

**Becoming a Good Citizen? The Long-Term Consequences of Poverty
and Family Instability During Childhood**

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Abstract

Our main objective is to evaluate whether a disadvantaged childhood inevitably leads to a politically disaffected and socially disengaged late adolescence. We examine the relationship between social and economic disadvantages during early childhood and “good citizenship” during late adolescence. Measures of formal volunteer activities are now available from the 1996 young adult supplements of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY); these data are linked to mother and family records from the 1979-96 main NLSY sample to create life-history records spanning childhood and adolescence. Children -- especially males -- from single parent families are less likely than children growing up in married couple households to be involved in volunteer work. Volunteer behavior is more strongly related to time spent in poverty among females than males. More generally, our results provide support for a mediational model, one in which long-term negative effects of childhood social and economic disadvantages on later pro-social behavior occur indirectly through effects on socioemotional development and life experiences during adolescence (e.g., attendance at religious services and school success). These results address current concerns about putative declines in a civil society in America and about the elevation of individualism over communalism among today’s young people.

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Introduction

This paper examines the relationship between social and economic disadvantages during early childhood and later civic behavior --- good citizenship --- in adolescence and early adulthood.¹ Previous demographic research typically has focused on “risky” behaviors among disadvantaged teenagers (Wu and Martinson 1993; Haveman et al. 1995; Klebanov et al. 1994). Indeed, a voluminous literature exists on the deleterious effects of family poverty and family instability on a variety of social and demographic outcomes, including teen childbearing, school drop-out, unprotected sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, and delinquency (Mayer 1997; McLanahan and Sandefur 1995). Whether disadvantaged children become socially responsible, productive, and civic-minded young adults has not been a major part of the scholarly dialogue. Specifically, do social and economic disadvantages in the early life course adversely affect the practice of various pro-social behaviors, such as civic and electoral participation, the development of healthy friendship networks, good work habits, and socially responsible or communal values in early adulthood?

We consider this question in terms of a key indicator of civic or pro-social behavior -- volunteerism. First, we evaluate the extent to which children of the 1980s have grown up to be socially responsible citizens, as measured by various kinds of volunteer work, including involvement in youth

¹We are not concerned about “citizenship” in a legal sense, as indicated by the exercise of various rights and obligations (e.g., voting, paying taxes, etc.) that attend to being a legal U.S. citizen. We are more interested in defining good citizenship in terms of a willingness to act out of concern for all of humanity.

mentor programs and faith-based religious organizations. Second, we document the extent to which socially and economically disadvantaged children, as young adults, engage in the civic and organizational life of their communities. Third, we assess the social and behavioral mechanisms through which family instability through childhood affects pro-social volunteer work in late adolescence and early adulthood. These are important issues in light of past and current high rates of child poverty, continuing high rates of nonmarital fertility and divorce, and increasing segregation of poor families in “bad” neighborhoods (Lichter 1997; Bianchi 1999).

For the most part, data limitations have prevented empirical studies of the longer-term consequences of child poverty and family instability. Such an endeavor requires appropriate behavioral and attitudinal information in late adolescence that can be linked to data that describe the child’s life-history (e.g., longitudinal accounts of household income and family structure). With the newly released 1996 young adult supplements of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), such a dataset now exists. These young adult records are matched with previously collected mother and family information from the 1979-96 main NLSY sample (Center for Human Resources Research 1997).

Family Structure, Poverty, and Civic Behavior

The study of today’s late adolescents and young adults -- their successful incorporation into the labor market, their family experiences and attitudes, and their interpersonal relationships -- is arguably more critical than ever before. The 1990s ushered in the first generation of young adults to bear the imprint of major upheavals in America’s fundamental institutions -- the family, economy, and

government. An unprecedented number of youth grew up during the 1970s and 1980s with single moms, absent fathers, and increasingly complicated and often transitory living arrangements (e.g., informal unions and step-families). For many, poverty was a way of life and reliance on welfare an economic necessity (Lichter 1997; Bianchi 1999). A rapidly restructuring and increasingly bifurcated economy meant that the parents of today's young adults often faced job insecurity, low or declining wages, and downward social mobility (Morris and Western 1999; Gottschalk and Moffitt 1994). The federal government's response during this period was to cut back the welfare safety net, block increases in the minimum wage, and step away from affirmative action and other equal opportunity initiatives.

Not surprisingly, public policy often centers on whether young people now come less prepared than previous generations to assume productive adult roles and to become good citizens. The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) has argued for instilling adolescents with an ethic of "responsible citizenship, caring and ethics through service to others." Social commentators often decry the "loss of a civil society," "the rise in incivility," "death of outrage," and a growing "opposition culture," all of which imply a loss of community, inter-personal trust, and empathy for others (e.g., Putman 1995; Wuthnow 1991; Bellah et al. 1995). Indeed, some observers fear that these cultural shifts pose a threat to America's basic democratic institutions (Elshtain 1999). To what extent this threat is a result of the unprecedented instability in the early family experiences of today's young adults is unclear. What is clear is that today's young people grew up during a decidedly different family and economic regime than previous generations of young adults.

Has this unprecedented instability in the early family experiences of today's young adults

undermined civic engagement and promoted apathy among young people? Volunteerism indicates civic commitment and an enlarged sense of social responsibility for the well-being of less fortunate others (Flanagan and Galley 1995; Flanagan et al. 1998). To be sure, volunteer activity is highly selective of privileged groups, but recent evidence indicates that volunteering may also have a positive transformative effect on adolescents; e.g., volunteers are less likely to engage in criminal or delinquent activities (Uggen and Halko 1999). An emerging ethos stressing social responsibility and community involvement contrasts with the stereotypic view of young adults as highly individualistic (rather than communal), self-involved (rather than empathic of others), and concerned only with material goals (rather than social goals).

Our conceptual framework emphasizes the fundamental role of the changing American family (Janoski and Wilson 1995; Sundeen 1990; Elshtain 1999). The conventional wisdom is that family instability and poverty “scar” children for life; in the words of Corcoran (1995), socially and economically disadvantaged children typically go “from rags to rags.” According to this perspective, growing up in a female-headed family or experiencing family instability during childhood adversely affects later civic commitment and engenders estrangement from broader societal or communal goals. Previous research suggests several possible mechanisms for such a relationship. Most studies have emphasized the lack of material resources (e.g., nutritional food), insufficient child investments (e.g., learning rich environments), or ineffective parenting (e.g., low maternal education, lack of supervision or feelings of affection) in single-parent families (Klebanov et al. 1994; Menaghan et al. 1997, Korenman et al. 1995). Any sub-optimal or even dysfunctional distal family experiences, in turn, may adversely affect proximate determinants of political

or civic participation, including educational attainment, full-time employment, and positive psychosocial adjustment (e.g., self efficacy, lack of depressive symptoms).

