Generational Differences in Immigrant Adolescent Civic and Political Engagement Attitudes

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January 11, 2012

Abstract

Previous research has overwhelmingly focused on non-immigrant civic participation. However, as of 2009, twenty-four percent of school-aged children are from immigrant families (Batalova and Terrazas 2010). With children from immigrant families constituting a sizable and growing share of the school-aged population, what are their civic and political engagement attitudes? Using the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS 2002), a nationally representative school-based study of adolescents, I study how engagement attitudes among adolescents, from Asian, Hispanic, Black, and White backgrounds, varies across immigrant generations (1st, 2nd, and 3rd generation). Moreover, I examine how same-race friendships and parent-child communication mediate the relationship between immigrant adolescents and their attitudes about engagement. The results suggest that there is a decline in the value of civic and political participation across generations for all four racial groups. Nonetheless, minority groups value these attitudes more than third generation Whites. These findings are inconsistent with literature that states that either foreign-born have similar involvement patterns as native-born or are less likely to participate than native-born (Stepick et al 2008; Lopez and Marcelo 2008; Tossutti 2003). Finally, I find that adolescent social networks only explain immigrant generational differences in engagement attitudes for Blacks. As for Latinos and Asians, there continues to be strong statistical difference between generations. As civic engagement is an important exercise of citizenship and integration, these findings reveal the crucial role immigrant youth may play as they transition to adulthood in the U.S.

In *Bowling Alone,* Robert Putnam (2000) notes optimistically, that unlike their parents, the children of baby boomers seem to be more civically minded. This younger generation is more likely to volunteer and participate in community projects (Putnam 2000). Moreover, they may also be more likely to engage politically as they transition to adulthood (Putnam 2000; McFarland and Thomas 2006). This last point is supported by 2008 Census data, which reveals that the trend in voter turnout rate for youth between the ages of 18 and 29 has been steadily increasing since the 2000 presidential election after decades of decline (Kirby and Kawashima-Ginsberg 2009). Despite these promising trends, research on youth civic and political engagement attitudes and trends has focused primarily on native-born youth. If young people today are more civically minded, then what role are youth from immigrant families playing? Are immigrant youth more or less likely to be civically minded than native-born youth?

Currently, researchers know very little about immigrant youth's views on political and civic engagement. Many immigrant youth studies up until recently have been on academic achievement and social relationships, both relevant indicators of assimilation. However, understanding immigrant youth political and civic engagement attitudes is becoming increasingly important since it may offer insight into the political integration of these youth, who constitute a sizable and growing share of the school-aged population. As of 2009, 25% of school-aged children come from immigrant families. Of the 16.9 million children who have at least one immigrant parent, 86% are second generation (U.S.-born with an immigrant parent). The remaining 14% are first generation (foreign-born with a foreign-born parent) (Batalova and Terrazas 2010). Furthermore, with Latinos and Asians making up the majority of the immigrant youth population in the U.S., the Census Bureau projects that both groups will triple in size by 2050 partly due to immigration, with Latinos making up 30% of the population and Asians comprising 9.2% (2008). With these changing demographics, immigrant youth political and civic engagement has the potential to play a critical role in U.S. in the years to come. Their engagement can impact the outcomes of local and national elections and policies.

Moreover, previous researchers that have investigated political and civic engagement trends have relied on measures that do not accurately capture immigrant civic engagement. For instance, immigrant youth may be engaging in their communities in ways that are not consistent with how researchers look at civic and political action (Eckstein 2001; Stepick, Stepick, and Labissiere 2008; Jensen 2008; Barreto and Munoz 2003). Other studies, however, have focused on only one or two immigrant racial/ethnic groups. As a result, the findings in the literature are inconsistent. It is not clear

as to whether all immigrant youth or if only certain immigrant generations within specific racial/ethnic groups are engaging in civic activity.

In contrast, this study, using the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS 2002), a nationally representative school-based study of adolescents, will look at immigrant youth civic and political attitudes and how these attitudes vary across different racial/ethnic and immigrant generation groups. By focusing on attitudes, I hope to bypass structural and cultural factors that may impede immigrant youth involvement in any specific civic action.[1] My measures of political and civic attitude, thus, may capture the value of civic and political engagement more accurately among youth from immigrant families.

Finally, previous work suggests that the relationship between civic engagement and social capital (networks, norms, and social trust) is strong (Putnam 2000; Eckstein 2001). As Putnam describes, "social networks provide the channels through which we recruit one another for good deeds, and social networks foster norms of reciprocity that encourage attention to others' welfare" (2000:117). Since social networks are integral in understanding political and civic engagement, this study will also look at how immigrant youth networks are related to their attitudes about engagement.

