Inherently Political? Associations of Parent Ethnic–Racial Socialization and Sociopolitical Discussions with Latinx Youths' Emergent Civic Engagement

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Highlights

- More sociopolitical discussions and cultural socialization were linked to more collective responsibility.
- More sociopolitical discussions were associated with future expectations for community involvement.
- We found an indirect link between sociopolitical discussions and future expectations via ERI exploration.
- We found an indirect link between preparation for bias messages and future expectations via ERI exploration.
- We found a correlation between sociopolitical discussions and cultural socialization.

Abstract The current study expands on ethnic–racial socialization (ERS) among Latinx families to include sociopolitical discussions as a way to better understand how these practices relate to adolescents' developmental outcomes, including their ethnic–racial identity (ERI) and their sociopolitical development. More specifically, we examined whether there were direct links between parental ERS practices and sociopolitical discussions at home and adolescents' emergent participatory citizenship via their ERI processes (i.e., exploration and resolution). These questions were examined using path analyses with 267 self-identified Latinx early adolescents (M_{age} = 11.88, SD = 1.22; girls = 54.3%). Results revealed direct associations between sociopolitical discussions and cultural socialization at home with civic accountability. Thus, youth whose parents had engaged in more discussions with them about current political issues and who taught them about their ethnic heritage and history endorsed a greater sense of collective responsibility for helping community members in need. Additionally, preparation for bias and sociopolitical discussions at home were each uniquely associated with more ERI exploration, and each was also indirectly associated with expectations for future community involvement via youths' ERI exploration. Our findings come at a critical juncture in time, providing insight into ways we can support the positive ERI development and build the civic capacity of Latinx adolescents.

Keywords Parent ethnic · Racial socialization · Sociopolitical discussions · Ethnic · Racial identity · Latinx adolescents · Civic engagement

Introduction

Within the last few years, the explosive cruelty enacted against Latinx communities through political legislation—including family separation of asylum seekers, termination of Temporary Protection Status, and threats to rescind DACA protections—along with poisonous rhetoric have intensified the need to instill a sense of resiliency among Latinx youth. Indeed, we have seen an emergence of political action among such youth (Ayón, 2016; Wray-Lake et al., 2018). One striking act of resistance involved the use of activist quinceañeras in Texas using cultural rites of passage (i.e., their *quinces*) in response to the potential ban of sanctuary cities and to increase voter registration. This has inspired other young people across the

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nation to incorporate voter registrations into their own quinceañeras. Other examples include young faces in rallies ordained in the colors of *sus banderas nacionales*[1] while demanding justice. Given the toxic climate of the political sphere against Latinx communities, it is important to ask how Latinx parents' ethnic–racial socialization (ERS) may support their children by addressing the political climate while they are teaching them about their cultural heritage. However, explicit sociopolitical discussions are not often captured by the most commonly studied ERS practices (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Ayón, 2016). The current study expands on ERS conceptualizations among Latinx families to include sociopolitical discussions as a way to better understand how these practices relate to adolescents' developmental outcomes, including ethnic–racial identity (ERI) and their sociopolitical development as evidenced by their civic dispositions. In particular, we focus on adolescents' emergent civic engagement, as prior literature has shown that adolescents of color engage civically through communal actions (Wray-Lake et al., 2018).

In the present study, we draw upon two interrelated theoretical concepts to frame our study: Social Justice Youth Development Theory (SJYD) and the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST). Ginwright and Cammarota's (2002) SJYD theory conceptualizes how youth of color develop a sense of agency to resist systems of oppression within a politically complex context. To respond to larger political forces, youth must undergo self-exploration related to their identities (e.g., race and ethnicity) using a critical social analysis lens. This allows youth to not only celebrate their ethnic and cultural diversity but also develop a deep understanding of how their identities are threatened by societal forces. To better understand the mechanisms by which youth process messages about race and ethnicity to inform their own ethnic–racial identity, we employ PVEST (Spencer, 2007), which theorizes that during adolescence, youths' identities and beliefs about themselves are constructed by the messages they receive about their group membership and place in society. Messages about ethnicity and race are most often transmitted from the family in the form of parental ERS (e.g., Huguley, Wang, Vasquez, & Guo, 2019). Accordingly, we argue that Latinx parents may embed sociopolitical messages within their ERS practices to promote exploration and a better understanding of ethnic–racial group membership and, by doing so, contribute

to their youth's emergent sociopolitical development (e.g., civic engagement; see also Mathews et al., 2019).

Ethnic–Racial Socialization and Sociopolitical Discussions at Home

In a society that denigrates the Latinx community on a daily basis, the messages Latinx parents transmit about their racial and ethnic background, via their ethnic–racial socialization practices (ERS), help to equip youth with tools to thrive despite growing up in a hostile environment. ERS encompasses a set of protective and adaptive practices (e.g., transmitting cultural values, preparing youth to cope with discrimination, and instilling strong family and ethnic connections) employed by parents of color to promote their children's positive development (Derlan, Umaña-Taylor, Updegraff, & Jahromi, 2017). In recent years, researchers have aimed to better understand how parents of color share their heritage and cultural history with their children, as well as prepare them for experiences of social injustice and how to respond to them (Hughes et al., 2006; Huguley et al., 2019). This process is shared through both verbal and nonverbal parental teachings that influence their children's development as they learn about their roots and form a better understanding of their ethnic–racial group vis-à-vis mainstream culture (Umaña-Taylor, Alfaro, Bámaca, & Guimond, 2009).

