

12-2008

ROCKING THE VOTE: An analysis of what makes the Millennial generation vote and the correlation of civic engagement to empathy

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ROCKING THE VOTE:
An analysis of what makes the Millennial generation vote and
the correlation of civic engagement to empathy

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
For the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in
The Department of Political Science
And the completion of Upper Level
Honors Distinction

by
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December 2008

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be nearly impossible to properly honor the people who supported me in the completion of this paper. This thesis is the product of two years of misdirection and finally redirection in ideas, and an exorbitant amount of research to design a topic that would have meaning in the current political environment. I must first acknowledge my thesis committee members of Dr. Regina Lawrence, Dr. Drew Lamonica Arms, and especially Dr. Cecil L. Eubanks, who gave me tremendous guidance in designing a thesis project and, perhaps undeservingly, a great deal of time in which to complete it. Without his encouragement and patience, this project may never have come to light. My sincere thanks also go out to Mr. George Allan, who helped foster my passion for civic engagement during my high school career. His insight and help in conducting surveys with We The People participants was invaluable. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Albert Mehrabian, who graciously, and somewhat unwillingly, allowed me to put his Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale on an internet medium to get a greater sample of survey participants. I would like to thank my family and friends who gave me the will to finish this seemingly unending project, and Professor Michael McKenna for giving me guidance with my statistical analysis. Finally, I would like to thank Michael Rutkowski for being my link to sanity when my will to finish this thesis was seriously tested and for providing unending support in the form of recalculating empathy scores for accuracy and unsolicited advice.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of the relationship between empathy and civic engagement. Its goal is to provide a critical analysis that will first examine the meaning of civic engagement and then, through empirical research, determine whether the level of empathy of a citizen shows a strong correlation to civic engagement. The first section divulges several popular models of citizenship. The second section provides a review of literature on civic engagement and the notion of empathy. The third section provides a design for measuring empathy and civic engagement. The fourth and final section analyzes the empathy and civic engagement levels of three distinct groups of young citizens.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Models of Citizenship

The concept of citizenship has roots in various sources. In the 5th century, B.C., Athens became the foremost example of pure democracy. Its “polis” structure was the most sophisticated model of a city-state, and today, remains the most ancient example of a true democracy with engaged citizens (Held 11). There are several reasons why city-states provide appropriate models of an engaged citizenry beginning with the nature of ancient civilization. First, many city-states were small in land area out of necessity; city-states had to be located along the coastline, rather than far inland, for survival purposes, such as access to water, agricultural needs, and trade (Held 11). The small physical nature of a city-state provided for smaller communities of citizens, making each citizen’s stake in the community much greater than would have been seen in a larger community with a greater population. Second, there were benefits associated with one’s status as a citizen. Citizens were males of strict Athenian descent and often the only free people of a nation, while slaves comprised a class of outsiders and non-citizens (Held 12). These citizens became the ancient model of the “good citizen,” enjoying true democracy facilitated by the small size of their communities (Held 12). What modern political scholars would term political communication and news would have been effortless for ancient leaders, who had to reach, on average, less than a thousand citizens in a small radius (Held 12). Modern democratic ideals such as voter turnout and civic responsibility were hardly issues due to the nature of the city-state. Even at the height of Athenian population growth, there were only an estimated 30,000 to 45,000 Athenian citizens (Held 12).

The Athenian model of citizenship can be defined using the words of one of Athens’ most famous citizens. In his funeral oration, one of the most celebrated passages of classical texts, Pericles states that in Athens,

Each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well; even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well-informed on general policies – this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all.

- Pericles' Funeral Oration
Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, p. 147

Here, it is clear that the common Athenian definition of a citizen was one who participated in “the affairs of the state,” and was dedicated to the common good, a mark of civic virtue. In this model of citizenship, civic acts such as voting were responsibilities, tied to one’s status as a citizen, rather than simply rights. In the polis, all citizens were governors, participating in policymaking and the creation of laws; and all were the governed, expected to abide by the laws (Held 14).

In Aristotle’s definition of citizenship, Pericles’ rhetoric is writ large. Aristotle suggests that a citizen is one who shares “in the civic life of ruling and being ruled in turn . . . [and] enjoys the right of sharing in deliberative or judicial office” (Aristotle 108). Aristotle further implies the notion of civic participation, what he terms civic virtue, or the willingness and readiness of citizens of a state to engage in civic responsibilities, such as public debate and democracy. For Aristotle, the key mark of a good citizen is one who strove for this virtue; one who recognized that by contributing to the good will of his community, he could achieve this virtue.

Aristotle’s definition of a citizen came in an era where true democracy was possible and a great majority of Athenian citizens were directly involved in governmental affairs. In Aristotle’s time, however, the only citizens were white, male property owners. Women, slaves, and children, although members of the city-state, did not actively participate in civic duties, that is, they were not afforded certain rights of citizenship in democracies, such as voting. Similarly, in early American history, women and minorities – primarily blacks – were not granted fundamental

rights of citizenship in a democracy. African-American males fought for this right in the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the 20th century; a fight which culminated with the success of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Women suffragettes believed in suffrage rights for all which led to the successful passage of a suffrage amendment in 1920. In both Aristotle's time, and the 20th century suffrage movements, the concept of citizenship begins with the notion that voting or political participation is a critical component of what defines a citizen. For the ancient Greek civilization, participation was a responsibility of a citizen, and lack thereof, was not an option for citizens. The modern struggles to afford all voting-age American citizens suffrage rights, signals a modern view of civic participation as a right rather than a responsibility.

In this transfer of citizenship from the model of antiquity to the modern model of citizenship, there is a consequential substitution of the ancient ideals of citizenship to modern ideals more feasible in an 18th century to present century democracy. The democracy of Aristotle and Pericles called for citizens to become part of the fabric of their community. In a sense, citizens needed to be objective in their community to do what was considered good for the city-state as a whole rather than for himself (Balibar 107). Modern democratic ideals, however, are more concerned with universal individual rights (Balibar 107). Exemplified above, in American democracy, decades of physical and legal fighting occurred until universal suffrage was realized. Segregated schools were common throughout the 20th century until citizens argued that separate was clearly not equal, and equality in education should be a right for all citizens. Indeed, the United States remains a nation founded on the ideals that "all men are created equal;" whether the framers meant this to include women and minorities or not, this phrase has transformed into a universal call for individual rights. In essence, voter participation was the standard of a "good"

citizen in the ancient model of citizenship, but the modern model of citizenship treats this type of participation as a right of citizens rather than a responsibility.

However, participation in elections has gone from being the defining factor of a good citizen to only a component of one, especially in the mindset of the millennial generation, the name commonly attributed to 18 to 29-year-olds (and sometimes dwindled further down to include only 18 to 24-year-olds) today. There is an assumption of political apathy of the millennial generation, which has arisen for the very nature that young voters have some of the lowest voter turnout rates in election cycles (Niemi 1). Elections in modern history have followed a trend that suggests that fewer citizens each year bother to follow public events or even turnout to vote in elections. With bitter fighting toward universal suffrage in American history, it would be alarming to suffragette Susan B. Anthony or Harriet Tubman that eligible voters in modern history seemingly take suffrage rights for granted. Although recent elections have seen a slight increase in voter turnout – sixty-four percent of voting age citizens voted in the 2004 presidential election, up from sixty percent in 2000 – the elusive 18-24 year-old voter group had the lowest turnout rate of all voting groups (U.S. Census 2005). Only 47 percent of registered 18-24 year olds turned out to vote (U.S. Census 2005).

