

**VOLUNTEERING AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION
AMONG IMMIGRANT MEMBERS OF ETHNIC
CONGREGATIONS: COMPLEMENTARY
NOT COMPETITIVE.**

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December 2010

Journal of Civil Society, in press

Acknowledgements: This study was financially supported by a University Research Foundation grant from the University of Pennsylvania. The authors thank Gordon Zhu and Charlene C. McGrew for their invaluable support in data collection. Thank you also to the pastors and congregants who opened their houses of worship for us.

Executive Summary

This paper explores the relationship between voluntary activities of first generation immigrants within the ethnic congregations which they attend and participation in other civic activities which occur outside of a congregation. We distinguish between attendance and volunteering within and outside of the congregation. An underlying question we wished to explore was whether membership and attendance in an ethnic congregation, which is assumed to promote bonding social capital, appeared to be related to more or less bridging social capital, as conceptualized by voluntary activities outside of the congregation and other civic participation in the wider community.

Countries whose residents exhibit high civic participation are also more democratic in their processes and outcomes, and this participation correlates with high levels of volunteerism (Okun & Michel, 2006; Putnam, 2000; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). Volunteering has been identified as a central measure of social capital and civic participation, and hence of a democratic and healthy community (Putnam, 2000). Social capital theory suggests that voluntary participation in associations and activities enables

interactions across diverse cross-sections of a population and facilitates “generalized trust” or mutual trust, particularly among peoples who do not know one another or are dissimilar (Berger, Galonska & Koopmans, 2004; Marschall & Stolle, 2004).

To address this question, survey data from 496 first generation immigrants who attended 23 ethnic congregations was analyzed using a composite variable of civic participation outside the congregation. Our analysis (the model accounted for 13 percent of the variance) suggests that voluntary activity within the congregation is significantly related to civic participation, and that volunteer activities, as opposed to attendance, are associated with civic participation. We did not find significant influence of gender, ethnic origin, proficiency with English, education level, presence of children under age 18 in the household. Age and length of residency in the US were found to be a significant. Our finding supports the observation that the longer an immigrant is in the host country, the more likely he or she is to adopt the culture of volunteering. Further, our sample was relatively young (mean age of 43 and 37 per cent under age 34) and suggests that while in the general population, in which young adults attend a congregation less

frequently than older adults, this may not be the case for first-generation immigrants given the higher rates of attendance and the special role of the congregation as a social and recreational hub (Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Ammerman, 1997). Younger immigrants may also find it easier to engage in cross-cultural activities.

We highlight several implications for voluntary activity as a factor in facilitating civic participation and integration among first generation immigrant members of ethnic congregations. In urban America, congregations provide an accessible environment which is rich in opportunities to build bonding social capital for recent immigrants. Nationally representative survey data indicate that people trust other people in their place of worship more than they trust co-workers, neighbours, and people of their own race (Saguaro Seminar, 2001). The assumption of similar values may be less prevalent in other voluntary associations, such as a sports team or mommy's group, which form independently of a religious context, and cannot be assumed to share certain values which promote trust, even in ethnically-homogenous groups. The assumption of shared values in the religious context may speed up the formation of generalized trust and bonding social capital. Congregations also

provide frequent opportunities for volunteering both within and outside of the congregation, as noted by Verba *et al.* (1995) and Sikkink and Hernandez (2003). In addition to multiple opportunities to volunteer within the congregation, there are often “entre” opportunities to organisations or community activities with which the congregation or a few members of the congregation have a prior relationship.

The study’s primary limitation is that the data collected was not designed to control for individual level factors which might promote one individuals’ volunteering and civic participation as an aspect of a “joiner’s” or engaged personality. That is, some people naturally would volunteer whether or not they were a member of a same ethnic congregation. Conversely, we cannot gauge how much participation in a congregation might encourage and provide opportunities for increased civic engagement.

Among immigrants, membership and attendance at ethnic congregations do not diminish civic participation. Second generation or long-term resident immigrants may be less prone to seek out an ethnic context for worship and bonding socialization, but for first-generation immigrants, membership in an ethnic congregation and

volunteering appear to support other bridging engagement and patterns of activity, as well as bonding social capital.

Introduction

One common assumption which prompted this study is that ‘healthier’ communities - those which are more democratic in their processes and outcomes - are also those in which civic participation is high, and that this participation is correlated with, or influenced by, high levels of volunteerism (Omoto & Snyder, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). Volunteering has been identified as a central measure of social capital and civic participation (Putnam, 2000). Social capital theory suggests that voluntary participation in associations enables interactions across diverse cross-sections of a population and facilitates “generalized trust” or mutual trust (Berger, Galonska & Koopmans, 2004; Marschall & Stolle, 2004). Generalized trust, as opposed to particularized trust, allows people to build, and become embedded in, networks of social support and solidarity, even among people who do not know one another or are dissimilar (Musick & Wilson, 2008). It is also associated with desirable community-level factors such as academic achievement, lower crime rates (Halpern, 2005), increased flow of information (Putnam, 1993), physical health, neighbourhood safety, as well as effective schools, public service, and government (Putnam, 1993; Sander & Lowney, 2005).