The implication is that today's young people who grew up in disadvantaged families should be less well adjusted and successful than young adults who grew up relatively advantaged (McLeod and Shanahan 1993; Hill and Sandfort 1995). They also should be less likely than late adolescents from two-parent families to engage in volunteer work or other pro-social activities.

Results from past studies, including the influential *Growing Up With a Single Mother* (McLanahan and Sandefur 1995) are consistent with the view (1) that single parenthood irreparably harms children, and (2) that poverty "explains" much of the association between family change and childhood or adult outcomes (e.g., teen pregnancy and marriage). Amato and Booth's (1997) *Generation at Risk* show that parental financial stress, measured in terms of parental income, welfare use, and change over the child's life course, has long-term negative effects on adult children's socioeconomic attainment (including schooling) and marital quality. Duncan et al. (1997) similarly find that childhood poverty affects socioeconomic attainments (especially schooling), as have other studies focusing on school dropout, high school completion, and earnings (Astone and McLanahan 1991; Axinn et al. 1997; Powell and Parcel 1997).

Moreover, Furstenburg and Hughes' (1995) recent study corroborates these results with a sample of "at risk" adults born to mostly African-American teen mothers. Past research thus suggests a straightforward mediational model: Poverty and family instability affect adolescent outcomes, such as healthy emotional development and educational attainment, which are known to affect volunteer activity and pro-social behavior in early adulthood.

Unfortunately, the intuitive appeal of this conventional wisdom has sometimes contributed to its uncritical acceptance (see Rein and Winship 1999). A careful reading of the literature indicates surprisingly little consensus on the size of family instability and poverty effects on different adolescent outcomes, how large they are relative to other effects (e.g., parenting or residential movement), whether any short-term developmental consequences persist into adulthood, or whether effects are different across groups (defined by the child's age, race, gender, or residence). Moreover, few if any studies are sensitive to the possibility that a disadvantaged family background may have long lasting effects that are best revealed in the absence of pro-social adult behaviors, rather than in the presence of anti-social and dysfunctional behaviors usually considered. We also know virtually nothing about links between earlier childhood experiences and later pro-social or civic behaviors. Indeed, the mechanisms (e.g., low income, parenting styles, child investments) through which childhood disadvantages affect pro-social behavior may be decidedly different from those that produce negative outcomes, such as teen childbearing and delinquency.

In fact, newly published studies now question various aspects of the conventional wisdom that family instability and low family income, *per se*, irreparably damage children (Mayer 1997; Edin and Lein 1997; Duncan and Brooks-Dunn 1997). The recent publication of Mayer's *What Money Can't Buy* (1997) is especially propitious — and controversial -- in light of recent concerns about the short- and long-term effects of welfare reform and poverty on children's lives. Mayer's (1997) systematic statistical analyses of several different nationally-representative data sets show that low family income during childhood is only modestly associated with a variety of negative outcomes in late adolescence (e.g., behavioral problems) and early adulthood (e.g., teen pregnancy, male unemployment). The

estimated effects of family income are often confounded in previous studies because important unobserved variables (e.g., parental intelligence, emotional health) cannot be “controlled.” Unlike most studies, Mayer’s research accounts for potential omitted-variable bias by using an instrumental variable approach (i.e., controlling a post-outcome measure of income). Her approach results in estimated effects of family income that are substantially lower than those reported in most previous studies.

The substantive and policy implications of Mayer’s (1997) analysis are compelling: Any long-term effects of growing up in poor and unstable families must be caused by observed and unobserved circumstances other than low income. The inability to “control” poverty’s correlates means that previous studies have overestimated the effects of child poverty. Mayer (1997) reports that parent’s income is only mildly associated with parental investment strategies (e.g., the things that parents purchase), suggesting that “investment theories” fail to adequately account for any deleterious consequences of single-parenthood for children. The argument that low income “causes” family stress and poor parenting (e.g., lack of supervision, or quality of the relationship) also seems inconsistent with the data. This conclusion differs from other recent studies, some of which suggest that the quality of the home environment may account for as much as one-quarter to one-third of the income effect on emotional and cognitive development (Smith et al. 1997). But it is not clear how strongly healthy development is related to an individual’s ability to become long-term productive and well-adjusted adults.

Our paper builds on past research in several important ways. First, unlike most previous work, it focuses on the long-term consequences of family background. Second, we balance the current

preoccupation with psychosocial and behavioral problems (e.g., Mayer 1997) with a new focus on pro-social behaviors (i.e., volunteer work). Third, unlike most previous research on volunteer work, civic identity, and pro-social behavior, which has centered almost exclusively on the effects of proximate causes (e.g., current education or occupational status), we also focus on distal causes (e.g., childhood social and economic background). Finally, this research is timely in light of new research suggesting that family poverty (Mayer 1997) and parenting (Harris 1998) matter less than previously thought, especially with regard to *negative* behavioral outcomes (e.g., school dropout). Whether this conclusion also is true for *positive* outcomes, such as volunteer activity, in late adolescence and early adulthood is ambiguous.

Data and Methods

The Young Adults of the NLSY Mothers. In 1996, a young adult supplement was administered to the young adult children of the mothers in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, a panel survey first initiated in 1979. Of the 1781 young adults surveyed in 1996 we examined a sample of 1106 adolescents who ranged in age from 14 to 18 (mean=15.60) and were still in high school (Center for Human Resources Research 1997). We selected this group so that the experiences of those we examined would be relatively homogenous. These “at risk” young people were born during the late 1970s to mothers who were disproportionately young (i.e., 14-21 in 1979), unmarried, and poor (Center for Human Resource Research 1997). Twenty-six percent of our sample were born to teen mothers and none were born to mothers over age 25.

The sample is comprised of roughly equal percentages of whites (40%) and blacks (41%), with

a smaller group of Hispanic youth (19%). We have linked these late adolescent records to their mother's records from earlier waves that include economic and household characteristics, collected on an annual basis until 1994 and biannually thereafter. Our sample thus provides an unprecedented opportunity to link the experiences of parental and filial generations, as well as to link early adult values and behaviors to childhood social and economic disadvantages. This sample also represents the first generation of "at risk" young people that grew up with the social and economic upheavals of last two decades (Kowalski-Jones and Mott 1998). No study to our knowledge has evaluated links between childhood experiences and civic-minded and socially-responsible behaviors.

Measurement. The Young Adult sample includes a global measure of formal volunteer work and volunteer work in specific organizational domains. Our global measure is based on responses to the following single item: "For all types of volunteer work you have done, was any of it strictly voluntary?" This variable was coded 1 if the young adult engaged in any voluntary volunteer work, and 0 otherwise (e.g., court-ordered volunteer work or any volunteer work that is required through an individual's school, church, or other organization is coded 0).

