The Effect of Youth Development Programs on Public Value

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Author Note

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Abstract

This paper presents information about the striking increase in research on Youth Development Programs (YDP), and evidence about the positive relationship between participation in YDPs and the participants’ commitment to public values. Analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey show a positive and statistically significant relationship between participation in Youth Development Programs as a youth and increases in measures associated with Public Value (voting and volunteerism) as an adult. These findings have important implications for future research on Youth Development Programs as a source of education in public values.

**Keywords:** youth development programs, public value, voting, volunteerism
The Effect of Youth Development Programs on Public Value: An Exploratory Study

Introduction

Recent developments elsewhere in the Social Sciences provide new opportunities to contribute to the analysis of public values. Youth Development Programs, a topic that emerged slowly in the 1960s (and almost cryptically – there is no clear indicator of who coined the term) s, has recently exploded in interest. Of the more than 7,700 publications that Google Scholar identifies with the Youth Development Programs literature, 97% were published since 2000. Even more striking is that more than half of that figure (3,840) was published since 2010, accounting for roughly half of the total literature available. Most or all Youth Development Programs (YDPs) state goals involving the inculcation of sound values into the young people they serve, and these values can often be regarded as public values. This raises the question of whether one can find evidence that YDPs actually do increase commitment to public values among their participants.

In this paper, we will outline an empirical, quantitative research design for helping to determine the relationship between participation in Youth Development Programs and Public Value (a public version of the business concept of “shareholder value” and a term we explore in our literature review). We measure participation in Youth Development Programs against two outcome variables, (1) adult volunteering habits and (2) voting, which will allow us to measure Public Value production. To answer the resulting research questions, we report a regression analysis using the National Longitudinal Survey data collected by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Preliminary findings indicate a statistically significant and positive relationship between Youth Development Program participation and adult voting and volunteering behaviors.
Background and Theory

Youth Development Programs

As mentioned in the proceeding section, the trend in Youth Development Programs research shows a striking increase in volume. The following two figures illustrate the increase:

**Fig. 1 - Youth Development Programs: Publication History**

- # of Results with term “Youth Development Programs”: 7,700+
- # of Results from 1900-1960: 0
- # of Results from 1960-1970: 20
- # of Results from 1970-1980: 67
- # of Results from 1980-1990: 139
- # of Results from 1990-2000: 463
- # of Results from 2000-2010: 3,700
- # of Results from 2010-Present: 3,840

**Fig. 2 - Youth Development Programs: Publication Trends**

The origin of the term “Youth Development Program” is not clear. The earliest use of the phrase that Google Scholar is able to locate is a 1963 speech, entitled: “CPI: Window Dressing or a Program with Meaning” (Sviridoff, 1963). In that speech, Sviridoff used the expression casually (“we are giving special attention to the evaluation

1 Collected with Google Scholar

2 Google Scholar does pull some results during this period, but all are false positives. Once opened, they reveal themselves to be articles from a later period. The typical error seems to switch a 2000+ era article to a 1900 article.

3 Collected with Google Scholar
of our manpower and Youth Development Programs.”) without any suggestion that the
term was novel or new. In the same year, a report entitled "The Rural School Dropout, a
Ten-Year Follow-up Study of Eastern Kentucky Youth” states that “this information
should be useful to government officials, school administrators, teachers, guidance
counselors, and others involved in Youth Development Programs” (Youmans, 1963).
Again, nothing is said to suggest the term is new or requires defining.

