



## CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on  
Civic Learning & Engagement

## Civic Engagement Among Minority Youth

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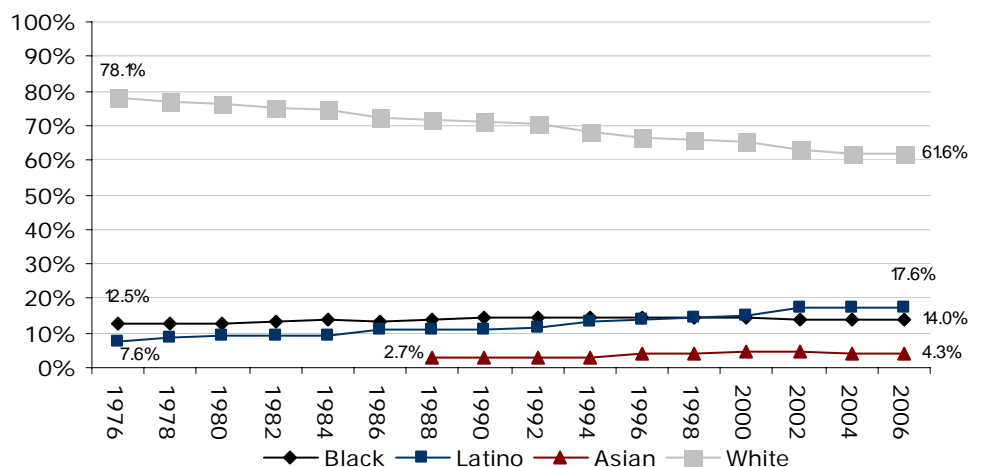
Minority youth are engaged in a wide variety of civic activities. Recent research suggests that there are differences in the nature and degree of civic engagement among young people by race and ethnicity. This research generally finds that African-American youth are among the most engaged politically, and Asian-American youth are among the most engaged in civic activities such as volunteering. In contrast, most work has found that young Latinos often lag behind every other group on traditional measures of engagement, especially in voting and volunteering. However, Latino youth are highly engaged in other ways, such as protesting.<sup>2</sup>

Utilizing data from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, and several other sources, we provide information on the civic engagement of youth, confidence in government and following public affairs and the news, by race and ethnicity.

### *A Growing Diversity Among Young People*

Population estimates from the Current Population Survey (CPS) suggest that today's youth are more diverse as a group than young people were 30 years ago. As shown in Figure 1, since 1976, the proportion of the youth population that is non-white has grown from 22 percent to 38 percent. The growth of diversity

**Figure 1: Race and Ethnicity Among Young Residents Ages 15 to 25**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, March Supplements, 1976-2006

among adults, in contrast, has been slower: only 27.3 percent of adults, ages 26 and older, were non-White in 2006 compared with 22.8 percent in 1972. In raw numbers, in 2006, there were an estimated 6.4 million young non-Hispanic African-Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. This compares to an estimated 27.9 million young non-Hispanic whites, 1.9 million non-Hispanic Asians, and 8 million young Latinos.<sup>3</sup>

**The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey**

In the spring of 2006, CIRCLE conducted the Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (2006 CPHS), interviewing 1,700 young people and 550 adults on their civic engagement, as measured by 19 core engagement activities.<sup>4</sup> A complete list of these activities is shown in Table 1. The 2006 CPHS also includes over-samples of African-American, Latino, and Asian-American youth.<sup>5</sup> Below we present a portrait of civic engagement by race and ethnicity by exploring each area of civic engagement shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 - 19 Core Measures of Civic Engagement from the 2006 CPHS (Activities Performed within the Last 12 Months)**

Civic Activities	Electoral Activities	Political Voice Activities
Engaged in Community Problem Solving Activity	Regular Voter (ages 20 and older)	Contacted public officials
Regular Volunteer for a non-electoral organization	Tried to Persuade others in an election	Contacted the print media
Active member in a group or association	Displayed buttons, signs, stickers	Contacted the broadcast media
Participated in fund-raising run/walk/ride	Made Campaign contributions	Protested
Engaged in Other fund-raising for charity	Volunteered for a candidate or political organization	Signed E-mail petitions
		Signed paper petitions
		Engaged in Boycotting
		Engaged in Buycotting
		Canvassed

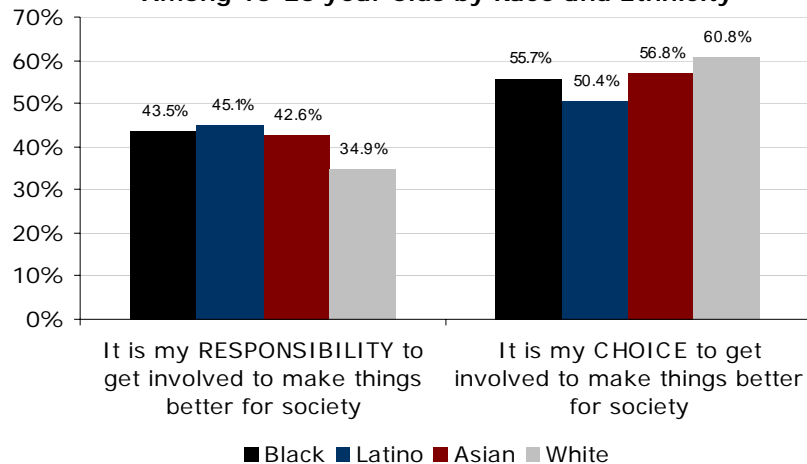
Source: 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Report, October 2006.

**Engagement in Civic Activities**

*Getting Involved*

Many young people are involved in their communities, but they offer different views of why they get involved. As shown in Figure 2, a majority of young people view getting involved as a choice, though there are minor differences by race and ethnicity. Whites are the most likely to report that getting involved in society is their choice, while

**Figure 2: Views on Getting Involved in Society Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**



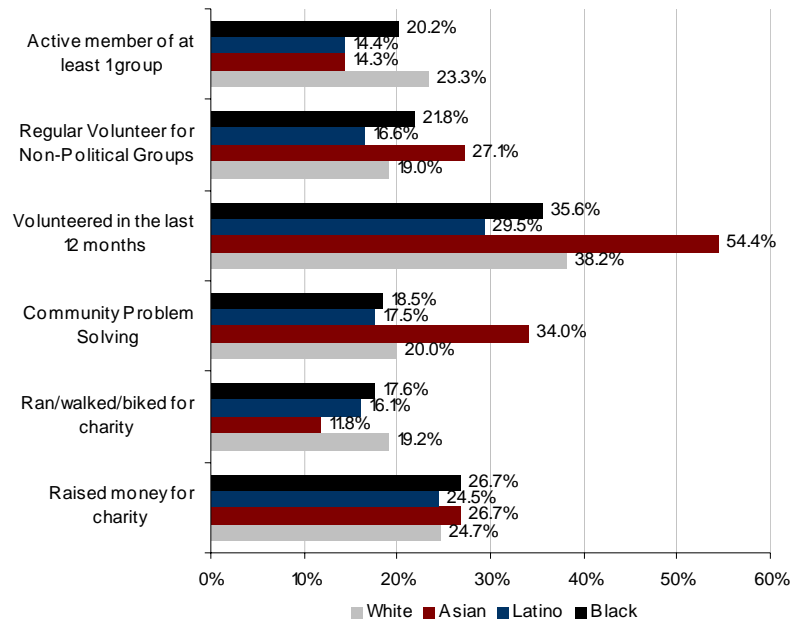
Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

Latinos are most likely to say it is their responsibility.

### *Racial and Ethnic Differences across Participation in Civic Activities*

According to the 2006 CPHS, there were substantial differences between racial and ethnic groups across the six civic activities measured. First, young Asian-Americans—surveyed for the first time across a wide range of civic indicators—were among the most active in a variety of civic activities. For example, over half of young Asian-Americans reported volunteering in 2006.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, about one-third of young Asian-Americans said they had worked “informally with some one or some group to solve a problem in the community” where they live, compared to 20 percent of young whites, 18 percent of young African-Americans and 17 percent of young Latinos (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Civic Activities Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

In addition to giving their time to improve social conditions, a sizeable group (over one-quarter) of young people reported raising money for charities. Participation in this civic activity was roughly the same across the different racial/ethnic groups. Young whites and African-Americans were the most likely to report being active members of at least one group.