Background

In the following section, I discuss relevant literature related to immigrant adolescent civic attitudes. I will begin with a review of youth civic and political engagement trends, then define social networks in relation to social capital, and end with two proposed research questions.

Immigrant Youth Civic and Political Engagement Trends

Adolescence is an important period for youth as they transition to adulthood (Coleman et al 1966; Sewell, Haller, and Portes 1969). It is during these formative years that attitudes and habits are developed (Sears and Levy 2003). A psychological development study by Chambers and Ascione (1987), finds that altruistic attitudes increase as children reach adolescence. During this time, youth are also more involved in clubs and organizations that serve others. Youth involved in service-oriented organizations in school are more likely to be politically active in the future (Putnam 2000; McFarland and Thomas 2006) and are more likely to do better in other parts of life (Davila and Mora 2007 and Lerner

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[1] For example, immigrant youth may not volunteer at an organization but may be informally teaching English to others in their community.

2004).[2] Many empirical studies have associated civic engagement, for adults and youth, with higher education and higher income (Putnam 2000; Hart and Atkins 2002; Lopez and Marcelo 2008; Barreto and Munoz 2003).

Despite a growing interest in youth civic engagement, few researchers have focused on immigrant youth civic trends. This may be because immigrants engage in ethnic-related civic activities, which are missed by traditional measures oriented towards white, middle class values (Eckstein 2001; Stepick, Stepick, and Labissiere 2008; Jensen 2008; Barreto and Munoz 2003). For instance, Latino youth in California demonstrated against Proposition 187, which denied benefits to the undocumented (Ramakrishnan and Espensade 2001 and Suarez-Orozco 1996). Participation in protests is more common among immigrant youth than native-born youth (Stepick et al 2008). Yet most civic engagement surveys do not ask about involvement in protests. In an effort to overcome these biases, some recent studies have incorporated newer measures to capture immigrant civic activities in both quantitative and qualitative methods. However, as I will show, many of these studies have methodological flaws such as high selection bias, low response rates, and non-representative samples resulting in concerns for validity and an inability to generalize.

To begin with, Stepick and colleagues (2008) in their study of Miami youth find that immigrant and non-immigrant youth have a similar pattern of civic engagement. They were able to include nontraditional measures relevant to immigrant youth such as teaching other immigrants English. The study, using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, observed and interviewed 330 Black and Latino high school youth for four years and separately surveyed 1334 freshmen (70% Black and Latino) at Florida International University. Both parts of the study had an oversampling of Black and Latino youth, which may be representative of Southern Florida but is not representative of U.S. population. Furthermore, by surveying college students from the same college, the researchers may have trends representing self-selected youth who probably share similar achievement and participation histories from high school.

In contrast to the findings of Stepick and colleagues (2008), Lopez and Marcelo (2008) find that second generation youth are more civically engaged than native-born youth. They also find that first generation immigrants are less engaged than both native-born and second generation immigrant youth. First generation immigrants may not be participating because of structural reasons (i.e. citizenship status) rather than actual value or desire (Lopez and Marcelo 2008). However, there are limitations to this study. First, the sample may not have been representative since the researchers used a telephone and internet-based survey, which resulted in a 25% response rate. Additionally, the

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[2] This casual relationship is contestable since we do not if civic engagement causes improvement in other parts of life or that improvement in other parts of life encourages civic engagement.

researchers fear that the 2006 immigration protests, which occurred at the same time of the administration of their survey, may have influenced their results.[3]

Similarly, Tossutti (2003), using the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating,[4] concludes that immigrant youth in her sample were less involved in civic activities than native-born youth. The only exception was that foreign-born youth had higher participation rates when looking specifically at volunteer activities related to religious institutions (Tossutti 2003). However, Tossutti's sample does not just consist of youth but also includes adults as old as thirty-five. As a result, her conclusions do not completely represent immigrant youth participation but also immigrant adult participation.

When examining Mexican immigrant adult engagement specifically, Barreto and Munoz (2003) suggest trends contrary to Tossutti and Lopez and Marcelo. Using a nationally representative sample of Mexican immigrants, the authors show that foreign-born and native-born have similar political participation rates. Moreover, citizens and non-citizens have similar rates as well. [5] They also find that socio-economic status, percentage time spent in United States, language fluency, and immigrant attitudes about opportunities in the United States add to the predictive power of their model. Even though Barreto and Munoz's outcomes only explain Mexican American adult political trends, they may offer insight into Mexican immigrant youth involvement, as well.