Whatever the etymology of the phrase, over time the term has taken on a more
agreed-upon meaning. Youth Development Programs “promote healthy adolescent
development” through a three-prong focus on “program goals, atmosphere, and
activities” (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). While the individual goals, atmosphere, and
activities may differ based on the values of the Youth Development Program itself, all
programs seem to contain one, or both, of the following elements: (1) a means of
providing activities that will, by virtue of keeping young people busy, prevent
participation in other, harmful activities, and (2) activities that inculcate an important set
of values in participants, often encouraging an expanded understanding of health,
responsibility, and personal skills (Gootman & Eccles, 2002). Along these same lines,
scholars, after reviewing the available literature, have introduced the following attempt at
a comprehensive list for the goals for groups that promote “positive youth development”
(Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004, p. 102):

1. Promotes bonding
2. Fosters resilience
3. Promotes social competence
4. Promotes emotional competence
5. Promotes cognitive competence
6. Promotes behavioral competence
7. Promotes moral competence
8. Fosters self-determination
9. Fosters spirituality
10. Fosters self-efficacy
11. Fosters clear and positive identity
12. Fosters belief in the future
13. Provides recognition for positive behavior
14. Provides opportunities for prosocial involvement
15. Fosters prosocial norms.

One argument for increased interest in Youth Development Programs is an increased emphasis over the last century on the importance of, “childhood and adolescence as special periods in which children should be given support to learn and develop,” as well as increasing concern over crime committed during youth (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). According to this research, increased federal funding in the 1950’s, combined with changes in the 1960’s to family structure and socialization sources, led to the first forays into Youth Development Programs research. Over time, as the methods have grown more sophisticated having started with simple surveys, then incorporating longitudinal data, and currently utilizing virtually every contemporary research method. The scope of the research has also expanded from simple prevention concerns to philosophical, sociological, and psychological issues. Studies on Youth Development Programs have expanded beyond the initial efforts at
preventing poor behavior; research increasingly examines how YDP’s can help participants in other ways, such as in the development of prosocial behaviors (Chesebrough, King, Gullota, & Bloom, 2004).

Public Value

Mark Moore’s Creating Public Value. When Harvard professor Mark Moore first published Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government in 1995, he hoped to start a debate about public service reform. Frustrated with a Public Administration field that he said, “explained ... how to implement policies, but never thought what those policies should be or what they should achieve,” Moore had worked for fifteen years to adapt private sector theory and collect hundreds of case studies on public sector success (Crabtree, 2004). The resulting book remains the most often-cited publication about Public Values, with 2,860 recognized citations on Google Scholar at the time of this article.

Moore’s (1995, pp. 52-55) initial definition of Public Value rested on six key points. First, because values are “rooted in the desires and perceptions of individuals,” public administrators have a responsibility to “satisfy ... desires” and “operate in accord” with some perceptions. Second, public administrators should concern themselves with satisfying the public’s desire for goods and services that cannot be produced and distributed through markets (with the understanding that citizens express their desires through representative government). When those needs are satisfied by a public sector enterprise, especially when that enterprise has used public authority to solve problems or to raise capital, value has been created. Third, public sector managers create value in one of two ways: (1) “public sector production”, a process when administrators use publicly-endowed authority and funds to “produce things of value to particular clients and beneficiaries;” and (2) “establishing and operating an institution that
meets citizens’ (and their representatives’) desires for properly ordered and productive public institutions” through “established mechanisms of accountability.” Moore explained that these two ways are conjoined, describing how public managers must balance ensuring that the cost of production is outweighed by benefits with the need to communicate the value of that production to citizens and representatives. Fourth, as this process will require engaging political authority, production must be “fair as well as efficient.” Fifth, public managers must recognize that they have “sold” a promise to create value for citizens and representatives in exchange for public resources and authority. Accompanying this promise is the expectation that public managers provide sufficient accounting, reasoning, and analysis to their political “authorizers.” Finally, Moore’s sixth key point states that public managers must recognize that the world – and the preferences of their public shareholders – will change. To create value, managers must be prepared to “adapt and reposition” their organizations as necessary.

**Bozeman’s Public Values and Public Interest. (adapted from Rainey, 2014)** Bozeman, in Public Values and Public Interest (2007), advances a conception of public values and public value failure with similarities to that of Moore, but with very important differences. In previous work, Bozeman (2002a) had proposed a concept of “public value failure” as a major alternative to the concept of market failure. He argued that market failure concepts have tended to concentrate on market efficiency and utilitarianism, whereas public value failure concentrates instead on failures of the public and private sectors to fulfill core public values. Bozeman suggests a number of instances in which this can occur. For one, mechanisms for articulating and aggregating values fail when core public values are skirted because of flaws in policymaking processes. For example, if public opinion strongly favors gun control but no such policies are enacted, the disjunction between public opinion and policy outcomes fails to maximize public values about democratic representation. In another example, the public and private sectors
may produce a situation involving threats to human dignity and subsistence, such as an international market for internal human organs leading impoverished individuals to sell their internal organs merely to survive.

