The Political Socialization of Youth in Immigrant Families and the Role of Community-Based Organizations

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Abstract

Advancing the literature on immigrant incorporation, youth civic engagement, and voluntary associations, this mixed-methods study examines the political socialization of youth from immigrant families. We contend that the barriers to immigrant parents’ political engagement limit their children’s political participation, unless children gain significant political exposure from community-based organizations (CBOs) or other non-family sources. Drawing on survey data from a representative sample of California’s youth population, our analysis demonstrate strong support for the top-down model of political socialization in which political behaviors, or lack thereof, are transmitted from immigrant parents to their U.S.-raised children. However, this is not the case for our unique survey sample of youth who participated in politically oriented CBOs. Our analysis of follow-up in depth interviews with survey respondents indicates that while most youth do not seek to politicize their immigrant parents, CBO youth members actively orient their immigrant parents to U.S. politics. In describing the efforts of CBO youth members to educate their foreign-born parents about politics and encourage their participation, we evidence trickle-up effects in the political socialization of immigrant families. We argue that future research on politically oriented civic associations should consider the impact of individual-level organizational membership on family-level patterns of political engagement.
Today, immigrants and their children comprise over one-fifth of the U.S. population (Foner and Dreby 2011). This large-scale migration has shifted the demographic composition of many American communities in the last few decades, especially those in California where many immigrants have settled. In light of these changing demographics, researchers have begun to examine the political incorporation patterns of today’s immigrants and the subsequent impacts on American society. Part of this body of work has highlighted the role that community-based organizations (CBOs) play in mediating immigrants’ adaptation to U.S. society and helping immigrants build political power (Bloemraad 2006; Wong 2006; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008).

To date, however, only limited work has focused on the political engagement of youth from immigrant families (Bloemraad and Trost 2008; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Wong and Tseng 2008; Abrego 2011; Seif 2011). Understanding such youths’ political socialization—that is, the continual and interactive process by which they acquire knowledge about, attitudes toward, and a sense of agency in the public arena—has important consequences for the functioning of institutions in democratic countries. As such, we raise timely questions relating to the transmission of political behaviors between parents and youth. First, do foreign-born parents impact their children’s political participation in their new country? To what extent do youth politicize their immigrant parents? By addressing these questions, we explore the ways in which immigrant parents influence the political engagement of their youth and, conversely, the conditions that motivate youth to politicize their immigrant parents.
We begin by discussing prior research on immigrant incorporation, family political socialization processes, and civic associations that informs our work. We then rely on analyses of data from the California Young Adult Study, a mixed-methods investigation of youth transitions to adulthood, to advance these three fields of scholarship. We use survey data to demonstrate that immigrant parents are less likely than non-immigrant parents to be politically engaged, and show that parents’ political engagement predicts youths’ political engagement within immigrant families—unless youth are active members of politically oriented CBOs. Our findings indicate that models of top-down political socialization apply to most immigrant families, but they also suggest that community organizations have an overpowering role in orienting youth toward politics in the U.S. We then present results from follow-up in-depth interviews with survey participants. We show that even though youth obtain exposure to U.S. politics through schools and mainstream media, most do very little to orient their foreign-born parents to politics in the U.S. However, this is not the case for youth involved in CBOs who have benefited from direct participation in political campaigns while in high school. Such youth educate their parents about political issues, and in some cases mobilize them to participate. In evidencing the trickle-up effects (McDevitt and Chaffee 2002) that CBOs can have on the capacity of youth to politicize their parents, we argue that future research on civic associations should consider the impact of individual-level organizational membership on family-level patterns of political engagement.

THE POLITICAL INCORPORATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Current research on immigrant incorporation offers some important insights into the political socialization of youth from immigrant families. Studies indicate key differences in the political socialization of first-generation immigrants (those born and raised abroad) compared to
their children—1.5-generation immigrants (those born abroad and raised in the U.S.) and second-generation immigrants (those born and raised in the USA). An emerging body of work has begun to explore differences between the political engagement of second generation youth and those from non-immigrant families, also referred to as third- or later-generation immigrants (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Wong and Tseng 2008).

Already, decades of research has demonstrated that first-generation immigrant adults tend to encounter a number of structural and cultural barriers to becoming fully incorporated into U.S. political institutions (Gordon 1964; Alba and Nee 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Adult immigrants, especially recent arrivals, can be disconnected from U.S. politics because they are concerned with settling in and gaining an economic foothold in this country. They may also encounter linguistic barriers to participation if they do not speak English well (Cho 1999; Junn 1999; Alba et al. 2002; Leal 2002; Ramakrishnan 2005; Wong et al. 2011). Additionally, those who do not become citizens, whether by choice or because they are ineligible, cannot vote and therefore remain disconnected from some political processes (Leal 2002; DeSipio 2006; Ramakrishnan 2006; Stoll and Wong 2007). First-generation undocumented immigrants may be especially disengaged from the public sphere because of fears of deportation (Chavez 1998; Abrego 2011) or preoccupation with other challenges related to their immigration status (Abrego 2006; Menjivar 2006; Gleeson 2010).

Although general trends indicate that first-generation immigrants remain relatively uninvolved, their children tend to exhibit greater levels of political engagement (Junn 1999; Ramakrishnan 2006; Wong et al. 2011). Importantly, compulsory enrollment in the U.S. K-12 education system exposes the second generation to political institutions and provides some of the information necessary for political participation as the children of immigrants become
adolescents and young adults (Niemi and Junn 1998; Andolina 2003). Unlike some of their parents, almost all 1.5- and second-generation immigrants speak English fluently (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Alba and Nee 2003) and can access mainstream media sources, including online sources, that may promote their political participation (Bloemraad and Trost 2008; Wilkin, Katz, and Ball-Rokeach 2009). A minority of 1.5 generation immigrant youth lack U.S. citizenship, however. Yet, with the exception of voting, it remains unclear the extent to which their citizenship status impacts their political participation considering that recent studies have drawn attention to the political activism of some of the college-going undocumented youth (Abrego 2011; Seif 2011). Overall, though, the extant research suggests that 1.5- and second-generation immigrant encounter fewer barriers to political participation than their immigrant parents.