John Della Volpe, director of polling for the Harvard Institute of Politics, said that “baked into the millennials’ DNA is [the idea of] making a world a better place” (Ruggeri 1). Here, Volpe suggests that millennials are not apathetic about the world around them, but rather they show their capacity for caring in other forms. Volpe said that it wasn’t until September 11, 2001, that young citizens believed that voting was integral to this mission of improving conditions of the world (Ruggeri 1). It was the terrorist attacks, the realization that this generation of millennials “will be the first that won’t be financially better off than [their] parents,” and the

timing – the millennials’ first taste of federal government has been under the deeply failed Bush administration – that have created an urgency in young citizens to view voting as an important civic duty (Ruggeri 1).

The recent Nov. 4 election date, however, a culmination of an unprecedented two-year long election season, was expected to, and by recent reports did, shatter previous election turnout numbers. It has been estimated that 126.5 million to 128.5 million votes were cast this year (Alban 1). This number set the record for number of votes cast but was not the highest percentage of voter turnout in history – that record is still held by the 1860 election when 81.3 percent of voters turned out in the historic race between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas (Alban 1). It is important to remember that the number of eligible voters was much smaller, however, as woman and African-Americans did not have voting rights. The modern day record is held by the 1960 race between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon with 67 percent of voters turning out (Alban 1). This year’s enormous turnout still amounted to about 61.7 percent of the electorate (Alban 1).

Fueled by a massive voter registration drive on the part of the Democratic party, many youth voters, ages 18 to 29, were part of 10 million newly registered voters and did turn out to vote in the recent election (Ruggeri 1). Again, this age group has been frequently described as apathetic about their community and by extension politics. One scholar noted that the increase in millennial voter turnout is “heartening, but traditionally, young voters are not a reliable support base for any candidate” (Davis 11/19/08). Yet, advances in modern American democracy include defining technological initiatives that make increased communication between governments and citizens possible, perhaps as a modern recreation of the ease of government access enjoyed by the Athenians. Indeed, one scholar writes,

Many democratic government initiatives to put key documents on line (e.g. the Special Prosecutor's report to the US Congress on the Clinton-Monica Lewinsky affair), to improve understanding of social policy entitlements through the use of web-based information and to seek voter opinion on a wide range of public questions can enhance responsiveness and accountability on both sides of government, (Held 250).

As noted previously, the general scholarly consensus has been that voter turnout, with the exception of the recent presidential election, has followed a declining trend, and millennials are the most apathetic, least participatory group of citizens. Indeed, one researcher found that "low voter turnout has been the norm for America's youngest political cohorts" (Soule 4). But, the very idea of democracy is a way of ensuring that all citizens enjoy "equal autonomy" (Held 277). The U.S. Constitution affords American citizens this principle of equality, in such amendments granting suffrage rights to all voting-age citizens, regardless of race or gender, and freedom of speech. But the current model of citizenship in American democracy takes note of something that the ancient model of citizenship would not: these amendments, first and foremost, grant rights, not responsibilities. There is no legal reprimand imposed on a citizen for refusing to vote, because the framers of the Constitution and future amendments recognized that the idea advocated in Pericles' oration of "kicking out" a citizen because he does not participate in government is against the very nature of autonomy.

To move beyond voting as a litmus test, it is important to find other factors which can determine how civically engaged a person is. For example, it has long been the notion that low voter participation turnout, especially among the millennials, relates to a citizen being uninterested in his or her community. However, as will be detailed below, millennials are among the most community service-orientated generations. Can community service be a factor that promotes civic engagement? The answer is, of course, and this research will attempt to defend that answer. But what promotes community service and in turn, civic engagement? This thesis

will attempt to first, define civic engagement within the boundaries of voting, then, look at other factors that contribute to civic engagement levels by analyzing a sample of young voting age citizens. Finally, this thesis will determine whether the notion that empathetic individuals have higher levels of civic engagement has empirical merit.

PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Part 2.1: Civic Engagement Defined

“Americans have taken citizenship very seriously over the last 200 years. We have never agreed, however, about what the ideal citizen is or the role the citizen should play in public life.”
Larry N. Gerston, Center for Civic Education, California (19)

To define civic engagement, it is first important to understand the two basic models of citizenship, and expand on the more appropriate one for modern citizenship. As described in the introduction, the Athenian model of citizenship is commonly referred to as the ancient model of citizenship or the model of antiquity. It can also be defined as the communitarian model (Gerston 20). “The communitarian model of citizenship has deep historical roots that find their way back to the classical republicanism of the ancient Greeks and Romans, which also influenced the political thought of the founders” (Gerston 20). In this model, the common good is central to the ideal citizen. Aristotle’s idea of civic virtue suggests that a good citizen subverts private interests to the interests of the many or common good. There are groups that can be seen as advocates of the communitarian spirit (Gerston 21). Environmentalists and those who promote volunteerism or community service are often described as communitarians for the idea that these groups work to improve the communal environment, sometimes at the expense of their individual interests (Gerston 21).

The second model described in the introduction was the modern model of citizenship, also known as the liberal view of citizenship (Gerston 20). John Locke often receives credit for adding credence to this view in his natural rights philosophy, delineated in *Two Treatises of Government* (Gerston 20). Locke's view creates a hyper-individualistic view of citizenship – citizens give up absolute freedom, but retain most of their freedoms, in exchange for individual rights from the government. The natural rights that citizens receive include the right to life, liberty and property. Thomas Jefferson, the father of American constitutional writing, expounded this Lockean view in the language of the Declaration of Independence. “Advocates of this view of citizenship would argue that because of its emphasis on the freedom of the individual it is a realistic model for the large, complex and diverse nation of today,” issues Athenians hardly needed to grapple with (Gerston 20).

There is a third model championed in Gerston's book on civic engagement, which Harry Boyte of the University of Minnesota first suggested. This model is a hybrid of the ancient and modern citizen models and is known as a model of “citizenship as public work” (Gerston 21). This model suggests a correlation between a citizen's individual needs and the common good of their society (Gerston 21). Instead of environmentalist groups viewed as communitarians, it may be just as fair to describe them as citizen groups of public work. Their individual interest corresponds with interests of a community. This idea is commonly taught in civic classrooms as “enlightened self-interest,” described as so because in this model, an individualistic citizen sees how advancing the common good can also further his or her personal interests and vice versa. Gerston writes that this model “takes individuals off the sidelines as passive observers and moves them closer to the center of the public policymaking process” (Gerston 21). The idea of the public policymaking process is the heart of a democratic society. In Athenian democracy,

citizens could literally be direct participants in policymaking. Due to modern American constraints, policymaking takes the form of lobbying, advocacy, and forms of civic engagement that go well beyond participation in elections. “Volunteer service, internships, field research, or service-learning opportunities associated with academic courses” are all modern forms of civic engagement (Gerston 21). Before delving into these areas of engagement, however, it is important to understand why voting has long been the standard to measure a good citizen.

Part 2.2: Voting as civic engagement

Voting has traditionally been viewed as one of the most basic tests for civic engagement. The commonly accepted attitude, already detailed, of young people in America is that they do not vote and are not engaged in politics. Why is this? Often, young citizens aged 18 to 24, are criticized as apathetic, uninterested, and less engaged in politics than previous generations of 18 to 24 year olds. According to research conducted by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), voter turnout among this age group has been in a steady decline from 1972 through the 2004 presidential election years. Turnout is even less during midterm election years, when no national race exists. In 2004 for example, 46.7 percent of 18 to 24-year-olds cast a ballot for president (CIRCLE 2004). Compared with 52.1 percent of 18 to 24-year-olds in 1972 (CIRCLE 2004), the difference could mean hundreds of thousands fewer votes cast in an age where there are slightly more eligible young voters. In 2004, of nearly 25 million eligible young voters, about 12 million turned out to vote. In 1972, of 23.5 million eligible voters, 12.2 million turned out to vote. The highest youth voter turnout rates occurred in 1972, 1992, and 2004 (CIRCLE 2004). All three of these election years can be considered fairly competitive – two were in times of war (1972 and 2004), and one came after 12 years of the

same party in political power and economic downturn. The recent election will likely be placed alongside these election years with record turnout numbers in years to come. The successful party in this election was the party that chanted the mantra of “Change.” Does this suggest that the greatest turnout of young voters occurs during times of extreme domestic and international circumstances? And because “the chance of any one individual’s vote making a difference to the outcome is extraordinarily slight” (Wattenberg 95), what motivation do young voters even have to vote?