In the more recent book, Bozeman (2007, p. 13) offers an explicit definition of public values: “A society’s ‘public values’ are those providing normative consensus about (a) the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (b) the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and (c) the principles on which governments and policies should be based.” He also conceives of public values as existing at the individual level. He defines individual public values as “the content-specific preferences of individuals concerning, on the one hand, the rights, obligations, and benefits to which citizens are entitled and, on the other hand, the obligations expected of citizens and their designated representatives” (14). In other words, he asserts that in societies one can discern patterns of consensus about what everyone should get, what they owe back to society, and how government should work. Individuals have their own values in relation to such matters, and the patterns of consensus consist of aggregations of those individuals who agree with each other about such matters. These points about individual level public values have obvious importance for the individual-level analysis we report below.

This perspective resembles Moore’s in various ways. Both perspectives locate value in the preferences of the citizenry, for example. Both emphasize the production of outputs and outcomes as sources of public value. Bozeman at certain points emphasizes public value “failure,” when neither the market nor the public sector provides goods and services that achieve public values. Moore emphasizes positive production of outcomes that enhance public value, but, by implication, failure to produce such outcomes fails to create or increase public value.
Differences between the two perspectives involve matters of emphasis and explicit versus implicit expression. There are important differences, however. One way of expressing some of these differences would contend that Moore emphasizes production whereas Bozeman more heavily emphasizes the demand side of the production process. As his book’s title—Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government—implies, Moore focuses on the public manager’s production of public value, by identifying outcomes that will increase it, developing strategy for producing those outcomes, managing the political context, and designing effective and efficient operational management processes for producing the outcomes. In Moore’s analysis, public value refers generally to outcomes of value to citizens and clients, with the public value increasing as the efficiency and effectiveness of production increases. He identifies outcomes only through some examples but not through an explicit listing, definition, or typology. Bozeman’s perspective more heavily emphasizes the existence of public values, independently of production processes but obviously enhanced or diminished by production processes. Moore discusses how the public manager and others (such as political authorities) decide whether government can justify producing outcomes, rather than leaving the production to the private sector. Bozeman (2007), and Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) do not restrict the production of goods and services that affect public values to government. Public and private organizations produce goods and services that either achieve or fail to achieve public values. Hence public values represent a psychological and sociologic construct referring to values that persons and social aggregates hold, independent of the production of goods and services that fulfill those values or violate them.

**Identifying Public Values.** This consideration of public values as psychological and social constructs that exist independently of production processes for outcomes that influence public values has a very significant implication. It draws Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007; Bozeman,
2007) into an effort to identify public values. They point out that public administration scholars examining public values take a variety of approaches. One approach is to posit public values, making no pretense of deriving them. One can conduct public opinion polls, survey public managers, or locate public values statements in government agencies’ strategic planning documents and mission statements and sometimes in their budget justification documents.

Another approach (Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007) involves developing an inventory of public values from public administration and political science literature. Predictably and unavoidably, when Jørgensen and Bozeman undertake to develop such an inventory, the list of public values becomes complex, multileveled, and sometimes mutually conflicting. The inventory includes seven major “value constellations” (Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007) or “value categories,” (Bozeman, 2007, pp. 140–141), each containing a set of values.