 Qualitative studies on immigrant civic engagement also present insight on the attitudes and participation levels of different immigrant groups. Similar to Barreto and Munoz (2003), the results, however, may not be generalizable outside the specific immigrant group and only capture the civic engagement level of adults. Nonetheless, these studies may be a preview of what current immigrant youth's engagement will be like when they are adults. The studies may also offer a context for the attitudes of youth with immigrant backgrounds. For instance, an interview study by Jensen (2008) reveals that both Salvadorians and Indians overwhelmingly believe civic engagement is important. As a result, Jensen concludes that immigrant ethnicity may not matter in terms of appreciating the importance of engagement.

In addition, Kasinitz and colleagues (2008), in their longitudinal qualitative study of second generation youth as they transition to adulthood, elaborate that Russian Jews and Chinese, who have higher economic and educations status,

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[3] Survey may have captured an increase in immigrant civic action due to a temporary external trigger. Also, those who participated in the protests may have been more likely to participate in the survey. As a result, the results may not be an accurate representation of the overall group.

[4] This is a Canadian based survey.

[5] Non-citizens represent anyone that is not a citizen such as green card holders, undocumented individuals, temporary visa holders, refugees, etc.

did not participate politically and voted the least when compared to native-born whites. African Americans and West Indians, on the other hand, were the most politically engaged compared to native-born whites (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Also, Black and Latino immigrants were more likely to participate than their native-born counterparts (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Nonetheless, Kasinitz et al (2008) rely heavily on engagement measures such as voting which may not be relevant for immigrants who are not citizens.

As shown above, previous studies combined do not reveal consistent results on the level of immigrant youth involvement within racial groups or immigrant generations. Again, the inconsistent findings may be the result of inadequate engagement measures, flawed data collection methods, or reliance on specific U.S. regions and/or ethnic groups.

To overcome these issues, I will propose a research question based on attitudinal measures of political and civic engagement for multiple immigrant racial/ethnic groups.

Social Networks

As mentioned earlier, Putnam describes social networks as, "…channels through which we recruit one another for good deeds, and… foster norms of reciprocity that encourage attention to others' welfare" (Putnam 2000:117). Performing "good deeds" and paying "attention to others' welfare" are central to political and civic involvement. Thus, to understand the engagement attitudes of immigrant youth, we need to understand how their social networks play a part.

According to James Coleman's (1988) theory of social capital, our friendship, family, and other networks are places where we create social capital. Coleman presents social capital as (1) obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structures, (2) information channels, and (3) norms and effective sanctions. All three types of social capital act as invisible currency created and existent within our interpersonal relationships. We use this currency to facilitate actions in order to meet certain ends.

Obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structure, for instance, is a form of a social capital that relies on reciprocal exchanges between persons through obligations. For example, "[if] A does something for B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future, this establishes an expectation in A and an obligation on the part of B" (Coleman 1988:102). Through these exchanges, trustworthiness is built, resulting in the formation of this type of social capital.

Coleman (1988) posits that parent and child interactions can also create expectations and norms, and transmit skills from parent to child. Previous research on youth political and civic engagement demonstrates that parents play a

critical role in influencing their children on community involvement. This role ranges from concrete actions such as parents participating in ethnic-based community groups to storytelling about politics in their home country (McFarland and Thomas 2006; Kasinitz et al 2008).

Storytelling may also be part of another form of social capital, *information channels.* *Information channel* social capital is information acquired through networks and is used to take action. For instance, McFarland and Thomas (2006) find that general conversation between parent and child during adolescence is strongly related to the child's future political participation.

Friendship networks play an important role, as well. Best friends of adolescents also share activities throughout the week, which can be an indicator of intimacy between friends (Kao and Joyner 2004). Research specifically on interracial friendships show that both Blacks and whites are more likely to be friends with someone of the same race than others due to continued high levels of racial segregation in schools (Hallinan and Williams 1989; Joyner and Kao 2000; Quillian and Campbell 2003; Haynie, South and Bose 2006). Asian and Latino adolescents, in particular, are more likely to choose same-ethnic instead of same-race friendships (Kao and Joyner 2006). When controlling for selection bias, peers still have a significant influence (Epstein 1983, Savin-Williams and Berndt 1990). For example, friendships that are high on reciprocation have a positive impact on academic performance (Vaquera and Kao 2008). Overall, despite a wealth of information on peer influence, there is still little researchers know about how friendships relate to crucial non-academic outcomes such as political and civic attitudes for immigrant youth.