The recent election could shed light on these questions and may finally help the millennials rid themselves of the reputation of apathy. “An estimated 24 million Americans ages 18 to 29 voted in this election, an increase in youth turnout by at least 2.2 million over 2004,” reported CIRCLE (Dahl 1). The reputation of apathy has not just been that of American young adults but all young adults in industrialized democracies throughout the world (Wattenberg 2). “In the parliamentary democracies in Western Europe, with the exceptions of Belgium and Italy, voter turnout by young people is substantially lower than for the population as a whole” (Eisner 7). Perhaps it was the innovative nature of President-elect Barack Obama’s campaign, which specifically targeted young voters by giving out information on how and where to register to vote, using the Internet and text messaging for advertising, and more traditional advertising methods such as television advertisements and direct mail in a revolutionary approach.

The surge in youth participation could also have been augmented due to the truly national efforts of this campaign which fundamentally required youth attention. The primary season for the Democratic Party lasted uncharacteristically late into the summer months of this year, and all eyes and ears were in some form cognizant of the raging battle for the Democratic nomination. The nomination was so important because of the commonly shared thought that under the

Republican Party's direction, the country was headed in the wrong direction. By all media reports, political pundits consistently, and correctly, called the election in favor of whomever the Democratic nominee was based on President George W. Bush's abysmal approval ratings throughout the primary season and into the November election. The focus on the Democratic primaries and caucuses were so strong in light of the close delegate count of Senator Hillary Clinton and then-Senator Obama. For the first time in their political life, millennials nationwide may have felt a sense of empowerment that their vote mattered, instead of the nominee being decided by the first caucus in Iowa and the first primary in New Hampshire. Gerston describes this empowerment as a citizen's awareness that he or she has the capacity to make an impact on a public issue (Gerston 23). This empowerment is often felt in other forms of civic engagement delineated previously in this section.

Part 2.3: Other Forms of Civic Engagement

In recent years, many high school students engage in civic organizations that have a volunteerism mission more than previous generations of high school students. Volunteer associations, social causes, and even young political organizations are led by many of the so-called disengaged 18-24 year-olds. This volunteerism movement among young generations has roots in the 1960s and 70s beginning with the civil rights movement, freedom bus rides and possibly inspired by public works initiatives prevalent after the Great Depression. "The civil rights movement helped inspire a new generation of young activists," writes political theorist Michael Schudson (Schudson 257). Schudson is describing high school and university aged students in his 1999 book on citizenship and called these 1960s activists "the students who in the next several years would spearhead the antiwar movement" in reference to the youth protests

over the Vietnam War and draft (Schudson 258). Indeed, Schudson has good reason for believing that students have been consistent leaders in community service. A National Center for Education Statistics survey released in 2000 indicated that eighty-one percent of college freshmen had performed volunteer work in their senior year of high school (Marks and Jones 307).

Political scientist Richard Niemi suggests that there is a correlation between this kind of community service and civic engagement. “Both participation in student government and regular participation in community service activities are related to a number of dimensions of civic development” (Niemi v). Niemi defines civic development in five dimensions: political knowledge, attention to politics, political participation skills, political efficacy, and tolerance of diversity (Niemi iii). Niemi suggests that students’ grades in school, race and ethnicity, activities, family characteristics, and school characteristics are related to their individual civic development (Niemi 3). Other factors that related to civic development are participation in student government and regular participation in community service – 35 hours or more during the school year (Niemi v).

Niemi further suggests that there are certain elements that hinder civic development and decrease voter turnout. These can include falling levels of involvement in nonpolitical civic associations, low levels of political knowledge, tolerance of diversity, and distrust of government and societal leaders. “Democratic predispositions need to be nurtured – they do not develop so spontaneously that it can be taken for granted that every new generation will be as supportive of America’s political and civic traditions and institutions as were previous generations” (Niemi 1). Here, Niemi suggests that an individual’s socioeconomic background and their home environment (nurturing or non-nurturing) has a significant impact on how young adults view

democracy and consequently how engaged they become. This thesis takes note of Niemi's model, but will focus solely on one factor as it correlates to civic engagement, rather than attempting to analyze an individual's childhood development as well.

Part 2.4: Empathy defined

“Empathy: I feel your pain.” (Keen 5)

The notion of empathy comes from the German word “Einfühlung,” a term coined in the late 1800s by philosopher Robert Vischer. Vischer first tried to define empathy as “aesthetic sympathy” (Empathy). Theorists and philosophers, however, have developed several different definitions for the word to create a more distinct separation between the idea of empathy and that of sympathy. For example, Heinz Kohut defined empathy as “the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person” (Kohut 82). Edith Stein said empathy is “the experience of foreign consciousness in general” (Stein 11). Martin Hoffman defined empathy as “the spark of human concern for others; the glue that makes social life possible” (Hoffman 3). Nancy Eisenberg defined empathy similarly, writing that it's “an emotional and behavioral response to another's emotional state, which is similar in affective tone and is based on the other's circumstances rather than one's own” (Eisenberg 52). The common thread in many of these definitions is the notion that empathy allows a person to feel as another feels and understand why the other feels that way (Lane 479).

Empathy is thought to be a universal feeling that all human beings have the capacity to experience, and the total absence of empathy in an individual is commonly considered pathological (Lane 479). There is some research to suggest that animals, especially primates, also have this ability to empathize with another of their species (Lane 479). For the purposes of this

research, this proposal will be largely ignored, as the focus of empathy here is solely as it relates to civic engagement among the human millennial generation.

In writing of the human being's ability to read a novel and empathize with a fictional character, Suzanne Keen wrote,

“Empathy, a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect, can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading. It need not be a conscious response: the neonates who cry at the sound of other babies' cries are almost certainly unaware of their primitive empathy. Equipped with mirror neurons, the human brain appears to possess a system for automatically sharing feelings, what neuroscientists call a “shared manifold for intersubjectivity.” (Keen, 4)

Empathy creates an emotional state that allows one human being to have an understanding of another's feelings and/or situation. It is important to distinguish it from sympathy, which is best described as pity for another or feeling sorry for someone. The main difference between empathy and sympathy is that in empathizing with another, a citizen understands the state of another, rather than simply feeling sorry for another's state of being.

Empathy can be identified in different age groups within a community. Children, for example, show the beginnings of empathy with playmates and school friends. “If a young child sees another child fall down on the playground, that child may spontaneously react in an empathetic way, such as providing comfort and support” (Bergin 1). Dr. Bruce Perry has written a multitude of articles on the development of emotional bonds, a precursor to empathy. Perry writes that “the most important property of humankind is the capacity to form and maintain relationships” (Perry 2). These bonds are what Perry calls “emotional glue,” and they are made up of caring, sharing, the capacity to love, and perhaps most importantly, the capacity for empathy (Perry 3). This capacity is assumed to develop most during infancy and early childhood (Perry 3).

