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# The Impact of Community Service Learning Upon the Expected Political Voice of Participating College Students

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## Abstract

This study considered the impact of the SERVE Program at Ignatius University upon participating students' expected political involvement. The SERVE Program is a community service learning program sponsored jointly by Ignatius University's philosophy and theology departments. Through a mixed methods research design, the authors found that Ignatius University students participating in the SERVE Program demonstrated statistically significant increases in their expected political voice in comparison with peers in a control group. Qualitative interviews with SERVE participants revealed that the program increased students' awareness of political and social issues; heightened their commitment to philanthropy; fostered their interest in pursuing socially responsible work; and strengthened their commitment to working for social change.

## Keywords

civic engagement, college issues, positive youth development, emerging adulthood

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Adolescents and emerging adults in the United States are participating in community service and community service learning experiences in record numbers. In 2006, more than 3.3 million college-aged Americans reported engaging in community service (Dolte, Cramer, Dietz, & Grimm, 2006). According to a 2008 survey, 65% of American college students described opportunities for community service on their respective campuses (Liu, Ruiz, DeAngelo, & Pryor, 2009). However, it is not clear whether this enthusiasm for community service has been accompanied by an equivalent surge in other forms of civic engagement. The Coalition for Civic Engagement and Leadership defines civic engagement as “acting upon a heightened sense of responsibility to one’s communities. This includes a wide range of activities, including . . . taking an active role in the political process; participating actively in public life, public problem solving and community service; [and] assuming leadership and membership roles in organizations” (CCEL, 2010).

A number of scholars have expressed concerns about the civic participation of contemporary emerging adults. According to Beaumont, Colby, Erlich, and Torney-Purta (2009), “A growing body of research shows that each generation of Americans has been less politically engaged than preceding generations” (p. 249). Likewise, a study by the National Association of the Secretaries of State (1999) concluded that, despite widespread involvement in community service, there is little interest among adolescents and emerging adults in other forms of civic activity. Finally, Damon (2008) has reported that “There has never been a time in American history when so small a proportion of young people between the ages of twenty and thirty have sought or accepted leadership roles in governmental or civic organizations” (p. 174).

On the other hand, after reaching a historic low in the 1996 presidential election, voter turnout among youth 18 to 24 jumped from 38% in 2000 to 47% in 2004 to 48.5% in 2008 (CIRCLE, 2010). Moreover, more than 50% of young adults report using online social networking sites such as Facebook to address social issues—a higher percentage than any other demographic of Americans (NCOC, 2008). In reference to this proclivity for online activism, Yale junior Nicholas Handler (2007) has asserted,

The real energy in campus activism is on the Internet, with websites like Moveon.org. It is in the rapidly developing ability to communicate ideas and frustration in chat rooms instead of on the streets . . . Perhaps when our parents finally stop pointing out the things that we are not, the stories that we do not write, they will see the threads of our narrative begin to come together. (p. A36)

Handler's words underscore the idea that changing modes of activism and engagement pose new challenges for gauging the civic commitments of emerging adults.

Perhaps, as a result of these challenges, the relationship between community service participation and other forms of civic engagement continues to be debated by educators and researchers. In order to investigate this relationship, this study considered the impact upon college students' expected political voice of a community service learning program at Ignatius University which combined academic study of philosophy and theology with sustained community service.<sup>1</sup> Our goal was to offer greater clarity to both scholars and educators about the relationship (or lack thereof) between community service learning and other forms of civic engagement.

### **Ignatius University and the SERVE Program**

Ignatius University is a competitive Catholic university in a large American city, and the SERVE Program is a 12-credit, year-long course through which Ignatius University students can meet their philosophy and theology requirements. According to the SERVE Program's website, "The mission of the SERVE Program is to educate our students about social injustice by putting them into direct contact with marginalized communities and social change organizations and by encouraging discussion on classic and contemporary works of philosophy and theology."

The academic component of the SERVE Program is a year-long course in philosophy and theology entitled "Person and Social Responsibility." Students meet three times a week for lecture and participate in a weekly discussion section. Although the content of the SERVE course varies somewhat across the 12 philosophy and theology faculty members who teach in the program, typical readings include works by Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Foucault, Freire, Malcolm X, and Jonathan Kozol. A syllabus for the SERVE Program is included as Appendix A.

In addition to this academic course, all Ignatius University students participating in the SERVE Program choose a community service project from a menu of more than 50 choices that include tutoring urban elementary school students, volunteering at a suicide hotline, working in an emergency room, helping low-income families apply for affordable housing, and tutoring prison inmates working toward their GEDs. Students devote 10 hours a week to their respective placements for the entire academic year.

Every year, nearly 500 Ignatius University students express interest in the 400 seats available in the program, which the SERVE Program assigns via a

randomized registration lottery. As a result of this randomized assignment process as well as the relatively large number of students who participate in SERVE each year, this investigation of the SERVE Program offered robust insights about the impact of the program upon the expected political voice of participants. The research questions guiding our investigation were the following:

1. What impact does the SERVE Program have upon participants' expected political voice?
2. How do SERVE participants describe and understand the impact of SERVE upon their participation in other forms of civic engagement?

## **Research Context**

A robust body of research has documented that community service learning experiences can increase students' confidence in their ability to influence social issues (Giles & Eyler, 1994); deepen their commitment to helping others (Jones & Abes, 2004; Markus, Howard, & King, 1993; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000); strengthen their moral reasoning ability and understanding of social problems (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Boss, 1994); increase their racial and religious tolerance (Barber et al., 1997; Myers-Lipton, 1998); and reduce their tendency to believe in stereotypes about marginalized groups (Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Greene & Diehm, 1995). As noted in this article's introduction, however, the relationship between community service learning and other forms of civic engagement is less clear.

## ***Community Service Learning and Civic Identity***

Erikson (1968) characterized adolescence as the stage in life where young people begin to shape their mature adult identities by seeking out "values and ideologies that transcend the immediate concerns of family and self" (p. 32). Erikson defined ideology as "a system of ideas that provides a convincing world image" and suggested that adolescents require exposure to such ideological structures in order to organize their experiences and growing understanding of the world (p. 31).

Erikson (1968) conceived of the "identity crisis" as occurring during adolescence; however, Arnett (2000, 2004) has argued that societal factors such as the increase in age of those entering marriage and parenthood as well as the "prolonged pursuit" of higher education have shifted the period of primary identity exploration from adolescence to the period during which an individual

is approximately 18 to 25 years old. Arnett (2000) refers to this period of primary identity exploration—a period which encompasses the college years—as *emerging adulthood*.