MODELS OF FAMILY POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Since the 1960s, researchers have argued that parents play a key role in youth’s political socialization (Greenstein 1965; Hess and Torney-Purta 1967; Easton and Dennis 1969). Empirical studies show that parents orient their children towards political participation by modeling political activity or engaging them in discussions about current events and political issues (Andolina 2002; McIntosh, Hart, and Youniss 2007; Warren and Wicks 2011). Meanwhile, when parents are not politically engaged, their children tend to exhibit a delayed pattern of political development (Jennings and Niemi 1974). This top-down model of family political socialization suggests that parents influence their children’s political participation as they transition to adulthood. Because parents from middle- and upper-class backgrounds generally enjoy greater access than do the less-privileged to resources that facilitate the intergenerational transmission of political values and skills, this top-down model of political
socialization has been used to explain reproduction of class inequalities in political participation across generations (Jennings and Niemi 1974; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995).

Youth, however, exercise some level of agency in negotiating the structural forces that impact their lives (Weis and Fine 2000; White and Wyn 2008). This had led some researchers to challenge this top-down model of political socialization, and argue that youth sometimes politicize their parents. Youth, after all, become exposed to political information and activity through their school curriculum (Niemi and Junn 1998; Westheimer and Kahne 2004) and extracurricular activities (McFarland and Thomas 2006), and may potentially share what they learn with those around them (Niemi and Hepburn 1995; Yates and Youniss 1998; Rogers, Mediratta, and Shah 2012). As such, youths’ own agency and political exposure may produce what McDevitt and Chaffee (2000; 2002) call *trickle-up effects* in the political socialization of families. McDevitt and Chaffee’s quasi-experimental studies demonstrate that a well-designed high school curriculum about voting stimulated political discussion between parents and children. Interestingly, they also note that the effects of such curriculum are strongest in families from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Their work suggests that when children possess political information, they are especially likely to serve as politicizing agents in the types of families that tend to be less politically engaged (McDevitt and Chaffee 2000).

Given these findings, is a *trickle-up* effect in political socialization likely to occur within immigrant families? As noted above, U.S.-raised youth tend to be more politically engaged than their foreign-born parents. This group is also unique in that their parents’ education and occupation tend to be poorer predictors of their future socioeconomic status when compared to young people from non-immigrant families (Bean and Stevens 2003). Therefore, parents’ immigrant background may have limited bearing on the political engagement of the 1.5 and
second generations. In fact, it is possible that U.S. raised youth may assist with their immigrant parents’ political incorporation, in the same way that they serve as cultural brokers who translate English language materials and navigate U.S. institutions for their immigrant parents (Valenzuela 1999; Orellana 2009; Kwon 2011).

Some evidence suggests that youth also politicize their foreign-born parents. For example, Wong and Tseng (2008) find that in comparison to those with native-born parents, youth from immigrant families are more likely to explain political materials (such as voter guides, sample ballots, candidate mailings, naturalization processes, and political parties) to their immigrant parents. Their study, however, relies on university students who tend to be politicized by their college environments (Pascarella, Corinna, and Smart 1988; Verba et al. 1995), and therefore may not be representative of a broader population of youth. Another study by Bloemraad and Trost (2008; 2011) examining family mobilization processes in the wake of the 2006 Immigrant Rights Marches reveals that youths’ access to English language media (including the internet), schools, and peers provided them with the information to recruit their parents to participate in protest activity. These studies by Wong and Tseng (2008) and Bloemraad and Trost (2008; 2011) raise questions about the applicability of top-down model of political socialization to the experience of youth from immigrant families, and also demonstrate the potential importance of non-family institutions in mobilizing families.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN THE POLITICIZATION OF YOUTH

CBOs can function as a non-family source of political socialization for immigrant and non-immigrant youth. A large body of literature suggests that CBOs and other volunteer organizations instill civic virtues and political skills as members learn how to organize meetings,
express their viewpoints, engage in collective decision-making processes, and resolve common concerns (Verba et al. 1995; Putnam 2000; Fung 2003). In the case of youth organizations, not all effectively politicize their members or meet their stated civic aims (Eliasoph 2011). As McFarland and Thomas (2006) have shown, organizations must be “politically salient” — meaning that they impart civic experiences, skills, and habits — in order to foster youths’ long-term political participation.

CBOs that engage adolescents in grassroots organizing around social justice represent one type of politically salient organization. Such CBOs emerged in California and elsewhere in the 1990s in response to the criminalization of youth of color, unequal school systems, blocked educational opportunities for undocumented immigrants, and environmental justice issues affecting young people and their families (Hosang 2003). These organizations involve young people in addressing issues and challenges that affect their lives, and provide extensive leadership development opportunities. Commentators have argued that these youth organizations have particularly profound effects on the civic and political development of young people (Ginwright and Cammarota 2007; Rogers et al. 2012). Evidence from case studies indicates that when CBOs involve young people in campaigns that address social justice issues affecting their communities, they provide youth with a roadmap for how to navigate and impact the political system (Kirshner 2009; Kwon 2008; Ginwright, Noguera, and Camarota 2006; Rogers and Morrell 2011). By identifying root causes of problems affecting their communities, mobilizing stakeholders, and demanding policy changes, youth acquire political knowledge and develop political efficacy (Rogers et al. 2012).

Until now, the research on these youth groups, like the research on volunteer organizations more broadly, has focused on the individual-level effects of membership on
patterns of civic and political participation (Putnam 2000; Fung 2003; Ginwright et al. 2006; Kirshner 2009; Rogers et al. 2012) or on the outcomes of youth-led campaigns (Oakes and Rogers 2006; Rogers and Morrell 2011). Studies have largely overlooked the potential effects of youths’ individual membership on family-level patterns of political participation. Thus, examination of whether or not CBO youth politicize their families has implications not only for testing the link between organizational membership and trickle-up effects in family political socialization, but also for theorizing the family as a unit of analysis when examining the political outcomes associated with organizational membership.