Given the links of civic participation, and in particular volunteering, to healthier communities, in this paper, we wish to advance the discussion on the dynamics of civic participation among first generation immigrants to the United States who attend ethnic congregations. We address a basic debate in the literature: whether within-group activism acts as a conduit to broader civic participation, or whether, through the creation of inward looking group cohesion, such within-group bonding activities can actually close its members from civic interaction with the broader society. The concept of bonding social capital, which is commonly used in this debate to describe the tendency to bond within the group, is contrasted with bridging social capital that is acquired through activities across different groups (Putnam, 2000).

Immigrant ethnic congregations in the United States are an interesting venue within which to examine bonding and bridging capital because they are a unique subset of voluntary associations where religious, ethnic, and migration considerations intersect. On the one hand, such congregations offer a homogenous, attractive, and easily accessible venue for newcomers to withdraw from the challenges of immigration and assimilation, while bonding with a culturally similar community. On the other hand, building trust and confidence with similar others is believed to result in higher involvement both within the congregation and in the wider community. As such, the immigrant ethnic congregation is a peculiar setting which merits a separate discussion about questions of volunteering and civic participation; generalized versus particularized trust (Uslaner & Conley, 2003); and bridging and bonding capital (Putnam, 2000).

Furthermore, the study of ethnic congregations in the US context is significant for three other reasons: the distinctive nature of associational life in the US (Skocpol, 1996; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999), the high levels of religiosity

(Van Tubergen, 2006), and its large diversity of immigrant communities, many of whom have relatively homogenous communities for worship (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000b). This proclivity for religious congregations and voluntary associations are notable distinctions compared to Europe and makes our research venue of interest to scholars in the field.

While *congregation attendance* has been noted as a predictor of civic participation (Verba, Scholzman, Brady & Nie, 1993; Wuthnow, 1999), our key argument is that this construct is insufficient, or inadequate, in explaining the association between religious participation and civic participation of immigrant members. We suggest, instead, differentiating between congregation attendance and volunteering within the congregation, because attendance is a passive form of participation while volunteering requires active participation, which we believe can better predict civic participation in the wider community. Within this framework, we ask whether the type of volunteering activity and the number of volunteer tasks that are performed within the ethnic congregation, as opposed to mere attendance, is related to civic participation in the wider community, and/or to volunteering outside the congregation. In other words, among first-generation immigrant congregation members, does attendance, volunteering, or both, inhibit or facilitate civic participation and bridging social capital?

Our paper starts with a review of relevant literature on volunteering, social capital, ethnic congregation membership, and civic participation in the US as it pertains to immigrants and non-immigrants. This is followed by hypotheses, the research methods, findings, and a discussion of the findings. We conclude with observations on congregation participation and volunteering as factors in facilitating civic participation and social integration among first generation immigrants.

Review of Literature

The review covers literature on ethnic, primarily immigrant, congregations in the US, attendance and volunteering among the general population, and the relation of volunteering to civic participation.

Role of ethnic congregations

Previous studies have pointed to various reasons that make congregations in general and ethnic congregations in particular, a unique subset of voluntary associations in the US. First, there is a preponderance of religious congregations in the US and these congregations are the most prevalent source of voluntary membership among all civic associations (Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). Studies of Los Angeles and Philadelphia, for example, show the ubiquitous nature of congregations on the US urban landscape; they are more populous than stores selling gasoline, food, and liquor in these geographical settings (Cnaan, Wineburg, & Boddie, 1999; Orr, 1998). Second, congregations are distinguished as a special subset of voluntary associations whose legitimacy is derived from the moral authority of its leadership, and whose purpose are

more limited or proscribed than other, secular voluntary associations (Harris, 1998). Third, the prevalence of ethnic congregations facilitates easy access for new immigrants. Ethnic congregations play a dual role for immigrants: a place of worship and a safe place for social interaction where new immigrants may form relationships and join social networks as they navigate a new culture in their host country.

Menjivar and Agadjanian (1997) found that for new immigrants, attending a congregation might be the only source of social interaction outside of the family. Rather than serving exclusively as a source of religious education and a place of worship, congregations often operate as social hubs, and primary conduits for social, recreational, and mutual aid functions for new immigrants. This dual role that immigrant congregations fulfill has been recognized frequently in the literature as the 'congregational' model (Warner, 1998; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Wuthnow, 1988). The congregational model is typified by voluntary membership as opposed to the geographical 'parish model' where all residents of the same area attended the same church. It is further characterized by its professional clergy, financial reliance on members, and provision of a variety of social services, in addition to worship services. These social services are often extended beyond its members to the local community (Cadge, 2008; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a, 2000b; Handy & Cnaan 1999). Ethnic congregations often engender high levels of member commitment, which helps to provide for the religious and material needs of immigrants (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a; Handy & Greenspan, 2009),

For these reasons, it is not surprising that a third of the adult immigrant population in the US attend a religious congregation (Van Tubergen, 2006). Even immigrants who were not affiliated with a congregation in their country of origin often join a religious congregation upon transitioning to the host country as they are attracted to many non-religious benefits provided by congregational membership (Ammerman, 1997; Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Khandelwai, 2002; Min, 1992). The high prevalence of congregations, their sources of legitimacy, their accessibility to immigrants, and the dual role of ethnic congregations are compelling reasons for looking at this type of association in relation to voluntary activity and civic participation among first generation immigrants.