Perry hypothesizes that early attachments or bonds are associated with healthy relationships later in life, while the contrary is true – that poor bonding can lead to behavioral problems later in life and a lack of empathy (Perry 10). He writes that often, aggression in young adults is “accompanied by a detached, cold lack of empathy” (Perry 11). Perry’s findings seem to support Hoffman’s notion that empathy is a comprehensive catalyst for prosocial moral behavior (Hoffman 3).

Both Emmanuel Levinas and John Stuart Mill write of humanizing the other –another human being – through empathy. Levinas identifies empathy as *Einfühlung* – a theory of how the ego or individual consciousness “knows itself through self-reflection, leaves itself in order to posit, in absolutely certain fashion, an intersubjective world of monads around itself” (Moyn 55). Levinas identifies the interrelation of oneself with another – empathy – as the understanding of another as unique and valuable to society, and further states that empathy helps the self to discover the other (Moyn 55). In 1979, Mill contended that a person’s morality is derived from a “feeling of unity with others that is based largely on empathy” (Hoffman 96).

Hoffman identifies empathy as “the cognitive awareness of another person’s internal states, that is, his thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and intentions” (Hoffman 29). Hoffman correlates strong empathy levels with volunteering and service in community organizations by college students. He recounts a study done in 1983 which finds that college students who obtained high empathy scores on a paper-and-pencil measure donated more money to the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Telethon than their less empathetic classmates. In the study, empathetic college students were more likely to volunteer and put in more hours of work at shelters for homeless families than less empathetic college students (Hoffman 36). Hoffman writes, “Empathy not only contributes to helping but it also interferes with aggression and the

ability to manipulate others” (Hoffman 36), supporting Perry’s theory that a lack of empathy can lead to violent adult behavior toward others. Hoffman further states that everyone has the capacity to develop empathetic feelings whenever they observe someone in distress at the same time that they are having their own independent experience of distress (Hoffman 45).

British philosopher David Hume suggested that because people tend to have similar life experiences, it is possible to imagine oneself in another’s place and evoke the same feeling as that person (Hoffman 52). Hume gives credibility to the idea that, empathy or “stepping into the other guy’s shoes works best when you resemble him” (Sorensen 75). He observed that human beings adopt the temperament and actions of those people in their company, typically family and close companions (Sorensen 79). A contemporary philosopher of Hume, Adam Smith signified the importance of empathy for a person’s social existence and the capacity for anyone to acquire it. Like Hoffman, Smith writes, “Even the greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society is not without it” (Hoffman 53). Smith of course is not implying that all citizens of a community have empathy rather that they all have the capacity to empathize.

Part 2.5: Empathy as it translates into Civic Engagement

“In an era of universal mistrust when nations are at war, and pride overshadows human reason, when technologic advances outweigh human need, and time dominates a materialistic world, when violence and bloodshed overbalance individual rights and property, when home life and family structure is dissolving, and altruistic love marked as avarice, the need for an empathetic nurse is recognized. Intelligence, experience, empathy – the greatest of these is empathy.”

Mary Durm, 1973

This research project identifies empathy as having a relationship with an individual’s altruistic nature, or sense of community. While a distinction between empathy (sharing of feelings with another) and sympathy (concern for another) should be made, it is also important to

note that empathy can translate into sympathy leading to community or altruistic action (Keen 4). In its infant stages, empathy can become an outward response of support. For example, anyone who recalls the events of September 11, 2001, felt a shared sense of anger at the innocent lives claimed by terrorist actions and a shared sense of patriotism – a sort of “rally around the flag” effect. Although only a small percentage of Americans experienced first-hand the aftermath of September 11 as a result of the loss of a loved one or other personal experience, it would be fair to say that with President Bush’s approval ratings sky-rocketing to an unlikely 85 percent and the memorable interview Dan Rather gave on The Late Show with David Letterman, in which he tearfully stated he would “line up with the President,” most citizens felt a shared sense of patriotism (Moyers, 4/27/07). This is a very modern example of the notion of empathy as the “drive to affiliate with others for comfort and safety” (Keen 6).

There is also the idea that the capacity for empathy is greater in females than in males. For example, Cambridge scientist Simon Baron-Cohen suggests that the female brain is already “hard-wired for empathy,” but the male brain is “hard-wired for understanding and building systems” (Baron-Cohen 1). Indeed, most women have the brain organization to outcommunicate men. Magnetic imaging brain scans (MRI) show that women have between 14 and 16 areas of the brain to evaluate others’ behavior, or empathize with them, versus a man’s 4 to 6 areas (Pease 14). “This explains how a woman can attend a dinner party and rapidly work out the state of the relationships of other couples at the party – who’s had an argument, who likes who, and so on. It also explains why from a woman’s standpoint, men don’t seem to talk much, and from a man’s standpoint women never seem to shut up” (Pease 14). This idea of a gender gap in empathy relates to the idea of a gender gap in politics: “that women generally prefer reparative,

humane solutions to social problems [caring], while men prefer punishment and preventative measures” (Keen 7).

Experts on empathy believe that the social nature of human beings contributes to a desire to work together (reciprocal altruism) to accomplish group survival (Keen 9). In other words, the ability to emotionally connect with another’s feelings harvests the desire to participate in tasks to advance the common good of one’s society. It should be noted that the reverse of the previous statement is also deemed true in many, but not all, occasions. If empathy translates into a desire to work toward the well-being of a community, then lack of empathy may, sometimes translate into the opposite effect of destruction of the common good (Keen 9). For example, a low level of empathy can contribute to social disorders such as psychopathology (Keen 9). This is not to say that if an individual has a low level of empathy he or she is at risk of becoming a sociopath or serial killer. There are many individuals who suffer from developmental disorders such as autism or Asberger’s who cannot easily empathize with another yet are not immediately seen as detrimental to society (Keen 10). “Autistic brains lack the ability to read people’s body language. This is one reason why autistic people have difficulty in forming social relationships, even though many have very high IQs” (Pease 170). Here, the social ability to empathize seems to correlate somewhat with the composition of chemicals in a person’s brain – nature, although, as Hoffman suggested, nurture does also have an effect on an individual’s ability to empathize.

However, there may be some truth to the claim that a low level of empathy can be predictive of anti-social behavior. Special Agent Terri Royster of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, teaches behavioral science at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. During a seminar on school violence following the massacre at Virginia Tech in 2007, Royster said that there are shared personality traits of school shooters, including low self-esteem, an inflated sense

of entitlement, and a lack of empathy (Vetter 1). Royster stated that school shooters rarely, if ever, think about the consequences of their actions on the community at large, but only of the selfish goal they are trying to pursue (Vetter 1). While a low level or entire lack of empathy is not an automatic red-flag signaling a violent, anti-social human being, it is fairly consistent to state that a high level of empathy fosters a greater awareness of an individual's community. Whether this greater awareness translates into helping one's community in the form of community service or outreach is a contentious issue. Some psychologists such as Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer write that "the relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior is neither direct nor inevitable" (Eisenberg and Strayer 11). Often, human beings will use a simple cost-benefit analysis to determine whether involving themselves directly in another's problems, regardless of a shared feeling, is less costly than it is beneficial. If one finds that the costs of helping outweigh the benefit to be derived from his or her action, one might decline to help (Keen 22). Still, there are other scholars who claim that empathy does translate into a community action (Keen 22). Studies show that individuals with higher empathy levels participate more in prosocial behavior – community service, picking up a crying infant, or aiding others (Keen 22).