A number of scholars have applied Erikson and Arnett's frameworks to the development of civic identity (Damon, 2008; Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, & Sheblanova, 1998; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). Damon (2008) has asserted that "There is reason to believe that a person's crucial orientations to life incubate during adolescence. If civic concern is not among them, it may never arise" (p. 57). Likewise, Flanagan and colleagues (1998) have argued that it is crucial to offer experiences to emerging adults that help them "develop an understanding of themselves as civic actors" (p. 458).

Youniss and colleagues (Yates & Youniss, 1996; Youniss et al., 1997; Youniss & Yates, 1997; Youniss, 2009) have asserted that community service experiences are a key mechanism for fostering the civic identity of adolescents and emerging adults. According to Youniss and Yates (1997), such experiences introduce adolescents and emerging adults "to the basic roles and processes required for adult civic engagement" and also help these young people to "incorporate civic involvement into their identity during an opportune [developmental] moment" (p. 622). In this formulation, much of the influence of the service-learning experience stems from its "collective component" (p. 625). These scholars assert that community service experiences lead adolescents and emerging adults into impactful "participatory experiences" with both the recipients of the service as well as the professionals organizing the service experience. These experiences "can promote a heightened and broadened sense of connection to other people . . . [and] encourage reflections on moral and political questions" (Yates & Youniss, 1996, p. 87). Moreover, Youniss and Yates (1997) suggest that "Many youth organizations typically provide direct exposure to explicit ideological orientations or worldviews . . . Membership in groups allows youth to test ideological positions that can then be rejected or built into their developing ideologies" (p. 623). In short, these scholars conceive of organized community service experiences as an important mechanism by which adolescents and emerging adults can integrate a civic component into their development of a mature adult identity.

It should be noted that adolescents and emerging adults from affluent backgrounds are typically presented with many more opportunities to participate in community service and other types of civic learning than their peers from poor and working-class households (Flanagan, Levine, & Settersten, 2009; Hodgkinson, 1995; Kahne & Middaugh, 2009; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Hodgkinson (1995) has reported that adolescents from households

with incomes above US\$50,000 are almost three times more likely to have been asked to volunteer than adolescents from households with incomes below US\$10,000. Kahne and Middaugh (2009) found that high school students from privileged backgrounds and attending schools in communities with high socioeconomic status (SES) are more likely to study the Constitution, take part in role-playing or mock trials, and be offered opportunities to participate in community service than students from poor or working-class families and attending low-SES schools. Moreover, Flanagan et al. (2009) have reported on significant gaps between young adults with college experience versus young adults who have never attended college on measures such as group membership, religious attendance, union membership, reading the newspaper, volunteerism, and participation in community projects. As college attendance is highly correlated with SES (Dynarski & Scott-Clayton, 2008), one might reasonably assert that there is a significant social class divide in the United States in both civic learning and civic participation.

### *Community Service Learning and Civic Engagement*

Youniss and colleagues (Yates & Youniss, 1996; Youniss et al., 1997; Youniss & Yates, 1997) have positioned community service learning experiences as an important component of their theoretical framework for the development of civic identity; however, there remain significant questions in the research literature about the relationship between community service learning and other forms of civic engagement. On one hand, several scholars have reported a positive relationship between participation in a service-learning program and civic attitudes and behaviors (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). Myers-Lipton (1998) found that college students participating in a service-learning experience demonstrated significant changes in their sense of civic responsibility and commitment to civic behaviors in comparison with college students involved in noncourse-related community service and students not involved at all in community service. Likewise, Mabry's (1998) study of service-learning experiences across 23 different universities found that these experiences had a significant, positive effect upon the civic attitudes of those students with little prior community service experience. Finally, Rice and Brown (1998) reported that undergraduate participants in a required service-learning course scored significantly higher on a civic participation scale at the conclusion of the course, and Denson, Vogelgesang, and Saenz (2005) found that college students who participated in service-learning in college were more politically engaged 6 years out of college than peers who had not engaged in service during college.

Other scholars, however, have reported that there is little evidence of a positive relationship between participation in service-learning and civic behaviors such as voting, contacting public officials, or becoming engaged in community affairs (Kirlin, 2002; Perry & Katula, 2001). In a study of college students participating in both service-learning experiences and community service experiences, Hunter and Brisbin (2000) found that neither of these service experiences significantly impacted participating students' beliefs about politics, political elections, elected officials, or their own roles as citizens. These scholars concluded that "Service learning, even with explicit classroom discussion . . . is not a miracle cure for students' political apathy, civic disengagement, or lack of support for the values supporting pluralist participatory democracy" (p. 625). Likewise, McAdam and Brandt's (2009) recent study of the public service program Teach For America found that alumni of the program demonstrated lower levels of voting, charitable giving, and civic engagement than a comparable peer group. According to McAdam and Brandt, these findings cast doubt upon the "somewhat naïve consensus among educators, policy folks, and scholars that there is a clear causal relationship between participation in community service and other forms of civic engagement" (Fairbanks, 2010, p. 10).

A number of scholars have offered explanations for this seeming division between service and other forms of civic engagement. According to a study by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (1999), more than 90% of the community service experiences offered to college students entail direct service such as tutoring or serving food rather than political advocacy or community organizing. Walker (2002) has asserted that such a ubiquitous focus on direct service "can encourage students to think that their individual actions are enough and that focusing on larger structural issues is not necessary" (p. 186). Likewise, Barber (1984) has asserted that service-learning programs "though which the lucky serve the needy may help illuminate our humanity, but they cannot . . . create a sense of common responsibility connected to liberty, nor provide integral solutions to structural problems" (p. 235). Battistoni (1997) and Boyte (1991) have gone even further in reporting that many participants in service-learning programs conceive of their service as an "antidote to politics" or an "alternative to politics" rather than a bridge to greater political and civic engagement.