Attendance at congregations as source of volunteer and civic participation

Clearly, attendance frequency is important: Several studies about congregation membership found that as frequency of attendance increases, so does the likelihood of participation in volunteer activities (Campbell & Yonish, 2003; Cnaan, Wineburg & Boddie, 1999; Uslaner, 2002; Verba, Schlozman, Brady & Nie, 1993; Wuthnow, 1999). Campbell and Yonish (2003) observed that among Protestants and Catholics, 60 to 75% of weekly attendees indicated some type of volunteering as opposed to just 28 to 50% of persons who did not attend at all, or who attended a congregation only a few times a year. They also found that the positive association between attendance and volunteering is observed for both religious and non-religious volunteering. Although weekly

and monthly attendees volunteer in religious contexts more often than they do in non-religious contexts, estimates of volunteering in both these contexts is still relatively high (e.g., between 24 to 52% of non-religious volunteer activity among monthly attendees) (Campbell & Yonish, 2003).

The literature also supports a relationship between attendance in a congregation and participation in civic and political arenas (Campbell & Yonish, 2003; Greeley, 1997; Putnam, 2000; Smidt, Green, Guth & Kellstedt, 2003). Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) suggested that congregations are venues for recruiting members to volunteer at other civic organisations. Sikkink and Hernández (2003) made a similar observation that church involvement within the Latino community not only increased opportunities for members to interact within the congregation but also increased access to other organisations in the local community. In terms of proactive influence on members' political engagement, Beyerlein and Chaves (2003) found that congregations were more likely to address and advocate for political issues than other non-political organisations in the US. Djupe and Gilbert (2002) and Greenberg (2000) found that members of congregations were politically informed and that social and political issues were discussed during worship services, religious classes, and other congregation meetings and activities. At the very least, such studies suggest that congregations provide opportunities for volunteering both within the congregation as well as outside of the congregation. In this vein, engagement within the congregation has been viewed as a potential stepping stone to social and political engagement outside the congregation: members who engage in leadership and volunteering within the congregation are more likely to participate in other civic arenas as well.

What is not addressed in these studies is the nature of congregation activity, and how it promotes civic engagement. Specifically, we argue that differentiation between volunteering and attendance is necessary because active volunteering within the congregation, more so than mere membership or passive attendance, might be an important variable that facilitates greater civic engagement. Rationale for our view comes from Putnam's and others' conceptualization of bonding and bridging social capital. Putnam (2000) suggested that congregations offer a site for building two kinds of social capital: "bonding" social capital with like-minded members in the organization and "bridging" social capital with others in various networks or in more diverse settings. When congregants, motivated to build their social capital, join a congregation, they typically are exposed to opportunities to volunteer both within the congregation (bonding capital) and beyond it (bridging capital).

While the concepts of bridging and bonding capital are well established, less evident is the question whether inward bonding ties among homogeneous ethnic groups of immigrants can lead them to adopt an outwards view as well; whether among immigrants, the congregational bonds indeed can serve as a 'stepping-stone to integration' (Handy & Greenspan, 2009). Using Putnam's theory of social capital, Fennema and Tillie (1999, 2001) suggested that participation in ethnic voluntary associations creates more ethnic social capital and more social trust among homogeneous groups of ethnic minorities. This

then has a spillover effect on other venues, such as the political arena. As Weisinger and Salipante (2005) observed, bonding social capital preceded bridging social capital. Participation in ethnic associations, in other words, has the ability to trigger higher levels of social integration and political participation for ethnic immigrants (Handy & Greenspan 2009; Jacobs, Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2004; Jacobs & Tillie 2004).

Opposing evidence suggests that homogeneity among group members may hinder members' wider involvement in civic and political activities by providing them a space to facilitate their particular activities/practices (Aguado, 2007; Campbell & Yonish, 2003; Hill & Matsubayshi, 2005). In this scenario, strong ethnic identification may result in withdrawal from wider civic participation (Uslaner & Conley, 2003). Among minority populations, membership in an ethnically homogenous group, such as an ethnic congregation, may not support generalized trust with individuals who are unlike oneself, but rather may foster strong "within-group" or particularized trust (Uslaner, 2002). Cadge and Ecklund (2006) used a national sample of new immigrants from different religious traditions to examine the impact of various factors such as demographics, family, employment, and language, along with attendance at worship services on integration. Their findings confirmed that US immigrants who are less integrated into American society are also more likely than others to attend religious services.

