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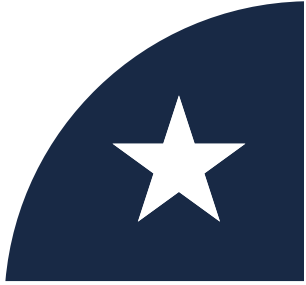
The Civic Achievement Gap

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Abstract: This paper, drawn from a book in progress, summarizes evidence of a *civic achievement gap* between non-white, poor, and/or immigrant youth, on the one hand, and white, wealthier, and/or native-born youth, on the other. Young people (and adults) in the former group demonstrate consistently lower levels of civic and political knowledge, skills, positive attitudes, and participation, as compared to their wealthier and white counterparts. As a result, they face serious political disadvantages.

"No black person is going to become president in my lifetime," Donte[1] asserted with unassailable confidence. It was February 1999, and my eighth-grade U.S. History class was, as usual, trying to direct the conversation away from my planned lesson. Because I was curious about Donte's reasons for making this assertion, though, I took the bait.

"Why?" I asked. "You think that racism and prejudice are just too great?"

"Naw!" Donte responded. "Black people are just too lazy and too stupid! I mean, look, who are all the poor people in the United States? Black people! Look around this classroom! We're all poor, and who are we? Mostly black! And think about how many of us are failing – might not even graduate…"

"Donte, I can't believe you're saying that!" India bristled. "You may be lazy, but a lot of the others of us aren't, and anyway you know you're not stupid, and neither am I. I think there might be a black president in our lifetime; even if there's not, it's not because we're too lazy and stupid."

"Did you know that middle class blacks outnumber poor blacks in the US?" I added. "Also, there are more poor whites than poor blacks in the US."[2]

"You wrong, Dr. Levinson. All the blacks I know are poor. And I know there aren't more poor whites than poor blacks!"

"Just look at reality," Jose concurred. "Who's in this school? Blacks, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans… I mean, yeah, Rita is in our class, but she's like an honorary black person." Many of the other students nodded, and Rita, a white, Jewish girl from the neighborhood, smiled. "You can't tell me there are all these poor whites and rich blacks around who we just don't see."

"No, it's true," I persisted.

"Anyhow," Jamal said dismissively, "you don't see anybody black running for President."

"No, there is an African-American man running for president this year," I responded. "Alan Keyes. He's running in the Republican primary against John McCain, George Bush, Steve Forbes, and the rest of them."

"Dr. Levinson, do you think that Alan Keyes will be assassinated?" Andrew interjected.

When I first started teaching, I would have been blindsided by such a question, but by a few years in, I had learned enough about how my students thought about politics that I wasn't surprised. "Are you asking that, Andrew, because you're afraid that powerful black politicians are likely to be assassinated?"

"Sure," Andrew responded. "I mean, look at Ron Brown, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X. And you know why Colin Powell didn't run for president. His wife wouldn't let him, because she knew he'd get killed, too…"

This discussion, which took place in my class at the McCormack Middle School in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston,[3] is representative of numerous discussions I've had with my students over eight years of teaching in overwhelmingly non-white and poor urban schools in Atlanta and Boston. My students have explained to me – a white, obviously middle class woman – in immense detail how and why minorities and poor people are personally deficient, socially and politically marginalized, discriminated against, and even killed if they threaten to become too powerful. As a teacher, I have struggled to figure out how to convince my students otherwise: how to teach them that effective civic and political participation by poor people of color is both possible and desirable, and then how to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and capacities to become effective civic and political actors.

One challenge my students and I face in learning from each other about such engagement is that our lived experiences, and thus in part what we think we "know" about how the world works, diverge so widely. Donte and Jose *knew* that most black people but only a few white people are poor because that is what they saw; hence, my claims to the contrary were roundly rejected as being merely a "teacher fact" that was out of touch with the way things really were.[4] Similarly, Andrew *knew* that minorities – especially African-Americans – who gained political power were likely to be assassinated, just as my students the following year *knew* that transit police officers are never to

be trusted or that it was pointless to advocate for more resources for our school because nobody in government cared about them anyway.