## **Method**

This study's treatment group consisted of 362 Ignatius University students enrolled in the SERVE Program during the 2008-2009 academic year, and

**Table 1.** Demographic Comparison Between SERVE Participants and Control Group by Race ( $n = 399$ )

	N	Race					
		African American	Asian American	White	Latino	Biracial	Other
SERVE participants	362	21	40	244	30	16	11
Control group	37	3	8	20	2	2	2

**Table 2.** Demographic Comparison Between SERVE Participants and Control Group by Religion ( $n = 399$ )

	N	Religion							
		Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	No religion	Other
SERVE participants	362	81	215	6	5	7	1	31	16
Control group	37	7	23	1	0	1	1	2	2

the control group consisted of 37 Ignatius University students who sought to enroll in the SERVE Program during the 2008-2009 academic year but who were randomly assigned to the program's wait list. The effects of such disproportionate group sizes upon this study's findings are considered in the Discussion.

The Ignatius University students in the treatment and control groups were proportionally similar in terms of gender, race, SES, and religion. The treatment group was composed of 222 female students and 140 male students, whereas the control group was composed of 25 female students and 12 male students. As the SERVE Program is intended for sophomores at Ignatius University, 393 of the 399 participants were between the ages of 18 and 21 years. The demographic characteristics of the two groups in terms of race, religion, and SES are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

### Data Collection

All the students in the treatment and control groups completed surveys in September of 2008 (Time 1) and then in May of 2009 (Time 2). These surveys

**Table 3.** Demographic Comparison Between SERVE Participants and Control Group by Social Class ( $n = 399$ )

	N	Race					No response
		Upper class	Upper-middle class	Middle class	Lower-middle class	Working class	
SERVE participants	362	44	190	85	22	21	0
Control group	37	1	15	14	1	5	1

requested demographic information about participants' gender, religion, religiosity, social class, race, political affiliation, and so on. Also, embedded within this survey tool were items adapted from a number of scales including Belief in a Just World (Peplau & Tyler, 1975), Expected Political Voice (Beaumont et al., 2009), and Survey About Poverty in America (NPR-Kaiser-Harvard, 2001).

Three hundred eighty-six students in the treatment group completed the original survey administered in September of 2008 (Time 1), and then 362 of these students completed the follow-up survey administered in May of 2009 (Time 2). This high participation rate was due to the SERVE faculty's mandate to complete the pre- and postsurveys as a course requirement. In the control group, 48 students completed the initial survey in September of 2008 (Time 1), and 37 completed the follow-up survey in May of 2009 (Time 2). Students in the control group received a US\$20 stipend for completion of these surveys.

Qualitative interviews were also conducted in April of 2009 with a diverse group of 30 Ignatius University students enrolled in the SERVE Program. To select these 30 participants, we requested that the 12 Ignatius University faculty members who taught in the SERVE Program nominate 3 to 4 students apiece who could offer diverse perspectives on the SERVE Program. These students were then contacted and invited to participate in an interview about their experiences in the program. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour and was sufficiently structured to ensure that questions posed to students were open ended, clear, and not overly complex (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Interview questions focused on students' motivation for participating in the SERVE Program; their experiences in the SERVE class; their experiences at their respective service placements, particularly impactful assigned readings;

their present involvement in activities related to social action; and their expected future involvement in activities related to social action.

## Measures

This article focuses on participants' results on the Expected Political Voice measure (see Seider, Rabinowicz, & Gillmor, IN PRESS for significant effects on students' public service motivation). The Expected Political Voice measure consisted of 10 survey items adapted from Beaumont et al.'s (2009) Survey of Political Involvement. These scholars define political involvement as "activities intended to influence social and political institutions, beliefs, or practices and to affect processes and policies related to community welfare, whether that community is local, state, or national or international" (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003, pp. 18-19). The survey items from this measure focused on "expected political voice" asked participants about "activities related to expressing political opinions or exercising one's political voice" (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007, p. 18). These survey items are presented below in Table 4. Participants responded to these items along a 5-point scale that ranged from *will definitely NOT do this now or in the future* to *will definitely do this now or in the future*. If one recalls the broad definition of civic engagement presented in this study's Introduction section, "expected political voice" might reasonably be characterized as one mechanism for "taking an active role in the political process; [and] participating actively in public life, public problem solving and community service" (CCEL, 2010).

A principal components analysis (PCA) indicated that one key construct appeared to be measured by the Expected Political Voice measure, with the first component accounting for 49% of the standardized units of variance (eigenvalue = 4.93) and showing very good internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .88$ ).

## Quantitative Data Analysis

The 362 Ignatius University students participating in the SERVE Program were "nested" within SERVE sections (i.e., classes) taught by 12 different professors. To account for the nested structure of the data set, we specified a multilevel model to examine the impact of the SERVE Program upon participating students while controlling for select background characteristics of the particular SERVE section in which students were nested (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). We also considered several potential individual-level and section-level moderators.

**Table 4.** Expected Political Voice Measure

Question No.	Statement
1	Contact or visit a public official to express your opinion
2	Contact a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue
3	Call in to a radio or television talk show to express your opinion
4	Write a comment on a political blog
5	Take part in a protest, march, or demonstration
6	Sign a written or email petition about a political or social issue
7	NOT buy something because you dislike the conditions under which it was made
8	Go door to door to campaign for a political cause
9	Work together with others to solve a problem in the community where you live
10	Run for a political position at the local, state, or national level

Individual-level student data (Level 1) include independent variables such as gender, race, religiosity, and pretreatment beliefs on the Expected Political Voice measure. SERVE section-level data (Level 2) include independent variables such as participation in the SERVE Program; the particular faculty member teaching the section in which a student is enrolled; and whether that faculty member is a member of Ignatius University's philosophy or theology faculty. The full list of tested variables is presented in Appendix B. The independent variables for the final fitted model can be seen below for student  $j$  in SERVE section  $i$ :

Post-Treatment Expected Political Voice $_{ij}$  =  $\beta_0$  +  $\beta_1$  Poverty in Family $_{ij}$  +  $\beta_2$  Private School $_{ij}$  +  $\beta_3$  Initial Expected Political Voice $_{ij}$  +  $\beta_4$  SERVE Treatment $_i$  +  $\beta_5$  SERVE Professor $_i$  + ( $r_{ij}$  +  $u_i$ )

In this model,  $\beta_0$  is the intercept parameter,  $\beta_1$  through  $\beta_3$  represent the effects of student-level moderators on the outcome,  $\beta_4$  represents the main effect of treatment on the outcome,  $\beta_5$  represents the effect of the student's SERVE professor,  $r_{ij}$  represents the within-classroom variance, and  $u_i$  represents the between-classroom variance.

