MANDATED COMMUNITY SERVICE IN HIGH SCHOOL AND SUBSEQUENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT:

The case of the "double cohort" in Ontario, Canada

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Abstract

In 1999, the Ontario provincial government introduced into its high school curriculum a requirement that students complete forty hours of volunteer community service before graduation. At the same time, the high school curriculum was shortened from five years to four. Consequently, the 2003 graduating class of Ontario high school students contained two cohorts, the first of the 4-year cohorts that was compelled to complete a mandated community service requirement, and the last of the 5-year cohorts that was not. Using a quasi-experimental design, we surveyed 1768 first-year university students in terms of their perceptions and attitudes about the nature and amount of previous volunteering, attitudes towards community service, current service involvement and other measures of civic and political engagement. Comparisons of the two cohorts indicate that, while there were discernible differences between the two cohorts in terms of their past record of community service, there were no differences in current attitudes and civic engagement that might plausibly be attributed to participation in the mandatory service program. Results are discussed with relation to the current debate concerning the impact of mandatory volunteering policies on intrinsic motivation to volunteer.

In 1999, the Ontario government changed the curriculum for high school students, adding a required civics class and specifying 40 hours of mandatory community service. The changes were part of an explicit attempt to halt the declining civic engagement of young people, and to encourage wider participation in community and political life. Because the government at the same time shortened the high school curriculum from five years to four, the 2003 graduating class of Ontario high school students contained two cohorts, the first of the 4-year cohorts that was compelled to complete a mandated community service requirement during their high school career, and the last of the 5-year cohorts that was not. The existence of these two cohorts within the same graduating class of high school students afforded a unique opportunity to assess the impact of mandatory community service in two groups of students with very similar backgrounds, but which differed in whether or not they had been required to perform 40 hours of community service to obtain their high school diploma.

An increasing number of secondary school jurisdictions around the world have introduced community service programs as one means of combating declining levels of civic engagement among young people (Keith, 1994; Hodgkinson and Weitzman, 1997; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). The community service programs themselves vary. They may be mandatory, in which case students are required to volunteer for a set number of hours for course credit, or they may involve

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service-learning, where the goals or lessons of service are reinforced by the course curriculum. Survey data from the United States indicates that approximately 26% of high schools require some form of service (Scales et al. 2004). Among schools with service-learning programs, approximately half reported in 1999 that the program was mandatory for students (Skinner and Chapman, 1999). In Canada, at least a third of all students of high school age report participating in community service programs (Hall, McKeown and Roberts, 2001).

For many advocates, the argument for adopting such programs is rooted in the observed and established relationship between volunteering activity on the one hand, and a syndrome of dispositions reflective of good citizenship on the other (Eley, 2001; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, and Snyder, 1998; Quall, 2001; Rosenthal et. al., 1998; Verba et. al., 1995). As Janoski and his colleagues (1998) summarize this position, "people acquire the habit of volunteering because they are routinely placed in social situations and social relationships where the social skills and dispositions requisite for volunteer work are developed." (Janoski, Musick, and Wilson, 1998, p. 498). By this argument, if the practice of volunteering has these effects, then mandating such practice will bring benefits to those most in need of them – that is, those who would not engage in community service of their own accord (Avrahami and Dar, 1993; Barber, 1992; Giles and Eyler, 1994; Sobus, 1995).

There is evidence for the positive effects of community service programs, though the benefits vary by type. Service-learning programs, where classroom lessons are supplemented by service experience, appear an effective way to improve typical measures of civic engagement such as political knowledge (Hamilton and Zeldin, 1987) and civic responsibility (Blyth, Saito and Berkas, 1997; Mechoir, 1997). Assessments of mandatory or voluntary service on its own, however, tend to be more tepid, though research points to improvements in knowledge (Niemi, Hepburn, and Chapman, 2000), political efficacy (Niemi et. al., 2000; Marks, 1994 as cited in Niemi et. al., 2000), "civic inclusion" (Reese, 1997 as cited in Niemi et. al.,2000), and enhanced civic skill levels (Niemi et. al., 2000). While our focus is on the impact of mandatory volunteering on civic engagement, it is clear that mandatory volunteering can also affect subsequent service behaviour. A study by Janoski, Musick and Wilson (1998) found that while pro-social attitudes were much the stronger predictor of subsequent volunteering behaviour, involvement itself – even if it is mandated – also has an independent impact on that behaviour.