PRESENT STUDY

The extant literature suggests that first generation immigrants encounter barriers to political participation and raises questions about the capacity of immigrant parents influence their children’s political participation and vice versa. We therefore address the following questions in order to illuminate political socialization processes within immigrant families: Are top-down model of political socialization applicable to the political behaviors of youth from immigrant families? Or are trickle-up effects in the political socialization of immigrant families so prevalent that parents’ political engagement, or lack thereof, has little consequence for children’s political participation? Under what conditions do trickle-up effects in political socialization occur in immigrant families? Are youth who are part of CBOs particularly likely to politicize their parents?

DATA AND METHODS

To address our research interests, we draw on data from the California Young Adult Study (CYAS), a mixed-methods investigation of the postsecondary educational, employment, and civic engagement experiences of youth in California United States. California is the state
with the largest immigrant population, and the experiences of young people in this state can offer important insights into the experiences of youth in other parts of the U.S. Additionally, the experiences of young people in California can serve as an important comparison to those residing in other countries with significant foreign-born populations.

The present study relies on information gathered from two distinct samples of youth ages 18-26 who attended school in California before the age of 17. This study excludes youth who migrated to the U.S. as young adults. The first sample comes from random digit dialing of landline telephones and cell phones in California, and includes an oversampling of landlines located in high poverty census tracts. Data were collected from 2200 respondents in April - August 2011. When sampling weights are applied in the analysis of cross-sectional survey data, results are representative of the study population. Additionally, this study relies on 150 in-person semi-structured interviews conducted with survey respondents residing in the greater San Francisco and Los Angeles metropolitan areas. We refer to this randomly selected survey and interview sample as the “general population.”

The second sample comes from the alumni rosters of eight community-based organizations (CBOs) that engage inner-city high school youth in grassroots campaigns for social justice. Four of these organizations are based in the San Francisco Bay Area, three are based in Los Angeles, and one is a multi-site organization with high school student groups in Oakland, Fresno, and Los Angeles. These organizations mobilize their members around education justice, criminal justice, juvenile justice, immigrant rights, and other issues. High school youth participate in multiple stages of organizing campaigns, from identifying issues to researching solutions, lobbying decision-makers, and mobilizing their peers and other community members. Our CBO sample was based on available membership rosters from 2004-2011. A limitation of
our study is that it excludes individuals for whom current contact information could not be obtained using telephone records, email addresses, and electronic social media. We suspect that those who could not be contacted were older, came from highly mobile families, or had weaker ties to the current CBO staff or volunteers who updated alumni records in 2011. This sample contains data from 410 youth ages 18 - 26 who participated in these organizations while in high school. Data also include 75 in-person semi-structured interviews with CBO alumni. In addition to providing more information about the political socialization and activity of CBO members, these data provide some insights into youths’ selection into CBOs. Youth offered one or more reasons why they joined their CBO. Nearly two-thirds (49 out of 75) of youth joined these organizations because they were recruited by friends, and another 14 stated that they also joined for social reasons, suggesting that most youth who join politically oriented CBOs are not inherently political themselves. However, another third (also) reported that they joined because the issues addressed by the CBO resonated with them, indicating that such organizations also attract youth concerned about their communities. Unfortunately, we cannot ascertain the proportion of youth in the general population who shared similar proclivities while in high school, and would also have joined a politically oriented CBO if one were available in their community.

Our analysis begins with descriptive statistics for the general population and CBO survey samples. We then provide further context for our study by sharing logistic regression results examining youths’ perceptions of their parents’ political engagement, highlighting differences between those youth from immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds. The dependent variable, parent political engagement, is based on a survey question asking: “Were you raised by someone who followed what was going on in government or public affairs?” Responses were coded as 1
if the respondent answered “Yes” and 0 if she responded “No.” Youth were identified as coming from immigrant families if they reported having at least one foreign-born parent or guardian. Analyses control for two indicators of socioeconomic status: a dummy variable accounts for whether or not the respondent was raised by a parent/guardian with a college education (1=college educated parent), and a second measure indicates if the respondent came from a low-income background. This variable was coded as 1 if the respondent reported being eligible for free or reduced-rate lunches while in high school (or middle school in the case of dropouts), or if her parents relied on public assistance while she was in high school.

Next, we test the applicability of top-down model of political socialization by examining whether or not parents’ political engagement predicts their children’s participation in political activities among youth from immigrant families. We conduct separate analyses for youth general population and CBO youth, examining four measures of youth political activity: 1) registering to vote; 2) community activism, based on a question asking if the respondent worked with others to address an issue impacting his/her community within the last year; 3) online activism, based on a question asking if the respondent shared his or her perspective on a political/social issue online within the last year; and 4) participation in a public rally or protest. All dependent variables are coded as 1 if the respondent answered “Yes” and 0 if “No.” Considering that socioeconomic status often predicts political engagement (Verba et al. 1995), we control for parent college education and low-income background, as defined above. Because college enrollment increases access to political knowledge and opportunities for political participation and political engagement (Pascarella et al. 1988; Verba et al. 1995), models account for those who are enrolled in two-year or four-year colleges. We also control for citizenship status since it may structure opportunities for political engagement (Abrego 2011; DeSipio 2006;
Leal 2002; Seif 2011). We control for age since it is positively associated with political engagement (Flanagan and Levine 2010). After presenting results from survey data analysis, we share semi-structured interview findings that compare the extent to which youth in the general population and CBO samples engage their parents in political discussions and activity. We draw on fully transcribed interview recordings that we analyzed with the assistance of Dedoose, a mixed-methods software that links survey data to coded qualitative interview data. Interview excerpts were edited for clarity.

FINDINGS FROM SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics. Weighted survey results from the general population indicate that 53% of young adults ages 18 - 26 in California (who attended school in California before the age of 17) were raised by a parent/guardian who followed politics. Results also indicate that 54% of the general population comes from an immigrant family, underscoring the size of the immigrant population in this state and the importance of understanding its political socialization. Thirty-five percent of this population was raised by a parent with a college degree, while 38% come from a low-income background. Compared to the general population, youth in the CBO sample are less likely to report being raised by a parent/guardian who followed politics (34%), and disproportionately come from immigrant families with low socioeconomic backgrounds. Just over 60% of both samples reported voting. However, when compared to the general population, CBO youth are noticeably more likely to have worked on a social or political issue affecting their community, shared their perspective on a social/political issue online, and protested.