We began our analysis by fitting an unconditional model for the Expected Political Voice measure, controlling for SERVE professor but containing no other variables, to compare the within-class and between-class variance. Next, we built a baseline model by first adding individual-level predictors such as gender (Level 1) and then adding section-level predictors such as the departmental affiliation (philosophy or theology) of the SERVE professor teaching a particular SERVE section (Level 2). Given the statistically null findings for

a number of these variables on the outcome, we removed them for parsimony in subsequent models using likelihood ratios tests. Finally, we added our question predictor—section-level participation in the SERVE Program.

This model predicts shifts in students' expected political voice over the course of the 2008-2009 academic year in that the treatment variable (SERVE Participation) is predicting only outcome variance not accounted for by the pretest (Initial Expected Political Voice). The final, most parsimonious conditional model for the Expected Political Voice measure is reported in the Results section. The effect size of the question predictor was calculated using Cohen's *d*.

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

The qualitative interviews with 30 SERVE students were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Pseudonyms were assigned to each interviewed student. We then coded these transcripts using emic and etic codes drawn from the scholarship on community service learning (Giles & Eyler, 1994; Markus et al., 1993; Moely, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002), emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000), and civic development (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999; Youniss & Yates, 1997). *Emic codes* refer to descriptions of behaviors or beliefs by participants in this study in language that is culturally specific to these participants. An example of an emic code is references by participants to the "Ignatius University bubble." An *etic code* refers to descriptions of behaviors or beliefs in the terminology of a particular academic discipline. For example, "description of worldview" is an etic code utilized in this study that is drawn from the research literature in developmental psychology.

In utilizing both emic and etic codes, our data analytic process included elements of both an inductive (Boyatzis, 1998) and deductive (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) approach to qualitative analysis. Specifically, our approach included inductive elements in that our use of emic codes relied upon identifying important "moments" in the interview transcripts and coding those moments prior to any analysis or interpretation of them (Boyatzis, 1998). At the same time, our approach included deductive elements in that we also developed a codebook of etic codes (described above) *prior* to our examination of the interview transcripts and then sought out these predetermined codes in these transcripts.

Two coauthors coded each transcript independently, compared their work, recoded, and then compared again until all coding discrepancies were resolved.<sup>2</sup> Upon completing the coding and categorizing of the transcribed interviews, matrices were constructed that juxtaposed the themes and patterns emerging

from the data with the relevant scholarship (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Narrative profiles were also developed for all 30 students who participated in qualitative interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In order to reduce the threat of researcher bias to interpretive validity, we shared our codebooks, transcripts, narrative memos, and data analysis with colleagues at Boston University and Harvard University and solicited their feedback both to cross-check our coding and to offer alternatives to our conclusions (Maxwell, 1996).

It should be noted that qualitative interviews were only conducted with Ignatius University students participating in the SERVE Program (as opposed to students in the control group). We made this decision to focus the qualitative data upon participants in the treatment group because we conceived of the qualitative interviews as a mechanism for learning more about aspects of the SERVE Program that participants believed to have impacted their expected political involvement. As a result, the interview protocol focused specifically upon participants' experiences within the SERVE Program and their perceptions of the impact of these experiences upon their beliefs, values, aspirations, and worldviews. Such a focus would have been inapplicable to the Ignatius University students in the control group, as they had not participated in the SERVE Program.

In querying SERVE participants about their perceptions of the impact of the SERVE Program, our analytic approach sought to bridge what is often characterized as a gap between positivism and interpretivism. The positivist approach originated in the natural sciences and seeks to discover an objective reality and facts through observation and experimentation (Angus, 1986). In contrast, the interpretivist approach is most often associated with the fields of anthropology and sociology and is skeptical of the existence of an objective reality. As Geertz (1973) observed, data collected by researchers is really "our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (p. 9). Although positivism and interpretivism are generally characterized as opposing approaches to conducting research, a number of scholars have argued that the two need not necessarily be viewed as incompatible (Farrer, 1984; Shankman, 1984). Roth and Mehta (2002) have observed that researchers may "simultaneously accept that there is both a single objective truth of factual events *and* multiple subjective views of the truth that reveal much about the worldviews and perspectives of those who hold them" (p. 137, italics added). In regard to this study of the effects of the SERVE Program, we were interested in both the (difficult to ascertain) "objective" effects of the SERVE Program upon participants' expected political voice as well as the diverse perspectives of the participants themselves about the program's effects upon them. We believe that these perspectives offered

by SERVE participants—though of course influenced by their particular biases and values—provide valuable data about the ways in which these participants conceive of themselves and how they aspire to be seen by others.

## Results

### *Expected Political Voice*

Fitting a taxonomy of multilevel models for participants' postintervention expected political voice revealed a significant difference between SERVE participants and control group participants ( $\beta_{\text{SERVE}} = .27, p = .03$ ) and evidence of a small effect size (Cohen's  $d = .19$ ). Specifically, after adjusting for participants' pretreatment scores on the Expected Political Voice measure, the Ignatius University students participating in the SERVE Program demonstrated a larger shift in their expected political voice than did their peers in the control group. The full taxonomy of fitted multilevel models is presented in Appendix B. The estimates and statistics of the final fitted model are presented in Table 5 below.

In short, the SERVE Program had a positive and significant effect upon the expected political voice of Ignatius University students participating in the program. While the effect was a relatively small one, so too were the size and duration of the intervention (a single year-long course).

Also evident in Table 5 below is that two individual-level variables were significant predictors of Ignatius University students' postintervention expected political voice: students who had witnessed poverty within their nuclear or extended families ( $\beta_{\text{POVFAM}} = .18, p = .01$ ) and students who had attended a private, nonparochial school ( $\beta_{\text{PRIVATE SCHOOL}} = -.17, p = .04$ ). Specifically, having experienced poverty within one's own family was positively associated with a shift in expected political voice over the course of the 2008-09 academic year, whereas attending a private high school was negatively associated with shifts in expected political voice during the 2008-09 academic year. These findings are taken up in this article's Discussion section. The only significant section-level (Level 2) variable was participation in the SERVE Program itself.