Yes/no (coded 1 or 0) responses to eight specific domains of volunteer work also were elicited from the following question: "Which of the following types of organizations are/were you involved with in your volunteer or community service work? (1) youth organization, such as Little League or helping with the scouts; (2) service organizations, such as Big Brother or Big Sister; (3) political clubs or organizations; (4) church or church-related groups (not including worship services); (5) community centers, neighborhood improvement, or social-action associations or groups; (6) organized volunteer group in a hospital or nursing home; (7) educational organizations; (8) conservation, recycling, or

environmental group such as the Sierra Club or the Nature Conservancy. Participation by late adolescents in some volunteer activities (such as political organizations) is relatively rare. We therefore focus on two specific types of activities that typify the volunteer experiences of our sample population: religious volunteer activity and volunteer behavior involving the mentoring of youth. Religious volunteering consists of volunteer activities sponsored by church or synagogue or religious groups (not including worship services). Youth mentoring, as we have defined it, consists of volunteer activities on behalf of youth organizations, such as Little League or helping with the scouts, service organizations, such as Big Brother or Big Sister, and educational organizations. If the respondent participated in any of those activities her/his answer is coded 1 and 0 otherwise.

Our conceptual model suggests that disruptive life course patterns through childhood may have negative effects on volunteerism indirectly through poor functioning at mid-adolescence. Drawing on multiple waves of data, we constructed a set of measures that describe early life course experiences. The proportion of time spent in poverty is assessed by the years living below the poverty line divided by the number of years. By assessing poverty status throughout childhood, we can more accurately gauge the possible long-term effects of family disadvantage (McLanahan and Sandefur 1995; Lichter 1997). Family instability is measured by the proportion of time spent in a female-headed household, which reflects the number of years in which the mother lacked a spouse or partner divided by adolescent's age (data for 1995 is missing so coded same as 1996). We also consider whether the child was born to an adolescent mother; early parenthood is an indirect measure of parental skills and maturity, as well as a proxy for unintended pregnancy and later parental investments (Axinn et al. 1998; Joyce, Kaestner, and Korenman 1999). The mother's ability to impart positive pro-social behaviors and

values may be compromised by her own experiences of family instability and its associated risk factors, including poverty (Thornton 1991). Family disruption during childhood is measured by the number of times that the child's mother experienced a marital and family change (e.g., divorce, remarriage, cohabitation).

Any long-term negative family effects presumably reflects the lack of parental resources or social capital (Wilson and Musick 1997). Rosenthal et al. (1998) refer to the role of parental conditioning as the "organismic" model of volunteering; i.e., children raised in environments that reinforce helping behaviors are themselves more likely to become helping adults. For example, residentially transient children and their parents are arguably only weakly attached to their communities and, by implication, are unlikely to have high levels of civic and political commitment to community or neighborhood civic or social goals. For our purposes, we evaluate the effects of residential mobility by the number of moves outside the county during childhood.

Maternal education also is likely to have direct and indirect positive long term effects on adult children. For example, education is positively associated with political activity and pro-social activities; highly educated mothers may provide positive role models for their children that persist into adulthood. Highly educated parents are also more likely to "teach" their children about positive social values and behaviors, i.e., highly educated parents may have higher levels of civic skills and knowledge, which they pass along to their children. In general, volunteers occupy dominant statuses in society (Smith 1994; Wilson and Musick 1997), with education being positively correlated with many forms of social engagement (Oliver, 1984; Snow and Oliver, 1995). The mother's educational attainment is assessed here by mother's highest grade completed as of the 1996 interview.

Finally, the cumulation of various stressful or deleterious experiences may negatively influence pro-social behavior, as coping mechanisms and social supports are exhausted. In order to test this hypothesis, we created a cumulative life course risk index, which summarizes negative life course experiences through childhood. This index was constructed from five measures of family background: childhood poverty, female headship, geographic mobility, maternal education, and teen mother. A score value of zero was given if, as children, they experienced no poverty, if they lived in a married-couple family, if they experienced no inter-county migration, if their mother had at least 15 years of education, and if they were not born of a teen parent. Conversely, those who have experienced any of the events received a value of one or two, depending on the severity of the event. A code of 1 is given to those who experienced a teen birth, those whose mothers have between 10 and 14 years of education, or some experience with moves, spouse/partner changes, poverty, or female headship but less experience than 1 ½ standard deviations above the mean score. Those with mother's with less than 10 years of education, or with more than 1 ½ standard deviations above the mean receive a value of 2.

We expect that these distal social and economic disadvantages work against the inculcation of pro-social values and behaviors, and that these long-term effects are mediated by proximal healthy or unhealthy functioning at mid-adolescence. Rosenthal et al. (1997) refer to this as the “contextual” model of volunteering; i.e., current circumstances rather than past experiences matter most in the lives of young adults. For example, previous research shows that religiosity is strongly associated with formal and informal helping behaviors (Wilson and Janoski 1995). Present religious involvement is measured here by religious attendance, composed of six ordinal categories ranging from (1) do not

attend religious services to (6) attend services more than once a week.

Involvements in school and work may also compete for time otherwise available for volunteer activities. Students with higher grades may spend more time engaged in homework, but grades may also signify a pro-school orientation that includes high levels of involvement in extra-curricular activities (Mahoney and Cairns, 1997). A measure of grade point average (where A's=4, B's=3, C's=2, D/F's=1) is therefore included in the analysis. There is also limited evidence that extensive work involvements can interfere with involvement in other activities (Greenberger and Steinberg, 1986). We therefore include a dichotomous measure indicating whether the youth is employed for 20 hours or more per week. The belief that they are capable of "making things happen" (i.e., personal self-efficacy) may also manifest itself in volunteer activity (especially activity that has a social goal). Here we use Pearlin's Mastery Scale, which is constructed from 7 measures and coded so that a high score reflects a greater degree of self-efficacy.

Adolescence is a time when future orientations with respect to work, family, and school are formulated and these plans bear on one's self-conceptions and behaviors (Erikson 1959). We therefore include three measures of future orientations. Educational plans reflect the highest grade that respondents realistically think that they will complete. Youth with high educational aspirations may engage in more volunteer activities, consistent with the observed positive relationship between volunteerism and education among adults. The youth were also asked, "What do you think is the best age, if any, to get married?" A similar question was asked for best age for the birth of a first child. Young person who expect to get married and have children earlier in the transition to adulthood will also be less likely to engage in volunteerism, since earlier ages for these transition markers are

associated with lower levels of educational and occupational attainment. An accelerated family life cycle may compete with organizational involvement in early adulthood.

Finally, the analyses include two additional control variables: age of the young person, and dummy variables indicating whether the youth is black or Hispanic (with the reference category being white or other). All analyses were carried out with SAS, STATA, and Mixor. Data are adjusted for over-sampling and attrition using the sampling weight provided by NLSY 1996 and deflated by the mean of the sampling weight to maintain observed sample size.