Youth in the CBO sample are younger than those in the general population, reflecting the difficulty in obtaining contact information for older age-eligible CBO alumni for this study.
Because girls outnumber boys in CBO memberships and tend to be more responsive to surveys, they dominate the CBO sample. The CBO sample also consists almost exclusively of youth of color and contains many non-citizens. A relatively high proportion of CBO youth attend college.

**Regression results.** Table 2 presents results assessing differences in parents’ political engagement between youth in immigrant and non-immigrant families. Model 1 consists of a bivariate logistic regression predicting the odds of having been raised by a politically engaged parent for those in the general population and CBO youth. Results for both samples indicate that youth from immigrant families are notably less likely than those from non-immigrant families to report that their parents followed political affairs (p<.001). These results remain consistent in Model 2 which controls for youth’s socioeconomic background. Figure 1 illustrates these results and shows similarly low probabilities of having a politically engaged parent for youth from immigrant families in the general population (probability = .15) and the CBO sample (probability = .13). Importantly, these estimates suggest that youth with politicized parents do not disproportionately participate in CBOs. Findings also align with prior immigrant incorporation literature demonstrating that first-generation immigrant parents encounter barriers to political participation (Junn 1999; Ramakrishnan 2005; Wong et al. 2011). Thus, it appears that youth from immigrant families receive less guidance from their parents on how to engage with U.S. politics than those from non-immigrant families.

The next set of analyses, restricted to youth from immigrant families from the general population, test the applicability of the top-down model of political socialization. Table 3 shows results for logistic regressions exploring the extent to which having a politically engaged parent predicts registering to vote, participating in community activism, participating in online activism,
and protesting among the general population of youth with at least one foreign-born parent. Findings, which excluded non-citizens, indicate that having a politically engaged parent positively correlates with registering to vote, but the coefficient for this variable is not statistically significant. The next three analyses include non-citizens, but also control for citizenship. Statistically significant results indicate that having a politically engaged parent predicts the likelihood of participating in community activism, online activism, and protest activity, after controlling for socioeconomic background, college enrollment, and other variables. Those with politically engaged parents are over 1.5 times more likely to participate in these activities, after accounting for the other variables. Regression results for the general population also show that parent college education and youth postsecondary school enrollment correlate with greater participation.

Overall, findings based on the general population suggest that the top-down model of political socialization applies to youth in immigrant families, as parent political engagement has an independent effect on youths’ political participation. These findings are important given the relatively low rates at which youth perceive their parents as being politically engaged. In other words, for most youth, parents’ lack of political engagement suppresses their own participation.

We find a different trend, however, for CBO youth. As shown in Table 4, having a politically engaged parent does not predict political participation, as measured in this study. Statistically insignificant coefficients for parent engagement are small for all activities with the exception of a modest positive (yet still statistically insignificant) coefficient for online activism. In other words, the top-down model of political socialization does not appear to apply for these young people, as it does for those in the general population sample. Interestingly, non-citizens are more likely than U.S. citizen CBO members to engage in online activism and protest activity, net of other
variables. This finding likely reflects noncitizen youths’ involvement in widespread online political and protest activity related to the 2011 campaign for California DREAM ACT that provided some forms of state financial aid to undocumented immigrant students.

Overall, survey results point to the possibility that youths’ experiences in CBOs override family political socialization processes in shaping their patterns of political participation. However, survey data alone do not eliminate the possibility that some CBO alumni represent a self-selected group of politically active youth, equivalent to the small percentage of the general population that are also politically active despite their parents' lack of political engagement. Here, semi-structured interviews offer additional insights into how participation in CBOs affects youth political socialization and their families.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FINDINGS

In-depth interview data gathered from 225 survey participants allow us to examine the extent to which youth produce trickle-up effects in the political socialization of their families. Interviewees were selected for the broader CYAS study using sampling based on gender, race/ethnicity, income background, and CBO affiliation. The interview sample was restricted to former public school students residing in the Greater Los Angeles region and the San Francisco Bay Area. Of the 150 participants from the general population, 80 came from immigrant families and included 50 Latinos, 25 Asian-Pacific Islanders, 3 Blacks, and 2 Whites. The CBOs in our sample were situated in communities with high concentrations of immigrants. As a result, of the 75 CBO interview respondents, 60 came from immigrant families and included 36 Latinos, 19 Asian-Pacific Islanders, and 3 Blacks, and 2 mixed-race individuals. Interviews lasted from 40 minutes to almost 3 hours. In addition to being asked about their family background, education, and employment experiences for the broader study, interviewees were asked to reflect
on their past high school and current political engagement, their perceptions of their parents’
political engagement, and to what extent they engaged their parents in discussion of politics or
influenced their parents’ political activity.

In-depth interview data from both the general population and the CBO alumni mirror
survey data, as youth from immigrant families were less likely than those from non-immigrant
families to perceive their parents as being interested in politics. In both samples of youth from
immigrant families, study participants reported that their immigrant parents encountered
challenges to political participation akin to those discussed in previous immigration literature
(Ramakrishnan 2005; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Wong et al. 2011). Some claimed that their
parents were hindered by their limited understanding of the U.S. political system, while youth
with parents in working-class occupations noted that their parents encountered time constraints.
As Miguel, a 19-year-old Mexican-American whose parents work the night shift for a packing
company, explained, “They work so they don’t have the time to learn about politics.” Asian-
American youth, in particular, claimed that language barriers prevented their parents from
connecting to political processes in the U.S. For example, Naï, a CBO alumnus reported, "My
parents came from Laos, so their English is kind of bad. It was hard for them to understand
what’s going on." Additionally, a number of youth whose parents had been exposed to political
repression in their countries of origin noted that such experiences contributed to their parents’
disengagement. Uriel, a CBO youth activist, explained his parents’ reluctance to engage in U.S.
politics: “I think they were initially scared… My dad came from Guatemala during the civil war
period. His brother was actually killed in the civil war because they thought he was a rebel—he
wasn’t."
Given the barriers to political participation that foreign-born parents encounter, do youth from immigrant families seek to increase the political socialization of their families? Among the general population, the answer is that this rarely occurred. In contrast, most CBO youth actively politicized their parents and other family members. In the following section, we demonstrate the distinct ways in which youth from the general population and CBO population addressed politics within their families.