Research Questions

From my review of previous research on immigrant civic engagement and social networks, I propose two research questions:

1. Do political and civic attitudes of youth from immigrant families vary across generations (from first generation to second generation to third generation) and racial/ethnic groups?
2. Given that family and school networks are integral in understanding political and civic engagement, this leads to the second research question: Do same-race friendships and parent-child communication mediate the relationship between immigrant adolescents and their attitudes about engagement?[6]

Data and Methods

<u>Sample</u>

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[6] Community social capital was not measured in the ELS 2002.

Immigrant youth attitudes about political and civic engagement were studied using the Educational Longitudinal Study (ELS 2002) dataset. ELS 2002 is the best dataset for this particular research question since it is a nationally representative longitudinal school-based study of randomly selected tenth graders (U.S. Dept. of Education, National Center for Education Statistics 2005). The ELS 2002 surveyed tenth graders in 2002 and re-interviewed them again in 2004 and 2006. Moreover, the survey also collected information from parents about their background and their relationship with their child.

Most importantly, the survey oversamples on Asian students, who are more likely to be first and second generation immigrants. As such, our sample will include enough immigrant parents and students to test our research questions.

Finally, the ELS 2002 dataset also includes school level information from administrators, teachers, and others in the base year (2002) and first follow-up (2004). As a result, I can control for school demographic information. Non-public schools were sampled at a higher rate compared to public schools.

However, for the purposes of this paper, only the base year sample and their base year data was used. As a result, my sample totaled 14,502 students including students with missing data.

Measures

Table 1 presents the definitions and descriptive tabulations of the variables used in the analyses. I begin with the main dependent variables that measure the student's value of fixing inequality and helping others in their community. Both of these measures are ordinal variables. For the first dependent variable, fixing inequality, students were asked to rate *the importance of fixing economic and social inequality* with 27% selecting *not important*, 54% selecting *somewhat important*, and 19% selecting *very important*. For the second dependent variable, helping others, students were asked to rate *the importance of helping others in your community.* About 7% selected *not important,* while 56% selected *somewhat important,* and 37% selected *very important*. Both of these measures are being used as proxies for political and civic attitudes.

[Table 1 here]

Primary Explanatory Variables: Race and Immigrant Generation of Respondent

The combined race and immigrant status variables and their interaction with each level of political and civic engagement attitudes are of primary interest. They allow me to test whether political and civic engagement attitudes matter more or less for minority and immigrant students.

The race of the respondent was determined using a race variable generated by the ELS 2002 staff in the student base-year survey. If race was missing in the student questionnaire, then the race of the student was imputed using parent questionnaire, school rooster, or other indicators such as native language and surname by ELS staff. The generated race variable included seven categories: White (non-Latino), Black (non-Latino), Asian (non-Latino), Hispanic/ Latino, American Indian (non-Latino), multiracial (non-Latino), and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (non-Latino). We combined American Indian, multiracial, and Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander into the category of "other" due to a small sample size of each of those groups.[7]

Then, the racial identification of each respondent was categorized into one of three immigrant generations: first generation (student and mother[8] born abroad), second generation (student born in the U.S. and mother born abroad), and third generation and beyond (both student and mother born in the U.S.).[9] This resulted in independent dummy variables: first, second, and third generation White, Black, Asian, Latino, and other.

Previous research has investigated the differences in civic engagement and civic attitudes between foreign born and native born (Tossutti 2003; Barreto and Munoz 2003; Stepick and colleagues 2008; and Lopez and Marcelo 2008). Other researchers, on the other hand, have specifically studied the engagement and attitudes of the second generation as distinct from the third generation (native born immigrants who also have parents that are native born) (Kasinitz et al. 2008). With the inclusion of immigrant generation, I will look at all three generations.

Social Networks

In addition, social networks are also of particular interest in terms of how they mediate the relationship been immigrants and their attitudes about engagement. I look at two types of network measures: same-race friendships and parent- student communication. Information about the networks came from the student base-year survey. Students listed three friends and then answered questions about each one of the friendships.

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[7] The "other" category will not be directly used in our models due to a small sample.
[8] We used mother instead of both parents and/or father since mothers had the most complete survey information on foreign birthplace.
[9] Hereafter, we refer to "third generation and beyond" as simply "third generation." Because we do not have information on the birthplace of grandparents or great-grandparents, we cannot differentiate third from fourth or fifth generational status.

Same-race friendships variable may be an indicator of shared norms around civic and political engagement. The variable was measured using a generated dummy variable for all three listed friends. Students who had at least one interracial friend received a "0" while students who had no interracial friends received a "1." Even students with only one or two listed friends were included since this still revealed their racial preference in friendships. Sixty percent of the respondents had all same-race friends.