Among Latinx families, *cultural socialization* has been recognized as the most widely transmitted type of ERS message. This includes teachings about cultural history and traditions to encourage the development of ethnic pride and positive group identity. These practices are central to Latinx families, and many parents make an explicit effort to transmit their culture to their children (Derlan et al., 2017). Parents accomplish this by using their native language in the home, celebrating native holidays, and teaching children about their cultural heritage through books, music, and food (Hughes et al., 2006). Cultural socialization has been associated with a host of positive outcomes for Latinx youth, including higher levels of school investment, ethnic–racial identity, and prosocial behaviors (e.g., Knight, Carlo, Mahrer, & Davis, 2016; Rivas-Drake & Marchand, 2016).

Preparation for bias is another socialization method used by parents of color to raise their children's awareness of systemic and individual racial discrimination and guide them on how to respond (Hughes et al., 2006). Latinx parents may also engage in preparation for bias socialization in response to children's own experiences of discrimination (Ayón, 2016). Although Latinx parents engage in conversations regarding discrimination, such messages are not as common as those pertaining to ethnic pride and cultural values (see e.g., Rivas-Drake, 2011).

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[1] Authors' note: We included Spanish as a way to provide a cultural emphasis; however, we do want to acknowledge that not all Latinx people speak Spanish and that colonialist language such as Spanish has been used to exclude Black and Indigenous Latinx people. As a translational note "sus banderas nacionales" translates to "their national flags."

This is understandably so, given the difficulty parents may have in raising the topic of discrimination with their children for fear of deleterious consequences to their self-esteem (cf. Hughes et al., 2006). The impact of these messages on Latinx youths' development has been mixed, with few studies indicating positive outcomes such as increased ability to cope with discrimination, whereas others link preparation for bias to greater depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem (e.g., Berkel et al., 2010; Espinoza, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2016).

ERS practices are thought to be informed by parents' individual and group experiences. For example, the more aware parents are of societal inequities impacting their ethnic–racial group, the more likely they are to alter their ERS practices to prepare their children to cope with future experiences of racial discrimination (Ayón, Ojeda, & Ruano, 2018; Ayón, Tran, & Nieri, 2019). With the current political climate, it is important to capture how Latinx parents' practices include discussions about current issues and events within the broader sociopolitical context. Explicit sociopolitical discussions are not captured by the two aforementioned ERS practices (Anyiwo et al., 2018); however, examining how ethnic–racial and sociopolitical socialization messages work in tandem to support Latinx youth outcomes would yield important insights, further expanding our knowledge of family processes co-occurring in this population.

ERS Practices and Latinx Youths' Emergent Sociopolitical Development

There are several reasons to expect that ERS at home may be linked to Latinx youths' emergent civic development. For one, when Latinx parents convey messages promoting cultural heritage and customs, they teach youth about their group's contribution to society and help them develop strong ties to their family and community (Ayón, 2016). Such connections serve as motivators that encourage individuals to stand up for their community in the face of prejudice and discrimination (Wallace & Zepeda-Millán, 2020). Related to this, ERS practices have the potential to support the sociopolitical development of Latinx youth by shaping youths' understanding of themselves as community members with communal responsibilities. Indeed, Latinx adolescents who received more cultural socialization from parents were more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors such as comforting those who experienced emotional distress and supporting those going through a crisis (Knight et al., 2016). These types of prosocial behaviors may be rooted in cultural values documented in Latinx families that promote a sense of obligation and responsibility to help and support one's family (Cupito, Stein, & Gonzalez, 2015). In their study of

Mexican American adolescents, for example, Knight and colleagues (2016) found that Mexican American cultural values transmitted at home were associated with greater public prosocial tendencies among the youth, especially for those with a stronger sense of Latinx identity. Knight et al.'s (2016) study also suggests that adolescents exposed to more cultural socialization engage in greater perspective-taking, which can ultimately lead to an increased awareness of the systems of oppression at play in the marginalization of their community.

In regard to preparation for bias, parental messages warning youth of future experiences of discrimination are echoed by the hate-filled political climate against Latinx communities, contributing to youth's awareness of racism and marginalization. It is often through parental preparation for bias messages that youth are first exposed to discrimination and learn about the systemic oppression their ethnic–racial group faces in society (Hughes et al., 2006). These conversations at home teach youth what to expect from society as a member of their ethnic–racial group and may thereby ignite a sense of collective social responsibility to take civic action and dismantle societal barriers to promote social change. For example, in a survey of diverse adolescents between the ages of 11 and 18 that included Latinx youth, Flanagan and colleagues (2009) found that Latinx youth (along with African American youth) reported being counseled by parents on discrimination and the barriers associated with it. These youth, in turn, also reported greater commitment to advocating for members of their ethnic group. In an examination of Latinx adolescents' and young adults' reactions to Trump's policies regarding immigration, youth reported experiencing greater awareness of prejudice against those of Latinx heritage and an increase in their civic engagement (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). These perceived attacks on their ethnic–racial group inspired youth to combat injustice and advocate on behalf of themselves, their family members, and others in their community. These results also mirror previous findings indicating that civic engagement among undocumented Mexican young adults is often displayed as helping and advocating for members of their ethnic–racial group (Perez, Espinoza, Ramos, Coronado, & Cortes, 2010; Suárez-Orozco, Hernández, & Casanova, 2015). Although not specifically focused on Latinx experiences in adolescence, these findings suggest the pivotal role parents play in raising awareness of community threats and may inform how youth choose to respond to these injustices.

