

Intergenerational Family Relations, Civic Organisations, and the Political Socialisation of Second-Generation Immigrant Youth

Veronica Terriquez and Hyeyoung Kwon

We build upon research on immigrant political incorporation, intergenerational family relations, and civic organizations in order to investigate the relationship between parents' political engagement and their children's civic and political participation. Drawing on survey data from a representative sample of California's 1.5 and second generation youth population, our analyses demonstrate support for the top-down model of political socialization in which barriers to immigrant parents' political engagement suppress the civic and political participation of their US-raised children. However, this is not the case for our unique sample of youth who participated in activist civic organizations. Our findings from follow-up in-depth interviews with survey respondents indicate that, while most youth do not actively politicize their immigrant parents, those who gained significant political experience through activist organizations often seek to orient their immigrant parents to US politics. In describing the efforts of some youth 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 activist civic associations should consider the impact of individual-level organizational membership on family-level patterns of political engagement.

Keywords: Immigrant Families; Political Participation; Youth

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Today, immigrants and their children comprise over one-fifth of the United States population (Foner and Dreby 2011). This large-scale migration has shifted the demographic composition of many American communities in the last few decades. In light of these demographic changes, researchers have begun to examine the civic and political incorporation patterns of today's immigrants and the subsequent impacts on American society. Part of this body of work examines the role of civic organisations in shaping how immigrants develop social infrastructure and build political power (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Wong 2006). To date, however, only limited work has focused on the civic and political engagement of youth from immigrant families (Bloemraad and Trost 2008; Callahan and Muller 2013; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Okamoto, Herda, and Hartzog 2013; Wong and Tseng 2008).

To contribute to this emerging scholarship, we focus on the roles of families and civic organisations in shaping such youths' political socialisation—that is, the continual and interactive processes through which young people acquire knowledge about, attitudes towards, and a sense of agency in the public arena (Wong and Tseng 2008). Political socialisation affects an individual's civic participation, by which we mean such activities as volunteering, working with others to solve problems (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), and using digital media to address public concerns (Kahne, Lee, and Feezell 2013). It also impacts youths' political participation, defined as activities directly aimed at influencing government actions (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Given that the children of immigrants comprise a significant proportion of the youth population, understanding their political socialisation has important consequences for the functioning of democratic institutions.

Youth from immigrant families, consisting of the 1.5 generation (those born abroad and raised in the US) and second generation (those born and raised in the US), also present a theoretically interesting case for understanding the intergenerational transmission of political behaviours and family relations. These young people's foreign-born parents—first-generation immigrants—often encounter linguistic, informational, cultural, and/or legal barriers to full participation in mainstream US society (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Wong et al. 2011). As a result, and of necessity, many children of immigrants facilitate their family's social and economic incorporation by helping their parents navigate US social and economic institutions (Foner and Dreby 2011). Yet, we have limited understanding of whether or not these US-raised young adults also promote their parents' political incorporation.

As such, we build upon research on immigrant political incorporation, intergenerational family relations, and civic organisations in order to investigate whether or not parents' political engagement impacts their children's civic and political participation, and vice versa. We rely on survey and semi-structured interview data collected from youth from immigrant families in California, the state with the largest immigrant population in the US. Our data come from a randomly selected sample of youth, as well as a sample of activists. We test the applicability of the *top-down model* of political socialisation, which predicts that immigrant parents orient (or fail to orient) their

children to civic and political participation, and also consider the applicability of a *trickle-up model* of political socialisation in which youth actively politicise their parents.

In examining the intergenerational transmission of political behaviours, our study makes four key contributions. First, we suggest that barriers to political engagement experienced by immigrant parents in effect suppress the civic and political participation of their children. We find that the top-down model of political socialisation applies to most immigrant families. Second, we demonstrate that very few youth actively orient their parents to politics. Although 1.5- and second-generation immigrants disproportionately tend to provide financial and other types of instrumental assistance to family members (Foner and Dreby 2011), we show that young people typically do not assume responsibility for the nonessential task of orienting their parents towards politics—largely because youth themselves lack an interest in politics, or have yet to acquire sufficient political experience to educate and mobilise their parents. Third, we find that extensive political experience gained in adolescence can help compensate for the limited political socialisation that such youth obtain from their families. And finally, we demonstrate that young people can orient their parents to politics if they acquire significant experience in political arenas through civic organisations. In evidencing support for the *trickle-up* model of political socialisation, we argue that future research should consider the impact of individual-level organisational membership on family-level patterns of civic and political participation.

The Political Engagement of Immigrant Parents and Youth

Political engagement—a psychological orientation towards politics often measured by political interest, knowledge, consciousness, and efficacy—is an important precursor to participation (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). The extant research suggests that first-generation immigrant parents encounter barriers to political engagement (Portes and Rumbaut 2006), which may then shape political socialisation processes within immigrant families. Adult immigrants can be disconnected from US politics, because they are concerned with settling in and gaining an economic foothold in this country, encounter language barriers, or lack US citizenship (Wong et al. 2011). Additionally, those who remain undocumented may fear deportation or be preoccupied with other challenges related to their immigration status (Menjívar and Abrego 2012).

While foreign-born parents can encounter immigration-related challenges to political engagement, their children may experience fewer barriers. Compulsory enrollment in the US K-12 education system exposes the 1.5 and second generations to political knowledge that can promote engagement (Callahan and Muller 2013). Unlike some of their parents, almost all 1.5- and second-generation immigrants speak English fluently (Portes and Rumbaut 2001) and can access mainstream media sources, including online sources, that can further political engagement (Bloemraad and Trost 2008). However, a minority of 1.5-generation immigrant youth lack US citizenship. Yet, considering the visible political activism of some college-going

undocumented youth (Nicholls 2013), it remains unclear how and to what extent citizenship status impacts patterns of youths' engagement in politics.