What is the mechanism through which service, whether mandatory or voluntary, might influence civic engagement and social responsibility? Youniss, McLellan, Yates and their colleagues (Metz, McLellan and Youniss, 2003; Youniss, McLellan and Yates, 1997; Yates and Youniss, 1996, 1998) suggest that organized community service activities expose young people to a unique socialization process. Through service, youth learn that by working with community organizations in a coordinated fashion, they can make a difference in the lives of others, and in their community. By interacting directly with people who have been stereotyped with labels such as "homeless" or "poor", they experience these people as individuals, and come to see issues such as homelessness and poverty from a different perspective. They begin to question political and societal systems that allow conditions such as poverty to grow, and wonder how such systems can be changed to improve people's lives. These new perspectives come at a time, developmentally, when young people are beginning to construct their adult identities. Ultimately, these kinds of experiences can contribute to young people's perception of themselves as "civic actors", individuals who are connected to their communities, and who have a responsibility to ensure that all citizens are given the opportunity to lead healthy, productive lives (Flanagan et al., 1999).

While there is certainly evidence that mandatory programs can have positive effects on participants, it is also clear that such effects are complex and conditional. For example, Niemi and his colleagues (2000) caution that the effects they detected were limited almost entirely to volunteers whose community service was "regular and sustained". Community service programs, whether mandatory or voluntary, had no effect on the infrequent or one-time-only volunteer. Similarly, Riedel (2002) found that the impact on civic responsibility of four programs at Minnesota high schools depended on the nature of the program in question. Only programs which offered broad op-

portunities for public action increased the political engagement of participants. Metz, McLellan and Youniss (2003) found that young people who performed service that helped people in need or addressed social problems had higher levels of "social concern" than young people who performed other kinds of service.

One of the most frequently mentioned concerns about mandatory service programs is what Warburton and Smith (2003) describe as a "developing theoretical critique" (p. 777) of such programs, which suggests that compelling people to engage in community service may actually be counter-productive if the goal is to promote pro-social attitudes and encourage socially responsible behaviour (Bessant, 2000; Brown, Kenny, Turner, and Prince, 2000; Deci and Ryan, 1987; Goodin, 2002; Nietz, 1999; Turnbull and Fattore, 1999). Here, mandatory service may be seen to 'poison the well' by reducing students' intrinsic motivation to perform service, thereby deterring students from future service and undermining possible positive effects on civic engagement.

Some evidence for this scepticism is beginning to accumulate. For example, Warburton and Smith (2003) report a strong theme among their focus group participants that "compulsory programmes are not the same as volunteering" (p. 780); these students reported feelings of exploitation, negativity and little enthusiasm for future volunteer involvement. Other researchers have argued that mandatory volunteering may well reduce intrinsic interest in such activities by undermining the self-perception that tends to sustain future volunteering. That is, those coming to see volunteer work as something done only when required or rewarded will be less likely to continue such activity when the requirement or the reward is removed (Batson, Jasnoski, and Hanson, 1978; Clary, Snyder, and Stukas, 1998; Kunda and Schwartz, 1983). Along these lines, Stukas, Snyder, and Clary (1999) reported that a mandatory community service program had the greatest negative effect on students who had previously been active volunteers. It was argued that these participants tended to devalue the exercise once they were required rather than inspired to contribute their time. Stukas and colleagues also found that the perception of choice in a mandatory program significantly enhanced the likelihood of subsequent volunteering for those who initially were not inclined to volunteer freely.

Recent research, however (Metz and Youniss, 2003, 2005), seems to suggest that such criticisms of mandatory service programs may be overstated. Comparisons of mandatory and voluntary service programs indicate that school-based required service does not deter, but may even increase young people's inclinations to perform community service. Metz and Youniss (2003, 2005) conducted a quasi-experimental study of students in a school that implemented a mandatory service program, comparing students from the cohort before the program was implemented (and who were therefore not required to perform service) with students attending the school after the program was implemented (and who were required to perform community service). They found that among those who were more inclined to volunteer anyway, there were no differences between the mandated and non-mandated cohorts in their inclination to become civically engaged in the future. However, among those less inclined to perform service, those from the mandated cohort expressed significantly greater future intentions to perform service, join a civic organization and to vote than did those from the non-mandated cohort.

The accumulated research highlights two key debates, one about the impact of mandatory service programs (that do not necessarily have a "learning" component) when compared to more comprehensive service-learning offerings (which do have a learning component), and a second about the positive or negative impact of mandatory versus voluntary service. While studies such as Stukas et al. (1999) suggest that mandatory service may undermine intrinsic motivation to volunteer, studies such as those by Metz and Youniss (2003, 2005) indicate that mandatory service programs can enhance future intentions to volunteer.