### *Heightened Civic Engagement*

This study's qualitative interview data offered further insight into the impact of the SERVE Program upon participating students' commitment to civic and political involvement. In these interviews, SERVE participants described ways

**Table 5.** Final Fitted Model for Effects of SERVE Upon Expected Political Voice of Ignatius University Students, Controlling for Select Background Characteristics of the “Section” in Which SERVE Participants are Enrolled ( $n$  SERVE sections = 12,  $n$  students = 399)

Fixed effect	Coefficient	Se	T-ratio	$p$ value
Intercept	.90	.18	5.03	.0001
Section level				
SERVE participation	.27	.12	2.18	.03
Individual level				
Poverty in family	.18	.07	2.67	.01
Private school	-.17	.08	-2.15	.04
Preexpected political voice	.68	.04	15.76	.0001
Random effect	Variance component	Se	Z	$p$ value
Random effect of student ( $r_{ij}$ )	.26	.06	4.68	.0001
Random effect of section ( $u_{0j}$ )	.08	.06	1.36	.09

in which the SERVE experience had increased their awareness of political issues; heightened their commitment to philanthropy; fostered their interest in pursuing socially responsible work; and strengthened their commitment to working for social change. Here, we consider each of these effects in turn.

### *Awareness of Political Issues*

Of the 30 Ignatius University students who participated in qualitative interviews, seven credited the SERVE Program with deepening their interest and understanding of important political issues. For example, Kathleen Wilmer explained that, prior to SERVE, “I was really intimidated by economic and political issues . . . but I mean it really makes you want to gain a greater understanding of the world and what’s going on in our society.” Likewise, Natasha Ingram explained that, as a result of SERVE, “I am probably going to be more involved in things down the road. In some shape or form, I am going to be making sure I am aware of the social issues going on around me.” Finally, Alice McGonagle explained,

I think the biggest problem in the U.S. is just a lack of knowledge on the problems that there are. I fully believe in humanity, and I think that if people knew about issues, they would actually want to do something

about them. But I think that people just don't know a lot about what's going on out there. Because I didn't even know until I did SERVE.

According to these students, SERVE increased their level of civic engagement by deepening their understanding of contemporary social and political issues.

In terms of how the SERVE Program deepened students' awareness and understanding of such issues, Janessa Lortie described a weekly assignment in her SERVE class in which she and her classmates sought out newspaper articles related to their service projects and then completed journal entries about the articles. Likewise, Marisa Silver explained that, once each semester, all SERVE students were required to attend an extracurricular speech, presentation, screening, or performance connected to a political issue raised in SERVE and then assigned to write a journal entry about that event. Through these assignments as well as their weekly experiences at their respective service placements, SERVE participants deepened their understanding of the most pressing political and social issues of the day.

An additional five students credited the SERVE Program with increasing their commitment to engaging others in conversation about the political issues raised in SERVE. For example, Joe Antonucci explained that he has sought out opportunities to talk about his service placement at an urban public school as a means of raising awareness about poverty. According to Antonucci, "When I go home, I tell my parents and my brothers and some of my friends. Hopefully, a lot of people who are in the program are doing the same thing. Hopefully, it will spread to people, and people will just do little things to help other people out." On a similar note, Sam Barksdale explained that his experiences in the SERVE Program "inspired some conversations I've had with friends here at school about social issues that sometimes stem out of political conversations." He added that, when he hears some of his more conservative friends talking about "taxes going to people who have made themselves poor and who don't work, I've become more passionate about [rebutting] those types of attacks on people who struggle as a result of structures that we benefit from." In these descriptions, one can see that the SERVE Program heightened many participants' awareness of important political issues as well as their willingness and capacity to engage others in dialogue about these issues.

### *Commitment to Philanthropy*

Eight interviewed students credited the SERVE Program with deepening their commitment to philanthropy. For example, Corey Seaborn explained that "If

someone donated even \$100 to the program I work at, I would be so grateful because they need the money. So, yeah, I feel like it's a responsibility." Several other SERVE participants described the program as having influenced their beliefs about their respective families' philanthropic obligations. For example, Felicia Santos explained that "With my parents, they always say that they give in the ways that they can, but I do not know. It is hard for me to justify how well I live when there is so much poverty." Santos added that "My boyfriend's parents have two houses and a summer vacation house. Both of us are more conscious, and we do not understand how you could justify having two houses when some people do not have one." Similarly, Annie Bartone explained that, as a result of her participation in the SERVE Program, she initiated a conversation with her mother in which she expressed her belief that "Just because we have this money to spend doesn't mean we have to spend it. It means we should be giving the money to other people so that they can spend it in ways that they see fit, in ways that they need it."

In terms of *how* the SERVE Program exerted this influence upon participants, Annie Bartone cited the influence of an assigned theological reading, C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. According to Bartone, "One of the things that spoke to me in *Mere Christianity* was when he (Lewis) said that you should want to do things and not be able to do them because you are giving your money to other people." Another student, Cecelia Sullivan, cited a reading by philosopher Peter Singer entitled "The Singer Solution to World Poverty." According to Sullivan,

Singer is very interesting because he advocates that if you have something such as money and other people are dying in a foreign country, then you should by all means give it to them or else you are a morally heinous person. That has made me kind of examine myself, and it's not necessarily that I accept it readily, but it is something that has forced me to think.

In previous writings, this study's lead author has documented the negative reactions of many emerging adults to the perspective on philanthropy espoused by Singer (Seider, 2008, 2009). In contrast, Sullivan—who learned about Singer's philosophy in the context of the SERVE Program—experienced his perspective on philanthropy as provocative but thought provoking.

### *Professional Aspirations*

Perhaps, the greatest civic impact of the SERVE Program was upon participating students' professional aspirations. Specifically, seven students cited the

SERVE Program as having deepened their commitment to pursuing service-oriented professions, and nine more students cited the program as having impacted their thinking about the role that businesspersons can play in fostering a more equitable society. In terms of a newfound focus on public service professions, Natasha Ingram explained that “One thing about the whole SERVE experience is finding out all the good things you can do. I think a lot of people, just society in general, puts the major jobs—doctor, lawyer—as like the good jobs to have. You just don’t realize how much you can do.” Likewise, Kathleen Wilmer explained that her experience in SERVE “made me kind of think that if I want to work in sports marketing, it’s kind of base in comparison to anything else I could be doing. It would be something I really enjoy, but does anyone else get any immediate gain from that?”

Danny Wei entered the SERVE Program with aspirations of pursuing a career in medicine. He explained that SERVE “hasn’t changed my decision that I am going to be a doctor but maybe what type of doctor. I feel after SERVE, I am more geared toward [being] someone who could serve the underprivileged community more. It sort of made me see the need in those communities.” Likewise, Natasha Ingram—whose service placement was at the St. James Homeless Shelter—explained that “I have definitely rethought my major a few times because of this experience. I want to be involved in this kind of stuff, maybe not at St. James Shelter, maybe not even working with homeless people, but I would love to have my job somehow reach out to marginalized populations.” A third student, Annie Bartone, explained that “I used to want to be a lawyer really, really badly. But after all my community service in high school and especially now after SERVE, I almost feel like that’s not going to satisfy me anymore . . . My dream would be to be a teacher at an inner city school.” In short, each of these students characterized the SERVE Program as having had a direct impact upon their professional aspirations.