In addition to cultural socialization and preparation for bias, the current national rhetoric towards immigrants, increased ethnic–racial profiling, surveillance, and criminalization of Latinxs (Wallace & Zepeda-Millán, 2020) may promote sociopolitical discussions at home. In focus

groups with Latinx parents of various documentation statuses, Roche and colleagues (2020) found that parents universally felt terrorized by anti-immigrant policies they learned about in the news and by xenophobic encounters in daily life. Worried about the implications of Latinx profiling, parents modified their own behavior (e.g., reduced travel) and sometimes asked their adolescent children to do the same (e.g., drive more cautiously). This racialization of undocumented immigration as a Latinx issue may thus inform parental ERS, as sociopolitical discussions may become embedded in these conversations in attempts to explain who is vulnerable to persecution due to their ethnicity and race (Ayón et al., 2018). Through interviews conducted with Latinx parents, Ayón (2016) highlighted that parents discussed documentation status and nativity issues with their children to help them contextualize some of the discrimination they were facing. Parents also encouraged their children to advocate for themselves and others when confronted with discrimination. However, in another examination of ERS among Latinx immigrants, differences pertaining to parental documentation status were identified. Both documented and undocumented parents reported transmitting preparation for bias messages to their youth, but documented parents urged their adolescents to stand up for themselves and their families in the face of discrimination, whereas undocumented parents instructed their youth to dismiss those encounters and walk away (Cross et al., in press). These results provide additional insights into why ethnic–racial and sociopolitical discussions in the context of immigration may impact youths' agency and future civic engagement.

The aforementioned findings demonstrate the need for further examinations of the interplay of ERS and sociopolitical discussions among Latinx families and their impact on the adolescents (Ayón, 2016; Hughes et al., 2006). Although preparation for bias has been understudied in relation to Latinx adolescents' prosocial behaviors and commitment to civic engagement (Flanagan et al., 2009), in a longitudinal study of diverse emerging adults that included Latinx participants, parental sociopolitical discussions have been shown to increase Latinx emerging adults' political participation and commitment to addressing inequities (Diemer, 2012). Although not focused specifically on Latinx adolescents, these findings suggest that parental ERS may potentially empower Latinx youth to engage in meaningful change in their communities, which we explore in the present study.

ERS and Ethnic–Racial Identity

Key to fostering motivation to enact social action among Latinx adolescents is the development of self-awareness through a celebration of their cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity, as well as an analysis of how current political, economic, and social institutions threaten their existence (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). As such, ERS practices may serve to facilitate adolescents' exploration of the historical and contemporary implications of being Latinx as well provide clarity about what it means to be a part of the broader Latinx community. In the current study, we conceptualize such understanding of one's ethnic–racial identity (ERI) in two ways: exploration and resolution. First, we consider the extent to which youth create meaning of their ethnic–racial group, which is an important developmental task for adolescents (Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2019). ERI exploration refers to how individuals explore what it means to be part of their ethnic–racial group (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004). Once exploration is sparked, youth begin to search actively to better understand their ethnic–racial identity, which can include engaging in a variety of activities that will expose them to group norms and beliefs (Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2019). Latinx parents have been shown to teach their children the social ills affecting their broader group by involving them in activities to assist and serve within their local community (Iturbide, Gutiérrez, Munoz, & Raffaelli, 2019).

ERI resolution refers to an individual's clarity about the role their ethnic–racial group membership plays in their lives (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). Due to biological and social changes taking place throughout adolescence, youth in this developmental stage are able to develop a more nuanced perspective about ethnicity and race, enabling the potential to develop an ethnic–racial group consciousness (Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2019). As such, early adolescents are able to think of themselves in terms of their group membership and have the potential to gain a better understanding of the ways their ethnic–racial group affiliation affects how they are perceived and treated in mainstream society. Studies with early adolescent samples (i.e., middle school-aged youth) find that those who express greater ERI resolution evince better academic adjustment and more diverse friendships (e.g., Medina, Rivas-Drake, Jagers, & Rowley, 2019; Rivas-Drake et al., 2017).

Parental ERS practices are instrumental in shaping adolescents' ethnic–racial identity, with many studies showing consistent links between ERS practices and ERI developmental processes (Hughes et al., 2006; Huguley et al., 2019). For example, Latinx late adolescents who received more family cultural socialization were more likely to engage in exploration and feel more resolved about their ERI (Douglas & Umaña-Taylor, 2015). The association between preparation for bias and ERI processes, however, is less clear. Although previous research on Latinx youth has found mixed associations between preparation for bias

and ERI content (i.e., private regard, public regard, and centrality), less is known about how preparation for bias relates to ERI *processes*, such as exploration and resolution, specifically within Latinx youth (Kulish et al., 2019; Rivas-Drake, 2011). One recent study of diverse late adolescents that included Latinx youth found that, compared to other groups, preparation for bias had no relation to Latinx adolescents ERI processes (Else-Quest & Morse, 2015). However, studies with other ethnic–racial groups including White, African American, Latinx, and Asian Americans have found that preparation for bias may have a positive association (Hughes, Hagelskamp, Way, & Foust, 2009a), a negative association (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009b), or no relation to ERI processes (Else-Quest & Morse, 2015).