Finally, **parent-student communication** is a combined variable that captures how often each parent and student discussed student-related problems, current events, and subjects studied in class. This variable, serving as a proxy, was designed to capture the frequency of communication between parent and child related to politics and civic life. As Coleman (1988) explains, parent-child interactions can create expectations and norms and can transmit skills to the child.

School-level Control Variables

Urbanicity of the school is divided into three dummy variables: rural, suburban, and urban (reference in models). I control for these variables since prior research demonstrates that the level of urbanicity has an influence on civic engagement.

Individual-level Control Variables

Other measures that may have an influence on the dependent variable are socio-economic status and gender of the student. Socio-economic status (SES) in this study is a composite of family income, parent's education, and parent's occupation. This continuous percentile variable ranges from -2.11 to 1.82. As described earlier in this paper, SES is positively associated with civic engagement for adults and youth (Putnam 2000; Hart and Atkins 2002; Lopez and Marcelo 2008; Barreto and Munoz 2003). However, Jones-Correa (1998) argues that the relationship between SES and civic engagement may be weak for some segments of an immigrant population.

Gender is also controlled for since females may be more likely than males to rate attitudes toward helping others higher.

Analysis Plan

To understand the political and civic engagement attitudes of first, second, and third generation immigrants in more detail, I constructed a series of ordered logistic regression models (illustrated in conceptual diagram Figure 1). First, I test the importance of fixing inequality and helping others using third generation whites as the base category. Attitudes about fixing social and economic inequality and helping others in one's community are used as proxies in this paper for

political and civic engagement values and intentions. The response levels for both of the dependent variables are not important, somewhat important, and very important. Next, I will look at how immigrant social networks in school and at home are related to those attitudes for different racial/ethnic generation groups.

In all the models, I control for all individual-level and school-level characteristics. Moreover, individual student weights are included since the ELS 2002 survey oversamples on Asians and non-public schools. Students in these models are also clustered within schools.

[Figure 1 here]

Results

Ordered Logit Models on Political and Civic Engagement Attitudes

To address the first research question, Table 2 includes ordered logit models that use third generation white students as the reference group with all other race/ethnic immigrant groups with generation status as covariates. Overall, Model 1 in Table 2 reveals that the odds of rating the importance of this attitude decreases across all immigrant generations for each race/ethnic group. Nonetheless, first and second generation Asian, and all Latino and Black generations have significantly higher odds in rating "fix social and economic inequality" (political engagement) as more important than third generation white students. Asian student odds by the third generation are not significantly different from white third generation student odds in their attitudes about fixing inequality. When comparing the odds of each Asian generation to each other, first generation Asian odds are significantly different from third generation Asian odds. There is no difference between first and second generation Asian and second and third generation Asian odds.

[Table 2 here]

Both Latino and Black third generation students have significantly higher odds of rating "fixing inequality" more important than third generation white youth. Latino youth, in particular, have significant generational differences between the first and second generation, second and third generation, and third and first generation odds. For Black youth, the difference between first and second generation odds is marginally statistically significant ($p < 0.10$). Other generational differences are not significant for Blacks.

First generation whites do show that they have higher odds of rating "fixing inequality" higher than their third generation counterpart. However, this significant association disappears by the second generation for white students.

Individual-level and school-level control variables have a significant relationship with the value of political

engagement. Females have higher odds in rating the importance of fixing inequality than males. Consistent with prior research, an increase in socio-economic status is associated with less odds of valuing this political engagement attitude. Finally, students from suburban and rural areas have lower odds than urban students.

In addition to political involvement, civic engagement is also an important aspect of American democratic society. Helping others in our community is crucial to performing civic duties. Model 2 in Table 2 gauge the importance of helping others for Asian, Latino, Black, immigrant youth when compared to third generation white students. The relationship between civic attitudes (helping others in the community) and immigrant generation varies across racial groups. Nonetheless, all Asian, Latino, and Black first generation students have higher significant odds ratios than third generation whites.

First generation black students, specifically, have four time higher odds of valuing civic engagement ("helping others in my community") than third generation white students. First generation Asians and Latinos have strong statistical odds of half and twice more than that of the base category respectively. First generation whites, on the other hand, do not have a statistically significant relationship with valuing helping others in their community.

Additionally, Asian, Latino, and Black student's civic attitudes odds decrease and are not significant in the second generation. The odds decrease Latino students in third generation as well. Both Asian and Black student's odds increase in rating *helping others* higher by the third generation, but this relationship is only significant for Black students.