Nine other SERVE participants credited the program with influencing their beliefs about the impact that businesspersons can have upon their communities. For example, Frank Hammond—whose service placement involved providing support to refugees to the United States—explained that “I have always wanted to have a business of my own . . . [and] I feel like now I have no option not to find some way to incorporate into that being helpful to an immigrant population in Phoenix or wherever I am.” Abigail Leng explained that her experiences at her service placement strengthened her beliefs about the importance of socially responsible business principles. Leng, who aspires to work in the fashion industry, explained that “If this is me exploiting all these people in my company and they are getting minimum wage and barely able to survive, how am I supposed to be okay with my wealth?” Likewise, Felicia

Santos described her newfound belief in the importance of “socially responsible investing,” and Eddie McCabe criticized his parents’ investment choices with the explanation that “Them donating a bunch of money to charity isn’t doing anything when they participate in the companies or organizations that oppress those people in the first place.” In short, the majority of Ignatius University students participating in the SERVE Program credited the program with influencing their beliefs about the importance of pursuing careers that directly benefit, or engage deeply with, the wider community.

### *Heightened Commitment to Social Change*

Perhaps, the most important indicator of the SERVE Program’s impact upon participants’ commitment to civic engagement was the 12 students who cited newfound aspirations of fostering social change. For example, Sam Barksdale explained that he now feels “a sense of responsibility for being part of a system that allows part of its community to fail, and so I feel a sense of responsibility for altering the system so that we eliminate the failures at the level of the oppressed.” Alex Denoble, whose service placement was at a local homeless shelter, described his realization that the shelter “is providing aid to those people now, which I think is important because otherwise we are leaving people in the street. But at the same time, unless that program is working to change the system, then I don’t think it’s working for social change.” According to Denoble, his newfound beliefs about systemic change came from both his experiences at his service placement as well as assigned readings by Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire about “liberating the oppressed from the dialectic structure.” As a result of these readings, Denoble explained that “I’d always known that there was inequality, and I had never seen it in this light as such a problem that I was so involved in. But now I can see that I’m involved in it even with my inaction towards it.”

Marisa Silver’s experience in the SERVE Program played an important role in her decision to join an Ignatius University club called “Americans for an Informed Democracy” and also to start her own student group focused on combating human trafficking through a variety of different consciousness-raising events. Felix Green described his frustration with his mother “because she has these strong political views and then I say, ‘Okay, what group do you want to join? What are you going to do about it?’ And she’ll say, ‘I’m not going to do that, Felix, come on!’” After listening to his mother rail against the Iraq War, Green explained that “I heard about this group of activist moms against the Iraq War, and I told my mom about it, and was like, ‘Here it is. Are you going to sign up?’” After she again declined to participate in this opportunity

for social action, Green expressed strong disappointment with his mother's reluctance to "put her money where her mouth is."

Following his participation in the SERVE Program, Donald Mitchell described a newfound ambition to become a judge because "as a lawyer, you are fighting for a case, but you don't have a chance to influence public thought or the public's view on things, and as a judge you can influence society's view more." Janessa Lortie characterized the business world as possessing the greatest opportunities to foster social change. She spoke glowingly of a talk she had attended by Jerry Greenfield, one of the founders of Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream, in which "he was telling us about his business philosophy and how he believes in promoting not only his employees but also the community through his business." Lortie connected Greenfield's principles to her learning in the SERVE Program by noting that "It sounded a lot like Catholic social teaching, and I thought that was really the most effective way to create social change in our country." In short, the SERVE Program fostered in many of its participants the recognition that social and political problems require larger societal changes rather than direct service.

### *Public Service and Social Change*

One of the interview questions posed to SERVE participants was the following: "Can community service play an important role in addressing social problems?" Of the 24 participants who addressed this question, eight responded that community service can provide important resources or benefits to its recipients. For example, Joe Antonucci explained,

I think that a lot of times people in their situations have lost hope in society and don't really think anyone is looking out for them, and then to see people come in and help, do whatever, tutor, nurse, or do whatever everyone is doing, that it just shows them that people actually do care . . . Hopefully that gives them some hope that they can pull themselves out.

On a similar note, Sabrina Mitchell explained that "Me going to the tutoring center can help some of the children there because I am an adult figure to them, and they probably look up to me and what I am doing." Likewise, Angela Gutman explained that the community center where she volunteered "allows students to come and to have a home away from home where they are not necessarily just hanging out, being at the wrong place at the wrong times. I think it is definitely helping them grow into greater people."

Fourteen of the interviewed students credited community service with playing a key role in addressing social problems by virtue of its effect upon those carrying out the service. For example, Matthew Muldoon explained that “It leads one to see other walks of life and that you are the one with the power to change that.” Frank Hammond described community service as powerful to the extent that “the end goal is deep education about what the problems are,” and Eddie McCabe asserted that “It is an excellent way to introduce people into understanding that there is a world outside themselves.” In short, the majority of the interviewed students characterized community service as offering significant benefits to the recipients of the service, the performers of the service, or both.

Only four of the interviewed students questioned the ability of community service to impact social and political problems. Two students asserted that the SERVE Program had little impact because students only enrolled in SERVE to enhance their resumes. Two other students suggested that larger, societal changes were necessary to address the issues raised by their service experiences. Specifically, Felicia Santos acknowledged the value of community service to address social problems such as poverty but then explained that “I am a realist and economist in the sense that I think money has more to do with it.” In other words, Santos believed that volunteerism could not be relied upon as the primary means of addressing social problems. Likewise, Alex Denoble—the student who cited the influence of philosopher Paulo Freire—said of community service, “I don’t think it is really going to work for social change because it is not changing the structure. It’s providing aid to those people now, which I do think is important . . . But at the same time, unless that program is working to change the system, then I don’t think it’s working for social change.” In short, Santos and Denoble were the only two students among those interviewed to suggest that significantly addressing complex political and social problems might require efforts beyond direct service. We take up the significance of these findings in the Discussion section.