One of the critical differences between the two types of study has to do with the research designs employed to assess differences between mandated and voluntary service. Stukas et al.'s (1999) study of a mandatory service program at a Minnesota university looked only at students who had participated in the university's mandatory service programs, comparing those who felt their service had been performed because it was mandated with those who thought they would have performed service even without a mandate. Metz and Youniss's research (2003, 2005), in contrast, com-

pared students who had been mandated to perform service with students who had not. It may well be the case that, among students who are mandated to perform service, those who feel more pressured to serve have less favourable attitudes and intentions with respect to future service. This does not mean, however, that they will necessarily have less favourable intentions to volunteer in future when compared to individuals whose service is not mandated. Indeed, research by Pancer and Pratt (1999) suggests that individuals' attitudes and intentions concerning community service often change dramatically as a result of their service experience. Many young people start performing service because they are asked or required to, but, if they have a positive experience (which most do), their attitudes and intentions with respect to service become more positive. These debates led us to believe that it would be more valuable for us to identify clear research questions than specific predictions about the intended impact of service engagement.

The Present Study

In the present research, we were interested in the impact of mandatory volunteering on two elements: attitudes towards service and civic engagement. Here, we rely on an expansive definition of civic engagement, including elements raised in the literature such as knowledge, efficacy and responsibility. More specifically, our research compared individuals from the two cohorts graduating from Ontario high schools in 2003, in an attempt to answer the following questions: 1) Do individuals who are mandated to perform service activities differ from those whose service activities are not mandated with regard to the nature and amount of service that they perform? 2) Do "mandated" and "non-mandated" individuals differ in terms of their attitudes towards service after completion of the mandatory program? 3) Do the "mandated" and "non-mandated" cohorts differ with respect to civic engagement more generally? 4) How does the mandatory nature of the service compare with other factors (e.g., the nature and extent of the service performed) in terms of its influence on attitudes toward service and future volunteering?
We expected to find that the mandatory nature of service is less relevant than its sustained and regular nature, something supported by existing research (Niemi, Hepburn and Chapman 2000). As a result, we expect to find differences in civic engagement not between mandated and non-mandated cohorts, but rather between those who volunteered – whether mandated or not – in a sustained and regular way, and those who did not.

Method:
Research Context

The new high school curriculum implemented by the Ontario government in 1999 requires students to take a civics class and to complete forty hours of mandatory community service sometime between grade nine and twelve. The required civics class introduces students over a period of six weeks to key concepts in the political organization of states and the specific organization of Canada's political system. The community service requirement has been left largely to the individual school boards to organize and administer. The legislation stipulates that the organization with which a student works must perform services of benefit to the community, must be non-profit, and must conform to the ethical standards of the Ministry of Education. Typically eligible activities include fundraising, involvement in community events and projects, volunteer work with seniors, involvement in the arts and culture, participation in youth programs or environmental projects. Beyond this, however, there is considerable variation across the province in the way school boards have chosen to administer the program. Some have used volunteer coordinators to provide information to students on volunteering opportunities in the area while others have established closer links with existing coordinating services such as the United Way or Volunteer Action Centres. School boards and individual schools or classes also vary in terms of the "learning" associated with the community service performed by their students. In some boards, schools and classes, the service students perform is combined with some sort of formal learning about or reflection upon their community service, making their programs true service-learning programs (Bringle and Hatcher, 1995); in other schools, little if any formal opportunity is offered to students to learn from or reflect upon their community work. It is also worth noting that some schools – particularly private schools and those in Catholic Boards – had pre-existing community

service requirements for their students so that the new program did not present a significant change to their status quo. There is, then, considerable diversity in the status quo ante in terms of service opportunities available to students. This diversity is paired with variation in the implementation of the mandatory requirement.

Participants

The research participants were 1,768 students (out of a total 3,603 students) entering their first year of studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, a mid-sized university in south-western Ontario in 2003. Of this sample, 62.3% were female, and 37.4% were male. Eighty-seven percent of the participants had been born in Canada. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents' fathers (73.7%) and a similar proportion of the respondents' mothers (71.4%) had obtained at least some post-secondary education or had completed a post-secondary degree.