Further, parents adapt their ERS practices in response to sociopolitical conditions that may threaten their adolescents' livelihood and well-being (Ayón et al., 2019). It is possible that preparation for bias socialization conflates messages regarding broader political status and societal discrimination with those regarding the immediate risk of exposure to interpersonal discrimination youth may encounter in daily life. Both may have implications for youths' construction of their ERI, yet it is not clear how messages that inform adolescents about current political issues affecting their community may serve to further encourage adolescents to explore their ethnic–racial group membership and engender resolve about their responsibilities as group members (Mathews et al., 2019), which may include leveraging available resources as a way to protect their family and community (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015).

Ethnic–Racial Identity and Emergent Civic Engagement

Scholars suggest that one part of how youth learn to be politically active is by forming an attachment to and investment in their communities (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). As youth develop their ERI, they might become more attuned to the societal marginalization and oppression experienced by their ethnic group members (Mathews et al., 2019). During their ERI exploration process, Latinx youth may not only learn about cultural factors, but they may also learn about the marginalization, oppression, and inequities that Latinx groups face in the United States. As adolescents reach clarity about their ethnic–racial membership (i.e., resolution), they may also form a greater understanding about their responsibilities to their families and broader communities (Cupito et al., 2015). The awareness surrounding their social identity and broader group membership may serve as a motivating force for future civic action (Cross et al., in press; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Indeed, empirical work examining the civic engagement of Latinx immigrant young adults finds that

the political and civic actions of Latinx individuals are often motivated by a desire to challenge anti-Latinx and anti-immigrant rhetoric as well as provide social services to their community (e.g., tutoring, helping those in need; Perez et al., 2010; Seif et al., 2014). While this work is in reference to the experience of Latinx immigrant and undocumented young adults, the targeting of all Latinx means that all of those racialized by others as Latinx are also at risk for discrimination (Roche et al., 2020; Seif et al., 2014). Additionally, the caging of children at the border serves to show that even at a young age Latinx youth are targeted. Although previous work has served to document the various ways Latinx youth and young adults engage politically and civically (e.g., Seif, 2016), much remains to be understood about how adolescents might develop these justice-based orientations earlier in life.

Paralleling our argument, Anyiwo et al. (2018) argue that for African American youth, sociocultural factors such as racial socialization and identity play an integral role in their sociopolitical development. In particular, they theorize that discussions regarding how current issues affecting their racial community can be a potential motivator for engaging in social action to enact positive change. These experiences might propel them to develop a sense of civic responsibility and engagement in an attempt to improve their group's societal standing (Wray-Lake et al., 2018). Given current anti-Latinx rhetoric, this process can be particularly salient for Latinx youth as they resist and challenge structural racism that places children in cages and threatens to separate families through deportations (Wray-Lake et al., 2018).

Current Study

To understand how Latinx adolescents fight back against oppressive forces, it is critical to understand the mechanisms by which sociopolitical development may be facilitated in ways that are developmentally appropriate, such as by examining their emergent civic engagement. The current study examines how Latinx adolescents' perceptions of ethnic–racial socialization at home may foster their emergent civic engagement via aspects of ERI development meant to explore and begin resolving what ethnic–racial membership means in youths' lives. Based on the literature reviewed, we expected that conversations at home teaching children about their cultural heritage would foster a sense of connection to their community, whereas discussions about how their community experiences marginalization and oppression would foster a sense of collective responsibility to enact change (Wallace & Zepeda-Millán, 2020). Thus, we expected perceptions of cultural socialization and sociopolitical discussions to be positively related to higher levels of civic accountability

and expectations for future community involvement. We also considered how preparation for bias might relate to emergent civic engagement in an exploratory manner, as there have been mixed findings in how these messages inform adolescents' outcomes (Berkel et al., 2010; Espinoza et al., 2016). Further, we hypothesized that cultural socialization, preparation for bias, and sociopolitical discussions would be positively related to adolescents' ERI exploration and resolution. Studies have shown that ERI is a mechanism by which ethnic–racial socialization practices promote positive adolescent outcomes in Latinx and other youth of color (e.g., Hughes et al., 2009b; Streit, Carlo, & Killorren, 2019). Accordingly, we expected that both exploration and resolution would mediate the associations between ERS and sociopolitical discussions and emergent civic engagement. Given that previous studies suggest possible gender and age differences in civic participation, we accounted for these characteristics in our analyses (Cupito et al., 2015; Diemer, 2012).

Method

Setting and Participants

Data for this study were drawn from Wave 1 of a planned longitudinal mixed-method study examining the links between social-emotional learning practices, family and community socialization experiences, and youth civic engagement and school outcomes. This study was conducted in collaboration with three public middle schools located in a large metropolitan city in the Midwest. Latinx students comprised 93.9% of the student population at Site 1, and no other ethnic–racial group comprised more than 4% (White [3.5%], Black [1.2%] Asian [0.5%], and Other [0.9%]); 81.2% of students were designated as coming from a low-income background. Latinx students comprised the largest ethnic–racial group at Site 2, with 64.4% of the student population (Black [34.1%] and White [1.5%]); 91.1% of students were designated as coming from a low-income background. Latinx students comprised one of the two largest ethnic-racial groups at Site 3 (43%) (White [43%], Black [4%], Asian [4%], Two or more races [3%], Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander [2%], and American Indian/Alaska Native [1%]); 61% of students were designated as coming from a low-income background.