Rather than focus on why young voters, more than any other age group, have the least amount of turnout in election years, this thesis will attempt to find out if young voter's empathy levels are high and correlate to an increased level of civic engagement. Perhaps there is an emotion that does factor into the young adults who do participate in elections. Scholars rightly suggest that there is a perpetuating cycle which says "young people do not vote because they don't follow politics...[and] because young people don't follow politics and don't vote, parties and politicians frequently don't bother with [them]" (Wattenberg 2). Here, scholar Martin

Wattenberg has identified the root of the so-called apathy of the youth problem: what motivation do young adults need to become more engaged in politics and hence, become more likely to participate in elections? Is it more the acknowledgement from parties and political campaigns? Possibly. Or is there something that can be nurtured into young adults to make them more considerate of the importance of elections? The hypothesis of this study suggests that young people with a greater sense of community are the voters who turn out. This sense of community can be focused into the idea of empathy, and what it means to be empathetic.

The decline in voter turnout and mutual neglect between politicians and young voters has occurred even though “young people today are the most educated generation America has ever had, and education once was a trusted predictor of voting behavior” (Eisner 4). Then, does apathy in elections indicate that young adults are less civically engaged? Some scholars have suggested that civic engagement has historically been defined by voting, yet the same young voters today are volunteering “in record numbers” through community service such as tutoring, cleaning up parks, building homes, and spending time at food banks (Eisner 5). This rise in community activism suggests that although young adults may have tuned out politically, they are channeling their civic engagement into other areas of citizenship. Young voters are showing that just because they do not vote does not necessarily mean they are apathetic about their communities, but rather than buy into the age-old maxim that voting is the core duty of citizenship, they are “rewriting the rules of citizenship” through volunteerism (Eisner 5). Indeed, “the current generation of young people is relatively unlikely to see voting as an important civic responsibility” (Wattenberg 6).

Michael Schudson defines the twentieth century ideal citizen as someone who is informed about political issues, politicians or public servants, political parties and who uses

rational choice decision-making to vote for candidates based on public good rather than party affiliation. Schudson makes no mention of volunteerism or community service as essential to the ideals of citizenship. One can hardly blame Schudson for this oversight because it is generally accepted that voting is the core of citizenship. Perhaps young adults believe that civic engagement has a core much more complex than just voting. A “common reason political scientists have found for why some people vote is that they believe it is their civic duty” (Wattenberg 127). Yet, a survey conducted by CIRCLE in 2002 asked the following question to 15 to 25-year-old Americans: “In your mind, which word best describes how you feel about voting: a right, a responsibility, a choice, or a duty?” (CIRCLE 2002). Only 9 percent of respondents surveyed said that voting was a duty (CIRCLE 2002). This supports the theory that young voters view civic duty as something other than and possibly transcendent of voting.

As described previously, volunteerism is generally viewed by young adults as civic duty rather than a right such as voting. Indeed, when controversy surrounded legislation lowering the legal voting age from twenty-one to eighteen in the 1940s, U.S. Representative Jennings Randolph championed support for the bill by indicating that if young adults were drafted into war, they “ought to be able to vote if they returned home alive” (Eisner 10). When the 26th Amendment became law in 1971, Randolph said, “I believe that our young people possess a great social conscience, are perplexed by the injustices which exist in the world, and are anxious to rectify those ills” (Eisner 10). Randolph was alluding to young adults as socially conscious citizens. Another way of defining social conscience is empathy and the idea that a person can emotionally and cognitively be tuned into another person. Indeed, one of the most civically charged years in recent history was in 2001, when the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred. Civic duty was not described in terms of voting, but rather in terms of patriotism and community

spirit. “The candlelight vigils and fundraising drives did play to the central strengths of many young people, calling upon their innate ability to empathize and to reach out to help others in need” (Eisner 67).

According to one scholar, “service pushes teenagers, the most self-centered of human beings, out into the world, opening their eyes and ears, and with hope their hearts and minds, to the conditions of others” (Eisner 74). In 2000, a Harvard survey found that 85 percent of college students believe volunteerism addresses community issues better than political engagement, i.e. voting, can (Harvard’s Institute of Politics 2008). Although this rise in volunteerism may be tied to the decline in young voter turnout, a worrisome thought for many proponents of the fundamentals of democracy, has it also broadened the notion of citizenship from mere voting to social consciousness, what can be dubbed here to be empathy?

Whether or not citizens vote is no longer an apt measure of civic engagement levels of citizenry, nor can volunteerism be sufficient to suggest that someone is civically engaged. Both trends, however, raise interesting questions about the origins of civic engagement. Scholars who have tried to answer the question of why people vote or participate civically have consistently identified a greater sense of community as being a catalyst for involvement.

A sense of community is central to any introduction into political thought. Aristotle’s theory of man as *zoon politikon*, or social/political animal, suggests that men have a basic need for a community or social network. In other words, men are social creatures, instilled with a need for some sense of community. Theorist Martin Hoffman argued that the importance for social organization is directly connected to the importance of empathy (Hoffman 2). This thesis will explore the hypothesis that there is a direct correlation between empathy and civic engagement.

PART 3: RESEARCH MODEL

To discover whether or not empathy leads to voting and other forms of civic engagement, this researcher created a survey to test the connection between a person's level of empathy and his or her commitment to civic engagement. This researcher looked at three specific groups of millennials: Louisiana We The People program participants, Federal Bureau of Investigation Honors Interns, and a control group of students not specifically affiliated with one civic organization, but who do fit the age group this research project seeks to analyze.

Part 3.1: Experimental Group B – FBI Interns

The first experimental group consists of students who completed a ten-week summer internship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation from June to August 2007. College professors and advisors have long pushed students to complete internships prior to their graduation. Internships are useful for several reasons, but this research is interested in how an internship, namely a federal internship, correlates to civic engagement and empathy. Internships grant the interns experience working on a meaningful project, and federal internships give interns familiarity with working under civic leaders, recognition of “the importance of being actively involved in community issues,” and fosters skills necessary for “effective and informed civic involvement” (Westheimer and Kahne 249). Research suggests that students who participate in government internships fuel a desire in these same students to participate in civic affairs (Westheimer and Kahne 250).

Based on this assumption, the first experimental group of FBI interns should have higher levels of civic engagement. To be accepted into the internship, applicants must undergo a highly selective and competitive application phase. First, applicants must be U.S. citizens attending an

accredited college or university recognized by the United States Secretary of Education (FBI.gov). Next, students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and not have been placed on academic probation for any form of student misconduct (FBI.gov). After successful completion of an application which includes a personal statement, competitive applicants undergo an interview, thorough background check, and polygraph test (FBI.gov). Successful completion of all of the aforementioned items will result in an applicant being granted a Top Secret Security Clearance and a 10-week temporary summer appointment. All of the respondents in this experimental group successfully completed the summer internship. Later survey analysis will show if government internships provide a stronger correlation coefficient between an individual's level of empathy and civic engagement.

Part 3.2: Experimental Group 2 – We The People participants

The second experimental group of We The People (WTP) participants was chosen for several reasons. First, students who participate in the high school WTP program are often noted to become much more engaged citizens after successful completion of the program. The program was created in 1987 to promote civic knowledge and responsibility among elementary and high school students (Center for Civic Education). Since its inception, more than 28 million students and 90 thousand teachers have been a part of WTP (CCE). On the high school level, students who participate in the WTP program often do so through their advanced placement American Government class. Students spend a semester working on six different areas of civic education, including philosophical and historical foundations of the American political system; the creation of the Constitution under the Framers; values and principles of the Constitution as they relate to American practices and institutions; the development and expansion of the Bill of Rights;

protections afforded by the Bill of Rights; and challenges of the citizen in American democracy (Morrison). Through the study of these areas of American government, students create thoroughly researched answers to civic questions and present their answers in regional, state, and/or national competitions. The students present their findings in a prepared speech to a panel of WTP judges in a mock congressional hearing and must defend their speech during a rebuttal period where the judges ask the students questions about their topic. Overall, the competition harvests public speaking skills and civic knowledge about historical and modern political topics.

