	476	1.8	0.72	-0.88	-0.05

Note. n = 1,102. ***p* < .001

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Civic Variables at Both Time Points

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Civic Intent T1												
2. Civic Intent T2	.53**											
3. Political Act. T1	.49**	.32**										
4. Political Act. T2	.28**	.40**	.50**									
5. Expressive Act. T1	.28**	.23**	.41**	.32**								
6. Expressive Act. T2	.22**	.38**	.29**	.55**	.40**							
7. Community Serv. T1	.50**	.36**	.56**	.33**	.37**	.23**						
8. Community Serv. T2	.28**	.40**	.35**	.54**	.24**	.53**	.46**					
9. Political Motive T1	.25**	.26**	.32**	.22**	.15**	.17**	.17**	.23**				
10. Political Motive T2	.10*	.27**	.20**	.35**	.14**	.27**	.10*	.18**	.17**			
11. Volunteer Motive T1	.26**	.18**	.16**	.17**	.16**	.07	.31**	.15**	.20**	.13**		
12. Volunteer Motive T2	.24**	.37**	.25**	.32**	.16**	.26**	.31**	.40**	.11*	.23**	.22**	
13. Asian American	-.00	-.12**	-.03	-.09*	-.12**	-.20**	.17**	.03	-.09	-.12**	.01	-.03
14. Latino	.02	.07	-.10*	-.04	-.06	.13**	-.10*	-.02	-.04	-.03	-.09	.04
15. Caucasian	.03	.04	.10*	.12**	.03	.05	-.04	.02	.16**	.17**	.07	-.02
16. College Bound	.03	.08	.05	.10*	.05	.02	.10*	.13**	.09*	.04	-.00	.02
Mean	3.66	3.62	1.71	1.62	1.77	1.65	2.83	2.31				
SD	.71	.73	.62	.63	.67	.68	.74	.75				

Note. Political and Volunteer Motive: Binary variables (1 = Beyond-the-Self Motivation is top-ranked). T1, T3 = Time 1, Time 3. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3

Paired T-test Results Comparing Civic Purpose Dimension Means (and Standard Deviations)

from Time 1 and Time 2

	Time Point				
	T1	T2	*t*	*d*	*df*
Civic Intention	3.66	3.61	-1.45	.14	452
	(.71)	(.73)			
Political Activity	1.71	1.61	-3.28**	.31	448
	(.62)	(.61)			
Community	2.82	2.30	-14.16***	1.36	433
Service	(.75)	(.75)			
Expressive Activity	1.76	1.63	-3.81***	.36	437
	(.67)	(.65)			

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

Table 4

Multivariate Regression Analyses of Demographic Factors and Time 1 Civic Indicator Scores

Predicting Change in Dimensions of Civic Purpose

Variable	Δ Civic Intention			Δ Political Activity			Δ Community Service			Δ Expressive Activity		
	B	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β	*B*	*SE B*	β
Demographics												
Gender	.02	.07	.01	-.00	.06	-.00	-.05	.08	-.03	.02	.07	.01
SES	-.01	.02	-.03	.03	.01	.08†	.03	.02	.08	.03	.02	.09†
College Bound	.32	.16	.12†	.24	.16	.10	.38	.15	.13*	.29	.11	.11**
African	.09	.21	.03	.12	.19	.04	.29	.17	.08†	.51	.18	.16**
Latino	.08	.07	.06	.01	.07	.01	-.04	.09	-.02	.22	.08	.15**
Caucasian	.00	.14	.00	.14	.12	.05	.18	.16	.06	.15	.13	.05
Mixed	.05	.13	.02	.07	.10	.03	-.17	.12	-.06	.08	.11	.03
US Born	.10	.08	.05	.04	.09	.02	.11	.11	.05	-.04	.10	-.02
Father US Born	-.13	.12	-.05	-.12	.10	-.05	-.18	.12	-.06	-.03	.09	-.01
Mother US Born	.13	.15	.03	.02	.16	.01	-.04	.17	-.01	.20	.16	.04
T1 Scores												
Civic Intention	-.53	.07	-.54***	.00	.06	.00	.01	.07	.01	.03	.05	.03
Political Activity	.02	.06	.01	-.63	.08	-.60***	.08	.08	.06	.11	.08	.09
Community Service	.07	.06	.08	.03	.05	.04	-.64	.07	-.60***	.06	.06	.06
Expressive Activity	.10	.06	.09†	.16	.06	.17**	.08	.06	.07	-.71	.06	-.64***
BTS	.10	.08	.06	.08	.06	.05	.14	.08	.09†	.07	.07	.04
R^2		.25			.28			.34			.39	
F		5.83***			8.34***			12.28***			13.44***	