## **Discussion**

We began this article by outlining both sides of the debate within the service-learning scholarship about the relationship between service-learning experiences and other forms of civic engagement. Both this study’s quantitative and qualitative results suggest that Ignatius University’s SERVE Program exerted a positive effect upon participating students’ commitment to other forms of civic engagement. In comparison with their peers in a randomized control group, the Ignatius University students participating in the SERVE Program

demonstrated a statistically significant shift in their expected political voice over the course of the 2008-09 academic year. Moreover, qualitative interviews with SERVE participants revealed that the majority of these students credited the SERVE Program with strengthening their understanding of political issues, deepening their interest in pursuing socially responsible work, and fostering their commitment to working for social change.

The qualitative interview data also offered a window into the multiple levers through which the SERVE Program influenced the civic commitment of participating students. Several students credited assigned philosophical readings by philosophers such as Paulo Freire and Peter Singer with influencing their beliefs about poverty and philanthropy. Other students cited assigned theological readings by writers such as C. S. Lewis and sociological readings by writers such as Allen Johnson with influencing their beliefs about what constitutes a socially responsible life. A third group of students described the powerful effects of assignments in which they sought out and wrote about news articles, on-campus talks, workshops, and performances related to the social issues raised in the SERVE Program. Finally, the majority of interviewed students cited the service placements themselves as a powerful mechanism for raising their awareness of complex political and social issues and deepening their commitment to addressing these issues.

A number of these levers described by SERVE participants have been cited in other research studies of effective community service-learning experiences and educational interventions. Take, for example, the students who pointed to readings in philosophy, theology, and sociology as particularly impactful. Boss (1994) has described the ability of service-learning paired with readings in ethics to exert a positive impact upon the moral reasoning skills of college, whereas Astin (2004) has reported that “aspects of the service learning experience appear to be especially relevant to issues of spirituality” (p. 40). Likewise, Colby et al. (2007) has found that coursework and readings on social issues “can transform students’ interpretive frames . . . [by opening] students’ eyes to global economic interdependence or the influence of opportunity structures on individuals’ achievement” (p. 109). Other researchers have found on-campus events, performances, and workshops to have a positive impact upon students’ attitudes toward racism, diversity, and intercultural sensitivity (Klak & Martin, 2003; Spanierman, Neville, Liao, Hammer, & Wang, 2008; Whitt, Edison, Pascarella, Terenzini, & Nora, 2001). Finally, a number of scholars have reported that community service experiences can serve as transformative or

triggering events for emerging adults—exerting a powerful influence upon their beliefs, values, aspirations, or worldview (Fischman, 1999; Hart, Yates, Fegley, & Wilson, 1995; Haste, 1983; Seider, 2007).

In short, there are a number of mechanisms embedded within the SERVE Program that previous researchers have found to have a positive effect upon participating students. Moreover, all of these mechanisms—exposure to readings in philosophy, theology and sociology; attendance at on-campus workshops and lectures; and participation in sustained community service experiences—represent opportunities for the emerging adults in the SERVE Program to consider new values, ideologies, and worldviews that can contribute to their development of a “mature adult identity” (Erikson, 1963). Alternatively, as Youniss and Yates (1997) have asserted, such experiences allow emerging adults “to test ideological positions that can then be rejected or built into their developing ideologies” (p. 623). In so doing, experiences such as the SERVE Program foster the development of participants’ civic identities.

### *Expected Political Voice and SES*

Recall also from this study’s Results section that SERVE participants who had witnessed poverty in their nuclear or extended families experienced larger increases in expected political voice, on average, than their SERVE classmates. On the other hand, SERVE participants who had attended private (nonparochial) schools experienced smaller increases in expected political voice, on average, than their SERVE classmates. These results suggest that there is a negative relationship between class status and the effects of the SERVE Program upon participants’ expected political voice—in other words, that Ignatius University students from poor and working-class backgrounds were more impacted by their experiences in the SERVE Program than their affluent classmates.<sup>3</sup> Such a finding is potentially important in light of the significant social class divide reported on by numerous researchers in both civic learning and civic participation (Flanagan et al., 2009; Hodgkinson, 1995; Kahne & Middaugh, 2009).

As noted in this study’s Introduction section, teenagers from affluent households are three times more likely to participate in community service than teenagers from working-class households (Hodgkinson, 1995), and youth from wealthier households and communities experience richer civic learning opportunities than youth from poorer households and communities (Kahne &

Middaugh, 2009). Levinson (2007) refers to these inequities between affluent and working-class youth as evidence of a “civic achievement gap.” What this study of the SERVE Program at Ignatius University suggests, however, is that when emerging adults from a diverse range of class backgrounds experience the *same* opportunities for civic learning, the less affluent youth may actually gain more from these opportunities in terms of their expected future political involvement. In other words, educational interventions such as the SERVE Program may have an important role to play in closing the civic achievement gap between poor and affluent emerging adults.

### *Fostering Social Change*

It must also be noted, however, that although the SERVE Program exerted a significant influence upon participating students, the effect was a relatively small one (Cohen’s  $d = .19$ ). Moreover, in their qualitative interviews, a majority of SERVE participants cited the effects of SERVE upon their future professional aspirations and commitment to social change, but only a handful of these students described *specific* types of social action in which they had become engaged or planned to become engaged. For example, Marisa Silver described her decision to form a student group committed to combating human trafficking, and Felix Green described urging his mother to join him at a protest against the Iraq War. Few other SERVE participants, however, articulated such specific examples of current or projected types of civic engagement. An important question, then, is why, at the conclusion of the 2008-09 academic year, a majority of SERVE participants described a newfound commitment to social change and a heightened interest in incorporating service into their professional lives but simultaneously offered few examples of *social action* in which they were currently participating or planned to participate.