Of the full sample, 274 students selected "Latino or Hispanic" as their self-identification category ($N = 274$); of these, 7 were missing age and/or gender information. Thus, our analytic sample comprises 267 self-identified Latinx early adolescents ($M_{age} = 11.88$, $SD = 1.22$) who reported their age and gender. This sample included students in fifth (22.8%), sixth (21.7%), seventh (31.5%),

and eighth grade (24.0%), with slightly more girls (54.3%) than boys (45.7%). A large majority of students (92.6%) were born in the United States, and a large majority reported that at least one or both parents were born outside of the United States (77.9%). For those who provided parents' country of origin (73.4%), the majority were from Mexico (69.2%), South America (14.8%), Central America (8.0%) or had parents from two different Latin American countries (8.0%).

Procedure

All surveys were group administered either in December 2018 (Site 1) and December 2019 (Site 2 and 3) using a web-based survey administration service. Classroom packets that included student consent forms and classroom incentive forms were given to each teacher during their classroom period in which they teach their school's universal social-emotional learning curriculum. Students were given the option to bring the signed consent form to their teacher or the administrative office. Classrooms with an 80% return rate of signed consent forms were given a pizza party regardless of parental permission status. Overall, 83% of all consent forms were returned; of these, 91% of parents provided their consent for survey participation and 9% refused. The overall survey participation rate was 76%. Students with parental consent were given a link for the web-based survey where they were informed that the survey was voluntary and confidential. Students provided assent by filling out their name and clicking "next," which directed them to the survey screen. Once students assented, they were able to view the survey questions. The survey took approximately 35 minutes (one classroom period) to complete. As a token of appreciation, participants received a $5 gift card.

Measures

Parental Ethnic–Racial Socialization

To measure adolescents' perceptions of their parents' ethnic–racial socialization practices, two subscales of parent ethnic–racial socialization were used (Hughes et al., 2009b; Kulish et al., 2019). The first 4-item subscale measures cultural socialization (e.g., "At home, how often have your parents said it is important to know about the important people and events in the history of your racial or ethnic group"; responses range from 1 [never] to 3 [a lot of times]; $\alpha = 0.77$). The second 4-item subscale measures the frequency of preparation for bias messages (e.g., "At home, how often have your parents said some people may treat you badly or unfairly because of your race or ethnicity?"; responses range from 1 [never] to 3 [a lot of

times]; α = 0.90). A mean of each set of items was scored such that higher values indicate more cultural socialization and preparation for bias practices, respectively.

Parental Sociopolitical Discussions

Adolescents' reports of parental sociopolitical discussions were measured using the Sociopolitical Discussions-Parents Scale (Syvertsen, Wray-Lake, & Metzger, 2015). The scale consists of 3 items assessing parents' civic socialization (e.g., "In my family we talk about politics and current events"; "In my family we talk about problems facing our community"; and "In my family we talk about times when people are treated unfairly"; α = 0.83). Responses range from 1 *[never]* to 5 *[very often]*, and the mean is calculated with higher scores indicating greater frequency of sociopolitical discussions.

Ethnic–Racial Identity

Adolescents' ethnic–racial identity was measured using two subscales from the Ethnic Identity Scale (Knight et al., 2011; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). The first taps into adolescents' exploration levels (e.g., "I have attended events that have helped me learn more about my ethnicity"; 3 items, α = 0.72). The second subscale taps into adolescents' resolution (e.g., "I have a clear sense of what my ethnicity means to me"; 3 items; α = 0.87). Responses on both subscales range from 1 (*Does not describe me at all*) to 4 (*Describes me very well*), and means were calculated so that higher scores indicate more exploration and resolution, respectively.

Emergent Civic Engagement

Flanagan et al.'s (2007) Emergent Participatory Citizenship Scale was used to measure adolescents' sense of responsibility for contributing to their communities. The scale is composed of two subscales: civic accountability and expectations for future community involvement. The civic accountability subscale consists of 4 items (e.g., "Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility") with a response range of 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*); α = 0.82. The expectations for future community involvement subscale consists of 2 items (e.g., "When you think about your life after high school, how likely is it that you would…get involved in issues like health or safety that affect your community"; ranging from 1 [*Not at all likely*] to 5 [*Extremely likely*] ; α = 0.62). Means were calculated so that higher scores indicate greater endorsements of civic accountability and expectations for future community involvement, respectively.

Covariates

Youths' age, gender, and school site were included as covariates. Youth were asked, "How old are you?" to assess age. For gender, they were asked to select from three options: girl, boy, or other (and were asked to specify what other gender label they preferred). Due to the small number of students who chose other (*n* = 3) or who chose not to respond to this question (*n* = 4), only those who indicated "boy" or "girl" could be included in the primary analyses. Adolescents' self-reported gender was thus coded as 0 (girl) and 1 (boy). Dummy codes were created for each school site, and site 1 was omitted in the analyses to serve as the reference group.

Analysis Strategy

We first conducted preliminary analyses to ensure our data were normally distributed and to examine preliminary associations between the variables. For the primary analyses, we tested our prediction that ERS and sociopolitical discussions would be related to Latinx adolescents' endorsement of civic accountability and expectations for future community involvement among students in this sample. Data were analyzed with a path analysis of observed variables conducted in M*plus* 8.0 with 5,000 bootstrapped samples (see Figure 1), adjusted for adolescent age, their gender, and school site. To assess model fit, we used standard cutoffs in the field of a nonsignificant chi-square value, a comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) ≥ .95, root-mean-square residual (RMSEA) ≤ .05, and standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) ≤ .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999; MacCallum & Austin, 2000).