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

Table 5

Mixed Model Analysis of Political Form of Purpose at Time 1 and Expected College Attendance

Predicting Change in Political Activity

Time 1 Purpose	College Bound	Mean Difference (Time 2 - Time 1)	SE	95% CI	
				Lower	Upper
No Purpose	Yes	.070	.039	-.007	.147
(*N* = 248)	No	-.130	.139	-.403	.144
Dreaming	Yes	-.018	.059	-.135	.098
(*N* = 112)	No	-.347*	.170	-.682	-.012
Dabbling	Yes	-.579***	.129	-.833	-.326
(*N* = 23)	No	.667	.418	-.154	1.487
Self-Fulfilling	Yes	-.745***	.101	-.944	-.546
(*N* = 36)	No	-.833*	.418	-1.654	-.013
Purpose	Yes	-.466***	.112	-.686	-.246
(*N* = 29)	No	.	.	.	.

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

Table 6

Mixed Model Analysis of Expressive Form of Purpose at Time 1 and Ethnicity Predicting

Change in Expressive Activity

| Time 1 Purpose	Ethnicity	Mean Difference (Time 2 - Time 1)	SE	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
No Purpose	Asian American	.003	.063	-.122	.127
(*N* = 218)	African American	.656**	.213	.238	1.074
	Latino	.161*	.069	.026	.296
	Caucasian	.044	.146	-.243	.331
	Mixed Ethnicity	.029	.133	-.233	.291
Dreaming	Asian American	-.045	.092	-.227	.136
(*N* = 107)	African American	.277	.290	-.292	.846
	Latino	.312***	.091	.134	.491
	Caucasian	.375	.213	-.043	.793
	Mixed Ethnicity	.355	.239	-.115	.825
Dabbling	Asian American	-1.000***	.146	-1.287	-.713
(*N* = 53)	African American	-.750**	.245	-1.233	-.267
	Latino	-.561***	.131	-.819	-.303
	Caucasian	-.875*	.425	-1.711	-.039
	Mixed Ethnicity	-1.000***	.269	-1.529	-.471
Self-Fulfilling	Asian American	-1.075***	.190	-1.449	-.701
(*N* = 46)	African American	-.583	.347	-1.266	.099
	Latino	-1.006***	.122	-1.245	-.766
	Caucasian	-.875**	.301	-1.466	-.284
	Mixed Ethnicity	-1.000**	.347	-1.682	-.318
Purpose	Asian American	-.450	.269	-.979	.079
(*N* = 25)	African American	.	.	.	.
	Latino	-.280	.197	-.667	.107
	Caucasian	-.395	.331	-1.046	.256
	Mixed Ethnicity	-.366	.290	-.936	.203

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

Table 7

Mixed Model Analysis of Community Service Purpose at Time 1 and Ethnicity Predicting