Overall, 1.5- and second-generation immigrants tend to be more integrated into mainstream US society than their foreign-born parents. This does not, however, mean that 1.5- and second-generation youth exhibit high levels of civic and political participation, or that they participate more than their parents, especially when parents are naturalised citizens (Ramakrishnan 2005). Regardless of where their parents were born, youth remain relatively politically disengaged when compared to older adults whose life, roles, and institutional connections tend to be more stable (Flanagan and Levine 2010).

Youths' Roles in Immigrant Families

What role do young people play in the political socialisation processes within immigrant families? According to the dominant model of family political socialisation harkening back to the 1960s, parents typically orient their children to politics, not the other way around (Greenstein 1965; Hess and Torney-Purta 1967). Beyond any indirect influences parents' socio-economic status may have on their children's political socialisation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), parents can directly orient their children towards public participation by modelling political activity or engaging them in discussions about current events and political issues (McIntosh, Hart, and Youniss 2007; Warren and Wicks 2011). This top-down model of socialisation suggests that parents' political engagement (or lack thereof) influences their children's civic and political participation.

Yet, the applicability of this top-down model to dynamics within immigrant families remains in question since migration tends to alter intergenerational family dynamics. As noted above, US-raised individuals tend to be more politically engaged and better integrated into US mainstream institutions when compared to first-generation immigrants. It is, therefore, possible that immigrant parents' below-average political engagement may have limited bearing on their children's participation. After all, recent evidence suggests that parents' socio-economic status tends to have weaker effects on the political participation of 1.5- and second-generation youth than on those from non-immigrant families (Callahan and Muller 2013).

It may also be possible that US-raised youth politicise their immigrant parents. For example, McDevitt and Chaffee's (2000, 2002) quasi-experimental studies demonstrate the effects of high school civics curricula on youths' capacities to engage their parents in political discussion. Although their studies do not explicitly focus on immigrant families, McDevitt and Chaffee find that when youth gain political knowledge and initiate political discussions with their parents, they evince *trickle-up* effects in the political behaviours of their parents. They suggest that youths' interest in politics prompts parents to seek political information and express their political opinions. Interestingly, McDevitt and Chaffee also note that the effects of school civics curricula are strongest in families from low socio-economic backgrounds.

These studies suggest that when children possess political information, they are especially likely to serve as politicising agents in the types of families that tend to be less politically engaged.

Accordingly, this *trickle-up model* of political socialisation may apply to the experiences of 1.5- and second-generation youth. After all, youth in such families disproportionately assume responsibility over their families' affairs, since they are able to draw on their familiarity with US culture and education, as well as their English language proficiency, in order to translate English language materials for their parents and help them navigate US institutions (Foner and Dreby 2011; Kwon 2014). Such youth who are exposed to political information and activity through their US schooling and extra-curricular activities could conceivably orient their parents towards civic and political activity.

Tentative evidence relying on data collected from non-random samples of youth suggests that this may be the case. For example, Wong and Tseng (2008) find that in comparison to those with native-born parents, students from immigrant families are more likely to explain political materials (such as sample ballots, candidate mailings, and naturalisation processes) to their parents. Meanwhile, Bloemraad and Trost's (2008) examination of immigrant family mobilisation processes reveals that youths' access to English language media (including the Internet), school curriculum, and peers provide them with the information to recruit their parents to participate in protest activity. As such, non-family institutions appear to catalyse political participation among the 1.5 and second generations (see also Callahan and Muller 2013). Still, it remains unclear whether or not most 1.5- and second-generation youth, because of their age, are sufficiently politically engaged and possess enough political experience to promote their parents' participation (Flanagan and Levine 2010).

Volunteer Associations in the Politicisation of Youth

To varying degrees, youth volunteer associations can function as a non-family source of political socialisation. While not all youth associations effectively politicise their members or meet their stated civic aims (Eliasoph 2011), some can have lasting impacts on youths' political participation if they require a significant time commitment; impart civic experiences, skills, and habits (McFarland and Thomas 2006); or engage members in political activism (McAdam 1988). Therefore, much like labor unions (Terriquez 2011) and other civic organisations (Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Wong 2006), some youth associations may further the political incorporation of immigrants.

Youth Organising (YO) groups are one type of youth association that may promote the political engagement and participation of 1.5- and second-generation youth. Emerging in California and elsewhere in the 1990s and subsequently spreading all over the country, YO groups involve mostly low-income youth in grassroots campaigns that address educational inequalities, health issues, environmental justice, juvenile justice, immigrant rights, and other issues (Torres-Fleming, Valdes, and Pillai 2010). These

groups typically provide their members with political education, offer them opportunities to meet with and lobby policy-makers, and encourage them to reach out to and mobilise peers and adults for the purpose of campaigns (Rogers, Mediratta, and Shah 2012). The extensive political experience that young people acquire through participating in YO campaigns might, therefore, eclipse the political socialisation that they receive at home, and may also motivate some to politicise their families.

Until now, the research on these youth groups, like the research on volunteer organisations more broadly (Fung 2003), has focused either on the individual-level effects of membership on patterns of civic and political participation or on the outcomes of specific youth-led campaigns (for a recent review see Rogers, Mediratta, and Shah 2012). Studies have largely overlooked the potential effects of youths' individual membership on family-level patterns of political participation. Thus, any examination of whether or not YO members politicise their families has implications not only for testing the link between organisational ties and family political socialisation processes, but also for theorising the family as a unit of analysis when examining the political outcomes associated with organisational membership.