**Family Without Politics: We Don't Talk About What’s “Out There”**

Most 1.5- and second-generation youth did not grow up discussing politics with their parents. In this section we show that while most youth in the general population were aware that their parents lacked an understanding of political processes in the U.S. or encountered other barriers to participation, very few, whether they were college educated or not, actively sought to educate their parents about U.S. politics or encourage them to get involved. In this sense, many perceived public affairs of state or a public life as irrelevant to the private sphere of the family. Furthermore, often lacking a strong personal investment in politics, most did not seek to expose their parents to political issues. Only a handful of youth reported actively trying to increase their parents’ political understanding or involvement.

Youth in the general population typically felt that politics were abstract from, rather than connected to family affairs, particularly since many believed that their immigrant parents were overwhelmed with more immediate concerns. For example, Mandi, a 22-year-old Chinese-American college graduate, did not broach political topics with her parents, both of whom worked many hours. Valuing the limited uninterrupted family time together, her conversations with them focused on “work and how school is going.” Meanwhile, Gabriel, a 21-year-old Mexican undocumented youth who worked alongside his father in their family gardening
business, enjoyed the fact that he had the opportunity to interact with his father during the day. Even then, when asked if he talked to his parents about political issues, Gabriel responded: “No, just about our family. I just tell them what I think about what is going on with our family, about the problems, just that, but not really into like whatever is out there.”

For the overwhelming majority of children of immigrants in our interview sample, the lack of motivation to engage their parents in political discussion stemmed from a youthful disconnect from political processes well documented in other studies (Zukin et al. 2006; Snell 2010). A good number of young people reported they lacked interest in politics or had other priorities. They were like Martin, a 20-year-old son of a Cuban father and a Salvadoran mother, who stated, “I don’t really care about politics right now.” He was focused, instead, on “work, school, having fun.” Indeed, the lives of many people we spoke to centered around making ends meet, hobbies, keeping up with school work if they were enrolled, and their relationships. They did not share strong opinions about politics.

Another group of youth expressed a distrust of the political system. For example, Jessica, a 19-year-old 1.5-generation interviewee from Guatemala, perceived following politics to be “a waste of time” because politicians “don’t hear you out.” Still, others expressed a sense of powerlessness, intimating that their actions would not produce a meaningful impact on the political processes that affected their lives. For example, 21-year-old Maria, who shared her frustration with the higher education budget cuts, claimed, “I can’t really do much about it… They’re cutting our college programs and it’s just bad, but it would be something a lot bigger and more powerful [than myself] that would have to do something about it.”

Undoubtedly, there were some youth in the general population, especially those in college, who expressed personal interest in politics largely as a result of their politicization in
college. Despite the advent of their own political engagement, they were not accustomed to discussing politics with their parents, and expressed a disinclination to introduce such topics into family interactions. One of these individuals was Eric, a Korean-American and a political science major at a top California university. Eric's father, a naturalized citizen, did not quite understand the political system in this country. Although Eric learned in college the importance of voting, when asked if he had guided his father through the list of ballot initiatives in the previous election, he replied: "I didn’t help my dad vote. I didn’t actually tell him what he should stand for. I think it would take too long."

One factor that deterred some youth from engaging their parents in political discussion was the fear that it would generate conflict. Latish, a Pakistani male and fan of left-leaning politics, claims he avoids political discussions with his parents. Believing that his parents are “too traditional” to concur with his political values, he tells his parents: “I have my opinion, it’s my own, you are not going change mine, I’m not going change yours, all we’re going do is argue about it.” Such evasion of political discussion with parents among some of the more politically oriented youth prevented trickle-up effects in political socialization from occurring in immigrant families.

Yet there are a small number of interviewees from the general population who sought to educate their parents about political issues and encourage their participation. These young people felt that their own participation made a difference in their communities, and therefore were motivated to politicize their parents. A son of Indian immigrant parents and a current university student, Ravi expressed a strong belief in the power of people to impact political processes. Ravi lamented the economic inequalities in his community, but he believed that individuals who experienced poverty and injustice could impact government policies through
voting. He felt it was unfortunate that his parents “saw voting as pointless” and believed that “politics worked for the government, not so much for the people.” Ravi sought to help his parents overcome their skepticism about the voting process, particularly since they held strong opinions about a range of political topics. He claimed he “always” tells them, “If you vote, you now can have a say.” Similarly, Alejandra, a Mexican-American four-year college student who was proud of her campus organizing to stop the higher education cuts, also encouraged her mother to become politically engaged. “I always tell my mom, ‘You have to advocate for different things. If we don’t go to protest and say we don’t like something, things are not going to change. That’s why you need to get involved!’” Alejandra, and a small number of youth like her, was able to actively politicize their parents because they had greater experience with, understanding of, or commitment to political issues than most others in the interview sample.

Community Based Organizations and "Trickle-Up" Political Socialization

In contrast to youth in the general population, most CBO alumni, who were exposed to curricula addressing the social injustices in high school, initiated political discussion with their parents, and many actively sought to influence their parents’ political participation. Youth obtained extensive political experience during their adolescence as they became involved in campaigns addressing issues affecting their schools or communities. These campaigns typically required them to research a social issue, identify potential solutions, meet with decision-makers (including elected leaders), and gather community support for policy changes or programs. CBO alumni consistently reported that their high school experience taught them how to engage in grassroots political processes, regardless of their initial reason for joining their organization. For example, when asked what he learned through his participation in a high school campaign, San, a
Lao Mien youth, gave a response typical of most CBO youth: “I learned critical analysis skills, how to facilitate workshops, public speaking . . . how to work with and talk to adults.”