I was and am willing to try to impose (through proof, discussion, rhetoric, and repetition) what I *know* in some cases: for example, that a majority of blacks in the United States are middle class, or that people of color are not personally deficient (lazy, stupid, etc.) in comparison to whites. The incontrovertible nature of other things that I think I know, however, is less clear cut. I *know* my students would be treated better on the subway if they opened up a dialogue with transit police. Am I right? What about my quest to get my students more civically and politically engaged in addressing problems in the neighborhood? I *know* this would empower them and their communities – but my students can be eloquent about the dangers of visible power. The past two years, for example, I have required my students to complete "citizenship projects" addressing a problem of concern to them. More than once, my students have told me it would be literally suicidal for them to work visibly to reduce one of the biggest problems in their neighborhood: gang violence. Are they right?

I bring these issues of experience and knowledge to the fore not in order to question the very nature or existence of knowledge. I am actually a firm believer in truth, as unfashionable as that may be these days. Rather, I raise them in order to emphasize that my students are undoubtedly often in the right, and I am sometimes (unknowingly) in the wrong. Hence, my opening anecdote is intended to give some flesh and context to the argument that follows; it is not intended to suggest that my students are deficient in some way. Similarly, my central claim in this paper – that there is a profound *civic achievement gap* between non-white, poor, and/or immigrant youth, on the one hand, and white, wealthier, and/or native-born youth, on the other – is intended to highlight a deep defect in our democratic institutions, including in our schools as sites of civic education, not to suggest that there is a defect in low-income, young people of color themselves. The challenges that they face are profound, and

while I am firmly convinced that it is imperative to eliminate the civic achievement gap by helping poor, non-white, and immigrant youth gain the civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for taking effective civic and political action, I believe that it is imperative for our health as a nation as a whole as much as for the sake of the youth themselves.

My claim that a civic achievement gap exists in this country depends first on an articulated conception or ideal of citizenship. In the spirit of trying to develop a capacious, pluralistic, and welcoming understanding of citizenship and civic education, I adopt the national consensus definition of good civic education and citizenship promulgated in *The Civic Mission of Schools*. This report, released in 2003 by CIRCLE and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, masterfully integrates the many disparate strands of belief and ideology about citizenship into a simple, clear, and consensus-driven form:[5]

> Civic education should help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Competent and responsible citizens:
>
> 1. are informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental processes of American democracy; have an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives.
>
> 2. participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.
>
> 3. act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to

accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting.

4. have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference.[6]

There are numerous specifics in this definition that one could dispute, of course. What I want to emphasize, however, is the general importance of civic k*nowledge*, *skills*, *attitudes*, and *behaviors* for this ideal of citizenship. Whether one agrees with the exact description of each component is a secondary concern. In essence, good citizens need to be *knowledgeable* about politics, history, government, and current events; they need to be *skilled* communicators, thinkers, and deliberators; they need to be *concerned* about the common good in addition to their own self-interest, and to *believe* it is possible and worth trying to make a difference through public action; and they need to *become involved* in public or community affairs, through some combination of voting, protesting, contacting public officials, mobilizing others, contributing time or money to causes or campaigns, participating in community groups, and other appropriate actions. This is what it means to be a good citizen.

On all of these measures, there is evidence of a profound *civic achievement gap* between poor, minority, and immigrant youth and adults, on the one hand, and middle-class or wealthy, white, and native-born youth and adults, on the other:

Knowledge and skills. As early as fourth grade and continuing into the eighth and twelfth grades, African-American, Hispanic, and poor students perform significantly worse on the civics test of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) than white, Asian, and middle-class students.[7] Similar disparities appear in American ninth graders' scores on a recent international test of civic knowledge and skills.[8] These results for youth are, unsurprisingly, echoed in studies of adults, as well. In a comprehensive study of adults' civic and political knowledge,

Michael Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter conclusively demonstrate that "men are more informed than women; whites are more informed than blacks; those with higher incomes are more informed than those with lower incomes; and older citizens are more informed than younger ones." These disparities are not small: out of the 68 questions Delli Carpini and Keeter asked, "in no case was the percentage correct for blacks as high as for whites or for low-income citizens as high as that for upper-income ones."[9] In practice, this means that individuals who are poor, non-white, and first- or second-generation immigrant may be shockingly ignorant, from an outsider's perspective: a few years ago, for example, *none* of the twenty-seven students in one of my classes knew that July 4th celebrated the signing and publication of the Declaration of Independence.