Present Study

This study examines the intergenerational transmission of political behaviours in immigrant families and the impact of politically salient youth organisations on political socialisation processes within such families. We address two main questions:

- (1) Does immigrant parents' political engagement predict youths' civic and political participation?
- (2) Do 1.5- and second-generation youth typically politicise their parents?

We consider how the answers to these questions might differ based on whether or not youth have experience in a YO group. In addressing these questions our research sheds light on the directionality of political socialisation in immigrant families. Our analyses focuses on young people from California, a state that has long received immigrants, but has experienced an especially large influx of immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and Asia within the last 40 years. In this state, unlike the rest of the nation, the young adult children of immigrants outnumber those of native born parentage. California is also home to a large immigrant rights movement and many community-based organisations that aim to address the needs of the state's racially diverse population. This civic infrastructure creates 'mobilising opportunities' (Ramirez 2013), and therefore, youth in California may exhibit greater civic and political participation than in other states.

Data

We draw on data from the California Young Adult Study, a mixed-methods investigation of the postsecondary educational, employment, and civic engagement

experiences of 18–26-year-olds who attended school in California before the age of 17. We use telephone survey data to test top-down models of political socialisation (research question #1 above), and rely on in-person semi-structured interview data to examine trickle-up patterns of political socialisation (question #2). We draw on information gathered from two samples of youth: (i) a randomly selected sample, and (ii) alumni of YO groups that engage high school students in grassroots campaigns.

The first sample, hereinafter referred to as the ‘general population,’ was selected through random digit dialing of landline telephones and cell phones in California, and includes an oversampling of youth residing in high poverty census tracts.¹ Survey data were collected from 2200 respondents in 2011. When sampling weights are used in the analysis of data, the results are representative of the racial/ethnic, Latino immigrant, and income composition of the study population.² The co-authors and a team of researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 175 survey respondents from the general population. Interviewees were selected for a follow-up interview using quota sampling based on demographics. Interviewees primarily resided in the greater San Francisco and Los Angeles metropolitan areas. Here we focus our analysis on 57 young people who were raised by politically disengaged immigrant parents. Data from this group allow us to assess whether or not such youth aimed to politicise their parents. This sample includes 42 Latinos, 14 Asian-Pacific Islanders, and 1 Black respondent, of whom 27 were men and 30 were women. We collected data on youths’ family background, their past high school and current political participation, their own and their parents’ political engagement, the extent to which youth initiated discussions about politics with their parents or influenced their parents’ political activity, and other topics. Interviews ranged from forty minutes to three hours.

The second sample comes from the alumni rosters of eight YO groups with a ten-year track record of engaging inner-city high school adolescents in social justice campaigns in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Fresno. Often as part of larger coalitions and networks, these organisations mobilise their adolescent members around educational equity, juvenile justice, immigrant rights, and other issues. While frequently recruited by their own peers, members receive ongoing trainings on grassroots organising strategies and mentoring from adult staff. This adult guidance enables adolescents to exercise leadership in grassroots campaigns. In line with prior research (Rogers, Mediratta, and Shah 2012), YO groups in this study enhance members’ civic skills, develop their political consciousness, and provide them with roadmaps for how to address community concerns through political processes.

We obtained our YO alumni sample from available membership rosters from 2004–2011.³ This survey sample contains data from 410 youths, ages 18–26, who participated in these organisations while still in high school.⁴ We also rely on in-person semi-structured interviews with alumni, focusing our analyses on 51 children of immigrants whose parents were not politically engaged. These data provide information about the political socialisation and activity of YO alumni. Although we cannot account for unobserved characteristics—such as inherent political motivation or enthusiasm—that might correlate with self-selection into civic activities, interview

data do capture one or more reasons why respondents initially joined their YO group. Nearly two-thirds (34 out of 51) joined because they were recruited by peers. Another 11 stated that they also joined for social reasons. The suggestion here is that most adolescents who joined activist youth organising groups were not inherently political themselves, nor were they encouraged to join these organisations by their parents.

Measures and Analysis

We first describe the general population and YO alumni samples. Although, we also present data on youth from non-immigrant families, our research interests lead us to focus our analyses on those from immigrant families. We identify youth from immigrant families as those who reported having at least one foreign-born parent or guardian. We then use logistic regressions to examine separately for each sample the relationship between parents' political engagement and youths' civic and political participation in early adulthood. The independent variable, parent political engagement, is a dichotomous measure based on this survey question: 'Were you raised by someone who followed what was going on in government or public affairs?' This dummy variable measures interest in politics, a key indicator of engagement and a strong predictor of participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Although, we ideally would rely on parents' reports of their own engagement, we still found this measure valid and reliable across both samples as evidenced by the correspondence between study participants' responses to both survey and semi-structured interview questions about their parents' political engagement while they were still young.

The dependent variables consist of five dichotomous measures of participation, the first four of which account for activity within the past year. Two are frequently used indicators of civic engagement: volunteering (based on a question asking if the respondent conducted any volunteer community service) and community work (based on a question asking if the respondent worked with others to address an issue impacting his/her community). Because of the growing importance of social media as a site for youth civic engagement (Kahne, Lee, and Feezell 2013), we include a measure of online civic expression or 'online voice' (based on a question asking if the respondent shared his or her perspective on a political/social issue online). Finally, we examine two measures of political participation: attendance at a protest or public rally and registering to vote.