In this model, there is no significant difference between generations for Asians. For Latinos, all generations are different from each other. While for Blacks, first generation Blacks are different from third generation Blacks and second generation Blacks.

Being female increases odds by almost 2 times that of males for this civic attitude. An increase in SES in this model slightly increases odds below the .05 significance level, which is the opposite of the effect of SES from Model 1 (political attitude).

Descriptive Statistics on Social Network Variables

If social networks and relationships are where we create norms and expectations about political and civic engagement, then how do they relate to political and civic participation attitudes for immigrants? Do they mediate the relationship and help explain the generational differences? To answer this research question, social network variables were added to the political and civic attitudes ordered logit models with third generation whites as the reference group.

Before presenting this model, it is important to first understand what the social networks look like for different immigrant generations and ethnicities. Figure 4, combining all three friendships, demonstrates the differences in same race friendships across race groups and immigrant generations. Third generation whites have the highest percentages in same race friendships (74%) while third generation Asians and Latinos have the lowest (17% and 29% respectively). Third generation blacks also have a higher proportion of same race friendships at 63%. This is starkly different from first and second generation blacks who have about half of their friendships be with someone of another race.

[Figure 2 here]

Overall, these differences are partly due to the size of each group since the Asian and Latino groups are much smaller than the other racial groups, which may impact their percentages.[10] Nonetheless, the Figure 4 still reveals changes in same race friendships across generations for immigrant youth with a push towards heterogeneity for Asians and Latinos. However, this may not indicate that same-ethnic related community networks are disappearing for immigrant youth.

The second network variable is parent-child communication, which is presented in Table 3 by race and immigrant generation. Again, students were asked how often they communicate with their parents about their problems, current events, and subjects studied in school. To rate the level of communication, the students used a scale: a 0 represents "never," 1 represents "sometimes," and 2 represents "often." Unlike previous network variables, the parent-child communication means and standard deviations show that there is less variation across generations. Parent-child communication seems to be consistent across different racial and generational group as well with means hovering around 1.00 (or "sometimes"). However, first and second generation Asians are slightly less than 1.00, but this may not be a significant enough difference.

[Table 3 here]

Ordered Logit Models on Civic Attitudes with Social Network Variables

In Models 1 (Fix Inequality) and 2 (Help Others) in Table 4, which include social network variables, there is no change in direction for the immigrant generation variables from the previous Models 1 and 2 in Table 2.

[Table 4 here]

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[10] The differences between Asian and Latino may be attributable to the oversampling of Asians.

In terms of social network variables, in both the models, parent-child communication significantly increases odds of rating civic attitudes higher. This relationship is very strong at the highest significance level. Having friends of the same-race may reduce odds but this relationship is not significant in either model in Table 4.

Most notably, for within racial/ethnic generational differences on political and civic engagement attitudes, Black immigrant students are not significantly different from their third generation counter parts with the inclusion of social network variables. This is different from earlier models where Black students had variation between first and third generation students.

As for Asians, there is no difference between the current models that include social network variables and earlier models in Table 2 that do not. Asians continue to have some generational differences in the political attitude model and have none in the civic attitude model with social network variables included.

Similarly, there continues to be generational differences for Latino students in models in Table 4, which is consistent with models in Table 2.

Discussion

This paper addresses two research questions that aim to determine political and civic engagement attitude of youth across immigrant generations. The first research question specifically looks at changes in these attitudes across generations for different racial and ethnic groups. Overall, there is a consistent decline in attitudes about political participation (fixing social and economic inequality) across generations for all ethnic groups. As for civic participation attitudes, there is more variation across groups. However, for both of these attitudes, the first generation seems to value them more than second and third generation. The results also reveal that minority groups value these attitudes more than third generation whites.

These findings are inconsistent with literature that states that either foreign-born have similar involvement patterns as native-born or are less likely to participate than native-born (Stepick et al 2008; Lopez and Marcelo 2008; Tossutti 2003). As mentioned earlier, the findings from previous researchers may be flawed due to reliance on measures that inaccurately capture immigrant participation levels.

First generation immigrants are more likely to value participation than other generations because they may experience discrimination due to their immigrant status. This may increase their desire to be politically engaged to fix inequality and help others in their community.

The second part of the paper addresses how social networks relate to immigrant attitudes about political and civic engagement. We see that parent-child communication has a strong positive relationship with political and civic attitudes, which is consistent with previous literature (McFarland and Thomas 2006; Kasinitz et al 2008). Overall, social network variables only explain generational differences for Blacks. As for Latinos, there continues to be strong statistical difference between generations. This is true for Asians as well with respect to political engagement attitudes.