Findings

Our goal is to evaluate whether socially disadvantaged children become socially disengaged as they make the transition to young adulthood. We first consider the frequency with which youth engage in volunteer activities, as well as their early life course experiences and experiences at mid-adolescence. Our conceptual model argues that family experiences through childhood affect emotional and behavioral functioning at mid-adolescence, which in turn influence levels of volunteer activity. Thus, we examine whether early family experiences predict volunteerism and, if so, whether indicators of functioning in adolescence mediate these relationships.

Volunteer Activities and the Early Life Course

Panel A of Table 1 reports mean levels of volunteer activities at mid-adolescence. Almost one-third of both males and females (31% for both groups) report that they engaged in some volunteer activity in the past two years. About one-fourth of the sample report that they engaged in volunteer activities that were purely voluntary (i.e., not mandated by school, faith-based organizations, or the

court). This means that roughly one-third of all volunteer activity among these young people is not completely voluntary.

(Table 1 about here)

The most common organizational venues for volunteer activity are faith-based institutions and organizations that serve the needs of children and young people. Almost one-fifth of our sample adolescents report that they volunteer in the context of their church or a church-related group (15% males and 19% females) or participate in such organizations as Big Brother or Big Sister, Little League, or scouting (18% for both groups). Less frequently observed are volunteer activities associated with civic organizations, such as community centers or nursing homes (8% males and 15% females) and even less common is volunteerism for political organizations (3% for both groups). This last observation is consistent with the commonplace view that young people are skeptical of political institutions and of the efficacy of political participation. Volunteerism can be required or sponsored by schools (8% males and 13% females) or churches (12% males and 13% females). Among youth who volunteer, 26% of male volunteers and 42% of female volunteers report that at least some of their volunteer behavior is sponsored/required by their school. Thirty-eight percent of these males and 41% of these females also indicate that at least some of their volunteer behavior is sponsored/required by their church or synagogue. Nearly 9% of male and 7% of female volunteers report that at least some of their volunteer behavior is sponsored/required by other organizations.²

Organizational sponsorship is particularly important for specific types of volunteer behavior.

² It is possible that an individual is involved in more than one volunteer activity and that those two activities are sponsored/required by two different organizations.

Fifty-seven percent of females who are engaged in youth mentoring report that at least some of their volunteer activity is sponsored or required by their school compared to 28% of the males. More than 30% of males and 40% females who are engaged in youth mentoring report that at least some of their activity is sponsored or required through their church. The majority of those who volunteer within their faith-based organization (74% males and 67% females) also report that at least some of their volunteer activity is sponsored through their church. It thus seems that the lack of church participation or the lack of volunteer programs within a school limit an individual's access to volunteer activity.

Indicators of disadvantage through childhood are common among these youth (see Panel B of Table 1). The average percentage of time spent in poverty is 24 for males and 27 for females, and a slightly larger proportion of time is spent in a female-headed household (27% for males and 28% for females). The NLSY "young adults" also experienced notable instability in their living arrangements during childhood. The mean number of changes in household composition is 1.56 for males and 1.61 for females, while the mean number of moves outside the county is 1.67 for males and 1.40 for females. These young people grew up in households marked by change, both in organizational involvement and residence. The mothers report surprisingly high levels of education, on average just short of a high school diploma. This may slightly overstate their education during the child's earlier years, however, since it refers to attainment in 1996.

Panel C shows indicators of adjustment at mid-adolescence. Average grade point average is slightly below a C. Female and male religious attendance averages once a month. Females and males have a mid-range score on Pearlin's Mastery Scale (range 7-28). Given the prevalence of poverty and family instability observed in this sample, educational plans are relatively high, with males and females

expecting to complete about two years of college on average. Moreover, male youth expect to delay marriage and parenthood until the about age 24 or 25, suggesting that they envision completing school and being gainfully employed before starting a family.

Life Course Models of Volunteerism

The zero-order correlations in Table 2 indicate the strength of bivariate relationships among types of volunteerism, early life course experiences, and functioning at mid-adolescence. The relationships among any type of voluntary volunteerism, church volunteerism and mentoring are indicated by phi coefficients. These relationships are substantial in magnitude and highly significant, indicating that participating in one form of volunteerism is often accompanied by other forms of volunteerism.

(Table 2 about here)

Of the life course variables, the proportions of childhood spent in poverty and in a female-headed household are consistently and negatively correlated with volunteer activity. As more time is spent in poverty and in a female-headed household, youth are less likely to have engaged in any voluntary volunteerism or voluntary activities associated with the church or with youth groups. These results are consistent with the view that today's young people, by virtue of their early childhood experiences, are less likely to engage in pro-social activities.

The results raise obvious questions about whether healthy functioning at mid-adolescence mediates the effects of early life course experiences on later volunteerism. Indeed, the results in Table 2 show that religious attendance and school plans are both significantly related to proportion of time in poverty and a female-headed household, and these same variables are significantly related to

volunteerism. Results in Table 2 likewise show that self-efficacy is positively related to both volunteerism and these indicators of the early life course, although the magnitude of these relationships is small. These data are consistent with the hypothesis that the proportion of time spent in poverty and a female-headed household and the mother's education are related to later volunteerism, in part because a disadvantaged family background is associated with religious attitudes, self-efficacy, and future adult plans.

We first examine the interrelationships between the early life course variables and volunteerism with a series of multivariate logistic regression models. A second model then includes variables indicative of functioning in mid-adolescence.³ A mediating relationship is indicated to the extent that significant effects of early life course variables in the first model are reduced by the inclusion of adolescent experiences in the second model. The results are reported for males and females separately. We identify coefficients that differ significantly in magnitude between these two groups when appropriate; we tested for these differences by estimating models for the total sample and including interaction terms one at a time.

Table 3 reports estimates for models predicting "strictly voluntary" volunteerism for males and

³ Some of the youth in this sample are siblings, which creates interdependencies among cases from the same family. This problem can be addressed with a mixed model which estimates cluster effects as random effects. That is, volunteerism can be predicted by the early life course and adolescence variables, but also by cluster-level parameters, while concurrently adjusting for intraclass correlation in the data (see Hedeker and Gibbons, undated). All of the multivariate models reported were also estimated as mixed models, allowing for a random intercept and error term at the cluster-level. Adjusting for multiple hypothesis testing, very few of the random effects were significant, consistent with Kish's (1965) observation that small clusters have negligible effects. We therefore present fixed effects models only.

females (i.e., we eliminate volunteer activities that are court-ordered). As shown in Model 1, for males, time spent in a female-headed household is associated with lower levels of volunteerism, a relationship of considerable magnitude (odds ratio=.31, $p<.05$). For females, time spent in poverty as a child decreases the likelihood of volunteerism, an effect that is likewise large from a substantive standpoint (odds ratio=.20, $p<.05$). Among females, maternal educational attainment increases volunteer activity (odds ratio=1.16, $p<.10$), an effect that is small from a statistical and substantive standpoint. Black males are less likely than white males to volunteer (odds ratio=.48, $p<.05$). The magnitude of the black effect differs between males and females, albeit marginally ($t=-1.88$, $p=.06$), suggesting that black males volunteer less than black females.