The total sample included only grade 12 (younger cohort) students from Ontario who indicated volunteering was mandatory and grade 13 (older cohort) students from Ontario who indicated volunteering was not required. Our data indicated that 38.3 percent of the incoming class was from the younger cohort, with the remaining 61.7% of students having completed the five year program. A comparison of the two groups revealed that they had similar profiles on most of the socio-demographic variables that are thought to be related to volunteering and civic engagement, including family income, parental education and community size. However, there were significant differences on three variables. Not surprisingly, the two groups differ in their average age: the Grade 12 cohort averaged 17.8 years of age while the Grade 13/OAC cohort had an average age of 19.2 years. The two groups also differed in their gender composition and in their religious attendance patterns. Regarding gender, the Grade 12 cohort had a significant over-representation of female students relative to the Grade 13 cohort (69% versus 58.4%), and a significantly greater proportion of students who attend religious services at least "a few times a month" (31% versus 25.1%).

It should be noted that Wilfrid Laurier is not a typical school by Canadian standards. Located in south-western Ontario, it has a smaller than average enrolment (approximately 12,000 undergraduate students), and is a predominantly liberal-arts university. The ethnic composition of the student population is more homogeneous than the province as a whole, and the average income of parents is higher than the national average. Hence, although the two cohorts in our study are themselves fairly comparable in socio-demographic terms (see below), they do not reflect the range of diversity found in the provincial university population and certainly not the range of diversity found in the entire 2003 high school graduating class.

Measures:
Background and demographic variables

The survey included locator information such as date of birth and postal code that allowed researchers to ensure that individuals did not complete the survey more than once. The survey also contained standard demographic predictors of civic engagement as service such as gender, religious observance, community size, income and levels of parental education. The religion question asked "How often do you attend religious services? [Never, a few times a year, a few times a month, once a week or more]."

Volunteering Activity

Participants were asked a sequence of questions to assess the amount and nature of their past volunteer activities. The first question asked "In the past several years, have you engaged in volunteer work of any sort [yes, no, don't recall]". Students who indicated that they had volunteered in the past were asked "What kinds of volunteer work did you do and with that frequency over the past several years?" In responding to this question, participants were asked to check the appropriate box (never did this, did this once or twice, did this a few times, did this quite a bit, did this a lot) for each of the following: a) Nonprofit organization (eg. human society, foodbank), b) Health Service Sector (eg. hospital, retirement home), c) School system (eg. tutoring or clean-up), d) Community Sports Programs (eg. coaching or refereeing), e) Local community or service club projects (eg. clean-up, fundraising), f) Other. Space was pro-

vided for students to provide a specific example if they selected option f. To compute a cumulative service activity score students were assigned a rating between 0 and 4 for each of the six voluntary sectors. A rating of 0 was assigned for no involvement in that sector and so forth up to a rating of 4 for 'a lot' of involvement. Adding the student's ratings across the six sectors created an index of involvement with scores ranging between 0 and 24. The mean score for this index for the sample as a whole was 7.23 and the standard deviation was 4.60. A second index was created to indicate number of intense service commitments. This measure is an additive index for the number of sectors in which students claimed to be involved "a lot" The resulting index has a range of 0 to 6. A third index measured the diversity of service commitment across the six sectors. We created a binary measure to indicate whether a student had been involved in a particular sector. The resulting variable is an additive count index of involvement.

Attitudes Toward Volunteering

Attitudes toward volunteering were assessed by means of three statements ("Everyone should volunteer some time for the good of the community", "People have a responsibility to help those who are less well off than themselves", "People who are well of should share their wealth by giving generously to charity"). Participants responded to these statements by indicating their agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (5). The three item scale had a Cronbach's alpha .73, indicating adequate internal consistency.

Confidence in public and private institutions

Students were asked "Please indicate how much confidence you have in the following institutions (A great deal, Quite a lot, Not very much, None at all). We then distinguished between public and private institutions. The two scales are mean confidence ratings with reliability scores of .69 and .57 respectively. Public institutions included the criminal justice system, unions, the polling industry, police, the federal government, provincial government and the youth court system. Private institutions included big business and the media.

Interest in politics scale

Interest in politics was computed as the mean response to seven questions. These included interest in Canadian and internal politics, party identification and more general views. Four of the items employed Likert format responses. These included "Politics and government sometimes seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on", "I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other", "I didn't really have any ideas about politics, but I thought about it a lot and I now have a clear idea of my feelings about political parties and where the country should be going" and last, "I haven't really thought about politics. It just doesn't excite me." In addition, students were asked two specific questions about political interest: "We would like to know how interested you are in Canadian politics. In general would you say you follow Canadian politics very closely, fairly closely, not very closely or not at all?" and "What about international politics? In general would you say you follow international politics very closely, fairly closely, not very closely or not at all?" The partisan identification question asked "how strongly" the student identified with their favoured political party, "Very strongly, fairly strongly, or not very strongly." Response categories to the seven questions were standardized to the same metric. The resulting scale has a reliability score of .84.