In a first set of models, we control for family socio-economic background, which can shape the intergenerational transmission of civic and political behaviours (Callahan and Muller 2013; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Analyses include two dichotomous measures: a dummy variable that accounts for whether or not the respondent was raised by a parent with a college education, and a second measure that indicates if the respondent came from a low-income family (determined by free or reduced-rate lunch eligibility while in high school or by parents' reliance on public assistance). A second set of models add other characteristics of youth that may predict participation, including race/ethnicity (Kasinitz et al. 2008), US citizenship

(Wong et al. 2011), gender, age, and postsecondary education (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).⁵

After presenting results from survey data analysis, we share results from in-depth interviews. We use these data to assess whether youth from immigrant families in the general population actively politicise their parents and exhibit patterns of trickle-up socialisation, or instead refrain from engaging their parents in politics. We also determine if YO alumni are particularly likely to encourage their parents' political engagement. Our findings are based on analyses of fully transcribed interviews that were initially coded into broad topical categories and then recoded inductively based on emerging themes, with an eye towards identifying patterns of trickle-up political socialisation and potential causal mechanisms explaining such patterns. We use pseudonyms to preserve the respondents' confidentiality, and edit interview excerpts for clarity.

Survey Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the general population and YO alumni, disaggregated by immigrant background. The first three columns contain results for the general population of 18–26-year-olds in California (excluding first-generation immigrants).⁶ Results reflect the state's racial/ethnic make-up as Latino youth outnumber Whites (44% compared to 35%), and Asian American youth comprise 11% of the population. African Americans make up only 6%. Among youth from immigrant families, Latinos comprise the majority (63%), followed by Asian Americans (19%). Results also indicate that youth from immigrant families come from lower socio-economic backgrounds than their non-immigrant counterparts.

The bottom section of the table contains findings for key variables of interest and shows the results of bivariate significance tests comparing youth from immigrant and non-immigrant families. Findings for the general population indicate that youth from immigrant families are significantly less likely than their non-immigrant counterparts to have been raised by a politically engaged parent ($p < .001$). The results also demonstrate that youth from immigrant families are less likely than those from non-immigrant families to do community work ($p < .05$), share their perspective online ($p < .01$), and register to vote ($p < .001$). (Additional analyses not shown here due to space limitations indicate that differences in socio-economic status largely explain unequal participation between young people from immigrant and non-immigrant families. However, immigrant parents' greater political disengagement contributes—to varying degrees—to 1.5- and second-generation youths' lower rates of participation.)

The right three columns of Table 1 describe the YO sample. It is worth noting that the YO alumni sample consists almost exclusively of non-white youth, and that women outnumber men, reflecting a gender imbalance in organisational memberships. This table also shows that a high proportion of YO alumni attend college. The high college-going rates among YO alumni may, in part, be attributed to the mentoring and

Table 1. Sample descriptions, California Young Adult Study.

	General population			Youth Organizing Alumni		
	Immigrant family	Non-immigrant family	Total	Immigrant family	Non-immigrant family	Total
Demographics						
<i>Family socioeconomic background</i>						
College-educated parent	28%	43%	35%	12%	32%	15%
Low-income	51%	23%	38%	91%	75%	88%
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>						
Latino	63%	21%	44%	64%	29%	58%
Asian/Pacific Islander	19%	2%	11%	28%	0%	23%
White	12%	61%	35%	0%	4%	1%
Black	2%	12%	6%	2%	51%	11%
Multi-racial/Other	3%	4%	4%	5%	16%	7%
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	52%	51%	52%	37%	34%	36%
Female	48%	49%	48%	63%	66%	64%
Average age	21.1	21.4	21.3	20.4	21.1	20.6
Noncitizen	16%	0%	8%	22%	0%	18%
<i>Postsecondary educational enrollment</i>						
No college	38%	31%	35%	30%	28%	30%
Attended a community college	32%	33%	32%	25%	26%	25%
Attended/graduated from 4 year college	30%	36%	33%	45%	46%	45%
Key variables of interest ^a	sig.	sig.				
Politically engaged parent	42%	66%***	53%	29%	59%***	34%
<i>Youth civic and political participation</i>						
Volunteer	45%	48%	46%	73%	59%*	71%
Community work	24%	30%*	27%	68%	55%*	65%
Online voice	27%	35%**	30%	55%	57%	56%
Attended protest	14%	12%	13%	53%	45%	51%
Registered to vote (citizens only)	64%	73%***	68%	73%	82%	75%
Unweighted sample size	1180	1020	2200	334	76	410
Unweighted percent of sample	54%	46%	100%	81%	19%	100%
Weighted percent of sample	54%	46%	100%	NA	NA	NA

^aBivariate two-tailed tests: + $p < .10$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

academic support YO groups offer their members, especially those who exhibit average or below-average academic achievement when they first join. Importantly, only a very small proportion of immigrants in the YO alumni sample were raised by politically engaged parents, suggesting that these organisations primarily recruit adolescents from non-politicised families. As shown on the bottom right corner of [Table 1](#), YO alumni exhibit high levels of civic and political participation in early adulthood.

Regression results

[Table 2](#) presents results for logistic regressions exploring the extent to which having a politically engaged parent predicts youths' civic and political engagement for the general population after controlling for other key correlates. Because of space limitations, we simply discuss results for parental political engagement and do not elaborate on the effects of control variables. Results for volunteering, community work, online voice, and protest activity offer support for the top-down model of political socialisation. As shown in Model 1, youth with politically engaged parents are over 1.4 times more likely to participate in these activities, after controlling for family socio-economic background. However, parental political engagement is not a statistically significant predictor of whether or not youth register to vote. Results for parental political engagement generally remain consistent in Model 2, which controls for additional correlates of participation. However, statistical significance declines for parental political engagement in models examining community work and protest activity.⁷ Overall, for most youth, our findings suggest that their parents' political disengagement suppresses their own participation in certain civic and political activities (with the exception of registering to vote). It is possible that, in the context of the highly contentious 2008 and 2010 California election cycles, voter registration and outreach through educational institutions, civic organisations, and diverse media sources successfully reached youth from non-politicised families.