A possible explanation for this disparity is that the faculty members teaching in the SERVE Program, the supervisors at the program’s service placements, and the readings assigned to SERVE participants focused almost entirely on the *nature* of political and social problems such as poverty, homelessness, and lack of educational opportunity as well as the *challenges* faced by individuals contending with these problems. Students characterized their learning from each of these sources as powerful and eye-opening, and learning about the factors and challenges related to these social and political problems had a positive effect upon their commitment to philanthropy, public

service, socially responsible careers, and expected political voice. Far less evident in the curriculum and teaching associated with the SERVE Program, however, was a focus upon the different types of social action capable of challenging the societal structures that allow poverty, homelessness, and lack of educational opportunity to exist. In qualitative interviews, students *did* reference assigned readings by philosophers such as Foucault and Freire to demonstrate their recognition of these oppressive societal structures, but virtually none of these students articulated examples of specific measures that citizens and activists can take to challenge such structures. Recall from this study's Literature Review section that a number of scholars have characterized direct service as a useful endeavor but not one which necessarily introduces students to "integral solutions to structural problems" (Barber, 1984, p. 235). In line with these scholars' concerns, too few SERVE participants seemed able to articulate the potential for various types of social action—for example, protests, boycotts, petitions, letter-writing campaigns, get-out-the-vote efforts—to address the structural problems that rendered their service work necessary in the first place.

Recall from the Results section that, in response to an interview question about whether service can play an important role in addressing social problems, virtually all of the interviewed students answered in the affirmative. Perhaps, if the SERVE Program had focused more intently on introducing students to examples of social action, more students would have followed SERVE participant Alex Denoble's lead in expressing doubt about the ability of direct service to foster social change. As Denoble explained of his work at a homeless shelter, "It's providing aid to those people now which I do think is important . . . But, at the same time, unless that program is working to change the system, then I don't think it's working for social change."

Perhaps, then, one sign of a service-learning program exerting a powerful effect upon the civic commitment of its participants is a program whose participants are powerfully affected by their service experiences but who are also able to articulate the limits of direct service in promoting social change. In its current form, the SERVE Program may risk inadvertently reinforcing to students the idea "that their individual actions are enough and that focusing on larger structural issues is not necessary" (Walker, 2002, p. 186). When one considers that more than 90% of the community service experiences offered to college students entail direct service experiences similar to those offered by the SERVE Program, it seems reasonable to suspect that many of these programs

are inadvertently reinforcing a similar focus on service at the exclusion of other forms of social action (HUD, 1999).

## Limitations

Although we believe this study's findings are robust, there remain limitations to this study that will need to be addressed by future research. Perhaps, this study's most significant limitation involved the atypical characteristics of its site and participants. Ignatius University is one of only several dozen Catholic universities in the United States and ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as a highly competitive university. As a result of these characteristics, we cannot assume these study's findings to be generalizable to all American college students. More research in more diverse contexts will be necessary to draw firm conclusions about the ability of community service learning programs such as SERVE to foster other types of civic commitment.

A second limitation of this study was the uneven sample size of this study's treatment and control groups. The small sample size of the control group ( $n = 37$ ) did reduce the statistical power of the ensuing quantitative analysis; specifically, the estimated causal effect were less certain because of the larger confidence intervals on the point estimates for the control group. Although researchers have found that uneven sample sizes in random assignment experiments do not, on average, introduce bias, it would be prudent to replicate this study with a more balanced sample (Avins, 1998; Spoto & Krailo, 1987; Torgerson & Campbell, 2000).

## Conclusion

In this study, we found that introducing students to important social problems through meaningful service experiences and powerful readings can have a significant effect upon their expected political involvement. Our qualitative interview data leads us to conclude, however, that this effect could be amplified by explicitly engaging students in reflection about the limitations of direct service and the potential impact of other forms of civic action. In reaching this conclusion, we are reminded (perhaps fittingly for a study set on a Catholic university campus) of the famous lament by Catholic Archbishop Dom Helder Camara (2008) that "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist" (p. 7). It would seem that a key lever for deepening the relationship between community service learning experiences and other forms of civic engagement is strengthening students' understanding that social change is most

likely to occur when giving food to the poor is followed by collective, organized efforts at changing a social system in which the poor have no food.

## Appendix A

### *SERVE Syllabus*

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#### *Person and Social Responsibility 2008-2009*

*Course description.* This two-semester, 12-credit course fulfills all core requirements in philosophy and theology. Course materials and methods consist of reading of classical philosophy texts, scripture, and other readings to be expected in any core philosophy and theology course; class meetings will be a mix of lecture and discussion.

In addition to these standard approaches to the study of these disciplines, SERVE requires a significant commitment to community service for the entire two-semester course and a once-per-week discussion group. There is also a requirement for two discussion groups per semester with the other students at your service site. These will take the place of two of the class discussion groups. The dates are to be determined.

*Required texts.* The following are the texts required for this course:

Euripides, *Ion*

Jonathan Kozol, *Amazing Grace*

Plato, *Republic*

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Michael Himes, *Doing the Truth in Love*

Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews*

Augustine, *Confessions*

*The Catholic Study Bible*

John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*

Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Karen Lebacqz, *Six Theories of Justice*

Martin Luther King, various speeches and writings

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## Appendix B

*Taxonomy of Fitted Multilevel Models Describing the Relationship Between Ignatius University Students' Expected Political Voice and Their Participation in the SERVE Program (n SERVE sections = 12, n students = 399)*

Predictors	Model 1: Demographic characteristics	Model 2: Adds initial expected political voice	Model 3: Adds section-level characteristics	Model 4: Adds participation in SERVE
Intercept	2.95****	1.13****	1.17****	.90****
Section level				
Philosophy vs. theology			0.08	
SERVE participation				.27**
Individual level				
Gender	0.14			
Religiosity	0.01			
Spirituality	0.10			
High school service	0.03			
Parent volunteerism	0.13			
Parent service-oriented job	0.18**	0.08		
Black	0.21			
Latino	0.01			
Asian	0.04			
Poverty in family	0.19**	0.17***	0.16**	.18**
Class status	0.05			
Political orientation	-0.13****	0.001		
Private school	-0.20*	-0.20**	-0.19**	-.17**
Initial expected political voice		0.67****	0.66****	.68****
-2 log likelihood	761.1	589.1	586.6	580.1

\*p < .10. \*\*p < .05. \*\*\*p < .01. \*\*\*\*p < .001.

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## Notes

1. Ignatius University, the SERVE Program, and all students in this article are referred to by pseudonyms.
2. As a result of the iterative nature of this coding process, we did not carry out a formal test of interrater reliability as typically measured by Cohen's Kappa. Instead, the coauthors responsible for coding compared their results on each qualitative interview, identified any discrepancies in their coding, and then discussed and resolved this discrepancy. This process was carried out for all 30 qualitative interviews with SERVE participants.
3. Complicating this finding was that there was no significant relationship between SERVE participants' self-reported class status and their changes in expected political voice. This disparity may be due to the well-documented unreliability of *self-reported* class status (Stuber, 2006).

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