As with the general population, most CBO youth acknowledged that their immigrant parents encountered linguistic, informational, and other structural barriers to participation. But unlike their counterparts, many went out of their way to educate parents, siblings, and sometimes extended family members about political processes, eventually convincing their immigrant family members that following politics was a worthwhile effort. Some even mobilized their immigrant family members to vote or participate in community-based campaigns. The experiences of these youth evidence the role of CBO grassroots organizing efforts in producing a trickle-up effect in the political socialization of immigrant families.

Almost all CBO youth with immigrant parents claimed to be more invested in and aware of U.S. politics than their parents. Because of this, many sought to educate their parents about political issues that impact their communities. For example, Thuan, a son of refugees, claimed his mom used to be “old-school traditional Vietnamese” so she really did not follow politics in the United States. "Once I got involved," Thuan explained, referring to a campaign to increase funding for public schools, "I educated her a lot more, and now she's more like me." Similarly, twenty-year-old Ignacia shared how she actively informed her Mexican immigrant parents about political issues: “I would be the one in the family always talking about politics. I'd be like, ‘Oh, did you hear about this?’ Or I’d talk to them about the elections and the president.” Ignacia claims her parents were more concerned with working and surviving economically, and therefore believed it was her role to inform them about how politics impacted their lives.

Several CBO youth reported that their parents did not enthusiastically welcome their political activity. But unlike youth from the general population, CBO youth did not shy away
from introducing politics into family discussion when such topics might cause disagreement. Back in high school, Daniel, now 23, poured his energy into a campaign focused on reforming the youth criminal justice system. He would share his enthusiasm for this work with his father, a refugee from Vietnam, who “had the opinion that we couldn’t make a difference.” He adds, “That was infuriating at the time. We would have a lot of arguments, healthy arguments.” To date, Daniel has not stopped discussing politics with his family, claiming his father has become more supportive of local grassroots political efforts. Similarly, Myrna, a 1.5-generation Mexican immigrant who came to the United States when she was six, stated that her mother initially thought politics was a waste of time, but had a change of heart "slowly, over the course of years.” Gay marriage was among the many issues that Myrna discussed with her mom. While her mother was initially "very against the whole LGBT community," Myrna's persistence changed her mother's views. Now her mother “tells other people and makes arguments in support of gay marriage by herself, and it’s like, yeah, Mom, you go!”

Other youth expressed that their political involvement sometimes worried their parents, but this did not stop them from continuing their campaign work in the community and at home. For example, Patrick, a twenty-three-year-old Filipino-American explains, “When I first got started going to protests and talking about American imperialism, my mom was like ‘Whoa, what’s happening?!’ My mom was really scared because she knows people who are involved in the Philippines get kidnapped or something bad happens to them.” According to Patrick, however, once his mother learned more about his antiwar organizing efforts and his involvement in a campaign to reform the juvenile justice system, she grew proud of him and would share stories about his political involvement with her coworkers and family members. Several youth whose refugee parents had witnessed political repression in their home countries of Laos,
Vietnam, and Guatemala also expressed that their parents shared concerns about their political activity. As with Patrick, most reported that their parents eventually supported their causes after learning that their efforts posed limited or no risks.

Youth who had undocumented parents, or who were undocumented themselves, had to overcome parents’ fears as well, but for a different reason. In line with Abrego’s (2011) research showing that 1.5-generation undocumented immigrants tend to be less fearful of political engagement than those who migrated as adults, some claimed that their parents worried that visible political activity could put them at risk of deportation. Nayeli, a 1.5-generation immigrant from Mexico, explains that her family worked very hard to establish itself economically without drawing any attention from government authorities—so her mother became very nervous when Nayeli started attending rallies and protests aimed at addressing the unfair criminalization of youth of color. “After years of me getting into the news all the time,” Nayeli claims, her mother “got over it” and sometimes “gets into the politics.” Nayeli and several other youth reported educating their parents about legal avenues for political engagement for undocumented immigrants in order to allay their fears.

Meanwhile, youth whose parents were naturalized citizens focused more energy on mobilizing their parents and other family members to vote. As adolescents, these youth were exposed to the electoral processes as they met political candidates and campaigned for or against local ballot measures. Flora, a 25-year-old Latina, serves as one of many examples of youth who are highly invested in the electoral process. In high school, Flora attended local candidates’ forums and participated in Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts in her East LA community. Adamant that “voting is one way to making a difference,” Flora has, over the years, made sure her parents regularly vote. “I have gone to their house to say, today is the election. You need to
go out and vote. I will drive you,” she explains. Like others, Flora makes sure her parents understand the ballot measures and the positions of political candidates running for key offices. This sometimes means that youth provide parents and other families with guidance on how to vote. For example, Meagan, a 26 year-old Chinese-American, takes advantage of the absentee ballot to direct how her parents, siblings, and grandmother vote:

We sit down and I tell them, “This is how you should vote for this issue.” At first I had to convince them to listen to me but at this point they’re like, “Okay, so Prop A, yes? No? All right.” They just kind of follow however I vote. Honestly, it’s really helpful for us as a family to go over some issue because you see all these signs and newspaper advertising and media advertising, and a lot of the times it’s totally skewed.

CBO youth do not restrict their family mobilization efforts to the electoral process. Some recruit their parents and other family members to participate in local grassroots political activities. Evelyn, who became involved in a South Los Angeles health campaign, regularly invited her Mexican immigrant parents to community events that aimed to educate the public about personal health and political health initiatives, such as Obama’s health care reform. Sutra, a Cambodian-American, in the past recruited his father to attend meetings in support of the creation of an Oakland youth center that would expand after-school programs. Meanwhile, Felipe convinced his parents to attend local community meetings focused on environmental issues affecting their neighborhood.

A small number of youth claimed to have inspired their parents’ enduring political engagement. For example, Justino, now 21, who was brought to the United States from Mexico at age 4, gave himself credit not only for his mother’s active political participation, but for his
sister’s participation as well. In high school he got involved in a campaign to close a chemical waste company that was negatively impacting the health of residents in his community:

As I became more active, I would try to get my family to support, come to the rallies. My sister eventually came to the rallies—my mom, too. My mom was like, ‘Wow, this is serious.’ So then she started helping out with the campaign.