(Table 3 about here)

Are early disadvantages directly related to volunteerism or are they mediated by the later experiences of mid-adolescence? To investigate this issue, a second model is estimated that includes variables indicative of adolescent experiences. For both males and females, the effects of the early life course experience variables are mediated by adolescent experiences. For the males, religious attendance increases the likelihood of volunteerism (odds ratio=1.34, $p<.01$). This effect is also observed for females (odds ratio=1.26, $p=.05$). Among females, grade point average (odds ratio=.56, $p<.01$) also has a substantial negative effects on volunteerism. Students doing well in school and working 20 hours per week or more per week are much less likely to engage in any volunteer activities. Best age for marriage also has a negative effect on volunteerism, although its effect is comparatively small in magnitude (odds ratio=.85, $p<.05$): students who think older ages are more suitable for marriage are less likely to engage in volunteer activities. Finally, females who expect to attain higher

levels of education are more likely to volunteer (odds ratio=1.40, $p<.001$). This finding complements the consistent finding that better educated adults are more socially involved. Perhaps some of the effect of education plans reflects a pro-social orientation that more educated young people and those who desire higher levels of educational attainment share in common.⁴

Childhood poverty and female headship clearly diminish later volunteerism. It also may be the case that the multiple disadvantages of youth have a cumulative impact that grows exponentially. In fact, many of the early life course disadvantages are interrelated (see Table 2). Childhood poverty is positively and very strongly correlated with the proportion of time spent in a female-headed household ($r=.62$), being born to a teen mother ($r=.20$), and maternal education ($r=-.27$). Similarly, the proportion of time spent in a female-headed household is highly correlated with being born to a teen mother ($r=.22$) and the number of changes in household structure ($r=.15$). Early life course disadvantages rarely occur in isolation.

To consider whether the effects of multiple early disadvantages affect volunteerism, we re-estimated the models in Table 3, substituting the cumulative life course risk index for the individual risk factors. These additional results, reported in Table 4, show that, among females, the cumulative risk factor index significantly decreases the likelihood of volunteerism: as young females experience more risk factors with greater severity, they are less likely to engage in any form of volunteerism (odds

⁴Locus of control was unrelated to volunteer work in our models. Moreover, in some preliminary work, we had also hypothesized that high self esteem would be positively associated with volunteer behavior, while depression would be negatively related to volunteering. Using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Center for Epidemiologic Studies- Depression Scale (CESD), however, we found little or no evidence to support this hypothesis.

ratio=.82, $p<.05$; the odds ratio for males=.88, $p=.11$). In addition, the same factors in adolescence that mediate the effect of proportion of time in poverty also mediate the effect of the cumulative risk index. Grade point average (odds ratio=.57, $p<.01$) and best age for marriage (odds ratio=.86, $p<.05$) decrease the likelihood of volunteerism. Educational plans, however, increase the likelihood of volunteerism (odds ratio=1.45, $p<.001$), as does religious attendance (odds ratio=1.28, $p<.05$). Among females, early life course disadvantages work in a cumulative fashion to reduce volunteerism at mid-adolescence. Model 1 also shows a significant black effect among males but not among females, a difference that is statistically significant ($t=-2.06$, $p=.04$).

(Table 4 about here)

Do high levels of early risk have long-term negative effects on volunteerism? High levels of risk--encompassing persistent poverty, a large number of changes in household composition, and a poorly educated mother--may lead to a very low likelihood of volunteerism. Youth from such households may exhaust their social supports and coping resources, while creating a sense of learned helplessness in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges (Shanahan and Mortimer, 1996) and leading to low levels of volunteerism. The equations shown in Table 4 were re-estimated with both the risk index variable and the square of the risk index variable to determine whether the effect of early risk on volunteerism is curvilinear. The results indicate that the effect of early risk is not curvilinear for either males or females. That is, early disadvantages do not interact to create very low probabilities of volunteerism.

Life Course Experiences and Domains of Volunteer Activity

Our results support a mediational model that links early life course disadvantages to

volunteerism. It may also be the case that specific types of volunteerism reflect unique life experiences. In Table 5, we therefore present results from models that predict religious-based volunteer activities and youth mentoring, the two most common forms of voluntary activities observed in this sample.

(Table 5 about here)

Model 1 for faith-based volunteerism shows that early life course disadvantages have substantial effects on this form of voluntary activity for males. The proportion of time spent in a female-headed household (odds ratio=.09, $p<.01$) and having a teen mother (odds ratio=.08, $p<.05$) both have very large, negative effects on faith-based volunteerism. The proportion of time spent in poverty actually has a large and positive effect on volunteerism (odds ratio=5.74, $p<.05$). This appears to reflect multicollinearity among the predictor variables – particularly proportion of time spent in a female-headed household – since the zero-order correlation between poverty and church volunteerism is significant and negative among males ($r=-.12$). Moreover, re-estimating Model 1 without the proportion of time in a female-headed household reduces the effect of poverty to insignificance. Finally for males, the mother's educational attainment increases the likelihood of church volunteerism (odds ratio=1.46, $p<.001$).

This same effect is observed for females: as the mother's educational attainment increases, females are more likely to volunteer in faith-based activities (odds ratio=1.20, $p<.05$). Time spent in poverty has a marginally significant effect on faith-based volunteerism among females (odds ratio=.35, $p=.055$). It is not surprising that religious attendance mediates the effects of these early life course experiences for both males (odds ratio= 2.34, $p<.001$) and, to a lesser extent, for females (odds ratio= 1.83, $p<.001$). In short, the models provide some support for the mediational model, especially for

males, whose church-related volunteer activities are adversely affected by several early life course disadvantages that exert most of their effects through religious attendance at mid-adolescence.

The same modeling strategy is used to examine the precursors of mentor-related volunteer activities, whether youth have engaged in voluntary activities in the context of such organizations as scouts, or a Big Brother or Big Sister organization (also shown in Table 5). The predictors examined here explain little of the interindividual variability in youth mentoring. As educational plans increase among females, so too does their likelihood of mentoring (odds ratio=1.32, $p<.01$). However, in general, neither early life course disadvantage nor experiences at mid-adolescence predict the likelihood of mentoring in our sample. Perhaps youth from disadvantaged homes may seek an “arena of comfort” in such organizations (Simmons and Blyth, 1987), while youth with favorable early family experiences participate to become socially involved.