Poor and minority people are also demonstrably less likely to develop civic skills via education, the workplace, or participation in voluntary associations—three of the primary venues in which individuals have the opportunity to develop and practice communication, analysis, organization, and leadership skills relevant to civic and political participation. This is because they are likely to leave school sooner and be less educated, to have lower-status jobs, and to participate in voluntary associations less. Poor Protestants and African-Americans partially make up for this gap by developing civic skills within their churches. But Latinos and other poor Catholics and non-church-going poor and minority individuals suffer the civic skill gap acutely.[10] Again, I contend with this gap as a teacher on an almost daily basis in my interactions with my students and their parents or guardians (all poor, many immigrant, mostly non-white). My eighth grade students, for example, struggle to negotiate conflicts without getting into fights; they interact ineffectually with authority figures and get themselves into trouble despite their best intentions not to; and in at least one case a few years ago, they rely on me to teach them how to use a phone book to call up career exemplars to shadow for career day because they've never seen or used a telephone book before. Similarly, I frequently watch in frustration

as deeply committed and caring parents fail to advocate effectively for their child in meetings because they don't have the communication skills. This gap in civic knowledge and skills thus impacts not just individuals' interactions with government officials or politicians but their everyday experiences at school and in the community as well.

Behavior/Participation. There has been a fair amount of media coverage of the voting gap based on race, ethnicity, and income. In the presidential election of 2004, for example, Hispanic and Asian voting-age citizens voted at a rate only *two-thirds* that of eligible whites (approximately 45 versus 67 percent, respectively)[11], while people living in families with incomes under $15,000 voted at barely *half* the rate of those living in families with incomes over $75,000 (45 versus 80 percent, respectively).[12] Naturalized citizens, too, vote at significantly lower rates than native born citizens – 54 versus 65 percent in the 2004 presidential election – which is an important cause for concern since twenty percent of the U.S. population is first- or second-generation immigrant.[13]

But significant behavior disparities also persist beyond voting. Reliable analyses of political participation, as measured by membership in political parties, campaign donations, campaign volunteering, participation in protests, contacting an elected official, and so forth, show vast disparities linked with both class and race. (Immigrant vs. native-born participation rates have not been studied to the same extent.) People who earn over $75,000 annually are politically active at up to *six times* the rate of people who earn under $15,000, whether measured by working for a campaign, serving on the board of an organization, or even such relatively low-cost actions as participating in protests or contacting officials.[14] Latinos, too, are far less involved in all of these activities than whites or blacks, and blacks are more likely to participate in "outsider" activities such as protests rather than "insider" activities such as campaign donations or direct contact with officials.[15] Hispanic young adults (ages 18-24) in particular have much lower rates

of voter registration and community involvement than their white and black peers,[16] which is of great concern since youth as a whole have been voting and participating in civic life at historically low levels (although the uptick in the November 2004 elections may forecast a reversal of this trend).[17]

Attitudes. Poor students and students of color can be fundamentally mistrustful and cynical toward government, as my opening anecdote reveals. The gap between my students and me actually mirrors a nationwide racial civic attitude gap – designated a "chasm" by Robert Smith and Richard Seltzer – in individuals' trust in government (political trust) and their trust in each other (social trust).[18] (See Table 1 at the end of this paper.)   Social class and trust are also directly correlated, as Robert Putnam reports in *Bowling Alone*:

> In virtually all societies 'have-nots' are less trusting than 'haves,' probably because haves are treated by others with more honesty and respect. In America blacks express less social trust than whites, the financially distressed less than the financially comfortable, people in big cities less than small-town dwellers, and people who have been victims of a crime or been through a divorce less than those who haven't had these experiences.[19]

Insofar as my students live many of these demographic characteristics at once – they are poor, nonwhite, living in inner-city Boston, predominantly living with only one parent (or grandparent), and depressingly-frequently victims of both petty and serious crime – their cynicism and mistrust may be over-determined.