The youth-led campaign to close chemical waste company was a success. Justino, along with his family members, witnessed the potential of ordinary people to make a difference in the community. This experience left a lasting impression on Justino, who is now involved in a campaign to increase local affordable housing. When asked if he has continued to engage his family in his political work, Justino responded: “I’ve influenced them to get involved and they’ve motivated me to keep going.”

Youth who participated in organizing campaigns while in high school developed an early understanding of how they could become involved in political processes. Trained in grassroots mobilization efforts in high school, many brought their political campaign work home, often changing their parents’ understanding of the political system, and sometimes changing their participation patterns. Now, as young adults, many continue to engage their parents in political discussion and activity. In summary, our findings suggest that CBOs can facilitate trickle-up effects in political participation of immigrant families by developing the civic capacities of young people.

**DISCUSSION**

Drawing on data from a representative sample of California youth as well as alumni of politically oriented high school CBO groups, this study sheds light on the political socialization
of youth in immigrant families and the role of CBOs is mediating family processes. Aligning with earlier research indicating that first generation immigrants tend to be less involved in U.S. politics than their native-born counterparts (Ramakrishnan 2006; Wong et al. 2011), this investigation shows that youth from immigrant families are less likely than those from non-immigrant families to report having politically engaged parents. Privileging youth’s own perceptions, this study also offers empirical evidence to demonstrate that many youth are conscious of their parents’ lack of connection to U.S. politics and attribute their parents’ lack of political engagement to structural barriers, including language barriers and time constraints, closely connected to the process of adjusting to life in a new country.

Given immigrant parents’ barriers to political participation, this study assesses the conditions under which top-down and trickle-up models of political socialization apply to 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth. Although scholars have long noted that parents’ political engagement impacts children’s political engagement (Greenstein 1965; Hess and Torney-Purta 1967; Easton and Dennis 1969; Jennings and Niemi 1974; Andolina 2002), recent work has questioned the extent to which such trends apply to immigrant families (Wong and Tseng 2008; Bloemraad and Trost 2011). Our evidence based on a representative survey sample of California’s youth indicates strong support for the top-down model; immigrant parents’ political engagement (or lack thereof) predicts youths’ participation in electoral politics, community activism, online political discussion, and protest activity.

At the same time, we also present empirical evidence indicating that the top-down model of political socialization does not always apply. When youth are highly politicized outside of their families, they can overcome their parents’ barriers to political participation. We show that parents’ political engagement does not correlate with patterns of political participation among
CBO alumni members who participated in grassroots political campaigns while they were in high school. Although survey findings from a cross-sectional convenience sample of CBO alumni should be interpreted with caution, they do appear to indicate that the political knowledge and efficacy young people attained through participation in campaigns for immigrant rights, education justice, juvenile justice, or other issues that affect their lives, trumps the political socialization that occurs within their families. These findings offer support for prior research that demonstrates that politically salient organizations and grassroots mobilization foster youths’ long-term political engagement (McFarland and Thomas 2006; Ginwright and Cammarota 2007; Rogers, et al. 2012).

This study also suggests that youth involvement in politically oriented organizations can inspire trickle-up effects (McDevitt and Chaffee 2002) in the political socialization of immigrant families. While in-depth interviews demonstrate that most 1.5 and second generation immigrant youth in the general population avoid promoting their parents’ political engagement, CBO alumni in our study sample possess the capacity and motivation to discuss political issues with their parents. CBO youth often seek to transform their parents’ political attitudes and behaviors, thus helping their families overcome fears about participation in contentious political activity in the U.S. context. When equipped with civic skills and political information, youth are equipped to further the political incorporation of their families. Accordingly, our study contributes to prior research that demonstrates the agency of youth in politicizing their immigrant families (Wong and Tseng 2008; Bloemraad and Trost 2011) by adding an important mechanism (youth’s CBO involvement) that mitigates structural barriers to immigrants’ political engagement.

Our findings demonstrating trickle-up effects in the political socialization of families therefore have broader theoretical implications for understanding the impact of CBOs on civic
and political life. Much of the recent work on civic organizations focuses on the individual-level influence of organizational participation in terms of patterns of civic and political engagement (Putnam 2000; Fung 2003; Skocpol 2003). By highlighting the impact of CBO alumni on the political socialization of their parents, this study reveals family-level effects of individual membership. Specifically, we show that CBOs that offer young people extensive political exposure not only politicize individual youth participants, they also have an effect on the politicization of families. Most CBO youth seek to overcome their family’s structural barriers to political participation by sharing political information and encouraging their political engagement. Findings from this study therefore complement an earlier body of work that suggests that union membership among individual adult workers can impact the voting patterns of family members (Freeman and Medoff 1984; Delaney, Masters, and Schwochau 1990).

In short, this study suggests the need for researchers to further explore how and to what extent individual membership in civic organizations can impact family-level political socialization processes among immigrants and other groups that encounter barriers to political participation. Keeping in mind that CBOs targeting adult immigrants and other disenfranchised populations remain in short supply (Gleeson and Bloemraad 2012; Putnam 2000; Verba et al. 1995) and that youth can exercise some level of agency in responding to structural forces that affect their lives (Weis and Fine 2000; White and Wyn 2008), researchers should pay greater attention to the extent to which different types of politically salient youth organizations impact the political engagement of members’ families. Additionally, future work should compare the political socialization of youth in immigrant families residing in different national contexts.
California Young Adult Study