Research suggests that students who complete the WTP program become better citizens than their non-WTP peers. In November 2004, the Center for Civic Education (CCE) conducted a survey of WTP alumni. Of 522 respondents, most in the millennial age group and a few aged 30 to 34, 92 percent reported voting in the 2000 presidential election compared to 78 percent of college freshmen surveyed by the National Election Studies (NES) (Soule 2). The study also found that 53 percent of alumni read the newspaper frequently, and 64 percent “paid a great deal of attention to stories on politics and public issues” (Soule 2). Further, 83 percent of WTP alumni responded that it was essential or very important stay updated on political affairs, while the NES found that only 34 percent of college freshmen responded similarly (Soule 2). Finally, 16 percent of WTP alumni had made a financial contribution to a campaign, while less than 4 percent of NES respondents had contributed (Soule 3). “In summary, We the People alumni surveyed are better informed and more politically engaged than their peers” (Soule 3).

The most important reason for selecting these students as the first experimental group comes in a compelling question in the CCE’s survey about altruistic behavior. As described above, altruistic behavior correlates very closely to empathy. The CCE asked respondents about the importance of helping others, especially those experiencing difficulty in life. 86 percent of

respondents said it was essential or important to help others versus 62 percent of NES survey respondents (Soule 4). Further, many alumni surveyed went on to have careers in public service, such as law enforcement, volunteer organizations, and even the Peace Corps (Soule 4).

David Hall, a WTP instructor at North Penn High School in Landsdale, Pennsylvania, surveyed his 98 students in 2002 and found evidence to suggest the correlation between civic engagement and WTP. Prior to the WTP class, 31 percent of his students felt they could *not* change public policy, 19 percent believed they could, and 49 percent were undecided. Afterward, only 10 percent felt they could not have an impact, and an overwhelming 66 percent believed that they could have an effect on government policy (Eisner 116). “[The instructor] is convinced that his students eventually vote in higher numbers than their peers” (Eisner 117). “The picture that emerges is that the values of alumni of the We the People program are more conducive to participatory citizenship in a democratic society” (Soule 9).

Part 3.3: Group 0 – the Control Group

To provide a wider comparison of the correlation between empathy and civic engagement, a control group was created of a simple random sample of students in an introductory (freshman-level) course at LSU. Political Science 1001 is a consistently popular class at the University, helping a student in any academic discipline to fulfill his or her general education requirements. The course is not required of a political science major, and applies to the University general education requirements, thereby providing the assumption that students in the class would not necessarily already have a high-level of interest in civics. The students who were presented with the opportunity to participate in this research did not have to meet a requirement of participating in any particular program; therefore, these students comprised the control group

for this study.

Part 3.4: The Survey

To test the correlation between a person's level of empathy and civic engagement, this researcher created a survey to identify each respondent's level of civic engagement. Civic engagement, for the purpose of this study was defined by several categories of activity. Respondents were asked nine different questions regarding their civic engagement and a corresponding value, similar to a Likert scale, was given. The nine questions directly relate to Niemi's idea of citizenship which suggested that a "good" citizens paid attention to politics, participated politically, tolerance of diversity and other cultures, and had some volunteer service as well (Niemi 1).

The Likert scale used consisted of 5 possible points for each question for the most civically committed response. In the first question, students were required to directly reflect on their involvement in civic-volunteer organizations in their school. 5 points were given to respondents who said they were really involved; 3 to students who were members, but not as active; 2 to students who had been involved in organizations like it in the past, but were not currently involved in any; and 1 point for a negative response. The second question pointed to Niemi's idea that students who are more understanding and tolerant of other cultures should be more civically engaged. It asked if students had extensive contact with a culture outside their own, i.e. a student exchange program, internship in another city, and mission work. 5 points were given to students who said yes, but also 3 points to students who said no. Because it can be assumed that students from affluent backgrounds are more financially able to participate in internships outside of their home city, 3 points were given to students who said no instead of

only 1 point, so as to reduce the penalty for a negative answer. This scale places the emphasis on civic engagement on activities that are easily accessible to anyone in school regardless of a person's socioeconomic status, such as participation in civic organizations, and as will be seen next, volunteerism, and voter registration.

Next, students were asked to divulge if they were involved in political organizations in their school. Again, 5 points were given to respondents who said they were really involved; 3 to students who were members, but not as active; 2 to students who had been involved in organizations like it in the past, but were not currently involved in any; and 1 point for a negative response. The next question required students to respond about their voter registration. Because voting has been given a great deal of emphasis as a factor of civic engagement, 5 points were given to students who said that they were registered to vote and students who were of voting age and were not registered received only 1 point. Students who were not eligible to register were not given or deducted any points, because they were exempted from this question.

The next few questions dealt with media consumption. Actively reading a newspaper, listening to a news program on the radio, watching a local or broadcast news television show, or following Internet sources of news are all examples of how consumers of media get their news. While it is true that young adults "have not picked up the same media habits that their parents and grandparents did" (Wattenberg 3), research suggests that millennials may use less mainstream areas of media to consume their news. With the advent of the Internet and non-mainstream media outlets such as blogs, there are numerous mediums competing for the same eyes and ears. This research asked respondents to answer a series of question testing their attention to political news. The first question is an active form of news consumption. Students were asked if they had signed up to receive political mail from politicians, political parties or

interest groups. Because this question is not as indicative of a person's attention to news, and so as not to penalize a non-voting age student twice, respondents who wrote that they were on a political mailing list were given 5 points versus 3 for a negative answer.

Next, the survey asked if students watched political news media outlets such as CNN, C-SPAN, Fox, MSNBC, BBC, or political programs such as Meet the Press or The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. Students who wrote that they watched these programs every day were given 5 points; several times a week, 4 points; several times a month, 3 points; only during a major, national election, 2 points; and rarely or never, 1 point. Subsequently, students who said they were interested in politics year-round were given 5 points and only during a major, national election, 3 points. Students were also asked if they had ever made a financial contribution to any political or interest group. Again, to not penalize less affluent students, students who said yes were given 5 points, and a no response equaled 3 points.

Finally, students were asked about their volunteer work. Students who answered that they spent several days per week volunteering were given 5 points; once a week, 4 points; several times per month, 3 points; once per month, 2 points; and rarely or never 1 point. Each respondent's level of civic engagement was calculated and divided by the total possible points (29) to indicate their civic engagement score.

This civic engagement score was compared to each respondent's empathy score. To calculate the empathy level of each participant in the three distinct millennial groups, Dr. Albert Mehrabian's Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale (BEES) was used. Mehrabian defined empathy as "one's vicarious experience of another's emotional experiences; feeling what the other person feels" (Mehrabian 1), and his scale was selected for its validity and reliability (Caruso and Mayer 5). Mehrabian's 30-item BEES test contains 15 positively-worded and 15 negatively-worded

items rated on a -4 to +4 scale (Caruso and Mayer 5). The complete thirty items given can be seen in Appendix A, but examples include questions such as, “I hardly ever cry when watching a very sad movie,” “It pains me to see young people in wheelchairs,” and “I easily get carried away by the lyrics of love songs” (Mehrabian, Appendix 3).

Respondents were required to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the 30 items, and an empathy score was calculated based on their responses. 4 points were given for very strong agreement, 3 for strong agreement, 2 for moderate agreement, 1 for slight agreement, 0 points for neither agreement nor disagreement, -1 points for slight disagreement, -2 for moderate disagreement, -3 for strong disagreement, and finally, -4 for very strong disagreement. The positively worded items were designed so that the most empathetic individual would have very strong agreement and the least empathetic would have very strong disagreement. Conversely, the negatively worded items were designed to make the most empathetic individuals have very strong disagreement and the least empathetic individuals, very strong agreement. Each respondent’s total score for the 15 positively worded items was calculated. The total score from the 15 negatively worded items was then subtracted from this number to create an individual’s raw score. For example, a positive score of 45 minus a negative score of 45 would yield a raw score of 90, a very high level of empathy.