Table 6 provides results from an analyses of the long-term effects of cumulative childhood disadvantage. The results indicate that the cumulative risk index has no measurable effect on the likelihood of mentoring among boys and a marginally significant negative effect among girls (odds ratio=.84, $p=.056$). Finally, the models shown in Table 6 were re-estimated, adding the square of the risk index to test for a curvilinear relationship. These analyses (not shown) provide little evidence that the effect of cumulative risk on any these forms of volunteerism is curvilinear (i.e., multiplicative). In this respect, our results are inconsistent with our working hypothesis. At the same time, we find that disadvantaged youth are not socially disaffected or lack empathy for the less fortunate, if measured by the extent to which they engaged in volunteer activities that benefit youth.

(Table 6 about here)

Discussion and Conclusion

A major objective of this study is to reorient policy debates away from the current preoccupation with the short-term deleterious consequences of family instability and disadvantage on young people's developmental outcomes (e.g., externalizing behavior, pregnancy, school dropout, etc.). Instead, we emphasize the potential long-term implications of early disadvantage on the transition to productive and socially responsible "citizenship," as indicated by early adult pro-social activities. This is especially important during the current period, when a large cohort of potentially "at-risk" young persons have begun to enter early adulthood and take their place as contributing (or not) members of society. Specifically, our concern is whether the past two decades of high child poverty and family instability have contributed to today's putatively growing share of apathetic and politically disaffected young persons. Our conceptual framework and empirical approach rests on the assumption that volunteer work — or the lack of it — signals the responsiveness of young adults to broader social issues and to the well-being of others less fortunate than themselves.

Our general conclusion, based on analyses of data from the newly available 1996 young adult samples of the NLSY, is that the "exposure" to single parent families (especially among boys) and to childhood poverty (especially for girls) are negatively associated with later pro-social behaviors. These results support our basic working hypothesis. At the same time, our results should not be viewed entirely from a pessimistic standpoint regarding America's future citizens. We found little evidence, for example, of significant deleterious long-term effects associated with being borne of a teen parent or experiencing multiple family transitions during childhood. Children of teen parents and unstable

households were just as likely as other children to engage in volunteer activities as they matured into late adolescence. These are optimistic results (for other views, see Rich 1999).

Our analyses have provided additional insights into the social mechanisms by which growing up in a female-headed family exert negative effects on volunteerism. Specifically, it is clear that effects of social and economic childhood disadvantages are mediated, at least in part, by healthy emotional and cognitive development in mid-adolescence. Religious activity plays an especially significant role; a disadvantaged childhood is negatively associated with faith-based involvement, which is a major venue for community involvement and pro-social activities (Wilson and Janoski 1995). Our analyses raise new and important questions about whether the young adult behaviors observed here have an environmental “cause” (e.g., living in an unstable family), or whether the results simply reflect an inability to control other unobserved variables, including neighborhood characteristics and heritable personality traits from parents (e.g., shyness or empathy) that may be associated with volunteerism or other kinds of pro-social activities (Harris 1998; Teachman 1997). More importantly, our results point to the importance of schools and churches for providing a pathway for young adults to volunteer. They also call for greater effort in identifying institutional mechanisms that facilitate civic involvement, especially if volunteerism has a positive transformative effect on values and behavior (Uggen and Janikula 1999).

In sum, our study provides a benchmark rather than final answers regarding the nexus between family change and the putative decline in a “civil society.” Indeed, we acknowledge several potential limitations of our study. First, the small sample size of the NLSY young adult sample makes it imprudent to make strong causal arguments — our results are suggestive rather than definitive. A complete evaluation of alternative explanations for the results reported here may require panel data as

the sample participants age into adulthood and alternative statistical designs (e.g. multilevel models of school or neighborhood effects) before strong causal assertions are appropriate (see Manski et al. 1992). Second, our analyses are largely restricted to two kinds of pro-social activities, each of which involves *formal* organizational participation (in faith-based institutions and schools). Our approach nevertheless provides a conceptual framework for future studies linking disadvantaged family background to values and attitudes (e.g., altruism) and many other kinds of *informal* pro-social or helping behaviors (e.g., giving to charity or attending to the neighbor's children). Indeed, young adults with disadvantaged backgrounds may express their values differently (yet positively) from young adults from stable middle-class families. For example, they may avoid participation in predominately white fraternal organizations like the Shriners or Rotary Club. Third, our analyses have focused primarily on the effects of "supply-side" characteristics (e.g., family background, employment, and schooling). Whether young adults engage in pro-social activities may also be "demand driven;" i.e., volunteer work may be greatest in neighborhoods or communities with the greatest need for help. On the other hand, fear of crime often is a major barrier to community involvement; the supply of volunteers may thus decline as the demand for volunteers and social activism increases. Neighborhoods and schools also provide a context for socialization (e.g., "collective socialization") and peer influence, which also are potentially important for child and adult well-being.⁵

⁵One testable hypothesis is that the long term effects of family instability may be artifactual, reflecting the fact that many poor families have little choice but to live in bad neighborhoods that socialize children into oppositional cultures, much less instill positive civic values and behavior. The adult NLSY supplement includes several subjective assessments of the current neighborhood context (e.g., crime, inability find jobs, abandoned buildings). Some additional analyses indicated that subjective neighborhood characteristics were largely unrelated to volunteer work among young adults.

Despite these limitations, our results on family change speak to concerns about the decline in civility and civil society, represented by the possible erosion of our most basic democratic and civic values, and expressed in persistent claims that society increasingly rewards individualism and personal gratification over communalism (e.g., Elshstain 1999). As Tocqueville observed more than a century ago, participation in voluntary and civic organizations has been life blood of America society and a training grounds for good citizenship and leadership (Rich 1999). Whether the rapid family changes sown in America over the past two decade have reaped a socially and politically disaffected citizenry has great saliency to our collective future. Indeed, any deleterious effects on our basic institutions (e.g., participatory government) and “sense of community” (e.g., trust and caring for those less fortunate in society) will be revealed in the full course of time.

They are neither an incentive nor a barrier to community involvement, nor do they account for the negative relationship between children’s living arrangements (with a single parent) and volunteerism as young adults.