Table 1. Descriptions of General Population and Community-Based Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Variables of Interest</th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>CBO Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raised by a parent who follows politics</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comes from an immigrant family</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socioeconomic indicators</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised by parent with a college degree</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income as a teenager</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth political engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered to vote</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked on a social/political issues</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Perspective on social/political issues online</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended protest</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Demographic Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial/Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S citizen</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noncitizen</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postsecondary Educational Enrollment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends a community college</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends/Graduated from 4 year college</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample Size**                                                    | 2200               | 410       |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Population (n=2200)</th>
<th></th>
<th>CBO Youth (n=410)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant family</td>
<td>0.377***</td>
<td>0.547***</td>
<td>0.278***</td>
<td>0.342***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.045)</td>
<td>(0.071)</td>
<td>(0.073)</td>
<td>(0.095)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has college educated parent</td>
<td>2.514***</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.737***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.375)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.144)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income background</td>
<td>0.455***</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.060)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.303)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p = < .05, **p = < .01, ***p = < .001
Table 3. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions of Political Engagement
California Young Adult Study, General Population Sample Respondents from Immigrant Families (N=1312)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Registered to Vote</th>
<th>Community Activism</th>
<th>Online Activism</th>
<th>Protested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politically engaged parent</td>
<td>1.363 (0.265)</td>
<td>1.663 ** (0.314)</td>
<td>1.604 ** (0.292)</td>
<td>1.611 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has college educated parent</td>
<td>1.387 (0.348)</td>
<td>1.440 (0.320)</td>
<td>1.251 (0.270)</td>
<td>1.464 (0.384)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income background</td>
<td>1.182 (0.264)</td>
<td>1.036 (0.201)</td>
<td>0.786 (0.151)</td>
<td>1.031 (0.236)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in community college</td>
<td>2.198 *** (0.503)</td>
<td>1.854 * (0.454)</td>
<td>1.246 (0.292)</td>
<td>1.438 (0.437)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in four-year college / Has BA degree</td>
<td>2.656 *** (0.586)</td>
<td>2.622 *** (0.571)</td>
<td>1.792 ** (0.367)</td>
<td>2.233 ** (0.597)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-citizen</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.900 (0.250)</td>
<td>0.526 * (0.140)</td>
<td>1.022 (0.317)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.403 *** (0.067)</td>
<td>0.944 (0.038)</td>
<td>1.008 (0.037)</td>
<td>0.904 * (0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>1040</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>1180</td>
<td>1180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Table 4. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regressions of Political Engagement  
California Young Adult Study, CBO Youth from Immigrant families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Registered to Vote</th>
<th>Community Activism</th>
<th>Online Activism</th>
<th>Protested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politically engaged parent</td>
<td>0.979 (0.346)</td>
<td>1.025 (0.278)</td>
<td>1.210 (0.315)</td>
<td>0.889 (0.230)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has college educated parent</td>
<td>0.531 (0.255)</td>
<td>0.584 (0.213)</td>
<td>0.998 (0.365)</td>
<td>0.921 (0.340)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income background</td>
<td>1.242 (0.606)</td>
<td>1.139 (0.474)</td>
<td>1.223 (0.493)</td>
<td>2.787 * (1.231)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in community college</td>
<td>1.800 (0.809)</td>
<td>1.402 (0.502)</td>
<td>0.830 (0.293)</td>
<td>1.749 (0.619)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in 4 year college/</td>
<td>1.653 (0.750)</td>
<td>1.669 (0.567)</td>
<td>0.956 (0.323)</td>
<td>1.366 (0.457)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has BA degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-citizen</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.320 (0.399)</td>
<td>2.034 * (0.594)</td>
<td>1.987 * (0.572)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.811 (0.203)</td>
<td>0.985 (0.056)</td>
<td>1.114 (0.062)</td>
<td>0.971 (0.052)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<=.05, **p<=.01, ***p<=.001
Figure 1

Predicted Probabilities of Parent Political Engagement for low-income youth without a college educated parent

Source: California Young Adult Study

Predicted Probabilities of Parent Political Engagement

Immigrant Non-Immigrant

Source: California Young Adult Study
Endnotes

1 The response rates for the cell phone and landline samples were 56.1% and 58.5%, respectively. These rates are significantly above the average response rates at the time of the survey, which tend to range from 40-50%. These high response rates can be attributable in part to the fact that potential respondents were called up to 31 times and received $30 gift cards for their participation.

2 Sampling weights use 2010 American Community Survey data to account for the study design and response rates. Additionally, weights account for oversampling of low-income census tracts, number of phones available to the respondent, and whether the survey was completed over a landline or cell phone.

3 Attempts were made to update contact information for all individuals listed in past membership rosters. However, organizations did not consistently keep records of all past memberships. Staff turnover during this time period contributed to missing membership lists.

4 Response rate for this convenience sample is 77.3%, and is calculated using the American Association for Public Opinion Research Method 3.

5 We also controlled for gender, since it can impact political participation (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Marcelo and Kirby 2007); however, it was not statistically significant in any of our analyses. Given our limited sample sizes, we opted to present findings for more parsimonious models.

6 Interview data collected from CBO staff and survey participants suggests that these CBOs improve the academic achievement of some students by motivating them to do well in school, connecting them to role models, and referring them to other academic support services. Additionally, survey analysis reveals that CBO youth are more likely to attend college than the general population even after controlling for high school academic performance. Such findings are in line with earlier research indicating that high school civic participation, including participation in youth organizing, contributes to the educational attainment of youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Ginwright and Cammarota 2007; Brand 2010; Rogers et al. 2012).

7 Additional analyses, not presented here, compare differences in perceptions of parent political engagement between youth from Latino and Asian immigrant families. After controlling for socioeconomic status, results indicate no statistically significant differences between Latino and Asian youths’ perceptions of their immigrant parents’ political engagement. We therefore only present findings for parsimonious models in this paper.
Findings remained consistent in a separate analysis that focused exclusively on youth who had enrolled in college, indicating that the immigrant parents’ political engagement or lack thereof impacted the political participation of two and four-year college students from the general population.

As found in earlier research (Levitt 2001; Espiritu 2003; Smith 2006), in-depth interviews also revealed that a minority of youth had immigrant parents who followed homeland politics. And others, particularly Latino youth, noted that their mothers, and occasionally their fathers, were civically engaged in school, church, and community activities. This is not surprising since civic organizations tend to be more accessible to immigrants than mainstream political organizations (Wong 2006).
References