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and correlations for all study variables. All variables in the analyses were tested for outliers, skewness, and kurtosis. The skewness results were all within an absolute value of 2, while kurtosis results were all well within an absolute value of 7. These results suggest that all variables of interest were normally distributed. Adolescents reported that their parents had, on average, high levels of cultural socialization (*M* = 2.56, *SD* = .48 on a 1–3 scale) and sociopolitical discussions (*M* = 3.15, *SD* = 1.07 on a 1–5 scale) compared to preparation for bias messages (*M* = 1.58, SD = .61 on a 1–3 scale). At the bivariate
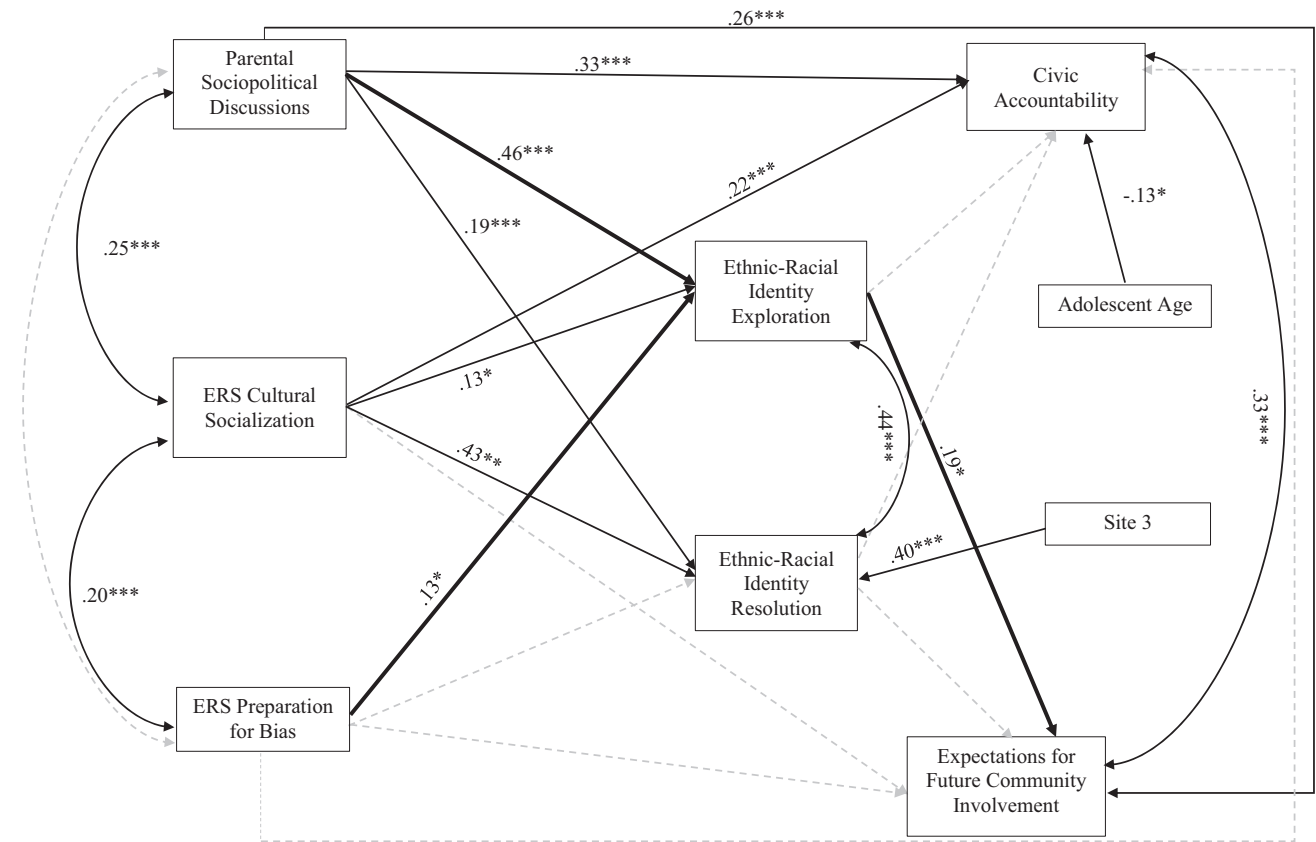
Fig. 1 $N = 267$. Standardized coefficients of path analysis linking Latinx adolescent reported parental ethnic socialization (ERS) and emergent citizenship. Dashed lines = nonsignificant paths; bold = significant indirect path. The model fit the data well $\chi^2(12) = 10.17$; $p = .601$; RMSEA= .000 [.00, .05]; CFI = 1.00; TLI = 1.02; SRMR=.031. NOTE: All mediators and outcomes were controlled for by gender, age, and students' school site; only significant control paths are shown.

Table 1 Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics among primary study variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. ERS Cultural Socialization	–						
2. ERS Preparation for Bias	.20**	–					
3. Sociopolitical Discussions	.25**	.08	–				
4. ERI Exploration	.22**	.19**	.50***	–			
5. ERI Resolution	.30***	−.02	.35***	.53***	–		
6. Civic Accountability	.34***	.10	.44***	.30***	.32***	–	
7. Expectations for Future Community Inv.	.08	.11	.36***	.32***	.23*	.44***	–
Mean	2.56	1.58	3.15	2.76	3.21	3.65	3.38
SD	.48	.61	1.07	.81	.75	.76	.92

Inv., Involvement. SD, Standard Deviation.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

level, cultural socialization was significantly and positively correlated with preparation for bias messages, sociopolitical discussions, exploration, resolution, and civic accountability. In addition, sociopolitical discussions were positively and significantly correlated with exploration, resolution, civic accountability, and expectations for future community involvement. Preparation for bias was significantly and positively correlated with cultural socialization and exploration.