Media exposure scale

Our two-item media exposure scale has a reliability score of .63 and asked "How regularly do you watch news on television?" and "How often do you read a newspaper?" Response categories for both questions were identical "Every day, a few times a week, seldom, or never."

Political cynicism scale

Our final scale was computed as mean response to the following three Likert items: "Generally, those elected to political office soon lose touch with the people", "I trust political leaders to act in my best interests", and "Many people in the federal government are dishonest". The three-item scale has a

reliability score of .45. Although lower than the reliability scores for the other scales, the removal of items did not significantly affect the alpha results. We felt that the conceptual coherence of the scale justified its inclusion.

Community and political engagement

The survey asked a broad range of questions tapping student dispositions about volunteering and their connectedness to their community. To assist in developing summary dependent measures, we subjected these items to a principal components analysis. The six factors or components identified from this analysis fall into the two general groupings of "community" and "political" engagement. The community engagement dimensions are: attitude toward volunteering, confidence in public institutions, and confidence in private institutions. The components of political engagement are: level of political interest, level of media exposure, and political trust or cynicism. Scale items were selected on the basis of their loading (> .50) on the designated factor from the principal components analysis. All items and all scales have been standardized with a range of 0-1 where a higher score indicates more of the quality or property in question.

Procedure

Questionnaires were administered in class to students in a broad range of first year classes in science, business and arts. The questionnaires took about 20 minutes to complete, and were done during class time. All questionnaires were administered in the first two weeks of class.

Results and Discussion:
Nature and Amount of Community Service

Our initial question was whether there would be differences between the two cohorts in terms of the quantity and quality of their community service experience. Table 1 compares the frequency with which both groups engaged in community service activity. The table's first panel reflects the rates at which the two cohorts engaged in any volunteer activity at all "in the past several years", while the second panel reports their rates of par-

ticipation in each of five community service sectors.

As expected, almost the entire younger cohort indicated that they participated in some kind of voluntary activity in that period. Surprisingly, however, the table indicates a high incidence of volunteering for the older cohort as well. Almost 90% of this group reported that they had volunteered in the same time period. The difference between the groups is statistically significant, but the absolute difference is not as great as one might expect, given that one group was compelled to complete community service while the other was not. Moreover, this rate for the non-mandated group far exceeds the rate of volunteering reported by Canadian young people in general (Hall, McKeown, and Roberts, 2001).

There are two possible explanations for this elevated proportion of active students. One possible explanation for this is the select group of young people that we are studying. Students entering university from high school tend to be among the more active, more motivated and achievement-oriented of their graduating classes. If so, there is a relevant selection bias in our sample that may have served to attenuate the differences in activity between mandated and non-mandated cohorts. Another possible explanation concerns the measurement item itself. Our survey question probed for 'volunteer work of any sort' in the previous several years. It is possible that students interpreted 'volunteer work' in different ways, and thus our question served to include students who might have responded negatively to a more specific inquiry into their past service experience.

Were the two groups involved in the same kinds of activities? The second panel of Table 1 suggests that, for the most part, the two groups had very similar sector activity profiles. The proportions of each group indicating involvement in the various sectors were remarkably similar in most cases and roughly similar in all.

Because membership in the two cohorts was not randomly assigned, it is prudent to compare the experiences of these cohorts after controlling for possible socio-demographic differences in their composition. In the following analysis, we employ multivariate techniques to test for cohort effects after controlling for six socio-demographic variables. These are gender and religious attendance –

Table 1: Comparison of Volunteering Rates and Sector Involvement for Grade 12 and Grade 13 Cohorts.