Although I did not realize it at the time I was teaching Donte's class, research also shows that political trust does not seem to be necessary to motivate participation. If anything, mistrust in government, when combined with a healthy sense of political efficacy, seems to *increase* voter turnout and have no effect on other forms of political participation.[20] Al Sharpton's closing statement at the 2004 Democratic presidential debate in

Detroit exemplifies this conversion of mistrust and marginalization into participation, even as it directly echoes some of my students' sentiments:

> But the problem we have is that in America many of us are not taken seriously. Most of us are not taken seriously. That's why we have a president that would send money to Iraq and not money to the schools in Detroit. That's why we have a president that wants to give people the right to vote in the capital of Iraq, Baghdad, and not respect the right of the voters in the capital of the U.S. in Washington, D.C. [Applause] So the problem is that they don't take me seriously personally. They don't take us, collectively, seriously. And that's why we need to register and vote and come out in numbers like we never did before... [applause] ... so they will never ever marginalize and not take us seriously again.[21]

The yawning attitudinal gap in trust between my students and me (and more broadly, between people who are poor, non-white, and victims of personal/social upheaval and those who are not) may not therefore be of particular concern.

By contrast, the sizable gap between us in our sense of *efficacy* – in other words, our belief that individuals can influence government (political efficacy) and especially that we ourselves can influence government (personal efficacy) – should be a cause of major concern. Efficacy is clearly correlated with engagement (the less efficacious one feels, the less likely one is to participate), and it also seems to be correlated with both race/ethnicity and class. In a landmark study, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady show that individuals' political efficacy increases in direct relationship to their income, with the poorest individuals expressing attitudes almost a full standard deviation lower than the wealthiest; it is also significantly correlated with race/ethnicity, with Latinos at the bottom, African-Americans in the middle, and white respondents at the top.[22]

Similarly, a study specifically of young Latinos, African-Americans, and whites (ages 15 to 25) shows equivalent significant differences in their confidence that "I can make a difference in solving the problems of my community."[23]

Focusing on politics itself, individuals had vastly different reactions to the 2000 presidential election voting irregularities in Florida. Nearly one-fifth (17 percent) of African-American survey respondents interpreted the "problems with the ballots or voting machines" as being "a deliberate attempt to reduce the political power of minorities," whereas barely one to three percent of white, Asian, and Hispanic survey respondents felt the same way.[24] These data anticipate my own students' views about what happened in Florida; virtually every one of my students since the 2000 election (i.e., over 500 young people whom I've taught since November 2000) views that election as having been fraudulent. As one of my former students from Atlanta reiterated in an interview I conducted with her in the spring of 2004:

> [N]o matter what you vote for, no matter how much you vote, it ain't gonna be in our hands. Whatever is going to happen is going to happen. . . . I believe it's in God's hands. Or whatever. You know, whatever plan He has for it, it's going to follow through regardless of who we vote on or what we vote on, or how much we complain, it's probably not right, you know. I just feel like there ain't nothing nobody can do. And then I also feel like…the other reason why I haven't voted is because, like he [another student in the group] was saying, when Bush wasn't supposed to win, it's like, well, why do people vote? Why? It ain't going to make no difference . . . . [I]f the government, they're going to pick whoever they want, they go with whoever they want to win anyway. And that's how it happened. It happened. Whenever whoever they say is going to win.

These various sources of data suggest

strongly that the efficacy gap exists, is significant, and adversely influences individuals' civic and political participation, although it should be noted that there is evidence elsewhere that this gap may be neither so great nor so predictable as I claim.[25]

Finally, two other attitudinal components seem to contribute significantly to the civic achievement gap: namely, individuals' senses of civic identity and civic duty. Michael Dawson has demonstrated in considerable quantitative and qualitative detail the ways in which African-Americans' senses of civic membership and responsibility are distinct from non-African-Americans' in being focused on the "linked fate" of African-Americans as a group; these considerations become especially important to poor African-Americans.[26] Immigrant citizens' sense of civic identity is similarly ambiguous. Although their sense of patriotism tends to be as high or higher than native-born citizens, their sense of themselves as Americans is more tenuous. In interviews I conducted this spring with first- and second-generation Arab-American students, parents, teachers, and community leaders in Dearborn, MI, for example, my interlocutors (most of whom were native-born citizens) consistently referred to "Americans" as "they." When questioned, one high school student responded as follows:

> Meira: Three of you are American citizens, born in the United States. But you have consistently throughout the interview . . . used the term "Americans" not to refer to yourselves but to refer to others. . . . [Y]ou talked about Americans as other people. So I'm curious why.

> Student: I see what you're trying to get us to say -- like we were born here, like, why shouldn't we consider ourselves as regular American people. But I think that we're different because we have to fall back on our parents' background because our parents -- that's what they teach us. That's what our culture is. Like our background from our old country and stuff like that.