[Table 3](#) shows results for YO alumni. Results for this group demonstrate that having a politically engaged parent does *not* predict civic and political participation for YO alumni in both Models 1 and 2. The coefficients for parent engagement for all activities are statistically insignificant. As shown in [Table 1](#), YO alumni exhibit high levels of participation. The civic skills and capacities youth acquire through organisational involvement (McFarland and Thomas 2006; Rogers, Mediratta, and Shah 2012), in addition to personality or other individual characteristics that propel them to join their YO group in the first place, seem to override their parents' lack of political engagement and motivate their active civic and political participation in early adulthood. Overall, survey results suggest that YO groups help compensate for parents' disengagement from politics. However, survey data alone do not eliminate the possibility that some YO alumni may 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. For additional insights into how YO group

Table 2. Odds ratios from logistic regressions of civic and political participation random sample respondents from immigrant families, California Young Adult Study.

Model 1	Volunteered	Community work	Online voice	Protested	Registered to vote
<i>Family background</i>					
Politically engaged parent	1.499** (0.254)	1.692*** (0.315)	1.656*** (0.300)	1.646** (0.374)	1.251 (0.230)
College-educated parent	1.924*** (0.383)	1.888*** (0.395)	1.538** (0.322)	1.821** (0.477)	1.544** (0.339)
Low-income	0.955 (0.168)	1.007 (0.193)	0.734 (0.140)	1.031 (0.228)	0.901 (0.176)
<i>Model 2</i>					
<i>Family background</i>					
Politically engaged parent	1.424** (0.248)	1.600** (0.301)	1.659*** (0.301)	1.504* (0.361)	1.337 (0.265)
College-educated parent	1.552** (0.329)	1.585** (0.356)	1.205 (0.277)	1.351 (0.374)	1.564* (0.423)
Low-income	0.926 (0.171)	1.007 (0.201)	0.843 (0.164)	1.033 (0.238)	1.013 (0.240)
<i>Youth characteristics</i>					
Race/ethnicity (ref. Latino)					
Asian-Pacific Islander	1.115 (0.252)	1.036 (0.252)	1.495 (0.372)	1.090 (0.377)	0.409**** (0.108)
White	1.257 (0.333)	1.094 (0.309)	0.795 (0.214)	1.503 (0.512)	0.646 (0.208)
Other ^a	1.629 (0.719)	1.124 (0.495)	1.456 (0.626)	1.711 (0.828)	0.945 (0.450)
Male	1.014 (0.165)	0.751 (0.137)	1.186 (0.209)	0.657* (0.147)	0.878 (0.157)
Age	0.844**** (0.029)	0.939 (0.037)	0.985 (0.035)	0.883** (0.043)	1.307**** (0.063)
Non-citizen	1.229 (0.300)	0.845 (0.232)	0.536** (0.144)	1.064 (0.330)	
College enrollment (ref. no college)					
Community college	0.991 (0.195)	0.963 (0.224)	1.199 (0.264)	1.572 (0.472)	2.542**** (0.577)
Four-year college	1.716** (0.376)	1.668** (0.391)	1.785** (0.416)	2.408*** (0.794)	4.454**** (1.114)
Unweighted sample size	1180	1180	1180	1180	1040

^aIncludes Non-Hispanic Blacks.Two-tailed tests: * $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

membership affects the political socialisation of youth and their families, we turn to semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured Interview Results

In-depth interviews with youth who were not raised by politically engaged parents allow us to examine the role of youth in politicising their families as well as the

Table 3. Odds ratios from logistic regressions of civic and political participation youth organizing alumni from immigrant families, California Young Adult Study.

	Volunteered	Community work	Online voice	Protested	Registered to vote
Model 1					
<i>Family background</i>					
Politically engaged parent	1.286 (0.376)	1.046 (0.281)	1.279 (0.324)	0.914 (0.231)	0.920 (0.295)
College-educated parent	1.496 (0.654)	0.582 (0.211)	1.010 (0.362)	0.867 (0.314)	0.719 (0.302)
Low-income	1.974 (0.818)	1.198 (0.491)	1.419 (0.561)	3.149*** (1.371)	1.210 (0.534)
Model 2					
<i>Family background</i>					
Politically engaged parent	1.244 (0.368)	1.015 (0.280)	1.232 (0.322)	0.862 (0.225)	0.944 (0.346)
College-educated parent	1.488 (0.661)	0.590 (0.221)	0.948 (0.351)	0.917 (0.346)	0.462 (0.232)
Low-income	1.792 (0.776)	1.086 (0.468)	1.268 (0.522)	2.860** (1.297)	1.044 (0.544)
<i>Youth characteristics</i>					
Race/ethnicity (ref. Latino)					
Asian-Pacific Islander	0.832 (0.246)	0.909 (0.257)	1.264 (0.342)	0.795 (0.217)	0.592 (0.213)
Other ^a	2.484 (1.619)	1.934 (1.065)	1.661 (0.773)	1.700 (0.822)	1.346 (0.865)
Male	1.102 (0.298)	1.137 (0.292)	0.957 (0.230)	1.594* (0.390)	0.498** (0.170)
Age	1.061 (0.075)	1.096 (0.071)	1.128* (0.070)	0.959 (0.059)	1.428*** (0.163)
Non-citizen	1.251 (0.426)	1.198 (0.387)	2.198** (0.672)	1.989** (0.606)	
College enrollment (ref. no college)					
Community college	0.853 (0.312)	0.475 (0.174)	0.947 (0.316)	0.994 (0.337)	3.582*** (1.626)
Four-year college	1.116 (0.409)	0.376*** (0.135)	0.995 (0.328)	0.787 (0.261)	4.270*** (1.900)
Unweighted sample size	1180	1180	1180	1180	1040