Despite strong consistent findings across racial/ethnic groups, this study has some important limitations. To begin with, the first generation Black and third generation Asian sample size was small which may have influenced the statistical power of the analyses of the two groups. Additionally, the sending countries of immigrant respondents were not controlled. First generation immigrants and the children of foreign-born parents are more likely to have ties to their home countries. Thus, they may be influenced by the civic and political engagement norms of that country as well.

Finally, Black, Asian, Latino, and white terms represent large and diverse populations. The classification of participants into these racial/ethnic categories is not aimed at homogenizing diverse cultures nor is it aimed at minimizing the complex experiences. Future research should examine political and civic engagement trends of immigrants using ethnic categories, which may result in a more nuanced understanding of engagement.

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Table 1. Definitions and Unweighted Descriptive Tabulations of Variables

Measure	Coding	N	Percentage
DEPENDENT VARIABLE			
Importance of fixing economic and social inequalities			
Fixing inequalities			100%
	0 = Not important	3946	27%
	1 = Somewhat Important	7758	54%
	2 = Very Important	2797	19%
Importance of helping others in your community			
Helping others			100%
	0 = Not important	1059	7%
	1 = Somewhat Important	8075	56%
	2 = Very Important	5419	37%
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE			
Generational Status and Race/Ethnicity			
First Generation			100%
White		130	11%
Asian		524	43%
Black		70	6%
Latino		442	36%
Second Generation			100%
White		254	16%
Asian		562	36%
Black		101	6%
Latino		521	34%
Third Generation			100%
White (reference)		7290	71%
Asian		88	1%
Black		1481	14%
Latino		796	8%
Same Race Friendships			
(friend1, friend2, and friend3)	Yes = 1, No = 0	8551	60%
Student Parent Communication			
Composite of three questions below:		12,602	
1. How often discussed troubling things with parents?			100%
	0 = Never	2937	24%
	1 = Sometimes	6173	50%
	2 = Often	3273	26%
2. How often discussed current events with parents?			100%
	0 = Never	3733	30%
	1 = Sometimes	5739	46%
	2 = Often	2951	24%
3. How often discuss things studied in class with parents?			100%
	0 = Never	2168	17%
	1 = Sometimes	6845	55%
	2 = Often	3477	28%
Gender			
Female (male reference)	Female = 1, Male = 0	7717	50%

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Cont. Table 1. Definitions and Unweighted Descriptive Tabulations of Variables

Socio-economic Status

Composite of family income, mother education, father education, mother occupation, and father occupation	Continuous percentile variable: ranges from -2.11 to 1.82	15187	N/A

School Characteristics

Urbanicity

		100%
Urban (reference)	5486	34%
Suburban	7764	48%
Rural	2947	18%

Total N   **14,502**

Figure 1: Conceptual Diagram of Models Testing Research Questions

Immigrant generation by race and ethnicity variables: first, second, third generation Asian, Latino, Black, and white

(Research Question 1: Model 1 and 2, Table 2)

Value of helping others and fixing inequality

(Research Question 2: Model 1 and 2, Table 4)

Social network variables: same-race friendships and student-parent communication

Demographic variables: SES, gender, school location (control variables in all models)
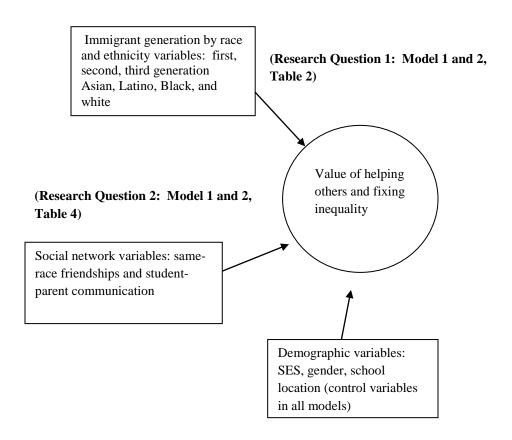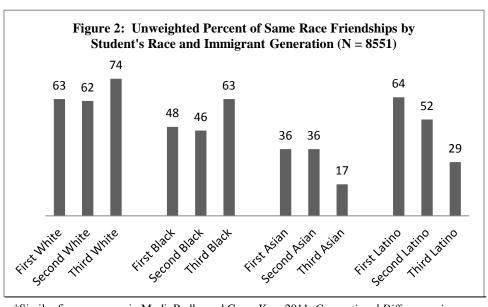
Table 2. Ordered Logit Regression of Engagement Attitudes by Race/Ethnicity and Immigrant Generation