### *Volunteering*

The rate of volunteering among young people, according to the 2006 CPHS, was 36 percent. However, as shown in Figure 3, there were substantial differences in volunteering among racial and ethnic groups. First, Asian-American youth reported the greatest volunteering rate (at 54.4 percent), while young Latinos reported the lowest volunteering rate (at 29.5 percent). Second, while a substantial number of young people reported volunteering, fewer reported that volunteering was something they did regularly. Asian-American youth reported the highest regular volunteering rate (at 27.1 percent) while young Latinos reported the lowest regular volunteering rate (at 16.6 percent)

Young volunteers of all race and ethnic categories favored the same types of organizations. Among African-Americans, Latinos, and whites, the three organizations that drew the most volunteers in 2006 were youth, civic, and religious organizations (in descending order). Asian-Americans had a slightly different ranking—civic, youth, and religious organizations. See Table 2.

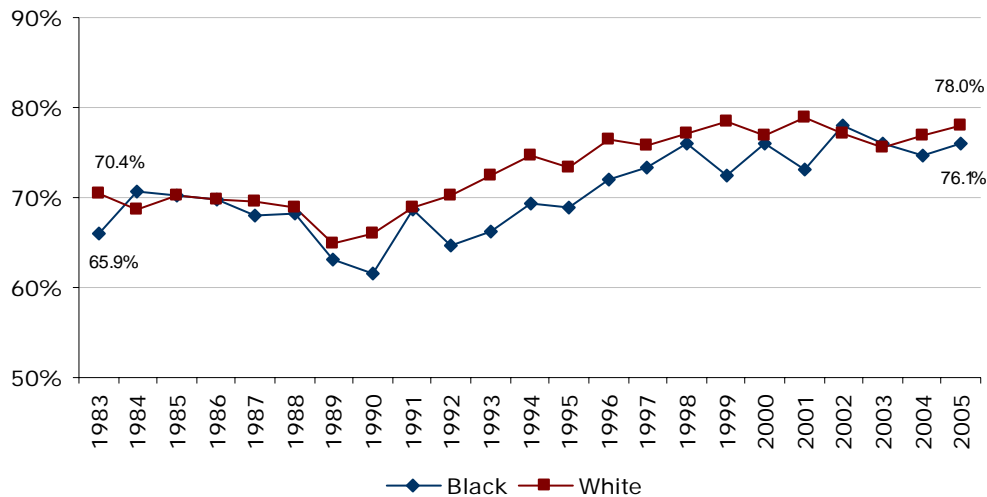
**Table 2 – Top 3 Organizations (by type) Where 15-25 year old Volunteer by Race and Ethnicity**

	African-American	Latino	Asian-American	White
1	Youth (26.3%)	Youth (21.3%)	Civic (39.4%)	Youth (24.2%)
2	Civic (23.1%)	Civic (17.0%)	Youth (36.3%)	Civic (19.5%)
3	Religious (18.1%)	Religious (13.4%)	Religious (22.5%)	Religious (18.9%)

Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE).

While the 2006 CPHS provides a snapshot of volunteering in 2006, it fails to provide a picture on how volunteering rates among young people have changed over time. However, one data source, Monitoring the Future (MTF), while not as rich on civic engagement measures as the 2006 CPHS, provides enough information to identify trends in volunteering. Unfortunately, the MTF only provides adequate samples of white and African-American youth.<sup>7</sup> Overall, since 1976, volunteering among young people has grown. This was true for high school seniors, 10<sup>th</sup> graders and 8<sup>th</sup> graders (the later two since 1991).<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 4: Volunteer Rates Among 12th Grade Students**

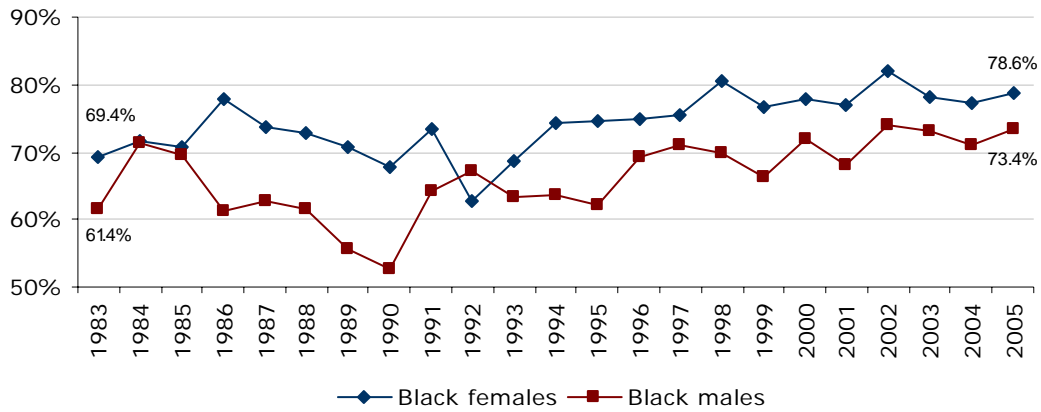


Source: Authors' tabulations from the Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF), 1983-2005

Since 1983, African-American 12<sup>th</sup> graders (high school seniors) have greatly increased their volunteer rates from 1983 to 2005—a 10 percentage point increase. Figure 4 shows the volunteer rates of African-American and white 12<sup>th</sup> graders from the Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF). Furthermore, over this time period, there has been little difference between the volunteer rates of African-American and white high school seniors. By 2005, both groups were volunteering at similar rates.

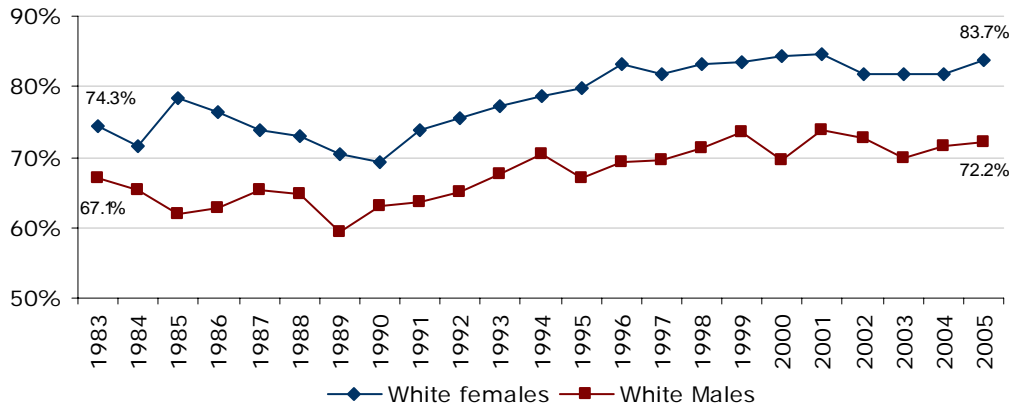
Figures 5 and 6 show the volunteer rates among African-American and white 12<sup>th</sup> graders by gender. Overall, women were more likely to volunteer than men; since 1993, this difference has remained virtually unchanged. Among African-American high school seniors, women were 5.2 percentage points more likely to volunteer than males in 2005. This gap was more pronounced among whites. White women were 11.5 percentage points more likely to volunteer than white men.

≡ Figure 5: Volunteer Rates Among 12th Grade Students



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF), 1983-2005

≡ Figure 6: Volunteer Rates Among 12th Grade Students



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF), 1983-2005

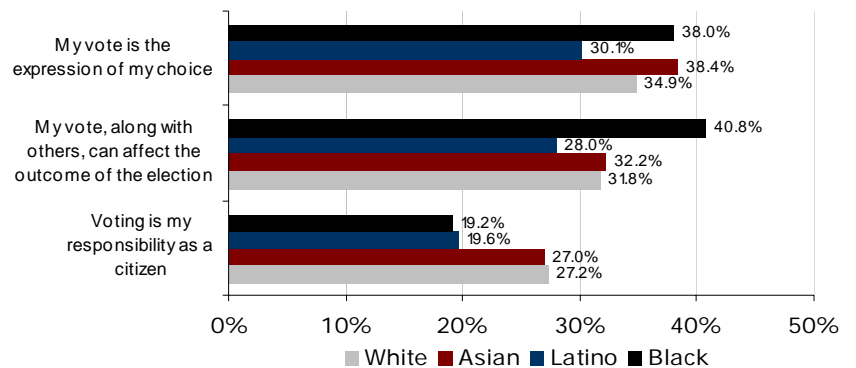
## Engagement in Electoral Activities

Since young people ages 18 to 20 were first given the right to vote, electoral participation among young people has declined steadily, with brief upturns in engagement in 1992, 2004, and 2006. Young people feel they can do little to affect elections and believe that it might even be difficult to figure out how and when to vote. This is especially true of Latinos.<sup>9</sup> Even when they do know how and where to vote, young people today do not “particularly feel guilty” about not voting.<sup>10</sup> However, this notion is not an absolute deterrent to voting; rigorous experimental evidence shows that young people are more likely to vote when they are asked to do so.<sup>11</sup>

### Views of Voting and Politics

As Figure 7 shows, African-Americans are the most likely, by a wide margin, to view their vote as “a vote to affect the outcome of an election.” Moreover, similar percentages of African-Americans and Asian-Americans view voting as an expression of their choice. High African-American voter turnout rates may be due in part to these views—that their vote is a way to make their voices heard in the political process.