^aIncludes Non-Hispanic Blacks.Two-tailed tests: * $p \leq .10$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$, **** $p \leq .001$

impact of YO groups on the intergenerational transmission of political behaviours.⁸ Importantly, our interview participants from both the general population and YO samples reported that their immigrant parents encountered linguistic, informational, legal, and other structural barriers to political engagement akin to those discussed in previous immigration literature (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Wong et al. 2011). Additionally, there were some youth whose parents had fled repressive regimes in Central America, Southeast Asia, or elsewhere, and who feared becoming involved in politics. Cognizant of the obstacles to their parents' political engagement, most youth from the general population claimed that they possessed at least a little more interest

in politics than their parents. Meanwhile, YO alumni often described how they were significantly more politically engaged than their parents.

Given that 1.5- and second-generation youth do not encounter the same barriers to political engagement as their first-generation immigrant parents, do these young people politicise their families? That is, do they promote their parents' political incorporation into the US in the same way that they facilitate their family's social and economic incorporation as demonstrated in previous literature (Foner and Dreby 2011)? Below, we demonstrate how young people's roles in promoting their family's political incorporation correspond with their own ties to YO groups or other activist organisations. After sharing findings from the general population, we discuss patterns of family political socialisation among YO alumni.

Family Without Politics: We Don't Talk About What's 'Out There'

Our semi-structured interviews suggest that most 1.5- and second-generation youth in the general population, not having been raised in politicised households, viewed the private sphere of the family as separate from the public sphere of politics. Lacking much political interest and experience, they did not further their immigrant parents' connection to political processes. Only a small proportion (7 out of 57—12%) of our interviewees—those who were politicised through campus and community organisations—promoted their family's political incorporation.

Youth in the general population typically viewed politics as distinct from, rather than connected to family affairs, since many believed that immigrant parents were overwhelmed with more pressing concerns. Consequently, they did not feel the need to initiate political discussions with their parents or encourage their parents' political activity. For example, Mandi, a 22-year-old Chinese American, did not broach political topics with her parents, both of whom worked long hours in low-wage jobs. 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 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, I just tell them what is going on with our family, about the problems, just that, but not really whatever is *out there*.'

For the overwhelming majority of children of immigrants in our interview sample, the lack of motivation to actively politicise their parents stemmed from a youthful disconnect from political processes well-documented in other studies (Flanagan and Levine 2010; Kasinitz et al. 2008). A good number of young people reported that they lacked interest in politics or had other priorities, such as making ends meet, keeping up with school work, hobbies, and their relationships. 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, [and] having fun'. There were also those who expressed a distrust of the political system. For

example, Jessica, a 19-year-old 1.5-generation Guatemalan immigrant, perceived following politics to be 'a waste of time' because politicians 'don't hear you out'. Additionally, there were several youth who lacked the political knowledge, tools, or connections to engage in political processes. Such youth typically expressed a sense of powerlessness around political issues that affected their lives. For example, 21-year-old college student Maria, who shared her frustration with how the higher education budget cuts limited the availability of courses she needed in order to graduate, claimed: 'I can't really do much about it. It would be something a lot bigger and more powerful [than myself] that would have to do something about it'.

Not all youth were politically disengaged, however. Over one-fourth of youth from the general population expressed personal interest in politics. Not having had much political experience as adolescents, these youth became largely politicised in college social science classes or in other college activities. Still developing new political identities, they were not accustomed to broaching political topics with their parents—at least not yet. One of these individuals was Eric, a 21-year-old Korean American who discovered politics through his political science courses at a top California university. Now a regular voter, Eric grew up with a father who did not quite understand the American political system even though he was a naturalised citizen. When asked if he had guided his father through the list of ballot initiatives in the previous election, Eric 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'. Adrianna, a 21-year-old Mexican American whose mother completed school up to the ninth grade, gave a similar response: 'It's hard for her to understand. I feel like education and politics go hand-in-hand'. Adrianna became a registered voter thanks to voter outreach on her college campus, and has learned more about how politics affect her family through her attendance at college-wide forums on immigration. She and Eric, like others who became politicised in college, found it important to be informed as voters, but none had devoted time to an electoral campaign, nor had they directly interfaced with government bodies to address community concerns. Their limited direct experience with politics likely contributed to their lack of motivation to educate their parents about politics or engage them in political activity.

As mentioned earlier, there were a small number of interviewees from the general population who sought to politicise their parents and encourage their participation. Exposed to politics through community-based or college campus organizations and individual connections with highly politicised peers, these young people strongly believed that their own political participation made a difference in their communities, and therefore were motivated to politicise their parents. Enrique, son of a Salvadoran mother, was one of these youth who was invited by his close friend to participate in immigrant rights marches sponsored by a prominent community-based organisation. This experience awakened him to the 'power of voters to make a difference for the undocumented'. Consequently, he has repeatedly urged his mother, a legal permanent resident, to become a naturalised citizen so she could vote. Similarly, Alejandra, a Mexican American four-year college student who was proud of her campus organising

against higher-education budget cuts, also encouraged her mother to become politically active. '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!"' Because they had participated in the political activities of activist campus or community organisations, a small number of youth like Enrique and Alejandra had greater experience with, understanding of, and commitment to political issues than most others in the general population interview sample. In actively introducing politics into the household, they modeled the trickle-up process of socialisation. At the same time, their experiences suggest that the catalyst for that process lies outside of their families.