However, another study by Ecklund (2008) with two congregations and second generation Korean American members, explored whether membership in an ethnic congregation furthered ethnic identities and inward networks rather than promoted integration into mainstream society. Her conclusion was that membership did not inhibit integration. Membership in these Korean congregations included the expectation of caring for others' well-being, including individuals in the wider community, and not only one's own ethnic community. In these cases, membership in a congregation promoted rather than curtailed civic activity. These contrasting explanations suggest that we should not assume directionality in the relationship between membership in an immigrant congregation and wider civic participation (also see Aguado, 2007).

Another factor that influences civic participation of immigrants must be noted: Whether and to what extent is immigrant accepted by the host society. The stepping stone theory puts the onus for integration on the immigrant and examines how he or she becomes engaged in civic activities. The implicit assumption is that members are welcomed and valued by society outside the congregation. But this is not always the case: minority groups, including immigrants, are more frequently excluded from opportunities for developing leadership and professional skills in the dominant culture. The religious context can be an alternative, parallel source for insulated and segregated opportunities (Moya 2005). Johnson (1999) and Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) observed that discrimination toward African Americans created a context in which the church served as an alternate rather than intermediate source to exercise skills. For example, if paid employment as a waiter or a cleaning person did not promote high social status, being head of a women's auxiliary or

serving as a deacon in a congregation provided higher status and a forum to exercise skills, leadership, and authority (Johnson, 1999; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). Thus, voluntary associations can, in a non welcoming environment, create a parallel structure within which social capital can reside and flow separately from the wider society, and furthers the rationale that directionality cannot be assumed when considering membership in ethnic associations and civic participation.

In addition to congregation attendance, demographic factors must be considered as control variables. Previous studies among immigrants indicated that education level is positively associated with volunteering (Jacobs, Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2004; Togeby, 2004). Income has been found to have inconsistent or non-significant impact on the probability of volunteering: although higher income may enable people to volunteer more, it also increases their opportunity cost. These effects work in opposite directions, and we do not include income as a control variable (Gomez & Gunderson, 2003). Women volunteer more frequently than men, unless religious prescriptions dissuade women's engagement outside the home (Jacobs, Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2004; Tillie, 2004); people who are employed volunteer more frequently than the unemployed (Jacobs, Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2004), and length of residency in the host country and proficiency in the local language are associated with higher participation rates, unless education level is high (Cho, 1999, Jacobs, Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2004; Togeby, 2004; Wong, 2000).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Given the opposing views and interpretations of congregational attendance, volunteering, and civic participation, the question remains does immigrant members' participation in their ethnic congregations facilitate or hinder civic participation? If it is true that bonding capital among members of ethnic congregation is related to consequent bridging activities outside of the congregation, then it should follow that immigrants who not only attend but also volunteer within their congregation should be more likely to exhibit higher civic participation, as compared to those who only attend.

The following hypotheses are organized to reflect our interest in 'congregational attendance' and 'volunteering within the congregation,' and 'volunteering outside the congregation' and 'civic participation.'

Congregational Attendance

- H1. Higher congregational attendance increases the likelihood of volunteering within the congregation.
- H2. Higher congregational attendance increases the likelihood of volunteering outside the congregation.
- H3. Higher congregational attendance increases the likelihood of civic participation.

Volunteering within the congregation

- H4. Volunteering within the congregation increases the likelihood of volunteering outside the congregation.

H5. Volunteering within the congregation increases the likelihood of civic participation.

Methods

Research Site

The research was carried out in ethnic congregations in the City of Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA). Philadelphia was a popular immigrant gateway to the US in the early 20th century, experienced a significant decline in popularity since the 1950s, but is showing signs of regaining its popularity as a destination to immigrants (Singer, 2004). The number of foreign-born in the city has been on the rise (30% increase between 1990 and 2000) while the overall population has declined by 4.3% in the same period of time (Ceffalio & Patusky, 2006). A recent census of congregations in Philadelphia revealed an impressive surge in the number of ethnic congregations (Cnaan, Boddie, McGrew & Kang, 2006). The inflow of immigrants and prevalence of ethnic congregations, combined with reasons of convenience and funding, suggested Philadelphia as a viable research site.

Sampling Frame of Ethnic Immigrant Congregations

A sample of ethnic immigrant congregations was drawn from an existing census of Philadelphia congregations, which contained 1,415 cases (Cnaan, Boddie, McGrew & Kang, 2006). To identify ethnically homogenous, immigrant congregations from this census, three selection criteria were defined: 1) 75% or more of the congregation members are immigrants; 2) the congregation is at least 75% ethnically homogenous; 3) the congregation had seating for at least 100 members. These criteria yielded a sampling frame of n=192 congregations, from which we generated a stratified random sample of 34 potential congregations to survey. Some of these congregations did not meet our eligibility criteria, were not accessible, or declined their participation; hence other ethnic congregations were randomly selected and approached. A total of 65 congregations were contacted, of which 23 congregations agreed to participate. The surveyed congregations represent different ethnic backgrounds, including Asian, Latino, European, and African ethnicities (see Table 1); they reflect eight of the 13 most prevalent immigrant populations in Philadelphia (Ceffalio & Patusky, 2006).