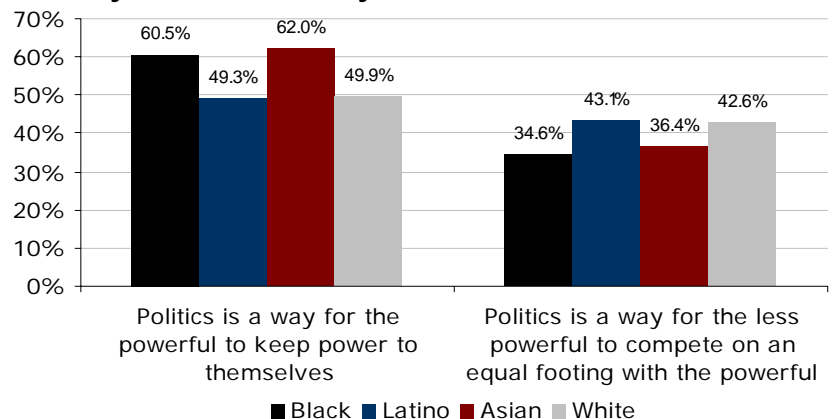
Figure 7: Views on Voting Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

Figure 8 shows views on politics among 15-25 year olds. African- and Asian-Americans are roughly ten points more likely to view politics as a way for the powerful to keep power to themselves than their Latino and whites counterparts.

Figure 8: Views on Politics Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity

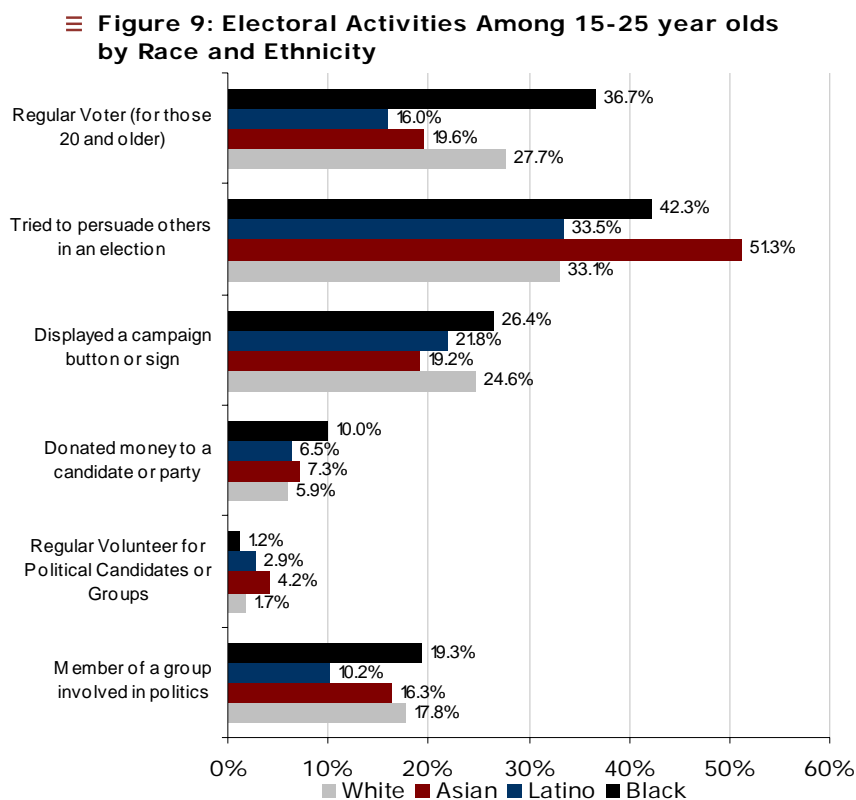


Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

### Participation in Electoral Activities

The 2006 CPHS asked about six different kinds of electoral activities, from regular voting to making campaign contributions (see Figure 9 for a complete list). In four out of six of the electoral activities, young African-Americans were the most involved racial/ethnic group.

While young African-Americans were the most involved racial/ethnic group in the majority of electoral activities measured, young Asian-Americans were the most likely to say they had tried to persuade someone else in an election. In contrast to the high levels of participation among African-Americans, young Latinos reported the lowest levels of engagement on electoral activity measures.

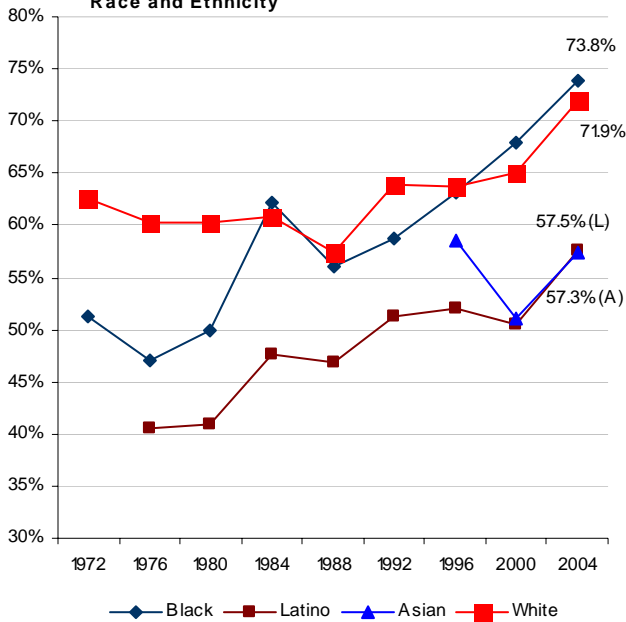


Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

### Trends in Voter Registration

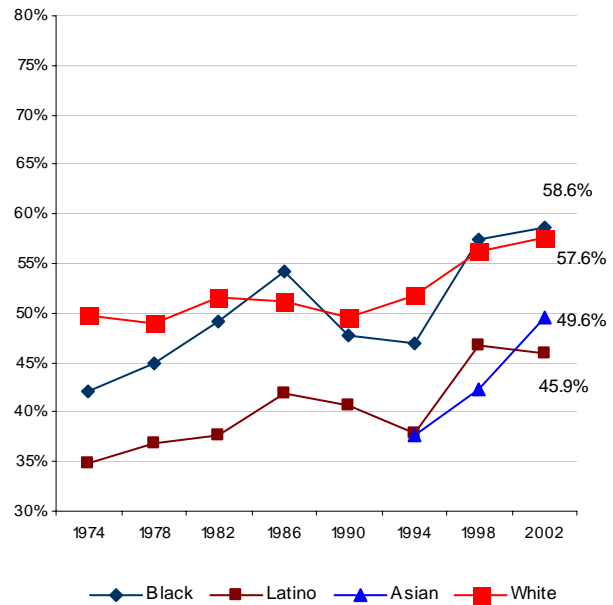
According to the CPS, since the late 1990s, African-American youth have reported the highest voter registration rates, with 74 percent of young African-Americans reporting that they were registered to vote in 2004. For all races/ethnicities, voter registration rates during presidential elections have been on the rise since 1988. Regardless of the election cycle, however, young Latinos and Asian-Americans continue to register to vote at lower rates than African-American and white youth (see Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10: Registration Rates During Presidential Elections Among Young Citizens, Age 18-29, by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, 1972-2004

Figure 11: Registration Rates During Midterm Elections Among Young Citizens, Ages 18-29, by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, 1974-2002