Change in Community Service Activity

Time 1 Purpose	Ethnicity	Mean Difference (Time 2 - Time 1)	SE	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
No Purpose	Asian American	-.424***	.075	-.573	-.276
(*N* = 232)	African American	.154	.213	-.309	.617
	Latino	-.292***	.073	-.436	-.147
	Caucasian	-.100	.139	-.394	.194
	Mixed Ethnicity	-.365*	.130	-.636	-.095
Dreaming	Asian American	-.500**	.143	-.798	-.202
(*N* = 91)	African American	-.200	.490	-1.759	1.359
	Latino	-.391**	.129	-.651	-.131
	Caucasian	-.333	.345	-1.128	.462
	Mixed Ethnicity	-.050	.150	-.527	.427
Dabbling	Asian American	-1.033***	.121	-1.283	-.783
(*N* = 42)	African American	.	.	.	.
	Latino	-1.075**	.288	-1.755	-.395
	Caucasian	-1.100	.500	-7.453	5.253
	Mixed Ethnicity	-1.150	.618	-3.118	.818
Self-Fulfilling	Asian American	-1.000***	.171	-1.365	-.635
(*N* = 38)	African American	.	.	.	.
	Latino	-.800***	.171	-1.162	-.438
	Caucasian	-.867	.481	-2.935	1.202
	Mixed Ethnicity	-.200	.400	-5.282	4.882
Purpose	Asian American	-1.082***	.150	-1.400	-.765
(*N* = 47)	African American	-1.600	.200	-4.141	.941
	Latino	-.938***	.186	-1.334	-.541
	Caucasian	-.333	.467	-2.341	1.675
	Mixed Ethnicity	-1.350***	.213	-1.854	-.846

$* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001$
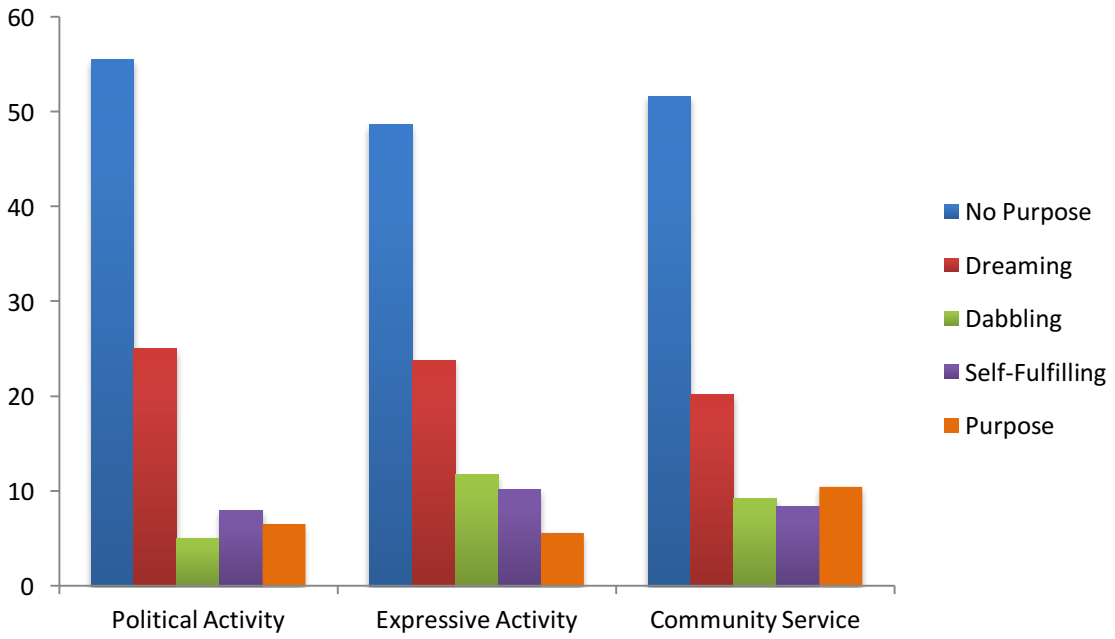
Figure 1. Percent of participants with each form of purpose for each type of civic activity at Time 1.
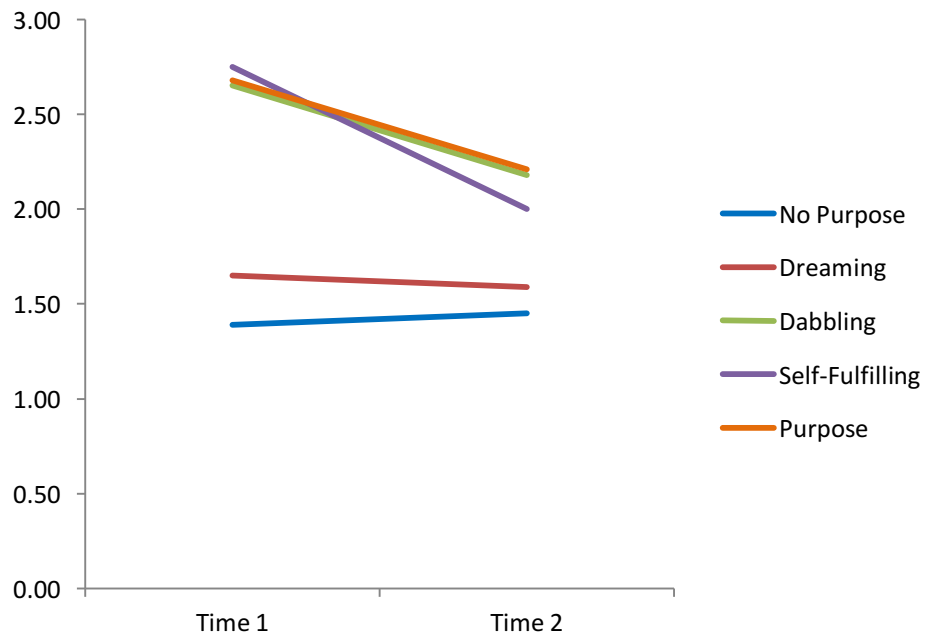
Figure 2. Change in political activity mean over time by form of political purpose at Time 1.
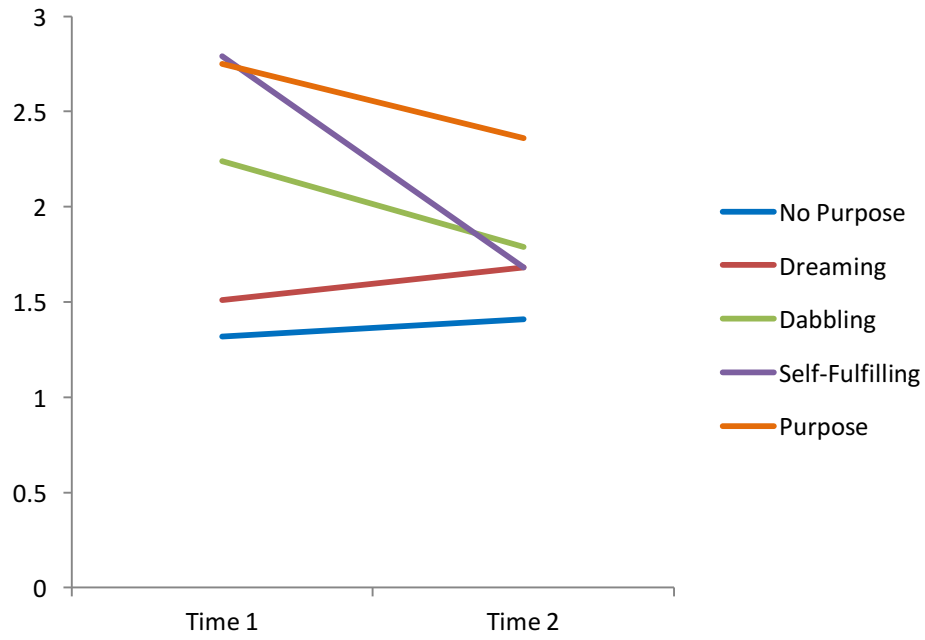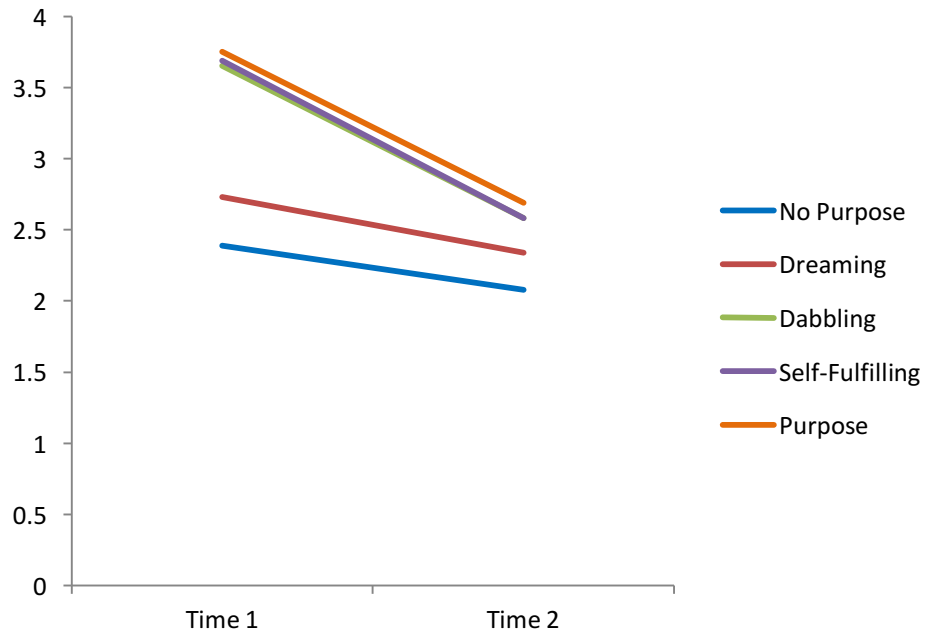
Figure 3. Change in expressive activity mean over time by form of expressive purpose at Time 1.