[TABLE 1 - about here]

Data Collection

Phone calls to the clergy of congregations were made to verify ethnic and immigrant composition according to our selection criteria. In some cases, the research team also paid a preliminary visit to some of the congregations in

order to ascertain their approval. We scheduled visits around the congregation's weekly worship service to conduct paper-and-pencil anonymous surveys among all adults present at the time of the visit. To supplement the on-site visits, a link to a web-based survey was provided to congregation members who preferred to complete it online. The survey was translated from English into Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese to accommodate immigrants who were not comfortable with English. The final sample size is n=495 with 90% paper-and-pencil (n=448) and 10% on-line surveys (n=47). We excluded from this sample 35 questionnaires filled out by people who were not first generation immigrants, and 29 which were incomplete.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument included questions targeting members' attendance in worship services, volunteering within and outside the congregation, civic participation and socio-demographic characteristics. Questions related to congregational participation were adapted from instruments used by Cnaan and his colleagues (Cnaan, Boddie, Handy, Yancey, & Schneider, 2002; Cnaan, Boddie, McGrew & Kang, 2006) and by Handy and Greenspan (2009). Several items from the Social Capital Community Benchmark (SCCB) survey (Saguaro Seminar, 2000, 2001) were used to examine participation in social and political activities. The relevant items in the instrument are described in the data analysis section.

Sample Characteristics

Survey respondents were nearly equally split in terms of gender composition, with 49% male respondents. Almost three quarters of the sample (72%) immigrated to the US before 2000. On average, respondents have resided in the US for 17 years, with a range from less than one year to 69 years. Respondents have been members of their congregation for an average of over 10 years. Their ages ranged from 18 to 93 years, with a mean age of 43 years old. It was a relatively young sample, with 37% of the sample being less than 34 years old. Respondents were educated (55% with a bachelor degree or higher) and more likely to be employed (78% were full- or part-time employed). A majority of the sample were of Asian origin (60%), with the remainder being white (15%), Black (14%), and Hispanic (11%). The ethnic composition of our sample closely corresponds to the 2000 US Census data on immigration in Philadelphia where the proportions of ethnicities among recent immigrants are: Asian - 68%, European - 15%, African - 9%, and Central and South America and the Caribbean - 6% (Ceffalio & Patusky, 2006). Demographic characteristics of respondents are detailed in Table 2.

[TABLE 2 - about here]

Limitations

First, the sample does not, and was not intended to represent all faith groups and all religions in the Philadelphia region. It may also not be fully representative of the populations of the surveyed congregations because

respondents were not chosen randomly in the sense that only those attending worship services on the day of the surveyor's visit were included in the sample. Second, our sample respondents may be better educated than the average immigrant. Our sample includes a high proportion of immigrants from Asia (60%), which, while consistent with the immigrant population in Philadelphia, may contribute to the relatively high proportion of participants with high levels of education. In addition, 78% of the sample was employed either full or part time. As noted, the literature indicates that more educated and employed individuals tend to volunteer (Jacobs, Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2004; Togeby, 2004), but the number of volunteer hours contributed is negatively correlated with level of education (Handy & Greenspan, 2009). This combination may contribute to our sample being one that is more likely to volunteer than the general population. On the other hand, nearly 40% of our sample indicated some difficulty with regard to communication in English ("Cannot communicate at all," "communicate with difficulty," or "Somewhat difficult") and 43% of our sample had a household income of less than \$40,000, which suggests that this sample is not an elite one on these measures. Finally, due to the scope of the study that covers immigrants in congregations only, we lack a comparison group and are unable to generalize our findings to first generation immigrants who do not attend congregations or who belong to other community groups.

Data Analysis

Dependent variables

We constructed two measures of immigrants' involvement outside the congregation as our dependent variables: *volunteering outside the congregation* and *civic participation*. Our first measure was operationalized using the dichotomous yes/no question "In the past 12 months, have you volunteered for any other organisation?"

To operationalize the variable *civic participation*, we recoded, averaged, and log-transformed five items borrowed from the SCCB survey into a new continuous variable labelled Civic Participation Score (CPS). The original question was 'how many times in the past 12 months have you': "signed a petition," "attended a political meeting," "attended a public meeting in which school or community issue was discussed," "attended a club or organizational meeting," and "been in the home of a friend of a different race/ethnicity or had them in your home." Responses to these items were originally given in an ordinal scale, ranging from 'never' to 'weekly'. We translated and then log-transformed this measure to an interval scale by recoding the initial responses to approximate the number of days per year for each activity: "never" (0 days per year), "less than once a month" (7 days per year), "once a month" (12 days per year), "more than once a month" (32 days a year), and "weekly" (52 days a year). The log-transformed variable had a correlation of $r=.967$ with the ordinal variable that only calculated the means of the 5 original participation items. All the five items grouped under CPS are inter-correlated (all correlations are

statistically significant except for the correlation between ‘sign a petition’ and ‘attend a club meeting’).