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Table 1. Volunteer Activities and the Early Life Course, Young Adult Survey of the NLSY: Means and (Standard Errors)

<u>A. Volunteer Activities¹</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>T-test, df</u>
Any volunteer experience	.31 (.02)	.31 (.03)	.01, 1086
Voluntary volunteerism	.24 (.02)	.23 (.02)	.13, 1086
Church volunteerism	.15 (.02)	.19 (.02)	-1.35, 1086
Mentoring of youth	.18 (.02)	.18 (.02)	-.16, 1086
Civic volunteerism	.09 (.01)	.15 (.02)	-2.78, 1086**
Political volunteerism	.03 (.01)	.03 (.01)	-.22, 1086
School requirement/sponsored	.08 (.01)	.13 (.02)	-2.16, 1086*
Church requirement/sponsored	.12 (.02)	.13 (.02)	-.48, 1086
<u>B. Early Life Course Experiences</u>			
Proportion of time in poverty	.24 (.01)	.27 (.02)	1.69, 960 [#]
Proportion of time female-headed household	.27 (.01)	.28 (.02)	-.59, 1086
Child born to teenage mother	.10 (.01)	.14 (.02)	-2.03, 1086*
Household structure changes	1.56 (.09)	1.61 (.09)	-.42, 1086
Moves outside the county	1.67 (.10)	1.40 (.10)	1.88, 1084 [#]
Mother's educational attainment	11.86 (.09)	11.93 (.11)	-.48, 1081
<u>C. Experiences at Mid-Adolescence</u>			
Grade Point Average	2.45(.04)	2.38 (.04)	1.16, 1086
Employed 20 Hours/Week +	.21 (.02)	.18 (.02)	1.12, 1086
Religiosity	2.98 (.09)	3.23 (.09)	-1.99, 1086*
Self-Efficacy	19.03 (.15)	18.60 (.16)	1.99, 1083*
Educational Plans (Grade level)	14.33 (.11)	14.87 (.12)	-3.26, 1079****
Best age for marriage	24.62 (.19)	23.75 (.18)	3.29, 893****
Best age for children	25.28 (.21)	24.58 (.21)	2.39, 852*

¹ All volunteer items coded 0=no, 1=yes; # p<.10 * p<.05 ** p<.01 **** p<.001

Table 2. Volunteer Activities and Life Course Experiences through Childhood and Adolescence, Bivariate Relationships
(Pearson correlations reported; |r|s $\geq .06$ are significant at $p \leq .05$)

	1. ^a	2. ^a	3. ^a	4.	5.	6. ^a	7.	8.	9.	10.	11. ^a	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
1. Voluntary ^a	1.0															
2. Church ^a	.52	1.0														
3. Mentoring ^a	.58	.40	1.0													
4. Poverty	-.17	-.11	-.09	1.0												
5. Female HH	-.13	-.13	-.08	.62	1.0											
6. Teen Mother ^a	.05	.04	.02	.20	.22	1.0										
7. HH Changes	-.04	-.06	-.05	.07	.15	.09	1.0									
8. Moves	-.00	-.01	.02	-.07	-.08	-.02	.17	1.0								
9. M's Education	.15	.16	.10	-.27	-.03	-.17	-.00	-.00	1.0							
10. Grades	-.06	-.01	-.03	-.06	-.06	.03	.04	.02	.01	1.0						
11. Work 20+ ^a	.04	.02	.02	-.11	-.11	.04	.00	-.03	.06	-.14	1.0					
12. Religiosity	.21	.37	.10	-.09	-.06	-.01	-.02	-.11	.14	-.03	.03	1.0				
13. Self-efficacy	.11	.07	.10	-.09	-.05	-.08	-.09	.07	.04	-.03	.12	.02	1.0			
14. School Plans	.21	.06	.15	-.25	-.07	-.08	-.03	.02	.28	.00	.08	.12	.23	1.0		
15. Age Marriage	-.08	-.08	-.05	.04	.18	.02	-.01	-.06	.05	.00	-.05	.00	.08	.12	1.0	
16. Age Children	.03	-.05	-.03	-.19	-.17	.01	.04	-.04	.05	-.04	.02	.02	.04	.18	.52	1.0

^a The association between two items marked by this superscript is reported as a phi coefficient.

Table 3. Volunteer Activity in Adolescence, Logistic Regression Estimates, Young Adult Children of the NLSY (unstandardized coefficients and standard errors reported)¹

	Males		Females	
	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
<u>A. Early Life Course Experiences</u>				
Time in poverty (proportion)	.01 (.64)	.16 (.81)	-1.60 (.67)*	-.82 (.81)
Time in female-headed household	-1.16 (.59)*	-.51 (.72)	.15 (.65)	.01 (.95)
Child born to teenage mother	-.97 (.68)	-.12 (.70)	.37 (.45)	-.01 (.61)
Household structure changes	.06 (.08)	.10 (.10)	-.14 (.09)	-.09 (.12)
Moves outside the county	-.04 (.07)	.05 (.09)	-.02 (.08)	.03 (.09)
Mother's educational attainment	.14 (.07) [#]	-.04 (.08)	.15 (.08) [#]	.16 (.10) [#]
<u>B. Experiences at Mid-Adolescence</u>				
Grade point average		-.03 (.21)		-.59 (.22)**
Employed 20 hours/week +		.13 (.48)		-.60 (.53)
Religious attitudes		.33 (.11)**		.23 (.11)*
Educational plans		.17 (.09) [#]		.33 (.10)***
Locus of control		.05 (.06)		.08 (.07)
Best age for marriage		-.07 (.06)		-.17 (.08)*
Best age for children		.08 (.05) [#]		-.03 (.07)

Table 3 continued.

C. Covariates

Age	.06 (.13)	-.04 (.18)	.03 (.14)	-.01 (.17)
Black	-.72 (.33)*	-1.09 (.41)**	-.06 (.36)	-.40 (.48)
Hispanic	-.65 (.45)	-.92 (.52) [#]	.03 (.48)	.13 (.56)
Constant	-3.21 (2.20)	-5.09 (3.57)	-2.97 (2.33)	-3.96 (3.64)
F-statistic, degrees of freedom N(unweighted)	2.38, 10, 479** 489	1.50, 21,339 [#] 360	1.64, 10, 456 [#] 466	2.05, 21. 328** 349

¹ Equations include dummy variables for missing status on Household structure changes and Moves outside the county, Best age for marriage, and Best age for children.

[#] p<.10 * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 4. Volunteer Activity in Adolescence, Logistic Regression Estimates, Children of the NLSY
(unstandardized coefficients and standard errors reported)¹

	Males		Females	
	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
Cumulative Life Course Risk Index	-.13 (.08)	.13 (.11)	-.19 (.08)*	-.07 (.11)
<u>B. Functioning at Mid-Adolescence</u>				
Grade point average		.02 (.21)		-.57 (.22)**
Employed 20 hours/week +		.16 (.47)		-.45 (.54)
Religious attitudes		.34 (.11)**		.25 (.10)*
Educational plans		.18 (.09)*		.37 (.10)***
Self efficacy		.06 (.06)		.10 (.07)
Best age for marriage		-.09 (.06)		-.16 (.08)*
Best age for children		.10 (.04)*		-.02 (.05)
<u>C. Covariates</u>				
Age	.05 (.12)	-.05 (.18)	.04 (.13)	-.03 (.18)
Black	-1.14 (.31)***	-1.42 (.43)***	-.15 (.28)	-.45 (.40)
Hispanic	-.85 (.44) [#]	-.94 (.51) [#]	-.19 (.45)	-.13 (.52)
Constant	-1.15 (1.95)	-6.13 (3.52) [#]	-1.09 (2.14)	-2.93 (3.62)
F-statistic, degrees of freedom N(unweighted)	4.49, 5, 484*** 489	1.94, 16, 344* 360	1.51, 5, 464 469	2.59, 16, 336** 352

¹ Equations include dummy variables for missing status on Household structure changes and Moves outside the county, Best age for marriage, and Best age for children.