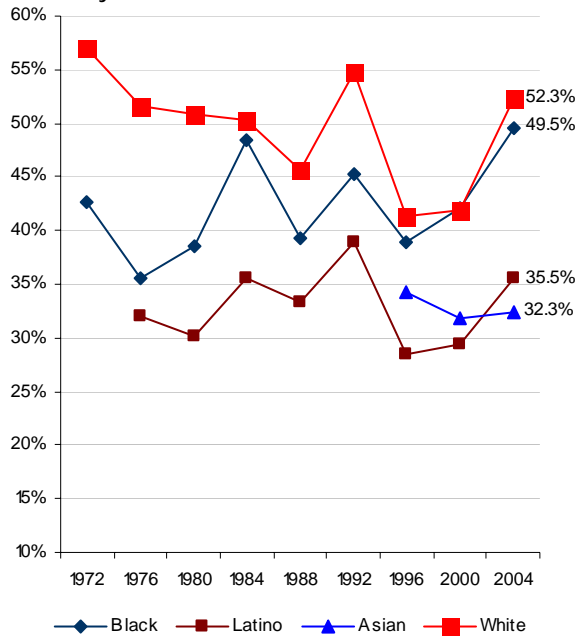
One striking pattern in voter registration rates in recent years is that more young people than ever have been reporting that they are registered to vote. This is true for both recent presidential elections and the 2006 midterm election, reflecting a greater level of interest in elections among youth reported in recent surveys.<sup>12</sup>



## Voter Turnout

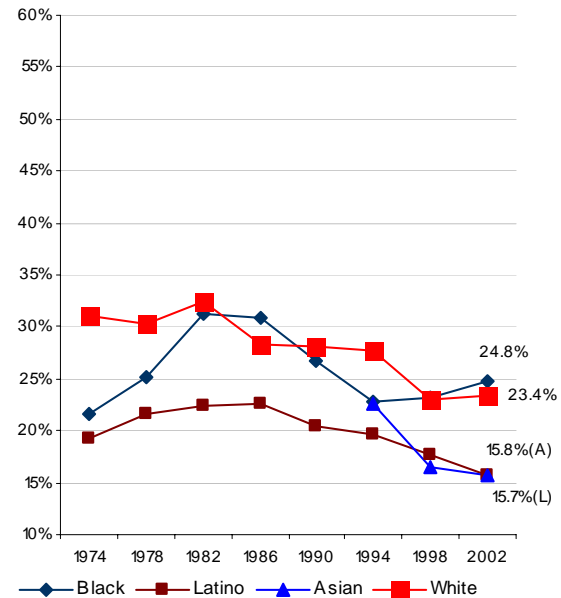
The 2006 CPHS provides an estimate of how many young people from a particular racial/ethnic group identified as regular voters (meaning that they voted in two or more elections) in 2006. Another way to measure voter participation is to use the Census Current Population Survey (CPS) to estimate voter participation over time. The CPS provides voter turnout and voter registration estimates by race/ethnicity as far back as 1972.

Figure 12: Voter Turnout Rates in Presidential Elections by Race and Ethnicity among 18 to 29 year old Citizens



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1972-2004

Figure 13: Voter Turnout Rates in Midterm Elections by Race and Ethnicity among 18 to 29 year old Citizens



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1974-2002

CPS estimates<sup>13</sup> show that young African-Americans and whites (age 18-29) have been the most likely racial/ethnic groups to report voting in both midterm and presidential elections.

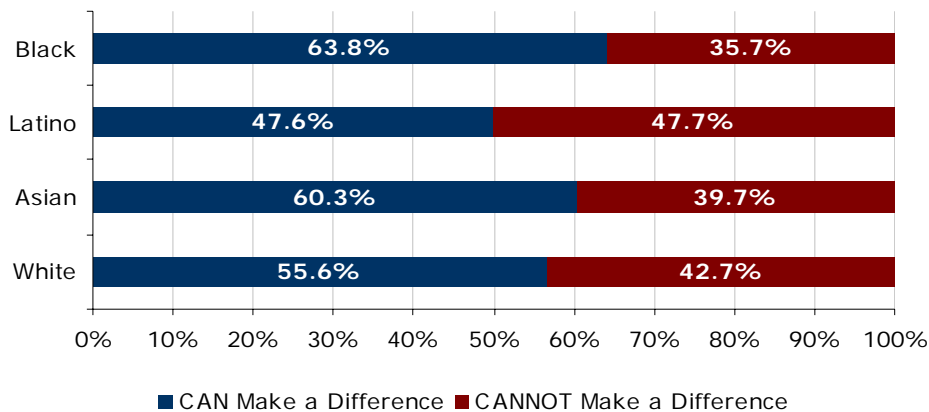
As shown in Figure 13, in general, turnout in midterm elections has been on the decline among most racial/ethnic groups since 1982. However, young African-Americans have avoided this trend, increasing their turnout rates since 1994.<sup>14</sup>

## Engagement in Political Voice Activities

### Making a Difference

Political voice indicators measure the ways people attempt to influence the government and their communities. Participation in these activities often reflects a belief that one can change one's community. Overall, the majority of young people believe they can make a difference, but this belief varies slightly by race and ethnicity. Figure 14<sup>15</sup> shows that Latinos feel the least efficacious (47.7 percent). African-Americans are the most optimistic about solving problems in their community: they are the most likely to believe that they can make a difference (63.8 percent).

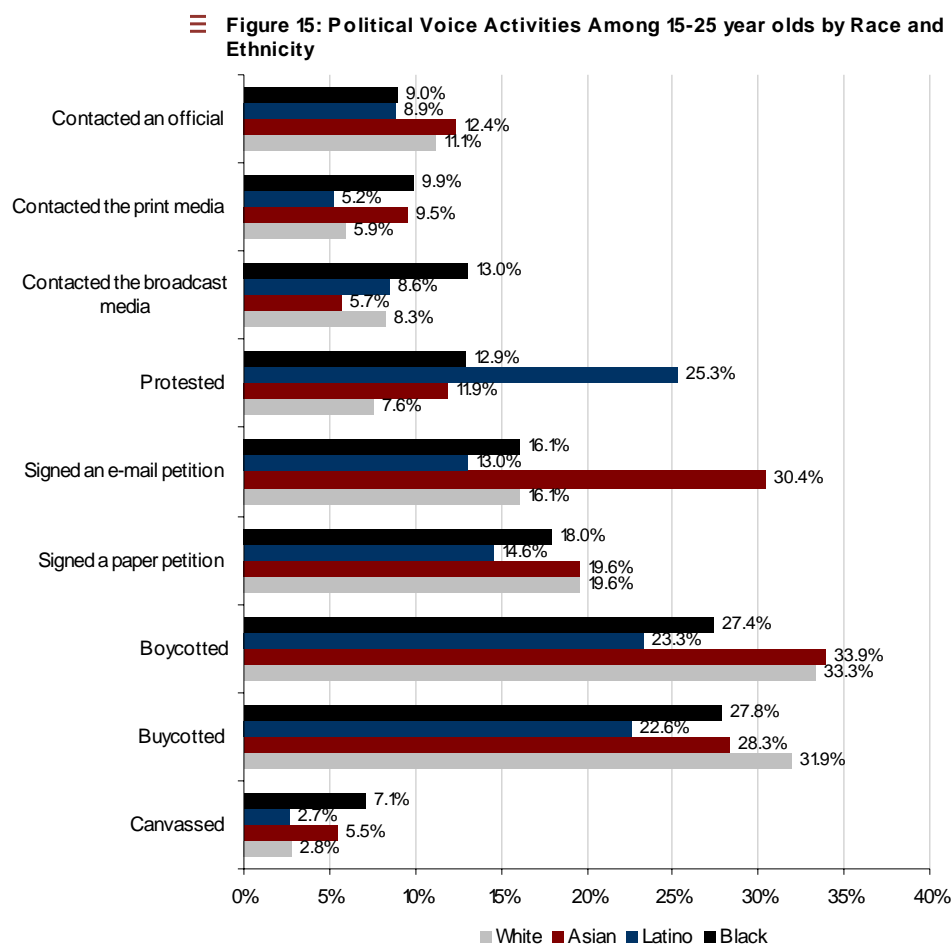
≡ **Figure 14: How Much Difference Do You Believe You Can Personally Make in Working to Solve Problems in Your Community? Responses Among 15-25 year olds, 2006**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

### Participation in Political Voice Activities

According to the 2006 CPHS, young people were engaged in a wide variety of political voice activities. Across all activities, however, there were some differences by race and ethnicity. First, young African-Americans were more likely than any other group to report canvassing and contacting the print media. Second, young Asian-Americans were among the most politically vocal, being the most likely to report signing an email petition, and participating in a boycott. In contrast, young Latinos were often the least politically vocal, except in the area of protest activity. In the early spring of 2006, protests were held nationwide in opposition to punitive legislation regarding immigrants. Among the protestors were many young people. As Figure 15 shows, Latino youth were the most likely to have protested in the last year (25.3 percent), likely reflecting their participation in national rallies since many Latino youth have a link to an immigrant experience—they were either immigrants or the children of immigrants themselves.<sup>16</sup>