	Political Engagement Attitude		Civic Engagement Attitude	
	Fix Inequality (1)		Help Others (2)	
	odds ratio	SE	odds ratio	SE
First Asian	1.72***†	(0.21)	1.36**	(0.16)
Second Asian	1.40***€	(0.14)	1.11	(0.11)
Third Asian	0.73†€	(0.18)	1.24	(0.35)
First Latino	3.49***¥†	(0.45)	1.77***¥†	(0.20)
Second Latino	1.90***¥€	(0.21)	1.21¥€	(0.16)
Third Latino	1.22*†€	(0.12)	0.91†€	(0.08)
First Black	3.01***†	(0.86)	3.77***¥†	(1.15)
Second Black	2.02**	(0.55)	1.52¥	(0.47)
Third Black	1.82***†	(0.13)	1.61***†	(0.12)
First White	1.37*	(0.22)	1.41	(0.31)
Second White	0.93	(0.15)	1.08	(0.17)
Third White	ref		ref	
Female (male ref)	1.34***	(0.05)	1.91***	(0.08)
SES	0.91**	(0.03)	1.06*	(0.03)
Suburban	0.90•	(0.05)	0.92	(0.05)
Rural	0.84**	(0.05)	0.95	(0.06)
Urban	ref		ref	
Constant 1	0.47***	(0.02)	0.12***	(0.01)
Constant 2	5.47***	(0.31)	2.58***	(0.14)
N	14,449		14,502	

Robust SE in parentheses; *** $p<0.001$, ** $p<0.01$, * $p<0.05$, •$p<.10$; ¥: first and second generation are significantly different from each other below the .10 level; †: first and third generation are significantly different from each other below the .10 level; €second and third generation are significantly different from each other below the .10 level

Figure 2: Unweighted Percent of Same Race Friendships by Student's Race and Immigrant Generation (N = 8551)

†Similar figure appears in Modi, Radha and Grace Kao. 2011. *Generational Differences in Immigrant Adolescent Friendship Choices and Attitudes about Diversity*. (Presented at ASA 2011 Meeting)

Table 3. Means and SDs for Parent-Child Communication by Race and Immigrant Generation, N = 12,602

	Mean	SD
First Asian	0.91	0.56
Second Asian	0.83	0.55
Third Asian	1.01	0.58
First Latino	1.01	0.55
Second Latino	0.95	0.55
Third Latino	1.00	0.57
First Black	1.04	0.59
Second Black	1.09	0.53
Third Black	1.00	0.55
First White	1.12	0.60
Second White	1.09	0.57
Third White	1.07	0.54

Table 4. Ordered Logit Regression of Engagement Attitudes by Race/Ethnicity and Immigrant Generation with Social Network Variables

	Political Engagement Attitude		Civic Engagement Attitude	
	Fix Inequality (1)		Help Others (2)	
	odds ratio	SE	odds ratio	SE
First Asian	1.72***†	(0.23)	1.45**	(0.19)
Second Asian	1.65***€	(0.19)	1.33*	(0.15)
Third Asian	0.96†€	(0.22)	1.40	(0.49)
First Latino	3.44***¥†	(0.52)	1.64***†	(0.24)
Second Latino	2.18***¥€	(0.30)	1.26 €	(0.22)
Third Latino	1.13†€	(0.13)	0.83•†€	(0.09)
First Black	2.37*	(0.84)	2.80*	(1.16)
Second Black	2.10*	(0.67)	1.18	(0.39)
Third Black	1.92***	(0.16)	1.59***	(0.14)
First White	1.34	(0.26)	1.23	(0.33)
Second White	0.97	(0.16)	1.10	(0.18)
Third White	ref		ref	
Female (male)	1.30***	(0.06)	1.84***	(0.09)
SES	0.84***	(0.03)	0.95	(0.03)
Suburban	0.91•	(0.05)	0.90•	(0.05)
Rural	0.85**	(0.05)	0.92	(0.07)
Urban	ref		ref	
Parent-child communication	1.79***	(0.08)	2.42***	(0.11)
Friends same race	0.88	(0.07)	0.90	(0.07)
Constant	0.79*	(0.09)	0.23***	(0.03)
Constant	10.02***	(1.02)	6.15***	(0.66)
N	11,590		11,593	

Robust SE in parentheses;   *** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05, •p<.10; ¥: first and second generation are significantly different from each other below the .10 level; †: first and third generation are significantly different from each other below the .10 level; € second and third generation are significantly different from each other below the .10 level