The complex results of the inventory should come as no surprise. As many authors have pointed out many times, the values that organizations and individuals pursue are diverse, multiple, and conflicting, and the values that government organizations pursue are usually more so. Bozeman (2007, p. 143) contends that lack of complete consensus about public values should not prevent progress in analyzing public interest considerations. He proposes a public value mapping model that includes criteria for use in analyzing public values and public value failure. For purposes of the present discussion, however, the absence of a compact, definitive list of public values complicates the analysis of the relations between YDPs and public values, but does not preclude it. The complexity of the public values inventory, coupled with Bozeman’s assertion that public values also exist at the individual level, suggests that individuals may vary widely in their conceptions of public values. In spite of such variation, we posit below that when an individual votes in a democratic election, or volunteers for community service, that individual expresses support for public values.
International adoption and criticism. Moore’s book – and the concept of Public Value – became “part of a wider debate [about public service reform] between officials and academics”, eventually leading to large-scale recognition in the United Kingdom. (Crabtree, 2004). Emily Kearney of the Arts Council in England (2006) explained how the idea that “[w]hile their counterparts in the private sector sought to maximise shareholder value, the job of public sector managers would be to maximise Public Value” made a big impression in the UK. Kearney describes how the Work Foundation (a British non-profit and think tank founded in 1918, recently acquired by Lancaster University, and who advises the BBC and several other governmental operations) has used Moore’s perspective on public values as the foundation for a new organizational philosophy. As a result of this influence, the BBC officially stated in 2004 that it “exists solely to create Public Value” (Crabtree, 2004). With this success came criticism. Some, such as fellow Kennedy School of Government professor James Crabtree (2004), argued that because of the approachability and wide-spread appeal of Public Value, it could be used to sell virtually anything. In Crabtree’s words:

Yet this is the nub of the problem with Public Value. Precisely because it sounds good, it is already in danger of becoming meaningless. Each vague iteration of the debate on this side of the Atlantic has been different from the last. Each has strayed a little further from Moore’s original thesis. And every step drags Public Value away from being a theory of public management and towards a soft-soap rationale with little explanatory power.

Other criticisms are voiced in Kearney’s 2004 review article. Kearney described the concern that “Public Value may undermine the ability of public managers to exercise expert judgement, and that it will become an exercise in governance by focus group.”
Current developments in Public Value. Public Value was originally described as exclusively public sector topic. If the goal of a private sector manager is to, “make money for his firm,” Moore wrote that the goal of a public manager is to produce value for the public (2004, p.28). Over time it has become understood that Public Value can be created by almost any organization--private, non-profit, public, public-private partnership (Jørgensen & Rutgers, 2015). This point reflects a recognition of the increasingly complex ways that the various sectors now work together to complete service delivery. Also, it is easy to see how Moore's six point definition of Public Value (especially the emphasis on citizen accountability as the price for public resources) might apply at a time where private sector companies receive publicly funded investments and bailouts.

Meanwhile, interest in Public Value continues to grow at a staggering rate. Google Scholar identifies approximately 18,000 individual publications that use the exact phrase “Public Value” since the publication of Moore’s book. As the literature has grown, it has taken several interesting turns in its scope and direction. Some have referred to Public Value as the paradigm for public managers, explaining that it goes beyond a simple managerial style and actually goes to the heart of motivation, relationships, and networks (Stoker, 2006). The phrase paradigm, as popularized by Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, describes the set of common beliefs, values, and techniques that unite a field (Kuhn, 1996). Stoker and others argue that Public Value has the potential to meet this standard for public management. According to this view, Public Value is, “more than a summation of the individual preferences of the users or producers of public services” and is instead a “paradigm [that] presents the achievement of Public Value as its core objective” (p.42). In this view of Public Value, people are less motivated by neutrality and more by “by their involvement in networks and partnerships, partnerships,
that is, in which their relationships with others formed in the context of mutual respect and shared learning.” (p.56).

While the Public Value strategy of management can be appealing, the process undoubtedly introduces some of the subjective risks that Public Administration was formed to combat, leaving administrators to be pulled by the opinions and experiences of their immediate network (including, possibly, political organizations and partisan influences). To correct for that, researchers have worked to better define Public Value, measure when it occurs, and prescribe best practices for administrators in the field that are based on empirical research (Jørgensen & Rutgers, 2015; Hills & Sullivan, 2006; Stoker, 2006).