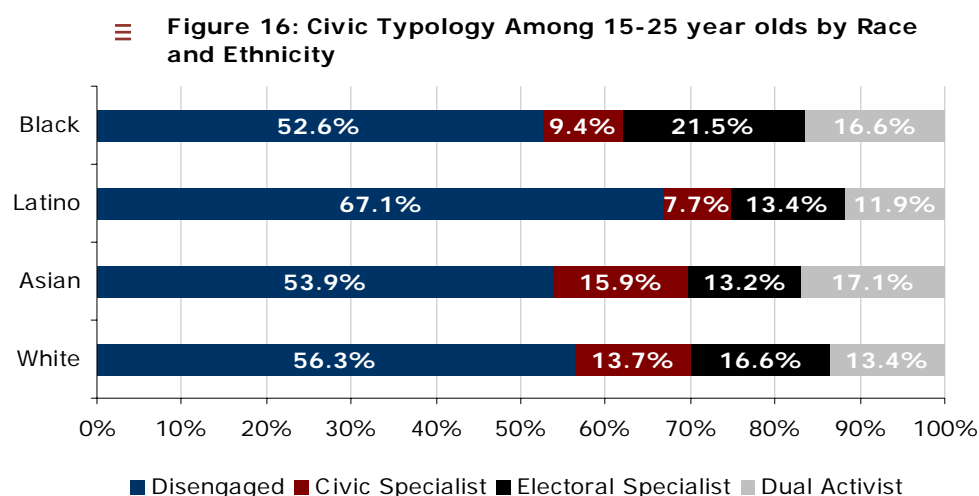
Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

## Civic Typology

The 2006 CPHS provides a detailed look at civic engagement activities. In addition, participation in key civic and electoral activities can be summarized with a civic typology. Following Keeter et al. (2002) and Zukin et al. (2006), CIRACLE classifies people into four broad categories:<sup>17</sup>

- The “*disengaged*” do not perform two or more types of engagement in either the civic or the political category.
- “*Civic specialists*” are those who have participated in at least two forms of civic engagement within the last year.
- “*Electoral specialists*” are those who can cite at least two forms of electoral engagement that they have conducted with the past year.
- “*Dual activists*” qualify as both electoral specialists and civic specialists.

As Figure 16 shows, the majority of youth were “disengaged” in 2006, regardless of race or ethnicity. Asian-Americans were most likely to be “dual activists” (17.1 percent) and “civic specialists” (15.9 percent); African-Americans were most likely to be “electoral specialists” (21.5 percent); and Latinos were most likely to be “disengaged” (67.1 percent).

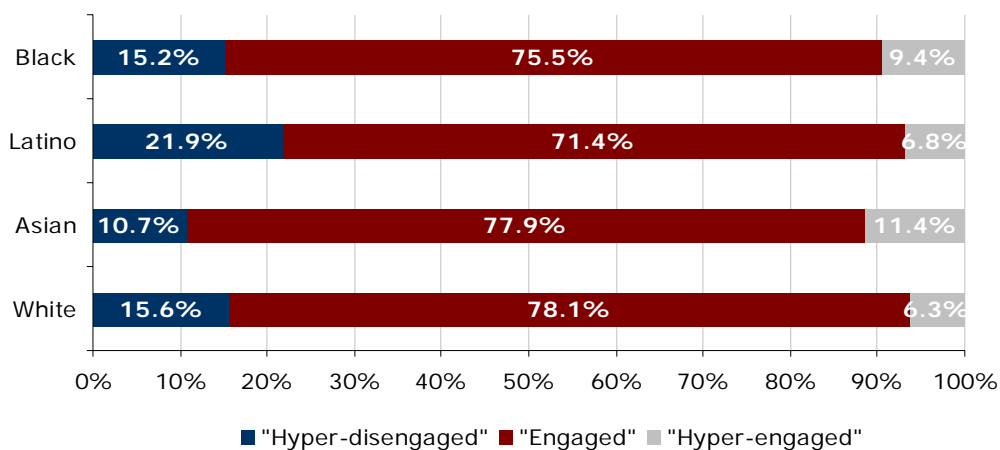


Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRACLE)

In addition to the civic typology, Lopez et. al. (2006) report other summary measures of civic engagement. These are shown in Figure 17 and include the following measures:

- The “hyper-engaged” were individuals who reported engaging in 10 or more of the 19 core activities.
- The “engaged” were individuals who reported engaging in at least one activity, but no more than nine activities.
- The “hyper-disengaged” were individuals who reported engaging in none of the 19 core activities.

≡ **Figure 17: Alternative Summary Measures of Civic Engagement Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

As Figure 17 shows, Asian-Americans were the most likely to be “hyper-engaged” (11.4 percent) and whites the least (6.3 percent). Latinos (21.9 percent) were the most likely and Asian-Americans (10.7 percent) least likely to be “hyper-disengaged.” African-Americans and whites report similar levels of being “hyper-disengaged.”

### ***Confidence in Government***

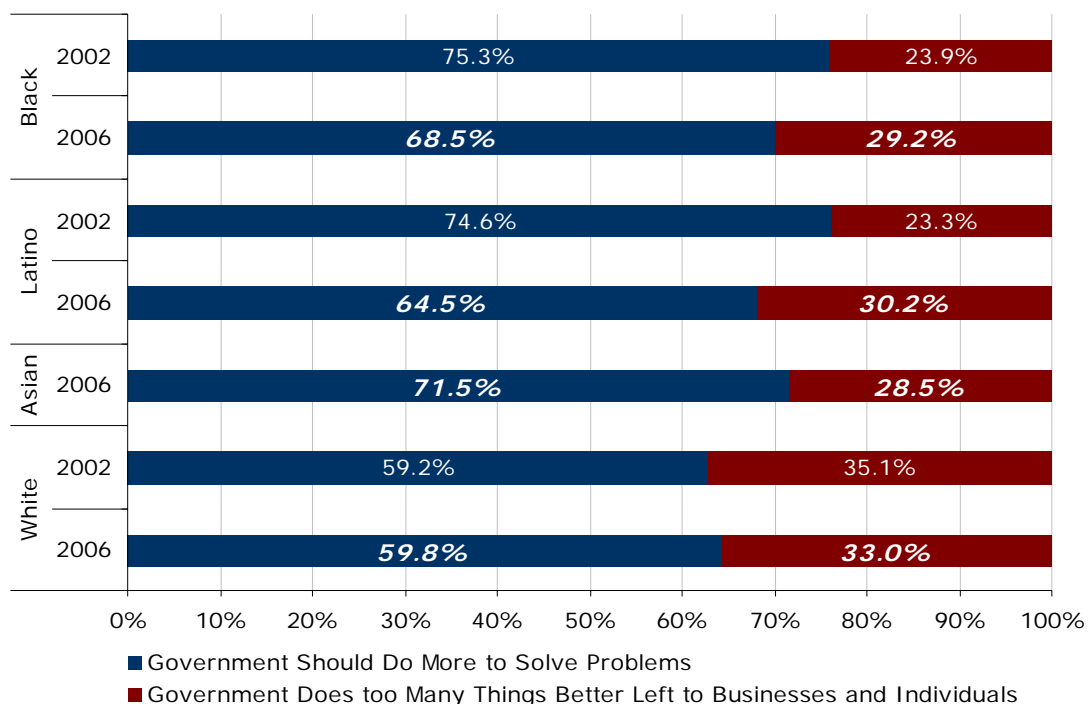
In recent years, young people have generally expressed the greatest level of confidence in the government of any age group. This support for government and its role has eroded in recent years, although young people today still express greater confidence than their adult counterparts.<sup>18</sup>

The 2006 and 2002 CPHSs asked four comparison questions about confidence in government, asking respondents to choose between two possible descriptions of their confidence in government. These comparisons comprised:

- *Government problem-solving*: do **MORE** or do **LESS**
- *Government efficiency*: does a **GOOD** job or **WASTEFUL** and **INEFFICIENT**
- *Government responsiveness*: **IS** responsive or is **NOT** responsive
- *Government regulation of business*: regulation is **NECESSARY** or regulation is **HARMFUL**

These responses are reported in Figures 18-21. Overall, non-whites reported greater levels of confidence in government than whites, though reported confidence in 2006 was down from 2002.