This echoes other scholars' findings about second-generation immigrants in New York City. These second-generation Americans "used the term American in two different ways. One was to describe themselves as American compared to the culture, values, and behaviors of their parents. . . . But they also used 'American' to refer to the native white Americans that they encountered at school, the office, or in public places, but whom they knew far better from television and the movies. They saw those 'Americans' as part of a different world that would never include them because of their race/ethnicity. Many respondents sidestepped this ambivalent understanding of the meaning of being American by describing themselves as 'New Yorkers.'"[27]

Why do these data matter? Even if they do demonstrate, as I claim, a significant civic achievement gap along all four dimensions of civic engagement (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors) between poor, minority, and immigrant citizens, on the one hand, and wealthy, white, and native-born citizens, on the other, why should we care? I suggest that anyone who believes in the value of democratic governance should recognize how crucial it is to narrow the gap. Individuals' civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes profoundly influence their civic and political behavior, and civic and political engagement, concomitantly, are central to the strength, stability and legitimacy of democracy. Studies confirm, for example, that civic knowledge is clearly and directly correlated with higher levels of political participation, expression of democratic values including toleration, stable political attitudes, and adoption of "enlightened self-interest."[28] Individuals' mastery of civic skills is also tied to both their likelihood of civic participation and especially their effectiveness. "[T]hose who possess civic skills, the set of specific competencies germane to citizen political activity, are more likely to feel confident about exercising those skills in politics and to be effective—or, to use the economist's term, productive—when they do."[29]

Participation, of course, matters because

democratic governance relies on participatory citizens. The legitimacy, stability, and quality of democratic regimes are all directly dependent on the robust participation of a representative and large cross-section of citizens. Governments that appear to (and/or do) serve the interests of only a narrow segment of the population cease to be viewed as democratic, and cease to inspire the loyalty and commitment of those who feel excluded or ignored. This poses a direct threat to both their legitimacy and stability. Political violence by citizens is also tightly linked to feelings of disaffection and alienation.[30] Furthermore, democratic deliberations and decisions are likely to be of lower quality if people representing only a fairly narrow range of experiences, interests, and backgrounds are involved. Part of the beauty of democracy, when it functions effectively and inclusively, is its ability to create aggregate wisdom and good judgment from individual citizens' necessarily limited knowledge, skills, and viewpoints. To exclude citizens from this process is to diminish the wisdom that the collectivity may create.

Attitudes matter, finally, because they constitute the motivational preconditions for civic engagement. Whether one knows nothing about current events or has a Ph.D. in political science, whether one is a shy follower or a brilliant orator and leader, if one doesn't believe that civic and political participation in general can make a difference or that one's own participation matters, then one is not going to participate. Political efficacy is crucial for motivating civic and political engagement. Attitudes of civic duty or obligation are also important motivators; the effect of citizen duty "is not enormous, but it is unmistakable: citizens with a strong sense of civic duty are about 6 percentage points more likely to turn out to vote in recent presidential elections than are their otherwise comparable counterparts who do not recognize voting as an obligation of citizenship."[31] Verba, Schlozman, and Brady also found that civic obligation was the most important attitudinal predictor for civic activism.[32] And finally, identity seems to figure importantly in influencing the character and quality of civic engagement, as political psychologists, philosophers, and others have shown. [33]

In sum, the civic achievement gap is a significant and documentable threat to democratic ideals and practice. I suggest that it is important for both the civic and political empowerment of poor, minority, and immigrant individuals, and for the health of the polity as a whole, that we develop means of closing the gap.

TABLE 1: RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN LEVELS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRUST

"GENERALLY SPEAKING, YOU CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL IN DEALING WITH PEOPLE" (VS. "MOST PEOPLE CAN BE TRUSTED") (1996); % WHO AGREE	**BLACKS: 81%** **WHITES: 57%** **HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS: 78%** **COLLEGE GRADUATES: 43%**
CIA PUSHED COCAINE IN BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS (1997); % WHO SAY "TRUE"	**BLACKS: 73%** **WHITES: 16%**
AIDS IS PART OF A DELIBERATE PLOT TO KILL AFRICAN-AMERICANS (1997); % WHO SAY "TRUE"	**BLACKS: 62%** **WHITES: 21%**
"BLACKS AND OTHER MINORITIES RECEIVE EQUAL TREATMENT AS WHITES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM" (1992); % WHO AGREE	**BLACKS: 9%** **WHITES: 52%**
DO NOT BELIEVE IN THE AMERICAN DREAM (1995)	**BLACKS: 33% LATINOS: 32%** **WHITES: 21% ASIANS: 25%**
"RACISM IS A BIG PROBLEM IN AMERICAN SOCIETY" (1995); % WHO AGREE	**BLACKS: 78% LATINOS 46%** **WHITES: 38% ASIANS: 32%**
9TH GRADERS' TRUST IN VARIOUS GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS (1999)	**WHITES MORE THAN BLACKS**
9TH GRADERS' AGREEMENT WITH POSITIVE STATEMENTS ABOUT THE US (1999)	**WHITES MORE THAN HISPANICS**

Source: Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University 1995; Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University 2000; Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University 2001; Baldi et al. 2001; Public Agenda 1998; Smith and Seltzer 2000; Sigelman and Tuch 1997.

ENDNOTES

1 All student names have been changed to protect students' privacy.

2 See http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/poverty02/table1.pdf for evidence of this.

3 I should note that I have reconstructed this conversation from memory; this is not a verbatim transcript.

4 See Rosenzweig and Thelen 1998 for further evidence of this distinction between school knowledge and "real history."

5 I should note, in the spirit of full disclosure, that I was a signatory to this document.

6 Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE 2003: 4.

7 Lutkus et al. 1999.

8 Baldi et al. 2001: Tables 4.1 and 4.5.

9 Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996: 157, also Tables 4.8 and 4.9, Figure 4.1; see also Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: Table 12.4 for independent corroborating data.

10 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: Ch. 11.

11 U.S. Census Bureau 2005: Table 4a.

12 U.S. Census Bureau 2005: Table 9.

13 U.S. Census Bureau 2005: Table 13; see also DeSipio 2001.

14 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: 190, Figure 7.2.

15 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: Ch. 8; Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry 1996; see also Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980.

16 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995; Lopez 2003.

17 National Association of Secretaries of State 2004; Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE 2003; Galston 2003.

18 See also Sidanus et al. 1997; Sanchez-Jankowski 2002; Lopez 2003; Dawson 1994; Dawson 2001 for evidence on similar race-related civic attitude gaps among young people in particular. The data on this are not conclusive, however; Baldi et al. 2001; Public Agenda 1998 both include evidence that the attitudinal gap is small or non-existent.

19 Putnam 2000: 138.

20 Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Kinder 1998: 831-832; Uslaner 2002.

21 Sharpton 2003.

22 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: Table 12.4.

23 Lake Snell Perry & Associates and The Tarrance Group 2002; Carnegie Corporation of New York and CIRCLE 2003.

24 Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University 2001: 24.

25 In contrast to the data presented above, for example, one survey found that an equal percentage of Latinos, whites, and African-Americans (about 60 percent) agreed with the statement that "political leaders do not care much what people like me think"; similarly, half of whites and African-Americans (but 60 percent of Latinos) agreed that they couldn't understand politics and government because they are too complicated. These figures suggest that lack of political efficacy is equally distributed across the board. A 1996 poll entitled "The State of Disunion: Survey of American Political Culture" also concluded that African-Americans and whites are equally committed to the American dream, civic minded, supportive of the political system, pessimistic (or optimistic) about American institutions, and disaffected from American government and leaders; data from the international IEA study of ninth graders are similarly ambiguous. See Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University 2000: 10; Hunter and Bowman 1996; Baldi et al. 2001.

26 Dawson 1994; Dawson 2001.

27 Kasinitz, Mollenkopf and Waters 2002; see also Stepick and Stepick 2002.

28 Galston 2001; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996.

29 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: 305.

30 Kinder 1998: 831-832.

31 Kinder 1998: 832.

32 Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: Ch. 4.

33 Damon 2001: 135. See also Damon 2001: 127; Feinberg 1998: 47. Melissa Williams powerfully challenges this emphasis on identity, arguing instead in favor of replacing "citizenship-as-identity" with a model of "citizenship as membership in a community of shared fate." But even her model of "shared fate" requires that students see themselves and their future as being "enmeshed in relationships" with others. See Williams 2003.

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