**Public Value: Implications on Youth Development Programs.** The literature for Public Value and Youth Development Programs seem primed for a collision course. For evidence, consider this quote (Quinn, 1999, p. 113):

Community youth programs are well positioned to add *value* [emphasis added] to the work of schools and families by building on young people’s current knowledge and strengths. In addition, they can provide young people with the support, protection, guidance, and opportunities that will allow them all to take their places as the next generation of America’s workers, family members, and citizens.

From this quote, we can see how Youth Development Programs are being described in terms of value delivery to citizens. Elsewhere in the same article, these programs are described as a “diverse array” of public, non-profit, private, voluntary, and partnership organizations that come together to form a unique “youth development sector” (p.98).
Furthermore, if we refer back to the “comprehensive” goal list for Youth Development Programs (YDP) (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004), we can how it might overlap with Moore’s six-point definition of public value (1995). Moore placed an emphasis on repaying publicly-entrusted funds and authority by satisfying citizens’ desire for goods and services not distributed through private markets, doing so in a way that allows their authorizers (the public, citizens, and representatives) hold public enterprises accountable. When this process is completed, public value is created. It therefore follows that, when Youth Development Programs (many of which depend partially or wholly on public funding) execute a goal desired by the public (e.g. promoting bonding, reducing juvenile crime, encouraging social competence, fostering pro-social norms, etc.) in a clear and transparent fashion, they are creating public value.

**Conclusions on the Literature.**

We have established that Youth Development Programs “promote healthy adolescent development” through a three-prong focus on “program goals, atmosphere, and activities” (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003), relying heavily on volunteering for operations and activities (Lerner, et al., 2005; Chesebrough, King, Gullota, & Bloom, 2004; Gootman & Eccles, 2002). We have described Stoker’s view that Public Value is potentially a cross-sectoral managerial paradigm (2004), while describing the current state of the field as guided by a philosophy of improving society through organizational outputs (Moore, Creating Public Value - Strategic Management in Government, 1996). We have noted Bozeman’s emphasis on public values existing at the individual level. Emphasizing the individual level, to measure Public Value, we have discovered that there are precedents for utilizing volunteering as an observable variable (Hills & Sullivan, 2006). Finally, we discovered that volunteering is “a form of altruistic behavior”
that requires certain resources (socio-economic resources, health, gender, and race) to occur in individuals (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

**Method**

**Sampling and data collection**

Conducted by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth is a nationally representative survey that selects large cohorts of respondents, then collects information from the same respondents at different points over time (National Longitudinal Surveys, 2015). The data set that we’ve selected, NLS 1979-2012 also known as NLSY79, started by interviewing 12,686 men and women, ages 14-22, in 1979. From 1979-1994, these respondents were interviewed annually, initially in-person. Over time, budget constraints led to over-the-phone interviews and then computer-based efforts were attempted. Phone interviews have become the most common form of interview technique, accounting for 90.7% of the total interviews in 2012. Each year, efforts are made to reach the entire original group of respondents to collect new answers on a wide battery of attitudinal, occupational, and demographical questions. The data is available through NLS Investigator, an innovative website that allows visitors to explore variables by expanding or minimizing different categories, see actual questions tied to each variable by hovering a cursor over the item, and to easily click variables to add them to the data set. Once the desire data has been selected, a visitor can easily save the data set and import it directly into Microsoft Excel or any program that accepts XML or CSV files.

**Research Questions**

We want to know if Youth Development Programs deserve further study in relation to public values. If we can demonstrate that Youth Development Programs contribute to the
creation of public value, this will justify further research. While reviewing the literature on Public Value, we discovered the precedent for utilizing Volunteering and Voting as a measurable variables for public value production. With these various goals and precedents firmly established, we can set out to describe two “narrow, specific, and consequently answerable” research question (Singleton & Straits, 2010):

1. “Does participating in a Youth Development Program as a youth increase adult volunteering habits?
2. “Does participating in a Youth Development Program as a youth increase adult voting habits?