≡ **Figure 18: Confidence in Government Among 15-25 year olds, by Race and Ethnicity**

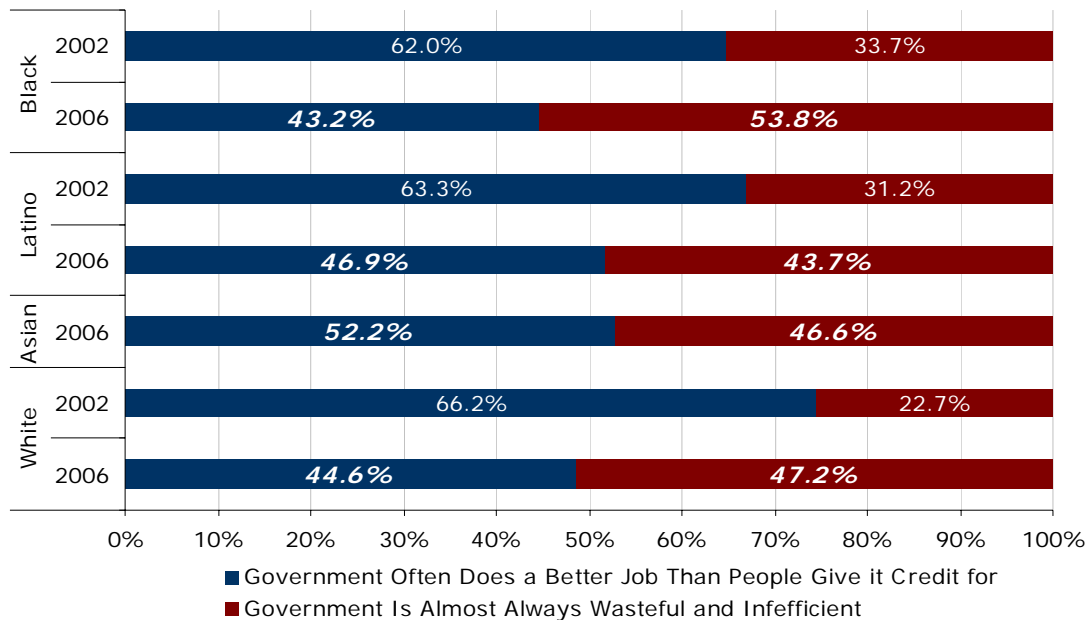


Source: Authors' tabulations from the Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, 2002 and 2006 (CIRCLE)

When asked to choose between two propositions--"government should do more to solve problems" versus "government does too many things better left to business and individuals"--as shown in Figure 18, young Asian-Americans reported the greatest level of support for governmental activism in 2006; 71.5 percent reported that government should do more to solve problems.<sup>19</sup> In 2002, African-Americans were the most likely to want to see the government solve more problems (75.3 percent), but their support for governmental activism flagged in 2006—it dropped 6.8 percentage points between 2002 and 2006 to 68.5 percent. Overall, young whites were the least likely of any group to want government to solve problems in both 2002 and 2006.

When asked to choose between "government often does a better job than people give it credit for" and "government is almost always wasteful and inefficient," in 2006, Asian-Americans expressed the greatest levels of confidence in government (52.2 percent), followed by Latinos (46.9 percent) and whites (44.6 percent). Only 43.2 percent of African Americans expressed the view that "government often does a better job than people give it credit for" in 2006, down from 62 percent in 2002. See Figure 19.

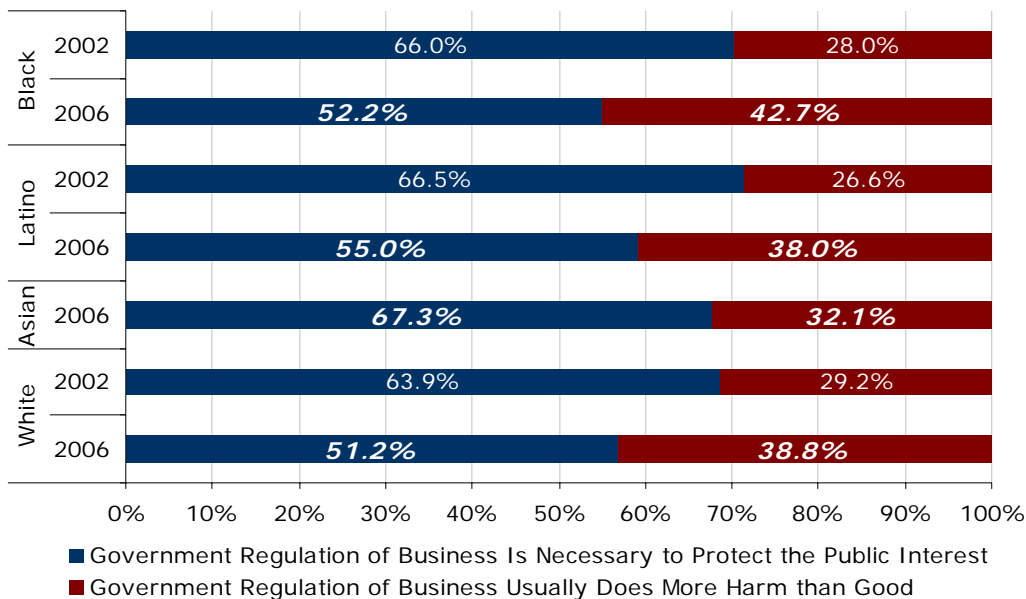
≡ **Figure 19: Confidence in Government Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, 2002 and 2006 (CIRCLE)

While African-Americans want the government to solve problems, they are suspicious about its effectiveness, a change in viewpoint between 2002 and 2006. As Figures 19 and 20 show, in 2006 African-Americans were the most likely to view government as wasteful and inefficient (53.8 percent) and were suspicious about government regulation of business—42.7 percent. In contrast, Latinos were least likely to view government as wasteful and inefficient (43.7 percent); Asian-Americans were the most likely to support government regulation of business (67.3 percent); and whites were the least likely (51.2 percent).

**Figure 20: Confidence in Government Regulation of Business Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, 2002 and 2006 (CIRCLE)

When asked about the responsiveness of government, the majority of young African-Americans viewed the government as not responsive to the genuine needs of the public (51.9 percent), continuing the pattern of low confidence in government reported among young African-Americans. The dissatisfaction with the government's responsiveness grew from 2002 to 2006 among all racial and ethnic groups surveyed in both years. See Figure 21.

**Figure 21 : Views on Responsiveness of Government to the Genuine Needs of the Public Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**