Figure 4. Change in community service mean over time by form of community service purpose at Time 1

Appendix

Measures Used in the Analysis

Civic Activities

How often have you have participated in each of the following activities since the time you

started high school? (4-points, Never—Regularly)

1. Took care of other families' children (unpaid)

2. Did things to help improve your neighborhood (e.g., helped clean neighborhood)

3. Held a leadership position in a school club

4. Signed a petition

5. Attended a protest march, meeting or demonstration

6. Helped people who were new to the country

7. Ran for a position in student government

8. Earned money to support my family

9. Represented the students at my school at a city council or school board meeting

10. Interacted with people or groups about political issues

11. Documented or discussed political and social issues through the internet (facebook,

    twitter, blog, myspace, youtube)

12. Visited or helped out people who were sick

13. Helped with a fund-raising project

14. Gave help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides) to friends or classmates who needed it.

15. Wrote a letter to a school or community newspaper or publication

16. Contacted a political representative to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue

17. Volunteered at a school event

18. Gave money to a cause

19. Volunteered with a community service organization

20. Provided care for younger siblings, disabled, or elderly members of my family

21. Expressed my own opinions or beliefs about issues through clothing, buttons, or bumper stickers

22. Used art, music or digital media (art/graffiti/music/spoken word/dance/videos/rap) to express my views about political or social issues

Future Civic Intention Scale

Thinking about your future, how meaningful are the following goals in your life?

(5-points, Not at all Meaningful—Extremely Meaningful)

1. Being involved in politics

2. Making a difference through volunteering

3. Becoming a leader in my community

4. Making positive changes in my community

5. Having an impact on a social cause or issue that is important to me

Political and Volunteer Motivations

People become involved in political/volunteer activities for many reasons. Think about the political/volunteer activities you have been involved in since you have been in high school. Please rank THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT REASONS that you became involved in political/volunteer activities by writing the numbers 1, 2, and 3 next to the three most important reasons.

Beyond-the-self Reasons

1. To do something about an issue I care about.

2. I wanted to take action on my beliefs.

3. It is important for my religious/ethnic/cultural group.

4. I wanted to be the kind of person who helps others.

5. I've been given a lot; I want to give back.

6. I became upset by something I saw happening.

Self-oriented Reasons

7. It is required at school.

8. It makes me feel good about myself.

9. To further my education or career goals.

10. Somebody asked or encouraged me to participate.

11. To build skills or prepare for the future.

12. It sounded fun.