Primary Analyses

The model fit parameters indicate the model fit the data well ($\chi^2(12) = 10.172$; $p = 0.601$; CFI = 1.00; TLI = 1.02; RMSEA = .000 [.00, .05]; SRMR = .031). Results suggest that after adjusting for the associations of gender and age, receiving more cultural socialization messages ($b = .22$, $SE = .07$, $p = .001$) and participating in sociopolitical discussions at home ($b = .33$, $SE = .07$,

$p = .000$) were positively associated with more civic accountability. Thus, youth whose parents had engaged in more discussions with them about current political issues and taught them about their ethnic heritage and history endorsed a greater sense of collective responsibility for helping community members in need. The association between preparation for bias and civic accountability was not significant ($b = .03$, $SE = .07$, $p = .602$). There was also a direct association from sociopolitical discussions to future civic expectations ($b = .26$, $SE = .07$, $p = .000$); however, there were no direct associations from cultural socialization ($b = -.06$, $SE = .08$, $p = .442$) or preparation for bias ($b = .06$, $SE = .07$, $p = .434$) to such expectations. In addition, more frequent sociopolitical discussions ($b = .46$, $SE = .06$, $p = .000$) and preparation for bias messages ($b = .13$, $SE = .06$, $p = .029$) at home were associated with more ERI exploration. Moreover, there was a significant indirect association of sociopolitical discussions ($\beta = .09$, 95% CI [.01, .18]) and of preparation for bias messages ($\beta = .03$, 95% CI [.001, .078]) with expectations for future community involvement via youths' ERI exploration. There were no significant indirect associations of parental socialization practices with civic accountability. Contrary to our hypotheses, there were no indirect associations via ERI resolution.

Alternative Model

We tested an alternative model in which emergent civic engagement could mediate the association between ERS and sociopolitical discussions and ERI exploration and resolution; thus, the ordering of ERI and civic engagement was changed. The fit indices for the alternative model were identical to our original model ($\chi^2(12) = 10.172$; $p = .601$; CFI = 1.00; TLI = 1.02; RMSEA = .000 [.00, .05]; SRMR = .031); in this model, direct associations with resolution were observed for cultural socialization and sociopolitical discussions, as well as a direct association with exploration for sociopolitical discussions and preparation for bias messages. There was an indirect association between sociopolitical discussions and exploration via expectations for future community involvement. However, there were no indirect associations via civic accountability. Given the identical fit between our two models, we retained our hypothesized model because it is based on theory. In comparing these two models, we suggest that ERI processes may facilitate emergent civic engagement as opposed to the reverse. However, given that this work is cross-sectional, this is not a definitive stance and longitudinal analysis may ultimately serve to determine these associations. Furthermore, these results may suggest a bi-directional relation between ethnic–racial identity and emergent civic participation.

Discussion

The highly publicized political campaign of the current presidential incumbent against the Latinx community has led to increased exposure of hate crimes against these individuals making it necessary for parents to address issues of discrimination and the current political climate. Given the anti-Latinx rhetoric within the United States, it is important to understand how parents may engender a sense of civic engagement as a means to respond to and potentially challenge such societal exclusion. Exploring the ways Latinx adolescents make sense of their civic responsibilities, our study provides insights on the mediating role of ERI processes on the relationship between parents' and youths' ERS and their sociopolitical discussion as well as youths' emergent civic engagement.

In support of our first hypothesis, we found that cultural socialization and sociopolitical discussions were associated with youths' emergent civic participation. This finding, as well as the positive and significant correlation between sociopolitical discussions and cultural socialization, provides preliminary support for the notion that sociopolitical discussions may be embedded within the ERS messages that parents give their children. In doing so, adolescents not only learn about their heritage but also make sense of their group membership within the politicized and racialized context of the greater mainstream society. As Latinx parents transmit their cultural values to their children, youth may also learn about the marginalization and systemic barriers affecting the Latinx community. More specifically, our results suggest that adolescents who receive cultural socialization messages from their parents and engage in more sociopolitical discussions may be more likely to develop a sense of civic accountability. Through these parental practices, adolescents may develop a sense of collective responsibility to help members of their community who are in need. This sense of responsibility may ultimately manifest itself through civic actions tied to social movements aimed at creating more social, political, and economic opportunities for Latinxs (e.g., *DREAM, Quince Power, and Families Belong Together*).

Additionally, our results also found that adolescents who engaged in sociopolitical discussions with their parents had greater expectations for future community involvement. Therefore, youth who actively learned about the current sociopolitical state of the Latinx community were more likely to have a greater commitment to being agents of change for the betterment of their communities. This finding contributes to the extant literature by providing empirical evidence on how parent socialization practices in Latinx families may contribute to the positive sociopolitical development of Latinx youth (Mathews et al., 2019; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). Our research is

particularly important since little research, to our knowledge, has examined this phenomenon in Latinx communities. Given that the Latinx community is under attack, it is not only particularly important to understand the mechanisms at play that drive Latinx youth to take civic action, but also how parents, teachers, and other adults in the community can support the continual engagement and empowerment of such youth.