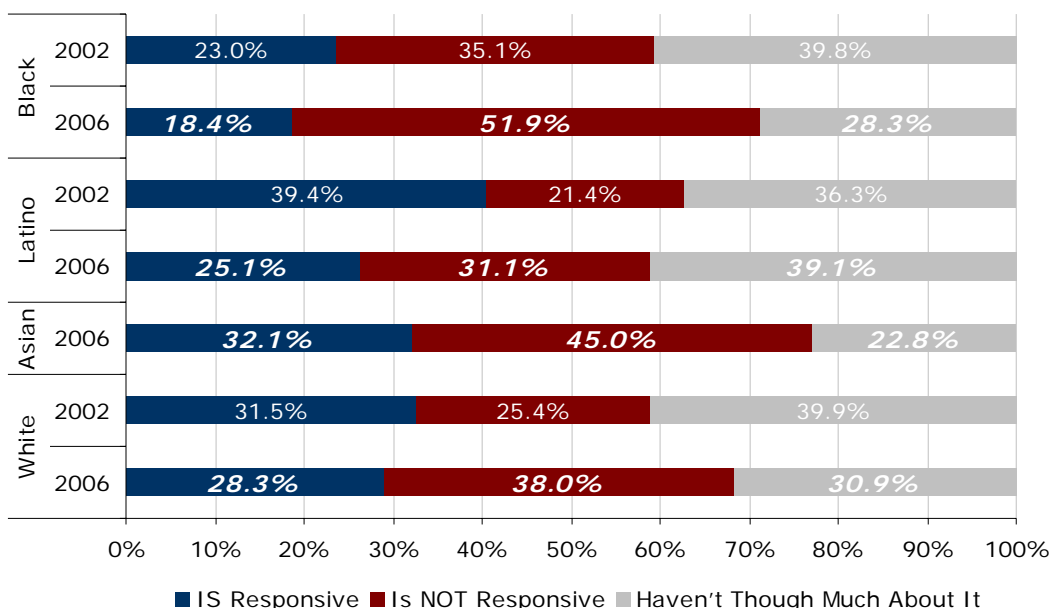


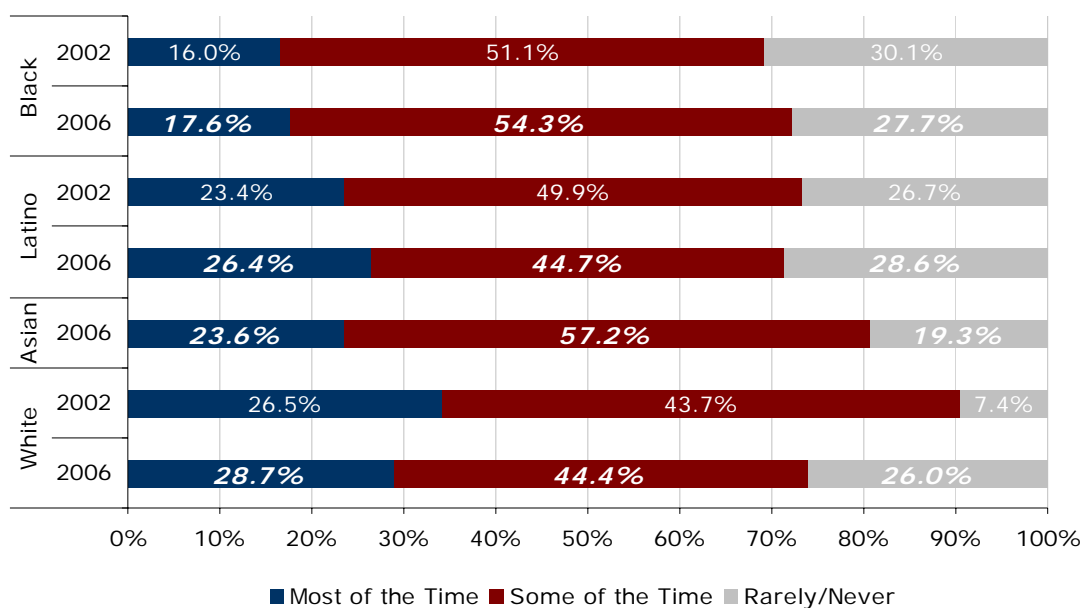
Figure 20 : Views on Responsiveness of Government to the Genuine Needs of the Public Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity



### ***Following Public Affairs and the News***

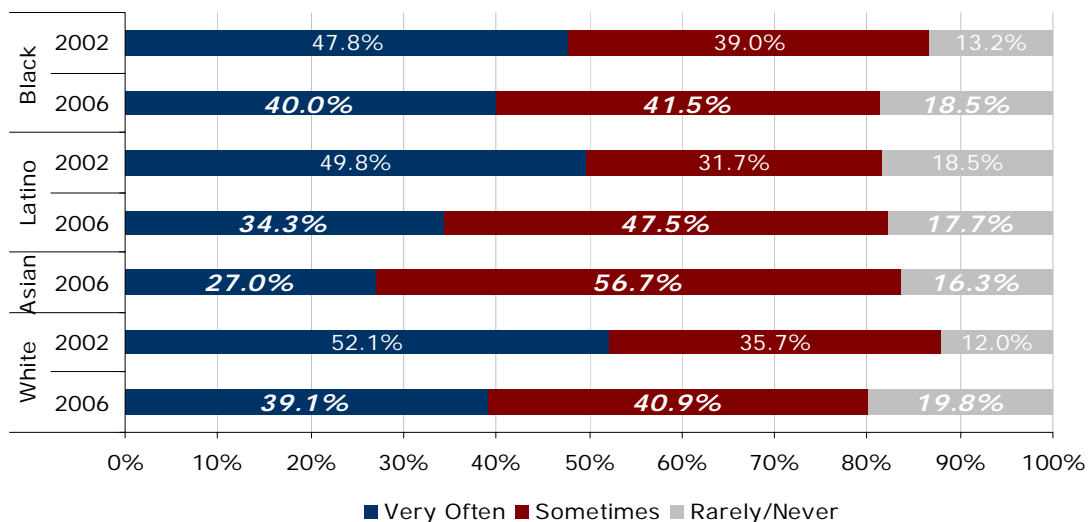
In order to get involved in their communities, young people must gather information. Figures 22 and 23 show how often young people followed public affairs and the news in 2002 and 2006. Young whites were most likely to follow what was going on in government and public affairs “most of the time.” In 2006, Asian-Americans were the most likely to follow what was going on in government and public affairs at least some of the time (80.8 percent) with African-Americans a close second (71.9 percent). See Figure 22.

≡ **Figure 22: Frequency of Following What Is Going On in Government and Public Affairs Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, 2002 and 2006 (CIRCLE)

Figure 23: Frequency of Discussing Current Events and News with Family and Friends Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Authors' tabulations from the Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey, 2002 and 2006 (CIRCLE)

African-Americans and whites were equally likely to discuss current events and news with family and friends very often, 40.0 and 39.1 percent, respectively, in 2006. Asian-Americans were the least likely in 2006 to discuss current events and news (27.0 percent). Since 2002, both African-Americans and whites were less likely to discuss current events and news, but Latinos were more likely to do so from 2002 to 2006.

## Appendix

**Table A – Demographics Among 15-25 year olds by Race and Ethnicity**

	Black	Latino	Asian	White
1976	12.5%	7.6%	***	78.1%
1978	12.6%	8.8%	***	76.7%
1980	12.7%	9.0%	***	76.3%
1982	13.3%	9.2%	***	75.0%
1984	13.7%	9.1%	***	74.5%
1986	13.5%	11.2%	***	72.2%
1988	14.0%	11.1%	2.7%	71.6%
1990	14.3%	10.7%	2.9%	71.3%
1992	14.6%	11.3%	3.1%	70.3%
1994	14.5%	13.3%	3.1%	68.3%
1996	14.7%	13.8%	4.2%	66.3%
1998	14.7%	14.6%	4.1%	65.9%
2000	14.7%	14.7%	4.5%	65.0%
2002	14.0%	17.2%	4.9%	62.8%
2004	13.9%	17.4%	4.3%	62.1%
2006	14.0%	17.6%	4.3%	61.6%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, March Supplements, 1976-2006. \*\*\* Not applicable.

**Table B – Civic Indicators, Civic Typology, and Alternative Summary Measures**

	Black	Latino	Asian	White
<b>Civic Activities</b>				
Raised money for charity (last 12 mos.)	26.7%	24.5%	26.7%	24.7%
Ran/walked/biked for charity (last 12 mos.)	17.6%	16.1%	11.8%	19.2%
Community Problem Solving (last 12 months)	18.5%	17.5%	34.0%	20.0%
Volunteered in the last 12 months (any type)	35.6%	29.5%	54.4%	38.2%
Regular Volunteer for Non-Political Groups	21.8%	16.6%	27.1%	19.0%
Active member of at least 1 group	20.2%	14.4%	14.3%	23.3%
<b>Electoral Activities</b>				
Member of a group involved in politics	19.3%	10.2%	16.3%	17.8%
Regular Volunteer for Political Candidates or Groups	1.2%	2.9%	4.2%	1.7%
Donated money to a candidate or party (last 12 mos.)	10.0%	6.5%	7.3%	5.9%
Displayed a campaign button or sign	26.4%	21.8%	19.2%	24.6%
Tried to persuade others in an election	42.3%	33.5%	51.3%	33.1%
Regular Voter (for those 20 and older)	36.7%	16.0%	19.6%	27.7%

**Table B Continued – Civic Indicators, Civic Typology, and Alternative Summary Measures**

	Black	Latino	Asian	White
<b>Political Voice Activities (Last 12 mos.)</b>				
Canvassed	7.1%	2.7%	5.5%	2.8%
Boycotted	27.8%	22.6%	28.3%	31.9%
Boycotted	27.4%	23.3%	33.9%	33.3%
Signed a paper petition	18.0%	14.6%	19.6%	19.6%
Signed an e-mail petition	16.1%	13.0%	30.4%	16.1%
Protested	12.9%	25.3%	11.9%	7.6%
Contacted the broadcast media	13.0%	8.6%	5.7%	8.3%
Contacted the print media	9.9%	5.2%	9.5%	5.9%
Contacted an official	9.0%	8.9%	12.4%	11.1%
<b>Civic Typology</b>				
Disengaged	52.6%	67.1%	53.9%	56.3%
Electoral Specialist	21.5%	13.4%	13.2%	16.6%
Civic Specialist	9.4%	7.6%	15.9%	13.7%
Dual Activist	16.6%	11.9%	17.1%	13.4%
<b>Alternative Summary Measures</b>				
Average number of civic activities	1.2	1.0	1.4	1.3
No Civic Activities	46.9%	47.7%	36.3%	40.0%
Average number of electoral activities	1.5	1.0	1.3	1.2
No Electoral Activities	27.7%	46.6%	30.1%	34.8%
Average number of voice activities	1.4	1.2	1.6	1.4
No Political Voice Activities	46.1%	45.9%	41.0%	42.7%
Average number of activities	4.1	3.3	4.2	3.8
No Civic Engagement Activities (“hyper-disengaged”)	15.2%	21.9%	10.7%	15.6%
10 or more activities (“hyper-engaged”)	9.4%	6.8%	11.4%	6.3%

Source: Authors’ tabulations from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CIRCLE)

**Table C – Voter Registration Rates in Presidential Elections  
Among 18-29 year old Citizens by Race and Ethnicity**

	Black	Latino	Asian	White	All 18-29 year olds
1972	51.2%	***	***	62.5%	64.1%
1976	47.0%	40.5%	***	60.2%	57.6%
1980	49.8%	40.8%	***	60.2%	57.8%
1984	62.2%	47.7%	***	60.8%	60.0%
1988	56.0%	47.0%	***	57.3%	56.4%
1992	58.7%	51.3%	***	63.9%	62.0%
1996	63.2%	52.1%	58.5%	63.8%	62.4%
2000	67.9%	50.5%	51.1%	65.0%	63.4%
2004	73.8%	57.5%	57.3%	71.9%	69.9%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1972-2004. \*\*\* Not applicable.