Volunteering Items	Grade 12 Cohort N=676	Grade 13/OAC Cohort N=1091	Significance of Differences[1]
Of The Total Sample . . .	Autocoded	Female=1	
% Who Volunteered "in past several years"	.979	.903	p<.001
Areas of Involvement for Those Who Volunteered . . .[2]			
% Volunteering in			
Nonprofit Sector	.708	.694	NS
Health Sector	.362	.337	NS
School System	.688	.736	NS
Sports Programs	.536	.505	NS
Community/Service Clubs	.700	.645	NS
Other	.148	.141	NS

Notes:
1. Chi square tests of significance (p< .01) have been used for all cohort comparisons .
2. Only students who indicated that they had volunteered "in the past several years" were included in the computation of these percentages.

of community service involvement associated with cohort membership. Three dependent measures of intensity are employed here. The first is a cumulative service activity index reflecting the degree of the student's involvement across six volunteer sectors. The second measure of involvement reflects the number of sectors in which students claimed to be involved "a lot". The third measure reflects the breadth or diversity of the student's involvement across the six sectors.

While the three measures tap somewhat different dimensions of involvement extent or intensity, they tell basically the same story. Once differences in background are controlled, and once the differing rates of cohort participation are controlled, mandated and non-mandated students do not differ in either the extent or the intensity of their community service involvements. In response to our first research question, then, the mandated cohort volunteered more than the non-mandated cohort, but the nature of their service behaviour did not vary significantly.

Attitudes Toward Service and Civic Engagement

As noted, adoption of the community service requirement for high school students is predicated on the assumption that such service has longer term positive impacts on young adults' attitudes about volunteering and levels of civic engagement. However, some sceptics are concerned that mandated exposure to the volunteer sector in the high school years may have the opposite effects. Our data do not permit an examination of the "long term" for these students; however, we can investigate whether there are differences in the attitudes

which we know are sources of cohort differences in our sample – as well as family context (family income, parents' attendance at university) and community size.

In the first column of Table 2, we employ logistic regression to re-examine cohort differences in rates of community service with controls in place. This regression confirms that the cohort differences were not simply due to differences in socio-demographic composition. To be sure, females and those who more regularly attend religious services were more likely to be involved in community service, but the coefficient for the mandated – non-mandated distinction also remains highly significant even after the effects of these variables have been controlled.

In the remaining columns of Table 2, we employ multivariate techniques – in this case, OLS regression – to test for differences in intensity or extent

Table 2: Comparison of Volunteering Rates and Sector Involvement for Grade 12 and Grade 13 Cohorts.

Independent Variables	Volunteered at all in High School?[1]	Cumulative Service Activity Index – all students[2]	Number of Intense Service Commitments[3]	Diversity of Service Commitment Across Sectors[4]
	Logistic Regression	OLS regression	OLS regression	OLS regression
(Constant)	3.432** (.501)	-.505 (.573)	-.114 (.144)	-.247 (.174)
Female (0-1, 1=female)	1.053** (.238)	1.300** (.230)	.286** (.058)	.350** (.070)
Attend religious services (0-1, 1=once a week)	1.432** (.401)	2.178** (.333)	.440** (.084)	.566** (.101)
Community size (0-1, 1=500,000+)	-.547 (.346)	-1.364** (.333)	-.283** (.084)	-.031
Family income (0-1, 1=$150,000+)	.185 (.401)	.465 (.379)	.096 (.095)	.073 (.115)
Father completed university (0-1, 1=Yes)	-.256 (.263)	.252 (.247)	.099 (.062)	.038 (.075)
Mother completed university (0-1, 1=Yes)	-.181 (.252)	.105 (.240)	.011 (.060)	.072 (.073)
Did R volunteer at all (0-1, 1=Yes)	N/A	7.355** (.439)	.715** (.110)	3.071** (.133)
Was community service mandated? (0-1, 1=Yes)	1.743** (.361)	.256 (.231)	.074 (.058)	.054 (.070)
Nagelkerke R^2	.155**	N/A	N/A	N/A
Adjusted R^2	N/A	.523**	.320**	.601**

Results are unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *=p<.01, **=p<.001 N=1255
Notes:
1. "Volunteered at all in high school" is a binary no-yes variable.
2. "Cumulative Service Activity Index" reflects the intensity of the student's commitment to each of six service sectors, summed across those six sectors. Scores on the index range between 0-24.
3. "Number of Intense Service Commitments" reflects the number of sectors (out of six) in which the student claimed to volunteer "a lot". Scores range between 0-6.
4. "Diversity of Service Commitment across sectors" reflects the number among the six service sectors that the student indicated having volunteered. Scores range from 0-6.

and perspectives of the two cohorts in the months immediately following their high school graduation.

To examine the impact of high school community service on these dimensions of civic engagement, we employed multiple regression. Each of our dependent measures has been regressed on a set of nine independent variables. Of these nine variables, three reflect aspects of the high school community service experience: whether the student engaged in any community service while in high school, whether the community service was of a sustained nature, and whether any of the community service was mandated. The other six independent variables are the socio-demographic background variables used as controls in the initial analysis.