The answers of the participants in each group created a random sample of the total population of that group. The unit of analysis was the participant. Each of the two variable groups were chosen for analysis because the populations are comprised of members of the millennial generation and each is expected to have a higher level of civic engagement than the “average” millennial.

As suggested by the use of questions concerning participation in community service, community service is positively related to civic development (Niemi 33). This correlation could be because those who participate more in community service are also the millennials who pay attention to the news (Niemi 33). “Student civic development appears to be highest among students with the most highly educated parents, and lowest among students with the least educated parents” (Niemi 37). “Students in public schools are less knowledgeable about politics, report lower participatory skills, feel less politically efficacious, and are less tolerant. Students in public schools are similar to private school students only in the extent to which they follow national news” Niemi 39).

Part 3.5: Results

To analyze the level of empathy and civic engagement of each group, several statistical analyses were conducted. First, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to see if there was a difference in the mean empathy levels of each group. Of 156 observations, a probability value (p-value) of 0.8293 was found. Because this probability value was much higher than the level of significance of 0.05, this p-value, the conclusion is that using a 95 percent confidence interval, there is no difference among the mean empathy levels of the control group, WTP participants or FBI Interns.

Table 3.5a shows the comparison of the mean empathy levels of each group surveyed. Tested at a 95% Confidence Interval.

Group	N	Mean Empathy Level	Standard Deviation
0	65	-0.148	1.101
1	43	-0.230	1.354
2	48	-0.296	1.420

0= Control group; 1 = FBI Interns; 2 = WTP participants; N = number of observations

To determine whether there was a difference in civic engagement levels among the three groups, a second ANOVA was conducted. This time, the p-value was 0.0001, significantly lower than the level of significance of 0.05. Using Tukey's Studentized Range Test in the ANOVA, it was found that groups 0 and 2 (Control Group and WTP Group) were statistically the same, but group 1, the FBI Interns, has a statistically higher level of civic engagement than the other two experimental groups.

Table 3.5b shows the comparison of the difference between the mean civic engagement levels of each group surveyed. Tested at a 95% Confidence Interval.

Group	N	Mean Civic Engagement Level	Standard Deviation
0	65	3.049	0.592
1	43	3.584***	0.587
2	48	3.278	0.578

0= Control group; 1 = FBI Interns; 2 = WTP participants; N = number of observations; Comparisons significant at the 0.05 level are indicated by ***.

Finally, a Linear Regression was conducted to determine if there is a significant correlation between an individual's level of empathy and their level of civic engagement. Here, empathy is used as the predictor variable, in that an individual's level of empathy determines their level of civic engagement (the response variable). The Linear Regression model gives the strength and direction of the linear relationship, in other words, it analyzes how much the predictor variable affects the response variable. In all three groups, there is a slight positive linear relationship. To determine this relationship as positive and linear, a line of best fit was digitally drawn using Statistical Analysis software. The line of best fit showed a positive slope between the empathy level and civic engagement of each respondent for all three groups. However, because the correlation coefficient (denoted in Table 3.5c as R-Square) was not statistically significant, it is impossible to conclude that statistically, there is a positive correlation between a respondent's empathy level and their level of civic engagement.

Table 3.5c shows the Linear Regression of empathy and civic engagement levels of each group of respondents.

Group	N	R-Square
0	65	0.0039
1	43	0.0066
2	48	0.0017

0= Control group; 1 = FBI Interns; 2 = WTP participants; N = number of observations; R-Square = Correlation coefficient; because all three are positive, there is a slightly positive correlation between civic engagement levels and empathy, although not statistically significant.

There were three null hypotheses for this experiment and three alternative hypotheses for this experiment. The first null hypothesis was that the empathy levels of the three experimental

groups would be statistically the same. The alternative hypothesis to this was that the empathy level of the We The People participants would be the highest, FBI Interns, the second highest, and the Control group would show an average level of empathy. Because the empathy levels were statistically the same, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

The second null hypothesis was that the civic engagement levels of the three experimental groups would be statistically the same. The alternative hypothesis to this was that the civic engagement level of the We The People participants would be the highest, FBI Interns, the second highest, and the Control group would show an average level of civic engagement. Because the civic engagement level of the FBI Interns was statistically higher than the other two groups, the null hypothesis here can be rejected.

Finally, the overall null hypothesis was that there would be no correlation between a person's level of empathy and their level of civic engagement. The overall alternative hypothesis was that there would be a statistically significant correlation between a person's civic engagement level and their level of empathy, using their level of empathy as the predictor variable and civic engagement as the response variable. The Linear Regression model showed a slightly positive correlation between these two variables, although it was not statistically significant enough to reject the overall null hypothesis.

Part 3.6: Sampling and Non-Sampling Errors

Some problems with this research assignment are the lack of respondents to each survey. Approximately 180 FBI Interns were invited to take the survey, but only 43 responded during the month-long time frame to take the survey. Approximately 150 WTP alumni were asked to take the survey and 48 responded. The control group had the highest number of responses with 65,

but this was still only half of the respondents invited to take the survey. The lack of a larger sample size could be significant in causing sampling errors. There is a potential for bias in the responses due to the high nonresponse rate in this survey. A larger sample size, due to an increase in responses, would provide a much more definitive sample of each experimental group. Further, because the survey was conducted via the Internet, respondents who did not have easy access to the Internet would have been excluded from the sample.

Conclusion

This research paper began with a quest to discover a modern definition of citizenship and to find links between those citizens who more aptly fit this model of citizenship and their motivation. As described above, the modern citizen must grapple with the thin line between civic responsibility and civic rights. During the historic election this November, Lee Hamilton, director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University and 34-year U.S. Congressional Representative, published a piece entitled “The Ten Commandments of Citizenship.” Hamilton wrote that voting is “the most basic step democracy asks of us” (Hamilton 1). Hamilton suggests that there is an argument to be made that one vote may not matter in the whole of the election results, but the action of voting is significant in a democracy. The action, for Hamilton, translates into an action of citizenship that goes beyond the mere election. Instead, voting becomes an affirmation of support for representative democracy (Hamilton 1). Hamilton also suggests that being informed is a commandment for citizens. Knowledge, for Hamilton, is civic power, and enables a more efficient government for the mere fact that it was elected by well-informed citizens (Hamilton 1). Hamilton further writes that participating in groups with like-minded citizens “strengthen[s] the dialogue of democracy” (Hamilton 1). Perhaps the most striking

commandment in the mold of the modern definition of citizenship is to become involved in one's own community. "Involvement is the best antidote . . . to cynicism," he writes, and this is the most appropriate "commandment" that this research project has focused on. A good citizen is the one who looks beyond traditional acts of citizenship, such as voting, and becomes involved in his or her society. The FBI Interns seem to fit this model of citizenship, as they had the highest levels of civic engagement.

Empathy implies understanding the other. As one scholar writes, it does not strictly mean that one is sympathetic to another, tolerates another person's actions, is fond of that person, or even agrees with that person (White 292). For example, as radical as it may appear, it is possible for an American citizen to have empathized with someone that they equally hate. One of the most wanted men of the late 20th and early 21st century in the United States was Saddam Hussein. A 1991 article in *Political Psychology*, suggested the idea that, as radical and even unpatriotic as it may appear, an American can detest Hussein for his actions but still have the capacity to understand why he acted the way he did (White 292). The idea of empathy is such a strong notion unconsciously present in our everyday lives that it contributes to our social behavior.