Youth Organisations and 'Trickle-Up' Political Socialisation

In contrast to youth in the general population, most YO alumni obtained significant political experience in adolescence, an age at which young people begin to develop their political identities. Their participation in grassroots campaigns required them to reach out to peers and adults—including local elected officials and other policymakers—regarding community concerns. Some even traveled to Sacramento to lobby state government representatives. Consequently, YO alumni consistently reported that their high school campaign experience taught them a range of civic and political skills. For example, San, whose Mien refugee parents had no formal education before escaping from Laos, gave a response typical of most YO alumni: 'I learned critical analysis skills, how to facilitate workshops, public speaking... how to work with and talk to adults'. Meanwhile, Myrna, a 1.5-generation Mexican daughter of a domestic worker, claimed 'I learned how to run campaigns and organise rallies'. She added that in her YO group, 'You learn how to become a leader in your community and how to get the media to come to your events and get people's attention'.

Given the intensive political experience YO alumni obtained in high school, a vast majority of these youth (45 out of 51—88%) sought to increase their parents' political knowledge, efficacy or activity. The experiences of these youth evidence the role of YO organising efforts in generating a trickle-up effect in the political socialisation of immigrant families.

YO alumni with immigrant parents claimed to be significantly more invested in and aware of US politics than their parents. As Miguel, a 19-year-old Mexican American YO alumnus whose parents both work for a packing company, explained, 'I am more interested in politics than my parents. They work so they don't have the time to learn about politics'. Because these YO alumni possessed a deeper awareness of political concerns that impact their communities, they sought to enhance their parents' political knowledge by informing them about relevant electoral or policy debates. For example, Thuan, a son of Vietnamese refugees, claimed that when he first got involved in his YO group, his mother did not express any interest in politics and was more concerned about his academic achievement. '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'. To date, Thuan and his mother regularly discuss local community issues and electoral politics. 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 talk to them about the elections and the president'. Ignacia claimed that her parents were more concerned with working and surviving economically, and therefore, believed it was her responsibility to inform them about how politics impacted their lives.

Several youth reported that their parents did not enthusiastically welcome their political activity. But unlike youth from the general population, YO alumni did not shy away from trying to develop their parents' political efficacy. Back in high school, Daniel poured his energy into a campaign focused on reforming the youth criminal justice system. He would initiate conversations about his campaign efforts 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'. Now age 23, Daniel has not stopped introducing politics into family discussions and claims his father has become more supportive of grassroots political efforts. Notably, some youth whose refugee parents had witnessed political repression in their home countries of Laos, Vietnam, and Guatemala shared that their parents feared political participation. Yet most of these youth reported that they had convinced their parents that electoral or grassroots political involvement posed limited risks.

Latino 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, explained that her mother became very nervous when Nayeli started attending rallies and protests aimed at addressing the criminalisation 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 parents about their rights in order to help them overcome fears regarding their ability to become involved in non-voting forms of political participation.

Many YO alumni actively promoted their parents' political activity. Some with naturalised parents focused their energy on mobilising 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. 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 explained. Like others, Flora makes sure her parents understand the ballot measures and the positions of political candidates. This sometimes means that youth explicitly guided their parents through the voting process. For example, Meagan, a 26-year-old Chinese American, came from a family who did not vote until after she became active in her YO group. She has since taken advantage of the absentee ballot to guide her parents and siblings through the voting process:

We sit down and I tell them, 'This is how you should vote for this issue...' Honestly, it's really helpful for us as a family to go over some issue because you see all this media advertising, and a lot of the times it's totally skewed.

YO alumni did not restrict their family mobilisation efforts to the electoral process. Some recruited their parents and other family members to participate in local grassroots efforts. Evelyn, who became involved in a local health campaign, regularly invited her Mexican immigrant parents to community events that aimed to educate the public about personal health initiatives, such as President Obama's health care reform. Sutra, a Cambodian American, recruited his father to attend meetings in support of the creation of an Oakland youth center that would expand after-school programmes. Meanwhile, Felipe, a Mexican American, convinced his parents to attend community meetings focused on local environmental justice issues.

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 the 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 organising campaigns as adolescents developed an early understanding of how they could become involved in political processes. Trained in grassroots mobilisation efforts, many discussed their political interests and activities with their families. Over time these young people supported their parents' political incorporation by seeking to increase their knowledge of political issues, develop their efficacy, and encourage political action. In summary, our findings suggest that YO

groups—and, by extension, other activist organisations—can facilitate trickle-up effects in political participation of immigrant families by developing youths' investment in civic and political affairs.

Discussion and Implications

Drawing on data from a representative sample of California youth as well as alumni of politically oriented high school YO groups, this study sheds light on the political socialisation of youth in immigrant families and the role of activist civic organisations in mediating intergenerational family processes. Specifically, we test the extent to which top-down and trickle-up models of political socialisation apply to 1.5- and second-generation immigrant youth.

Although scholars have long suggested that parents' political engagement impacts children's political participation (Greenstein 1965; Hess and Torney-Purta 1967), recent work has raised questions regarding the extent to which such trends apply to immigrant families (Bloemraad and Trost 2008; Wong and Tseng 2008). Our findings demonstrate support for the top-down model of political socialisation in that immigrant parents' political engagement (or lack thereof) correlates with youths' civic and political participation. Beyond the effects of socio-economic status, other barriers most immigrant parents encounter to political engagement appear to negatively impact the next generation's participation in some civic and political activities. Findings, therefore, contribute to prior literature that seeks to understand the social mechanisms that shape political incorporation across generation since migration (Martinez 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005; Wong et al. 2011).