Independent and control variables

The variables *congregation attendance* and *volunteering within an ethnic congregation* are our two independent variables. In the final regression model, the dependent variable *volunteering outside the congregation* is used as an independent variable along with attendance and volunteering within the congregation (see Multivariate analysis). *Congregation attendance* is a continuous variable measured by the question “In the past 12 months, how many times a month (on average) did you attend services in this congregation? Responses ranged from 0 to 36 (more than once a day).

To determine the rate of *volunteering within the congregation*, we asked a dichotomous yes/no question, “In the past 12 months, have you volunteered with your congregation?” Seventy-nine percent responded positively to this question. However, this response did not capture the breadth of immigrants’ volunteer activities. To capture multiple volunteer activities we used the count of types of volunteer activities to estimate volunteering within the congregation. The volunteer activities reported included: Administration - 13% respondents participating, Governance (committees, board) - 22%, Fundraising - 22%, Maintenance and transportation - 23%, Choir - 21%, Special events (cooking and serving meals, home visiting) - 39%, Training and education (including teaching Sunday school) - 26%, and Other - 15%.¹ We summed the various types of volunteer activities for each respondent to create the variable *volunteering within the congregation* that is the count of all the volunteering activities in which they participated; this variable ranges between 0 and 8.

We included the following control variables: years of membership in the congregation (continuous), age (in years), racial/ethnic origin (Asian reference group), length of residency in the US (in years), dichotomous measure of gender (0=male), and dummy variables for level of English proficiency (0=cannot communicate or with some difficulty), education level (0=less than bachelor), presence of children under age 18 in the household (0=no), and employment status (0= not employed). Table 3 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the dependent, independent and control variables.

[Table 3 about here]

¹ Twenty respondents reported about volunteering within the congregation but did not report type. They were recorded as other/unknown type.

Findings

Bivariate analysis: First, we performed Pearson correlation tests to assess whether frequency of congregation attendance is correlated with volunteering within the congregation (H1), volunteering outside the congregation (H2), and civic participation (H3). We found that higher congregational attendance increases the likelihood of engaging in more types of volunteering within the congregation ($r=.105$, $p=.027$) thus supporting H1. However, our second and third hypotheses were not supported by the data. Second, we performed another correlation test to assess whether respondents' volunteering activities within the congregation were related to their volunteering outside the congregation (H4). We found that those who volunteered within the congregation were more likely to volunteer outside the congregation ($r=.230$, $p<.001$). Lastly, we tested the correlation between volunteering within the congregation and civic participation (H5) to find that volunteering within the congregation also increases the likelihood of civic participation ($r=.166$, $p<.001$) hence supporting our fifth hypothesis.

[Table 4 about here]

Multivariate analysis: To examine the robustness of the relationship in H5, we performed a multivariate analysis using OLS regression with *civic participation* as the dependent variable, and congregational attendance, volunteering within the congregation, and volunteering outside the congregation as our independent variables. We controlled for the background variables described above. Table 5 presents the results of three models. We found that volunteering within and outside the congregation are positively and significantly correlated to civic participation while congregational attendance is not. Length of residency in the US had positive and significant impact, while age had a negative significant impact in all models. Employment status had a positive and significant impact in models 1 and 3. The models with volunteering inside and outside the congregation had better explanatory power than the model measuring attendance only and the most comprehensive model accounted for 12.9% of the variance.

[TABLE 5 - about here]

Discussion

Our overall findings lend credence to the premise that volunteering in one's ethnic congregation can be considered complementary to civic participation. Simple membership or attendance in worship services, in and of itself, may enhance bonding capital, but frequent attendees are not necessarily

likely to volunteer more outside of the congregation, nor to engage in civic participation. In contrast, individuals who engage in volunteer activities within their congregations are more likely to volunteer outside of the congregation and are more likely to engage in civic participation. Our data suggest, then, that volunteering within and outside the congregation, especially the number of different volunteer activities within the congregation, is a more useful predictor of concurrent civic participation, than is frequency of attendance.

These findings replicate, to a certain degree, a study by Beyerlein and Hipp (2006) who found that for non-immigrant US congregations, it is congregation activities, beyond worship attendance, that facilitated participation in civic organizations. Such findings challenge the many studies that use frequency of congregational attendance to measure relationship to civic participation (e.g., Campbell & Yonish, 2003).

The control variables that were significant - that is: age, length of residency in the US, and employment status - give further insight into our findings. With regards to age, which had negative impact on civic participation, our sample was relatively young with a mean age of 43 and 37% under age 34. That our sample was relatively young might reflect some bias in data collection; older immigrants may be disinclined or suspicious and hence did not participate in filling out our survey even though participation was anonymous. But we believe there is an empirical grounding to this finding as well. While the SCCB survey indicated that in the general American population, young adults attend a congregation less frequently than older adults, this may not be the case for first-generation immigrants given the contrasting evidence of high rate of attendance among immigrants in general (Handy & Greenspan, 2009) and the special role of the congregation as a social and recreational hub (Ammerman, 1997; Warner, 1998). It is also likely that younger immigrants find it easier to engage in a variety of activities in the host country, including those which are cross-cultural. Younger immigrants may have fewer barriers, such as language acquisition as well as incentives to participate in voluntary and civic activities.