The idea that there is a correlation between empathy and civic engagement is a good one. As all three groups showed, on average, the higher a person's level of empathy, the higher their level of civic engagement. Perhaps with a larger, more representative sample of respondents, a statistically significant correlation between the two levels can be found. This research suggests that empathy can be a predictor variable for a person's level of civic engagement, but there are possibly other factors that are indicative of a person's desire to participate civically and to vote in political elections. These variables, what can be termed lurking variables that were not tested in

this research project, can also positively correlate with a person's civic engagement level. Some variables may be demographic, as suggested earlier by Niemi's model, as in a person's race, gender, and age; or they can be variables that have been nurtured into an individual as in their childhood environment, and even type of school attended or religious background. If democracy is to thrive, it is important to discover what makes all citizens want to participate in their communities, so as to create a model for civic education that can help increase voter and civic turnout. As detailed above, there are many reasons that empathy can be seen as a positive predictor of prosocial behavior, and perhaps once a more detailed method for testing civic engagement can be determined, it will become more clear whether empathy truly affects a person's engagement level.

Appendix A: FULL-LENGTH (30-ITEM) BEES

Positively-worded questions denoted by (+); Negatively-worded questions denoted by (-)

- (+) 1. I very much enjoy and feel uplifted by happy endings.
- (-) 2. I cannot feel much sorrow for those who are responsible for their own misery.
- (+) 3. I am moved deeply when I observe strangers who are struggling to survive.
- (-) 4. I hardly every cry when watching a very sad movie.
- (+) 5. I can almost feel the pain of elderly people who are weak and must struggle to move about.
- (-) 6. I cannot relate to the crying and sniffing at weddings.
- (+) 7. It would be extremely painful for me to have to convey very bad news to another.
- (-) 8. I cannot easily empathize with the hopes and aspirations of strangers.
- (-) 9. I don't get caught up easily in the emotions generated by a crowd.
- (+) 10. Unhappy movie endings haunt me for hours afterward.
- (+) 11. It pains me to see young people in wheelchairs.
- (+) 12. It is very exciting for me to watch children open presents.
- (-) 13. Helpless old people don't have much of an emotional effect on me.
- (+) 14. The sadness of a close one easily rubs off on me.
- (-) 15. I don't get overly involved with friend's problems.
- (-) 16. It is difficult for me to experience strongly the feelings of characters in a book or movie.
- (+) 17. It upsets me to see someone being mistreated.
- (+) 18. I easily get carried away by the lyrics of love songs.
- (-) 19. I am not affected easily by the strong emotions of people around me.
- (-) 20. I have difficulty knowing what babies and children feel.
- (+) 21. It really hurts me to watch someone who is suffering from a terminal illness.

- (-) 22. A crying child does not necessarily get my attention.
- (+) 23. Another's happiness can be very uplifting for me.
- (-) 24. I have difficulty feeling and reacting to the emotional expressions of foreigners.
- (+) 25. I get a strong urge to help when I see someone in distress.
- (-) 26. I am rarely moved to tears while reading a book or watching a movie.
- (-) 27. I have little sympathy for people who cause their own serious illnesses (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, lung cancer).
- (+) 28. I would not watch an execution.
- (+) 29. I easily get excited when those around me are lively and happy.
- (-) 30. The unhappiness or distress of a stranger are not especially moving for me.

Appendix B

Results from civic engagement test by group.

1. Are you involved in any civic/volunteer organizations at school?

	Yes, really involved.	Yes, a member but not very active.	Not currently, but in the past.	No.
Control	16.9%	20.0%	26.2%	36.9%
We The People	38.0%	16.0%	28.0%	18.0%
FBI Interns	40.9%	15.9%	34.1%	9.1%

2. Have you ever had extensive contact with a culture outside your own (i.e. national student exchange, study abroad, internship in another city, mission work)?

	Yes.	No.
Control	26.2%	73.8%
We The People	38.0%	62.0%
FBI Interns	79.1%	20.9%

3. Are you involved in any political organizations at school?

	Yes, really involved.	Yes, a member but not very active.	Not currently, but in the past.	No.
Control	3.1%	9.2%	23.1%	64.6%
We The People	22.0%	10.0%	20.0%	48.0%
FBI Interns	6.8%	4.5%	20.5%	68.2%

4. If you are eligible to vote, are you registered?

	Yes.	No.	I am not eligible to vote.
Control	76.9%	21.5%	1.5%
We The People	60.0%	22.0%	18.0%
FBI Interns	95.5%	4.5%	0.0%

5. Are you on any political mailing lists (signed up for e-mail lists for politicians, parties, interest groups)?

	Yes.	No.
Control	29.2%	70.8%

We The People	26.0%	74.0%
FBI Interns	40.9%	59.1%

6. If you watch any political news outlets (CNN, C-SPAN, Fox, MSNBC, BBC, or political programs such as Meet the Press or The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer), how often do you watch them?

	Every day	Several times/week	Several times/month	Only during major, national elections.	Very rarely	Never
Control	16.9%	30.8%	20.0%	6.2%	18.5%	7.7%
We The People	14.0%	30.0%	26.0%	16.0%	14.0%	0.0%
FBI Interns	38.6%	20.5%	15.9%	2.3%	15.9%	6.8%

7. Are you interested in politics year-round or only during major, national elections?

	Year-round	During a major, national election only.
Control	52.3%	47.7%
We The People	58.0%	42.0%
FBI Interns	61.4%	38.6%

8. How many days per week do you spend on volunteer work?

	Several days per week	Once/week	Several days per month	Once/month	Almost none.	None.
Control	0.0%	9.2%	12.3%	20.0%	30.8%	27.7%
We The People	10.0%	8.0%	20.0%	30.0%	14.0%	18.0%
FBI Interns	13.6%	20.5%	20.5%	27.3%	13.6%	4.5%

9. Have you ever made a financial contribution to any political or interest group?

	Yes.	No.
Control	27.7%	72.3%
We The People	12.0%	88.0%
FBI Interns	20.5%	79.5%

Appendix C

Prose on empathy

1. Empathy

In an era of scientific discovery

when genetics and test tubes can challenge or even question the existence of a creator, when computers can match the human brain and machines replace the skill and initiative of men, when nurses must be intellectually alert, efficient managers, superb diagnosticians, and capable leaders, when the role or even existence of nursing in the future is questioned, and defining, outlining, and evaluating deserve time,
the need for an intelligent nurse is recognized.

In an era of radical change

when there is dissension and misunderstanding between, the young and old, and concern, care and attention are mocked when there is dichotomy between the establishment and the masses, between administration and staff, when progress and learning are synonymous, and something is good only to the degree of its usefulness, when life is easily taken or given, and man knows not where to turn,
the need for an experienced nurse is recognized.

In an era of universal mistrust

when nations are at war, and pride overshadows human reason, when technologic advances outweigh human need, and time dominates a materialistic world, when violence and bloodshed overbalance individual rights and property, when home life and family structure is dissolving, and altruistic love marked as avarice,
the need for an empathetic nurse is recognized.
Intelligence, experience, empathy – the greatest of these is empathy.

Mary Durm, Niles, Michigan, 1973

2. A Teacher's Level of Empathy

“As flat-topped crew cuts and back-combed topknots bend low and weave on tense and c-curved spines; as sweaty fingers strive to transfer thoughts from anxious minds that struggle to recall facts from texts and lectures; as pencils fly, erasers scrub, and ball points scratch through words, I watch in sympathy, for even I would probably flunk this mid-term test I’m giving.”

- Vivian Buchan, Iowa City, Iowa, 1964

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