In terms of preparation for bias messages, though we did not find a significant direct association with adolescents' emergent participatory citizenship, we did find a significant and positive indirect association via adolescents' exploration. This finding is in contrast to previous research that found no association between preparation for bias and Latinx adolescent outcomes (Else-Quest & Morse, 2015). It may be the case that parents' preparation for bias messages encouraged youths' awareness about how their ethnic–racial group is discriminated against in addition to encouraging them to respond in ways that support their community (Anyiwo et al., 2018). Future work should consider the context under which preparation for bias messages are given to adolescents and how adolescents make sense of these messages, to better understand the potential impact of preparation for bias messages on Latinx adolescents' development.

In support of our second hypothesis, we found that all parental socialization measures were related to adolescents' ERI processes. Adolescents who engaged in more sociopolitical discussions with their parents were more likely to engage in exploration and have more clarity about their ethnic–racial identity. Additionally, adolescents who received more cultural socialization messages were more likely to have higher levels of resolution and exploration. This finding is consistent with current research indicating that the more messages youth receive about their culture the more clarity they have about what their ethnicity means to them (Ayón et al., 2018). In line with previous research with a pooled ethnically diverse sample, we found that cultural socialization messages and preparation for bias messages were significantly associated with adolescents' exploration levels (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2018). Other work with similar findings suggests that parents who have explored and reached resolution regarding their own ERI may use socialization messages to contribute to resolution (Douglas & Umaña-Taylor, 2015). Our findings suggest that understanding the positionality of one's social group in terms of the broader social context and learning about their cultural heritage, traditions, and languages may help Latinx youth both explore and develop a clearer meaning of their ethnicity and race.

Finally, we found partial support for the role of ERI processes explaining the associations between adolescents' sociopolitical discussions with their parents and their emergent civic engagement. Adolescents who engaged in more ERI exploration, specifically, were more likely to express commitment to future community involvement. However, although engaging in sociopolitical discussions with their parents was related to adolescents having more clarity about their ERI, there were no indirect linkages between sociopolitical discussions and adolescents' emergent participatory citizenship via their resolution. Our results suggest that sociopolitical discussions that take place within the context of ERS support the positive sociopolitical development of Latinx youth as they engage in the ERI exploration process (Mathews et al., 2019). Future work should consider whether and how sociopolitical discussions may form an important component of ERS for Latinx youth, as some scholars have suggested (cf. Ayón, 2016). Our findings are consistent with current literature highlighting the salience of sociopolitical issues for Latinx youth, and potentially other youth of color, who develop a *politicized* ethnic–racial identity as they engage with issues affecting their communities.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current research provides novel insights on the mechanisms at play through which parent ERS can potentially promote the emergent civic engagement of Latinx youth. However, these results must be taken into consideration along with the limitations of the study. Most notably, this study is not generalizable given the unique setting where the data were gathered. The demographics of most schools were primarily Latinx. In our largest school site, which comprises the majority of the sample, a large portion of the middle school teachers also identify as Latinx and/or bilingual. Therefore, our findings may not be generalizable to the greater Latinx community in U.S. settings where there is a mismatch in the ethnic–racial backgrounds of teachers and students or that may be more hostile to Latinx students. Further research should also be conducted to understand how these mechanisms manifest among Latinx families in less homogenous settings. There was also limited variability within our sample. Few adolescents were born outside of the United States, and the majority of youth had parents who were not U.S.-born. Previous research suggests there may be different civic engagement levels based on adolescents' and their parents' immigration status (Wallace & Zepeda-Millán, 2020) future research should see if the associations we found may differ by immigration status.

Due to the cross-sectional nature of this research, we are unable to determine the directionality of the paths examined. More longitudinal research is necessary to better explain the mechanisms at play that encourage the

sociopolitical development of Latinx youth. It is also important to consider that we were unable to disaggregate our sample into various Latinx subgroups. Given the intersectional effects of systemic oppression, it is important to consider the nuances of each Latinx subgroup (e.g., nationality and colonial histories) as well as the multiple identities that youth may have. Intersectional research is necessary to fully understand how civic engagement emerges in groups that vary by specific Latinx ethnicities, sexual orientation, and immigrant status, as examples (e.g., Terriquez, 2015).

Lastly, this study is also limited by the reliance on self-reported measures. Previous studies have shown differences between parents' reports of ERS practices and adolescent perspectives (Hughes et al., 2009a), and it may be possible that taking into account parent reports of their ERS practices and sociopolitical discussions with their children may yield different findings. As such, additional research is necessary to understand how parental ERS practices may support the sociopolitical development of Latinx youth. However, in spite of these limitations, the current research provides timely insights into how parents' ERS practices and sociopolitical discussions might encourage the emergent participatory citizenship of Latinx youth.

Implications and Conclusion

One key contribution of the present research is that it considers received ERS messages alongside sociopolitical discussions that take place within families. ERS messages given through a politicized lens have the potential to support the civic engagement of Latinx youth (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015). The current findings come at a critical juncture in time, providing insight to ways we can support the positive ERI development and build the civic capacity of Latinx youth. The current contentious sociopolitical climate is impacting the messages parents transmit to their adolescents and reflect the pervasive influence of structural and institutional forces at the family level (Ayón et al., 2018; Roche et al., 2020). The present findings suggest it may be critical to expand our current ERS conceptualization to include parental sociopolitical discussions to better understand the critical role parents' ERS practices play within Latinx youth's sociopolitical development. Such broader conceptualization could also explicate how parental ERS may respond to political institutions and structural forces. To support Latinx adolescents' development, policymakers and practitioners should capitalize on the power of parental ERS to promote our youth's future and their civic engagement, especially at this historical moment in our society.

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