Table 3 summarizes the results of our regression analysis for the three community engagement and three political engagement variables. Regarding the former of these, the analysis suggests that our background and community service variables are

Table 3. Regression of Civic Engagement Dimensions on High School Community Service Experience

Independent Variables	Attitude Toward Volunteering	Confidence in Public Institutions	Confidence in Private Institutions	Political Interest	Media Exposure	Political Cynicism
(Constant)	.529** (.030)	.497** (.021)	.419** (.034)	.486** (.031)	.603** (.028)	.437** (.022)
Female (0-1, 1=female)	.030* (.012)	.011 (.008)	-.009 (.014)	-.126** (.012)	-.096** (.011)	-.001 (.009)
Attend religious services (0-1, 1=once a week)	.107** (.018)	.007 (.012)	-.024 (.020)	-.005 (.018)	.005 (.016)	.018 (.013)
Community size (0-1, 1=500,000+)	.014 (.018)	.014 (.012)	-.006 (.020)	.004 (.018)	.028 (.016)	.012 (.013)
Family income (0-1, 1=$150,000+)	-.001	.021 (.014)	.080** (.023)	.041 (.020)	.033 (.019)	.051** (.014)
Father completed university (0-1, 1=Yes)	-.008 (.013)	-.008 (.009)	-.012 (.015)	.001 (.013)	.005 (.012)	-.019 (.009)
Mother completed university (0-1, 1=Yes)	-.009 (.013)	.008 (.009)	-.009 (.014)	-.007 (.013)	.012 (.012)	.014 (.009)
Did R volunteer at all (0-1, 1=Yes)	.119** (.023)	.031 (.016)	.008 (.027)	.009 (.024)	.033 (.022)	.018 (.017)
Did R volunteer 'a lot' at placement (0-1, 1=Yes)	.027** (.006)	-.001 (.004)	-.009 (.007)	.016* (.006)	.008 (.006)	.001 (.004)
Was community service mandated? (0-1, 1=Yes)	-.026 (.012)	.008 (.008)	.024 (.014)	-.027 (.012)	-.046** (.011)	.001 (.009)
Adjusted R²	.326**	.108	.130	.299**	.282**	.132

Results are unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *p<.01, **p<.001. N=1255; See endnotes 4-9 for description of dependent variables.

related only to the most specific dimension of community engagement – attitude toward volunteering. For that variable, being female, attending religious services more regularly and having a lower family income are all significant predictors of a more positive attitude toward community service. But high school service experiences are significantly related to this attitude as well. Our findings indicate that sustained service in one volunteer sector during high school predicted to a more positive attitude, but having volunteered at all was the strongest predictor in the equation. At the same time, our analysis suggests that mandating students to perform high school community service did not have a significant negative impact on one's attitude toward volunteering.

For the more generalized measures of community engagement – that is, confidence in public and private institutions – only one predictor, family income, registered any significant effect, and the overall R^2 for each of these equations was not significant.

The regression coefficients for the political engagement dimensions in Table 3 suggest that students' political interest, media exposure and cynicism are related to selected socio-demographic background variables and, in one of the three cases, to aspects of the high school community service experience. Specifically, male students are more likely to score higher on political interest and media exposure, but not on cynicism. And students with higher family incomes tend to more politically cynical. Regarding the possible effects of community service variables, community service by itself was unrelated to any of the three variables, but those who engaged in sustained service exhibited significantly more political interest, and those who were mandated to perform service in high school exhibited significantly less political media exposure.

This last finding is interesting. We noted above that, in addition to the community service requirement, the Grade 12 cohort was also required to complete a civics course before graduation. Given this, we might expect that a cohort completing such a course would profess more interest in politics and exhibit more political media exposure than a cohort for which the course was only an option. That the relationship was negative in both of these cases and significantly so for political media exposure suggests that other developmental variables may have suppressed any modest positive effects that the course may have had on students' political engagement. That is, given that the age groups involved here are on opposite sides of a critical political responsibility cusp (18 years) in our society, this finding may simply reflect different stages of political development. As noted, the average age of the mandated cohort was 17.8 years while the non-mandated students averaged a year and a half older. In support of this explanation, when we regress political media exposure on both the age and cohort variables, the cohort effect fades to statistical non-significance.