Operational Definitions of Measures for all Variables

Through our literature review, we have identified several important variables. In this section, we list and provide operational definitions for our explanatory, outcome, and control variables. We also have described where that variable can be measured in our intended data set, the National Longitudinal Survey on Youth (NLS Investigator: NLSY79 (1979-2012), 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Variable Type</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>NLS Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanatory Variable:</strong> Participation in Youth Development Programs</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
<td>The Individual Has Participated in a Youth Development Program / The Individual Did Not Participate in a Youth Development Program</td>
<td>#R12164.00 “PARTICIPATED IN OTHER TYPE OF HIGH SCHOOL CLUBS - COMMUNITY YOUTH ORGANIZATION”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome Variable:</strong> Adult Volunteering Habits</td>
<td>Dichotomous</td>
<td>Asks if individuals have completed unpaid</td>
<td>T03090.00: UNPAID VOLUNTEER WORK IN 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable Name</td>
<td>Validity/Reliability</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory Variable: Participation in Youth Development Programs</td>
<td>The most significant concern in this area stems from the fact that the question included specific examples of types of Youth Development Programs (mentioning Scouts, the Y, and 4H). There is some concern</td>
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that individuals, not knowing that an organization that they participated in as a youth was a Youth Development Program and not seeing it listed, may indicate “no” when they should have said “yes.” We’re also concerned about the dichotomous nature of this variable. According to this measure, an individual that participated in 4-H for a month could be grouped with someone that participated in Boy Scouts of America for eight years. With that said, we still feel that it is a remarkable development to find a question (especially in a nationally representative survey) that so specifically mentions asks about past participation in youth programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable: Adult Volunteering Habits</th>
<th>First, we have validity concerns regarding our ability to truly evaluate if responses here tell us about adulthood behaviors. Although all of these respondents are now adults, finding out weekly habits over only the last 12 months could paint an unreliable, invalid picture of the regular habits that person has expressed in adulthood.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable: Adult Voting Behaviors</th>
<th>This was a midterm election, so might not be the ideal choice to measure voting behaviors, but it is the sole measure of voting behavior available in the NLS.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Control Variable: Income.</th>
<th>This variable is created based on self-reported income data, leading to concern that people that are outside of the norm (extremely poor, extremely rich) may feel social desirability factors that cause them to misrepresent their income status. Also, there is some strange clustering at the highest income level (four people have all identified themselves as making the exact same annual income of $279,816. This bears additional scrutiny.</th>
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<tr>
<th>Control Variable: Health.</th>
<th>We are mostly satisfied with the validity and reliability of this measure, as it measures whether the individual currently has a health issue that prevents them from working or other activities. If we have a concern, it is that the question is a double-barreled one. It asks people “work or other activities” when it is possible that some, rare individuals may have health issues that only prevent one or the other.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Control Variable: Gender. Identified as related to willingness to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Self-reported, but seemingly valid and reliable. Unlikely that a respondent would misrepresent themselves in this area.

Control Variable: Race. Identified as related to willingness to volunteer (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Self-reported, but seemingly valid and reliable. Unlikely that a respondent would misrepresent themselves in this area. Still, it would be desirable to have a more complex set of racial options as the three options provided seem, in my opinion, to be exhaustive but not intuitive.

Measures of Public Value

Now that we have reviewed our key concepts and selected our sample, we are left with a quandary: how best to empirically examine the relationship between the two variables? For this, we turn to literature on the subject contributed by the Work Foundation (Hills & Sullivan, 2006). As mentioned previously, the Work Foundation is a research group operated by Lancaster University that seeks to, “help policymakers, public managers and institutions understand the concept of public value and see how it can be applied in practice.”

Acknowledging a literature that was frustratingly obtuse on proper measurement methods for Public Value, The Work Foundation set out to quantify proper, measurable variables for observing Public Value. Of the measures identified, two are readily available to study in our data set: voting behaviors and volunteerism.