**Table D – Voter Registration Rates in Midterm Elections  
Among 18-29 year old Citizens by Race and Ethnicity**

	Black	Latino	Asian	White	All 18-29 year olds
1974	42.2%	34.8%	***	49.7%	48.1%
1978	44.8%	36.8%	***	49.0%	47.9%
1982	49.1%	37.7%	***	51.5%	50.4%
1986	54.2%	41.8%	***	51.3%	50.9%
1990	47.7%	40.8%	***	49.6%	48.6%
1994	47.0%	37.9%	37.7%	51.7%	49.6%
1998	57.3%	46.8%	42.3%	56.2%	55.0%
2002	58.6%	45.9%	49.6%	57.6%	56.2%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1974-2002. \*\*\* Not applicable.

**Table E – Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections  
Among 18-29 year old Citizens by Race and Ethnicity**

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>All 18-29 year olds</b>
1972	42.6%	***	***	57.1%	55.4%
1976	35.5%	32.0%	***	51.7%	48.8%
1980	38.6%	30.2%	***	50.9%	48.2%
1984	48.3%	35.5%	***	50.3%	49.1%
1988	39.4%	33.4%	***	45.6%	43.8%
1992	45.2%	38.9%	***	54.9%	52.0%
1996	39.0%	28.4%	34.3%	41.4%	39.6%
2000	42.0%	29.4%	31.8%	42.0%	40.3%
2004	49.5%	35.5%	32.3%	52.3%	49.0%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1972-2004. \*\*\* Not applicable.

**Table F – Voter Turnout in Midterm Elections  
Among 18-29 year old Citizens by Race and Ethnicity**

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>All 18-29 year olds</b>
1974	21.6%	19.3%	***	31.1%	29.5%
1978	25.2%	21.6%	***	30.3%	29.3%
1982	31.2%	22.5%	***	32.3%	31.7%
1986	30.8%	22.5%	***	28.2%	28.2%
1990	26.7%	20.4%	***	28.1%	27.3%
1994	22.7%	19.6%	22.6%	27.6%	26.1%
1998	23.2%	17.6%	16.5%	23.0%	22.3%
2002	24.8%	15.7%	15.8%	23.4%	22.5%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements, 1974-2002. \*\*\* Not applicable.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Research Associate, Research Director, and Senior Research Associate, respectively. We thank Peter Levine, Abby Kiesa, and Deborah Both for comments on previous drafts of this fact sheet. All errors in fact or interpretation are our own.

<sup>2</sup> Davila, A. and Mora, M.T. (2007). "CIRCLE Working Paper 52: Do Gender and Ethnicity Affect Civic Engagement and Academic Progress." [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

Lopez, M.H., Levine, P., Both, D., Kiesa, A., Kirby, E., and Marcelo, K. (2006) *The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities*. Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

Ramakrishnan, S.K. and Baldassare, M. (2004). "The Ties That Bind: Changing Demographics and Civic Engagement in California. Public Policy Institute of California.

Cassel, C.A. (2002). "Hispanic Turnout: Estimates from Validated Voting Data." *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 2. pp. 391-408.

<sup>3</sup> When using the Current Population Survey, we have defined racial/ethnic groups by defining anyone with Latino background as Latino, single race or ethnicity individuals who are non-Latino as white, African-American, and Asian-American. We do not include Native Americans, because of their small sample sizes. Furthermore, we do not include those of mixed race/ethnicities, because we cannot establish a solid trend line due to the recent addition of the mixed race/ethnicity category to the CPS in 2003.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the 2006 CPHS and its survey methodology, please see the CIRCLE report *The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities*. by Mark Hugo Lopez, Peter Levine, Deborah Both, Abby Kiesa, Emily Kirby, Karlo Marcelo, October 2006.

<sup>5</sup> The 2006 CPHS surveyed 1,674 young people ages 15 to 25 and 547 adults 26 and older. It contains over-samples of young African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. It is a combined random phone sample and random internet sample. For more details on the structure of the survey, see *The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities* by Lopez et. al.

<sup>6</sup> The Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), also asks about volunteering rates but uses different question wording, and thus produces a different volunteering rate than the 2006 CPHS. CPS finds that over time (from 2002-2005) young whites are the most likely to volunteer, followed by young Asian-Americans, African-Americans and finally young Latinos.

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**2005 Volunteer Rates Among 15-25 year olds**

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>White</b>
2005	17.4%	13.4%	21.3%	29.4%

Source: Authors' tabulations from the Current Population Survey, 2005

<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, no information is available on other races and ethnicities in the MTF data collection prior to 2005. In 2005, information on Latinos was available. For Latino high school seniors, the volunteering rate was 66.9 percent, substantially lower than that for whites and African-Americans.

<sup>8</sup> For more detail on long run volunteering trends among young people, see the CIRCLE fact sheet "Volunteering among Young People." Trends from 1976 to 2005 for 12<sup>th</sup> graders, and from 1991 to 2005 for 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders are available. Additionally, information on incoming college freshmen is also available.

<sup>9</sup> See the CIRCLE fact sheet "Electoral Engagement Among Latino Youth," by Mark Hugo Lopez. 2003. [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

<sup>10</sup> According to the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press report "How Young People View Their Lives, Futures, and Politics: A Portrait of 'Generation Next'," 50 percent said they feel guilty about not getting around to voting, compared to 70 percent of adults over age 40.

<sup>11</sup> Young Voter Strategies with CIRCLE, *Young Voter Mobilization Tactics* (September 2006).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> For a full discussion of the different ways voter turnout can be calculated please see "CIRCLE Working Paper 35: The Youth Voter 2004: With a Historical Look at Youth Voting Patterns 1972-2004." Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

All voter turnout estimates presented in this fact sheet are calculated for U.S. citizens only, and according to the "Census Citizen Method" described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35.

<sup>14</sup> Preliminary estimates of youth voter turnout in the 2006 midterm election from CIRCLE suggests that young people did vote in slightly greater numbers relative to 2002. Final, and more reliable, estimates of voter turnout will not be available until later in 2007 when data from the November 2006 CPS becomes available.

<sup>15</sup> For Figure 14, the categories of "a lot" and "some" were collapsed into "CAN make a difference", and the categories "little" and "no difference" were collapsed into "CANNOT make a difference."

<sup>16</sup> See the forthcoming *Journal of Adolescent Development Science* article, "Civic Engagement among Immigrant Youth: New Evidence from the 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey," by Mark Hugo Lopez and Karlo Barrios Marcelo, 2007.



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<sup>17</sup> Keeter, S., Zukin, C., Andolina, M., and Jenkins, K. (2002) "The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait." CIRCLE and The Pew Charitable Trusts. [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

Zukin, C., Keeter, S., Andolina, M., Jenkins, K., and Delli Carpini, M.X. (2006) *A New Engagement? Political Participation, Civic Life, and the Changing American Citizen*. NY, NY: Oxford University Press.

<sup>18</sup> For more information on confidence in government among young people, in comparison to adults, see Lopez et. al. (2006) *The 2006 Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Detailed Look at How Youth Participate in Politics and Communities*, and the Council for Excellence in Government's report *A Matter of Trust: Americans and Their Government: 1958-2004*. (2004)

<sup>19</sup> The sample size for Asian-Americans was too small in 2002 to produce reliable estimates for confidence in government and media usage.