At the same time, our findings suggest that youth can overcome their parents' immigration-related challenges to political participation. Importantly, results of logistic regression analyses indicate that youths' voter registration is not contingent on their parents' political engagement. Voter outreach efforts and educational institutions may be implicated in engaging a very large population that is unlikely to be politicised by their families. As such, this finding aligns with other research that demonstrates the importance of non-family sources in the political socialisation of the 1.5 and second generations (Bloemraad and Trost 2008; Callahan and Muller 2013).

The active political participation of youth who previously participated in adolescent YO groups further evidences the important role of non-family institutions in politicising the children of immigrants. Our analyses show that parental political engagement does not correlate with patterns of political participation among YO alumni. Although survey findings from a cross-sectional convenience sample of YO alumni should be interpreted with caution, results point to the possibility that the political experience young people acquire through participation in grassroots campaigns trumps the political socialisation that occurs within their families.

Our investigation also builds on research that describes how 1.5- and second-generation youth promote their family's incorporation. Youth from immigrant families contribute to their family finances; they also use their English fluency to connect their

parents to information and resources that are critical to their family's permanent settlement (Foner and Dreby 2011; Kwon 2014). Most youth, however, do not actively promote their parents' political participation. Lacking interest in politics or extensive political experience themselves, they do not feel compelled to encourage their parents' political participation in community affairs or government elections. Youth who were not raised in politicised households, after all, rarely view politics as related to family matters.

However, when youth are equipped with civic skills and political information, they can alter their immigrant parents' engagement in the public arena and facilitate the political incorporation of their families. A small proportion of youth from the general population who became politicised through college and community organisations, in addition to most YO alumni, actively encourage their parents' political engagement. Accordingly, this study suggests that youth involvement in activist organisations can catalyse trickle-up effects (McDevitt and Chaffee 2002) in the political socialisation of immigrant families. Once they acquire political campaign experience, children of immigrants often seek to transform their parents' political attitudes and behaviours, thus helping their families overcome fear and uncertainty about participation in political activity in the US context. Our study validates prior research demonstrating the agency of youth in politicising their immigrant families (Bloemraad and Trost 2008; Wong and Tseng 2008) by specifying an important mechanism—involvement in an activist civic organisation that mitigates structural barriers to immigrants' political engagement.

Beyond this, our findings have broader theoretical implications for understanding the impact of activist civic organisations on civic and political life. Studies of civic organisations primarily focus on how participation in such organisations shapes patterns of an *individual's* political and civic engagement (Fung 2003). The active roles that YO alumni play in educating their families about political issues or mobilising parents to participate in political activity are evidence of the *family-level* effects of an individual belonging to a civic organisation. Specifically, we show that civic organisations that offer young people extensive political exposure not only politicise individual youth participants, but also have an effect on the politicisation of their families. In this regard, our research complements recent cross-national work by Street (2013) which draws attention to family-level processes in shaping immigrant political incorporation.

Finally, this study has other implications for future research. Regional, national, and organisational contexts determine opportunities for political involvement and structure the environments in which immigrants and their children participate (Ebert and Okamoto 2013; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008; Koopmans 2004). Our inquiry relies on survey data collected from California, a state that has developed a particularly vibrant immigrant rights movement since the mid-2000s (Ramirez 2013). Additionally, the activist organisations we examined here are likely to have particularly strong impacts on members' civic capacities. Future investigation into the political socialisation of immigrant families across regional, national, and organisational contexts (including schools, labor unions, religious institutions, and other types of civic associations) could offer additional insights into the social

mechanisms that promote or inhibit civic and political participation. Such investigation would broaden our understanding of social forces that enable or constrain the political incorporation of immigrants and their descendants into US civic and political life.

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Notes

- [1] The response rates for the cell phone and landline samples were 56.1% and 58.5%, respectively. High response rates can be partially attributed to the fact that potential respondents were called up to 31 times and received \$30 incentives.
- [2] Sampling weights account for sampling frame, household size, number of phone lines per household, and non-responses are used in the analyses. The 2010 American Community Survey data were used in calculating weights so that the weighted sample reflected the racial/ethnic and Latino immigrant composition of the population of young adults who were born in the United States or who arrived in the country as minors. Additionally, California Department of Education data on the percent of free and reduced lunch high school students in 2003–2011 were used to generally ensure that the weighted sample reflects the income background of respondents who had attended public high schools.
- [3] A limitation of our study is that it excludes individuals for whom current contact information could not be obtained. 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 records.
- [4] Response rate for this sample is 77.3%.
- [5] We compare youth who have not attended college to those who at some point enrolled in a community college (but not a four-year institution) and to those who at some point enrolled in or graduated from a four-year college. In analyzing racial/ethnic differences, we compare those who identify as Hispanic/Latino to non-Hispanics of various racial backgrounds.
- [6] Because 6% of the general population reported involvement in a political organization in high school, this sample likely includes a small number of individuals who had participated in a YO group.
- [7] In alternative analyses, we added parental citizenship status to equations, but this variable was not a statistically significant predictor of civic and political activity after accounting for other variables in Model 2.
- [8] In line with the top-down model of political socialization, the children of immigrants with politically engaged parents typically reported having political discussions in the home,

regardless of whether or not they belonged to a YO group. However, among some YO alumni and a few politically active youth from the general population, we found evidence of 'dual political socialization' in which youth sought to further politicize their parents.

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