General Discussion

This study reports the results of a quasi-experiment to assess the short-term effects of a newly-introduced high school community service requirement in Ontario, Canada. The experiment entails comparisons between a sample drawn from the Ontario Grade 13 cohort that graduated in 2003 without a mandatory community service requirement – the "control group" – and a sample of the Ontario Grade 12 cohort which graduated in the same year having completed such a requirement – the "treatment group". The results of our analysis yield a number of observations about possible short-term effects of community service by high school students and about possible effects of mandating such service.

Specifically, our comparison of community service participation rates between treatment and control groups suggests that the government program mobilized a significant number of high school students who would not otherwise have invested time in community service. To be sure, the difference between the two university-bound cohorts was not large, and some of the mandated students would no doubt have volunteered their time without a requirement. Nevertheless, the fact remains that a greater proportion of students in the mandated cohort, relative to the non-mandated cohort, committed at least some of their time to community service during their high school years, and this difference survives controls for potentially confounding socio-demographic differences between the cohorts. Our broad question on previous volunteering activity likely underestimates the impact of the mandatory program, for it provided a deliberately inclusive definition of

prior service involvement.

Those advocating high school community service argue that simple mobilization – whether freely chosen or mandated – has important impacts on skills development, and on one's developing sense of civic responsibility and civic engagement. Our findings contribute to debates around this thesis in three ways.

First, our findings address the fears expressed by some (Bessant 2000, Brown et al 2000, Deci and Ryan 1987, Goodin 2002, Nietz 1999, Turnbull and Fattore 1999) that mandating community service in high school may actually have negative effects. At least in the short term, we find little to support such fears here. For the most part, students who were mandated to perform community service exhibit the same attitudes and perspectives about community engagement as those who were not. This also contradicts findings that suggest the mandatory volunteering will have a particularly negative effect on those previously engaged in voluntary service (Stukas, Snyder and Clary 1999). In the one instance where there was a difference between cohorts – on political media exposure – age differences between the cohorts would seem to offer a more plausible explanation for the difference than the community service requirement.

Second, the findings suggest that mobilization by itself is insufficient to produce effects on subsequent civic engagement – that the community service commitment must be of a sustained nature to have the desired effects. We found that a sustained commitment did make a significant difference for two of our dependent measures; however, community service of any duration remained significantly related to one's subsequent attitude to volunteering, even after controlling for duration. Because this finding conflicts with that of Niemi, Hepburn and Chapman (2000), it suggests that the matter requires additional investigation.

Third, the effects of high school community service on our measures of subsequent civic engagement are seemingly quite limited. While service is related to one's subsequent attitude toward volunteering and at least sustained service is related to one's level of political interest, such effects did not extend to the broader dispositions about society that we measured, such as confidence in institutions or political trust. It should be noted that, because we surveyed these students just after their graduation from high school, we have no behav-

ioural measures of subsequent engagement.

While this analysis provides a useful initial assessment of the mandatory service program, two of its limitations must be clearly acknowledged. First, the student sample we have studied is drawn from a very narrow segment of the high school population; hence our findings should not be generalized to that population, and only with caution should they be generalized to the population of university-bound graduates. We suspect that employing this segment in our study provides the most difficult test for the program because these well-motivated and high-achieving students are arguably the least likely to need its benefits. However, without data from non-university-bound high school graduates, this remains only a suspicion, and a hypothesis for future research.

Second, we have surveyed these students in their first weeks at university – for most, that is barely three months after their high school graduation. While this allows us to assess their perspectives and inclinations in the short term, it in no way permits us to assess the longer term impacts on their attitudes and levels of civic engagement. This would require a study that tracks them through their university years and beyond.

Despite these limitations, the present study clearly supports those like Metz and Youniss (2003, 2005) who assert that mandatory service programs increase young people's participation in service activities, and do not reduce their intrinsic interest in volunteering. While a few laboratory and correlational studies (e.g., Stukas, Snyder and Clary,1999) suggest that requiring community service may reduce intrinsic motivation to volunteer, quasi-experimental studies such as our own present study, and those of Metz and Youniss, more strongly indicate that requiring community service gets more young people to volunteer and does not detract from their motivation to volunteer in future. Our results suggest, further, that in a real-world setting, the mandatory nature of the service is not nearly as important as other aspects of the service experience, such as whether or not the service was of a sustained or short-term nature (Riedel 2002). Indeed, recent research (Taylor & Pancer, in press) indicates that the quality of the service experience is likely a much more important determinant of young people's attitudes toward volunteering than is the mandated or non-mandated nature of the experience.

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