Length of residency in the US was found to have a positive influence on civic participation. This finding suggests that the longer an immigrant is in the host country, the more likely he or she is to adopt the prevalent culture of volunteering in the US. This is in keeping with other research on volunteering and suggests that length of residency is an important factor to assess in regard to volunteering and civic participation (Cho, 1999; Wong, 2000). Employment status was also found to have a positive and significant influence in two of the models, which supports some prior research (e.g., Jacobs, Phalet, & Swyngedouw, 2004).

Unlike other studies (e.g., Jacobs, Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2004; Son & Lin, 2008; Tillie, 2004), we did not find gender to be significant in the relationship between volunteering within the congregation and civic participation. Further studies should consider gendered types of civic engagement in survey development and analysis. No significant differences were found in explaining civic participation by race or ethnicity despite the fact that our sample contained a high percentage of persons from Asian countries (60%). However,

research on whether and how immigrants from different countries of origin compare in regards to volunteering outside of the congregation and civic participation is needed to understand the role of specific ethnic cultures in promoting or curtailing immigrant integration in the host society.

In this analysis we did not assess whether differences in various faith traditions or denominations are related to varying degrees of civic participation among immigrants, although it is likely that such differences exist. For example, Wuthnow (1998) observed that Mainline Protestants and Catholics were more likely to volunteer in ways which benefited the wider community while Evangelical Protestants volunteered more in activities which benefited members of their congregation or denomination. Further analysis among immigrant congregation members might delve into whether this difference in volunteering venues is observed among the major faith traditions and whether it is related to civic engagement (see also Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006).

Jacobs and Tillie (2004) noted the need to distinguish and measure local and international factors which affect civic participation. Denominational-level differences in how congregations function, as well as local political contexts and opportunities for civic participation are integral for understanding how immigrants engage in civic activities, the political process, and the role of ethnic voluntary associations. One example is Aguado's (2007) study which found that individuals who hold multiple group memberships in voluntary associations enjoy more diversity of their social network. However, this was less likely to be true for members of homogenous groups like religious congregations. Therefore, further research should enable analysis of the local context and interaction effects between individual level factors, and contextual factors such as how well connected or embedded the congregation is in local associational networks or how organizational characteristics of congregations facilitate or encourage voluntarism and civic participation (Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Schneider & Morrison, 2009).

Conclusion and implications

What implications can be drawn from our findings vis-à-vis first-generation immigrants, membership, attendance, and volunteering within and outside of congregations? For first-generation immigrants, what kind of social capital resides in an ethnic congregation and what is the role of the congregation in facilitating their participation in the wider community?

First, in urban America, congregations provide an accessible environment which is rich in opportunities to build bonding social capital for recent immigrants. SCCB data indicate that people trust other people in their place of worship more than they trust co-workers, neighbours, and people of their own race (Saguaro Seminar, 2001). The assumption of similar values may be less prevalent in other voluntary associations, even when ethnicity is shared. For example, members on a sports team, or in a "mommy's group," which form independently of a religious context, cannot be assumed to share certain values which promote trust. Even in ethnically homogenous groups, it may take

time to assess whether values are held in common. This line of reasoning suggests that when people attend or join a congregation, the assumption of shared values in the religious context hastens the formation of trust and bonding social capital. Theoretically then, membership in a same-ethnic congregation should enable a somewhat immediate and easily accessible source of social networks, which also facilitates generalized trust and social engagement inside the congregation.

Congregations also provide frequent opportunities for volunteering both within and outside of the congregation, as noted by Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) and Sikkink and Hernandez (2003), and range from tasks that take very little preparation or commitment, such as being an usher, to tasks that require lengthy preparation or commitment such as teaching a course, being part of a choir, or mentoring. In addition, some volunteering is “inward looking” for internal maintenance of a congregation while some is outward looking and benefits people who are not members of the congregation, as noted by Wuthnow (1999) in the Giving and Volunteering Survey. Other volunteering occurs within the congregation but is outwardly focused, such as providing a soup kitchen which is open to the public, mentoring for local youth, or thrift shops. While this congregation-initiated volunteering may occur within the walls of the congregation, the focus of the activity is outward and can lead to interaction with non-members. Outward looking volunteering potentially can facilitate both bonding and bridging social capital. A third type of volunteering is done outside the congregation with the explicit intention of participating in wider service to the community. Such volunteering may be led or facilitated by the congregation but is coordinated with others and includes interaction with a range of non-members and thus promotes bridging social capital. Finally, some volunteering is initiated and carried out by individuals, and is done so independently of the congregation. For example, members of a congregation may volunteer at a city agency or rally but they do not do it as representatives of the congregation.

Our findings suggest that among immigrant members, even volunteer activities carried out exclusively within the congregation are associated with external volunteering and civic participation. In addition to multiple opportunities to volunteer within the congregation, there are often entrees to other opportunities, organisations, or community activities with which the congregation or a few members of the congregation have a prior relationship. Examples might include invitations to participate in local school functions, blood drives, community food pantries or emergency relief programs. These networked and associational affiliations provide a source of bridging social capital with external organisations or task forces (Wuthnow, 1999).