[#] p<.10 * p<.05 ** p<.01 *** p<.001

Table 5. Volunteer Activity in Adolescence, Logistic Regression Estimates, Children of the NLSY

	Church-Related Voluntary Activities				Mentoring of Youth			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
<u>A. Life Course Experiences</u>								
Time in poverty (proportion)	1.74 (.69)*	1.86 (.97) [#]	-1.04 (.54) [#]	-.66 (.75)	.44 (.66)	1.38 (.96)	-.70 (.65)	-.03 (.70)
Time in female-headed household	-2.41 (.77)**	-1.73 (.94) [#]	-.72 (.54)	-.62 (.77)	-.87 (.61)	-.80 (.82)	-.44 (.58)	-1.21 (.66) [#]
Child born to teenage mother	-2.51 (1.10)*	-2.54 (1.35) [#]	.58 (.46)	.33 (.68)	-.42 (.59)	-.25 (.67)	.15 (.47)	-.35 (.56)
Household structural changes	-.05 (.10)	.10 (.12)	-.14 (.09)	-.15 (.13)	-.02 (.09)	-.00 (.10)	-.09 (.09)	-.09 (.11)
Moves outside the county	-.03 (.09)	.04 (.11)	.02 (.09)	.08 (.10)	.06 (.08)	.14 (.10)	.02 (.09)	.04 (.09)
Mother's educational attainment	.38 (.09)***	.28 (.13)*	.18 (.08)*	.28 (.09)**	.12 (.08)	-.01 (.09)	.14 (.08)	.17 (.10)
<u>B. Functioning at Mid-Adolescence</u>								
Grade point average		.32 (.27)		-.32 (.23)		-.00 (.22)		-.26 (.23)
Employed 20 hours/week +		-.07 (.63)		.10 (.56)		.13 (.55)		-.57 (.55)
Religious attitudes		.85 (.16)***		.62 (.13)***		.00 (.11)		.05 (.10)
Educational plans		-.10 (.11)		.07 (.11)		.15 (.11)		.28 (.10)**
Self efficacy		.10 (.08)		.05 (.06)		.11 (.07)		-.02 (.06)
Best age for marriage		.05 (.07)		-.12 (.07)		-.06 (.06)		-.01 (.07)
Best age for children		-.05 (.06)		-.04 (.07)		.01 (.05)		-.10 (.05) [#]

Table 5 continued

C. Background Characteristics

Age	-.12 (.14)	-.45 (.24) [#]	-.31 (.14)*	-.31 (.19)	.12 (.13)	.04 (.21)	-.14 (.14)	-.06 (.17)
Black	-.56 (.39)	-1.19 (.60)*	.86 (.33)**	.45 (.47)	-.31 (.34)	-.46 (.42)	.48 (.32)	.33 (.40)
Hispanic	-.45 (.68)	-.77 (.63)	.62 (.48)	.59 (.62)	-.85 (.44)*	-1.40 (.67)	.36 (.44)	.43 (.48)
Constant	-4.08 (2.45)	-2.41 (4.60)	1.33 (2.32)	.38 (3.58)	-4.64 (2.36)*	-5.22 (4.08)*	-.81 (2.41)	-2.73 (3.52)
F-statistic, degrees of freedom N(unweighted)	2.98, 10, 479** 489	2.02, 21, 339** 360	2.19, 10, 456* 466	2.86, 21, 328*** 349	1.31, 10, 479 489	.89, 20, 320 340	1.30, 10, 456 466	1.18, 21, 328 349

¹ Equations include dummy variables for missing status on Household structure changes and Moves outside the county, Best age for marriage, and Best age for children.

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

Table 6. Volunteer Activity in Adolescence, Logistic Regression Estimates, Children of the NLSY

	Church-Related Voluntary Activities				Mentoring of Youth			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>	<u>Model 1</u>	<u>Model 2</u>
Cumulative Life Course Risk Index	-.24 (.10)*	.02 (.15)	-.22 (.09)*	-.15 (.12)	-.06 (.09)	.08 (.12)	-.18 (.09)#	-.20 (.11)#
<u>B. Functioning at Mid-Adolescence</u>								
Grade point average		.29 (.24)		-.29 (.23)		.04 (.20)		-.25 (.23)
Employed 20 hours/week +		.22 (.58)		.23 (.54)		.10 (.54)		-.37 (.56)#
Religious attitudes		.89 (.15)***		.59 (.12)***		.00 (.11)		.07 (.10)
Educational plans		-.02 (.11)		.12 (.10)		.14 (.10)		.28 (.09)**
Self efficacy		.09 (.09)		.07 (.06)		.12 (.06)#		-.02 (.06)
Best age for marriage		.00 (.06)		-.10 (.07)		-.08 (.06)		-.03 (.07)
Best age for children		-.02 (.06)		-.03 (.06)		.01 (.85)		-.07 (.05)
<u>C. Background Characteristics</u>								
Age	-.10 (.14)	-.39 (.21)#	-.27 (.14)#	-.31 (.18)#	.16 (.13)	.04 (.21)	-.12 (.14)	-.11 (.18)
Black	-.79 (.36)*	-1.34 (.58)*	.59 (.30)*	.31 (.45)	-.57 (.32)#	-.47 (.40)	.34 (.29)	.21 (.40)
Hispanic	-.59 (.62)	-1.13 (.63)#	.30 (.46)	.22 (.56)	-.99 (.42)*	-1.16 (.56)	.17 (.42)	.22 (.48)
Constant	.93 (2.20)	-.67 (4.41)	3.29 (2.24)	2.58 (3.51)	-2.87 (2.06)	-5.28 (4.09)	.99 (2.24)	-.17 (3.53)
F-statistic, degrees of freedom N(unweighted)	3.38, 5, 484** 489	2.50, 16, 344** 360	1.94, 5, 464# 469	3.21, 16, 336*** 352	1.92, 5, 484# 489	.90, 15, 325 340	.91, 5, 464 469	1.30, 16, 336 352

¹ Equations include dummy variables for missing status on Household structure changes and Moves outside the county, Best age for marriage, and Best age for children.

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