Volunteerism. Volunteering is already an essential topic in the world of Youth Development Programs. The literature identifies a critical portion of the sector as voluntary (Quinn, 1999) and lists volunteering as a key component of the activities and values promoted by the organizations (Lerner, et al., 2005; Chesebrough, King, Gullota, & Bloom, 2004; Gootman
& Eccles, 2002). As an example of the former assertion, we can look to the Boy Scouts of America. We can see from the Boy Scouts the tremendous impacts that volunteers can have on the implementation of a Youth Development Program (Boy Scouts of America: Facts About Scouting, 2014):

- More than 1 million volunteers provided leadership for Scouting programs in 2013.
- On average, Scout volunteers give 20 hours per month in service to Scouting. This equals approximately 246.8 million hours of volunteer time given to support Scouting in 2013. (Source: Volunteer Outcomes Study, Research & Program Innovation)
- $5.57 billion of volunteer time was given in 2013 to support Scouting across America. (Based on $22.55 Independent Sector value of volunteer time for 2013)

From this one example, we can see how voluntary staff is a critical component to the operation of the Boy Scouts of America. When one combines the fact that the Boy Scouts also involves participants in large amounts of volunteering (for example, the same site states that, in 2013, “service projects were conducted by more than 2.6 million youth members” providing “$384.3 million of service ... to communities across America. (Based on the $22.55 Independent Sector value of volunteer time for 2013)”) we can see how volunteerism is a common thread in the operation and activities of Youth Development Programs.

With volunteerism established as essential to Public Value research and Youth Development Programs implementation, we should take a moment to better understand the topic itself. Volunteering is, “a form of altruistic behavior” with “a goal to provide help to others, a group, an organization, a cause or the community at large, without expectation of material reward” (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 3). Described as a relatively new field, the study of
volunteering is maturing rapidly owing to changes in public perception on volunteering (from frivolous hobby to essential societal contributor) and an increased federal funding. Volunteer work is often categorized either by the setting in which it takes place, the people being served, or the central cause that anchors the work. Empirical research is currently taking place on the “subjective dispositions” (such as personality, motives, values, norms, and attitudes) that may lead one to volunteer (p. 38). “Individual resources” (such as socio-economic resources, time and health, gender, and race) are also considered an important component in the decision to, or ability to, volunteer (p.111). To the point of additional Public Value being created by volunteering, it is also pointed out that there are several positive “consequences of volunteering”, including citizenship and increased prosocial behavior (p.455-485). Increases to feelings of citizenship and civic participation are of significant interest to us, as both have been argued to be important considerations for Public Administration (Cooper, 1991). Of special interest to the intersection between volunteerism and Youth Development Programs are research findings that indicate individuals come to volunteering through “exposure to persuasive messages” (Clary, et al., 1998), suggesting the possible role that socialization may play in priming an individual for later volunteer actions.

Voting. The act of voting is a critical part of American society. In The Logic of American Politics (2013) Kernell et al. stated that “most Americans agree that the right to vote is the very essence of democracy” (p. 489). While overall voter turnout ebbs and flows, close to 60% of the populace exercises their right to vote (p.490). Given voting’s place in society and the fact that one of the key goals of Youth Development Programs is to foster prosocial norms (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004), it is not surprising YDP’s like the Boy Scouts of America inculcate a sense of responsibility and duty towards voting. Meanwhile, the Work Foundation’s “Measuring public value 2: Practical approaches” extolled the importance of
voting’s role in community capacity-building (Hills & Sullivan, 2006). Since it is currently encouraged by YDP’s and is described as a favorable output of public value production, we have selected voting one of the output variables for our exploratory research.

The literature on voting identifies a number of key factors that influence an individual’s likelihood to vote (Kernell, Jacobson, Kousser, & Vavreck, 2013, pp. 490-491). Age and education are identified as having the strongest influence on voting, with race and region also playing important roles. The groups least likely to vote include African American, Hispanics, and the residents of the southern area of the United States. One fact that is of great interest for this project is that “people with deeper roots in their communities … are more likely to vote” (p.491). If our findings are supported by additional work, it may prove to be because of the connections that participants of youth development programs build with their communities. We also should note, considering we have operationalized voting through a midterm election variable, that midterm elections experience turnout that is “twenty-seven percentage points higher for the most educated as compared with the least educated” (p.490). To conclusively describe the relationship between Youth Development Programs participation and voting, we will want to control for age, education, race, and (if possible) other communal ties such as length of residency, church membership, and homeownership.