Our study supports other analyses which suggest that among immigrants, membership and attendance at ethnic congregations does not diminish civic participation. Furthermore, volunteering-- outside and even within the congregation, more so than mere attendance, supports bridging engagement and activities for first-generation immigrants.

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Table 1 – Congregations and Respondents by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Congregations	Respondents (%)
Korean	4	118 (23.8)
Hispanic and Latino	3	75 (15.2)
Indian	3	74 (14.9)
Chinese	3	70 (14.1)
European	4	54 (10.9)
African	3	47 (9.5)
Vietnamese	1	33 (6.7)
Caribbean	1	20 (4.0)
Arab	1	4 (0.8)
Total	23	495

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	%		%
Gender		Education	
Male	48.6	Less than high school	12.3
Female	51.4	High school diploma or GED	11.5
Ethnic / Racial Origin		Some or full post secondary / college	21.3
Asian	60.2	Bachelor's degree	26.8
White/Caucasian	14.7	Graduate or professional degree	28.1
Black	13.7	Employment Status	
Hispanic/Latino	11.0	Employed	78.1
Other	0.4	<i>Of which: full time</i>	61.6
Age		<i>part time</i>	16.5
Under 25	12.0	Not employed	21.9
25-34	24.8	<i>Of which: retired</i>	7.0
35-44	20.8	<i>student</i>	5.3
45-54	19.0	Children under 18 in household	
55-64	12.9	Yes	31.3
65 +	10.6	<i>Of which: under 5</i>	16.4
Civic Participation items		<i>5-13</i>	13.7
Signed a petition	27.2	<i>14-18</i>	8.1
Attended political meeting	23.5	No	68.7
Attended public meeting	39.2	Length of Residency in the US	
Attended club meeting	55.9	Recent (immigrated in or after 2000)	28.0
Been to a home of a friend of different race/ethnicity	73.4	Established (immigrated 1990-1999)	29.6
Volunteering within the congregation		Long-time (immigrated before 1990)	42.4
Yes	78.8	Level of English Proficiency	
No	21.2	Cannot communicate at all	2.2
		Communicate with difficulty	11.3
		Somewhat difficult	24.6
		Easy	23.9
		Very easy	37.9

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Dependent variables				
Volunteering outside the congregation	.46	.50	0	1
Civic participation (weighted mean score)	7.67	9.14	0.0	52.0
Independent variables				
Volunteering within the congregation (No. of volunteer activities)	1.89	1.71	0	8
Congregation attendance (times per month)	5.1	4.5	0	36
Gender (0=female)	.51	.50	0	1
Age (in years)	42.45	15.19	17	93
Ethnic origin: Asian (ref. group)	.60	.49	0	1
Black	.11	.31	0	1
Hispanic	.11	.31	0	1
White / Caucasian	.15	.36	0	1
Length of residency in the US (in years)	16.71	12.07	0	69
Time in the congregation (in years)	10.43	11.08	.2	72.0
English proficiency (0=no English or difficult)	.62	.49	0	1
Level of education (0=less than bachelors)	.27	.44	0	1
Have children under 18 (0=no children)	.31	.46	0	1
Employment status (0=not employed)	.78	.41	0	1

Table 4: Bivariate Correlations Between Key Variables.

	Congregational attendance	Volunteering within the congregation	Civic Participation	Volunteering outside the congregation
Congregational attendance	1	.105** .027	.062 .196	.032 .509
Volunteering within the congregation		1	.166*** .000	.230*** .000
Civic Participation			1	.268*** .000
Volunteering outside the congregation				1

*p< .10 **p< .05, ***p< .01 (2-tailed)

Table 5: OLS Regression Summary Predicting Civic Participation

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Congregation attendance	.115	.113	.090	.110	.092	.108
Volunteering within the congregation			1.006***	.280	.730**	.285
Volunteering outside the congregation					4.516***	.960
Gender	1.112	.957	1.031	.941	1.180	.941
Age	-.132***	.047	-.134***	.040	-.123***	.039
Racial / Ethnic origin (ref. Asian)						
Black	-.485	1.721	-.010	1.693	-.473	1.693
Hispanic	1.298	1.843	1.813	1.954	1.123	2.026
White / Caucasian	-.839	1.378	-.770	1.341	-.681	1.331
Length of residency in the US	.108*	.067	.150**	.066	.108*	.066
Years attending the congregation	-.011	.073	-.064	.072	-.044	.072
Level of English proficiency	-.190	1.125	-.834	1.117	-1.111	1.122
Education level	-1.503	1.092	-1.455	1.061	-1.572	1.052
Children under age 18 in household	.429	1.233	-.786	1.008	-.487	1.017
Employment status	2.625**	1.201	1.823	1.198	1.951*	1.185
(Constant)	8.363***	2.170	7.819***	2.207	6.459***	2.205
N	322		313		300	
Adjusted R ²	.030		.066		.129	
Model significance	F = 1.818**		F = 2.709***		F = 4.168***	

*p< .10 **p< .05, ***p< .01