**Hypotheses**

**H1**: Participation in Youth Development Programs will increase adulthood voting behaviors.

**H2**: Participation in Youth Development Programs will increase adulthood volunteering behaviors.
Results In order to explore our research questions, we identified a small number of variables from the NLS. For this preliminary analysis, we identified youth programs participation (a dichotomous variable) as the predictor variable, and we identified two outcome variables—volunteerism and voting. The results of two analyses are presented as crosstabulations in Tables 1 and 2.

Although our model is, by design, simple and we understand there could be much more sophisticated causal models, this model establishes two statistically significant associations between Youth Development Program and the outcome variables. Moving forward, we would want to complete a more sophisticated test, but the current bivariate analyses already justify additional scrutiny.

The Effect of Youth Development Programs on Voting

{Table 1 About Here}

Our crosstabulation has an N of 7501, one degree of freedom, and a p-value of <.001. The relationship between the explanatory variable (Youth Development Program participation as a youth) and the outcome variable (2006 Voting behavior) is statistically significant and positive. As illustrated in the histogram below, those that participated in Youth Development Programs in the past have higher than expected rates of voting. Out of the 797 respondents (9.4% of the sample) that participated in Youth Development Programs, the expected count for voters was 504. Instead, the actual count was dramatically bigger: 619.
The Effect of Youth Development Programs on Volunteerism

Our crosstabulation has an N of 7492, one degree of freedom, and a p-value of <.001. The relationship between the explanatory variable (Youth Development Program participation as a youth) and the outcome variable (2006 Volunteerism) is statistically significant and positive. As illustrated in the histogram below, those that participated in Youth Development Programs in the past have higher than expected rates of volunteerism. Out of the 786 respondents (10.5% of the sample) that participated in Youth Development Programs, the expected count for those doing unpaid volunteerism in 2006 was 178. Instead, the actual count was dramatically bigger: 283.
Limitations and implications for future research

On their official website, the organizers of the NLS survey indicate that they have gradually reduced the number of military respondents to better account for actual American demographics. They also indicate that “[b]eginning in 1991, the 1,643 members of the economically disadvantaged, nonblack/non-Hispanic supplemental sample were no longer interviewed.” This seems to be an odd decision, one that could drastically affect the type of sample we are using, and would require additional investigation. Before proceeding further, we would need to contact the Bureau of Labor Statistics to gain greater insight into this decision.

Also, due to the simple research design that we have conducted, we have not yet been able to include some of the control variables that have been identified by the literature on voting and volunteering. If we are going to have confidence in our findings, it is essential that our next steps be a multivariate regression that includes consideration for these variables.
Discussion and conclusions

This research project would be the first step in examining the relationship between Youth Development Programs and public values. The evidence that participation in Youth Development Programs does indeed increase adult volunteering and voting habits is very significant for the analysis of public values and of Youth Development Programs. We already have data that indicates volunteering as an adult is related to greater health in later years (Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, Rozario, & & Tang, 2003). We also noted earlier that volunteering leads to important benefits to society. Also, if we can demonstrate this youth socialization link to adult behavior, it raises a litany of questions: What other behaviors are shaped by Youth Development Programs? How should public administrators and others involved in public value production and education interact with the Youth Development sector? Should public institutions adjust selection procedures based on attributes that former youth development participants exhibit?

The current proposed design needs extension and elaboration. As noted earlier, there are issues that must be resolved with the sample. Additional work could be done to ensure all important variables have been identified and included. Nevertheless, the evidence, based on a large and well developed national longitudinal survey, that Youth Development Program participation relates positively to volunteering and voting, provides challenging but promising implications for further research on both Youth Development Programs and public values.
References

  


### Table 1: Youth Development Programs (YDP) * Voting Crosstabulation

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Table 2: Youth Development Programs (YDP) * Volunteerism Crosstabulation

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