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Ethnic Identity and Generational Status in South Phoenix, Arizona

Disadvantaged immigrant communities in the United States lack economic and, in many cases, legal resources. Contemporary discourse surrounding immigration may further exacerbate fear and uncertainty in these communities as well. Using data collected in one such community in the Phoenix metropolitan area, we will investigate differences in racial and ethnic identity by immigrant generation. In addition, we examine the correlations between these self-identities and respondents' reported perceptions of the rapidly changing economic and immigration environment in the community.

Introduction

Self-reported ethnic identity is determined by a host of features. Race, generation of immigration to the U.S., age, education, socioeconomic status, and region in which one lives, among others, will provide an individual with a multitude of potential identities. Generational status is an especially relevant aspect of ethnic identity and linguistic or phenotypic differentiation from that of the dominant group may discourage 'Americanized' or 'panethnic' labels. Immigrants and their children in disadvantaged communities or without documentation may choose to identify with the country of origin.

Given proximity to Mexico, the greater Phoenix area has long stood as a gateway for immigrants wishing to reach other destinations in the United States, and has a

significant Hispanic population, especially in the south of the city. The ever-polarizing issue of immigration has been very public in Arizona, and has increasingly taken on a very political face, with federal, state, county, and city leaders taking very controversial stances. Given this hotly-debated topic, research of this difficult-to-reach, under-represented, largely poor population has become all the more difficult, and vital.

This paper asks the extent to which self-reported ethnic identity varies across generation status, (first generation, "1.5" generation, second generations). We also compare these respondents by their interpretation of the recent economic downturn and increased attention to undocumented immigration enforcement (Fix & Passel, 1999; Van Hook, 2003; Pew Hispanic Center, 2007).

Background

The study area in the southern portion of Phoenix occupies approximately 40 square miles of Phoenix's southernmost edge, and had a 2000 population of 91,907 residents, with a projected 2020 population of 113,513. Phoenix as a whole encompasses 14 "villages", and approximately 514 square miles. Census data cites a 14.5% change in population from 2000 (1,321,045 residents) to 2006 (1,512,986 residents), and places the 2009 population at 1,567,986. The change from 2006 to 2009 was a modest 3.5%, however, given the economic climate, there is still evidence of Phoenix's growing stature as one of the U.S.'s largest cities (fifth largest U.S. city), a city which regularly outpaces the growth of other U.S. cities. Prior to the economic downturn, city growth was forecast at 60% between the early 2000's and 2030, for a total of 6 million residents (City of Phoenix, 2002, 2004, 2009; U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

Approximately 20% of Phoenix residents are foreign born and the majority of

these are relatively recently arrived from Mexico or other Central American countries; as of 2005, Phoenix's Latino population is nearly 42% of the total. Approximately 90% of Latinos report Mexican ancestry. Between 2005 and 2006, Maricopa County (which includes the greater Phoenix area) was the fastest growing county in the U.S., and Hispanics made up 55% of that growth. In the "Hispanic Core" of South Phoenix, in which South Mountain Village is located, migrants hail predominantly from the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua, and to a lesser extent, Sinaloa; which is consistent with historic regional migration patterns from Mexico to the U.S. (Oberle & Arreola, 2008).

The changing social and political environment for immigrants in Phoenix has created a very difficult atmosphere for undocumented. Increased scrutiny of employers, which has taken form in Arizona state in laws such as HB 2779, also known as the Legal Arizona Workers Act, or the Employer Sanctions Law, places strict penalties on employers who knowingly on unknowingly hire illegal immigrants (Maricopa County Attorneys Office, 2007).

Additionally, high-profile politicians in Maricopa County, including State Representative Russell Pearce (R-Mesa) and County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, have made the issue of illegal immigration a top-priority of their terms in office. Arpaio, citing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, checks for immigration status for those booked into his jails, as well those who are stopped by Maricopa County Deputies. Arpaio has come under well-publicized criticism for his "crime suppression" sweeps conducted in proximity to Hispanic neighborhoods. The sweeps have become known as "immigration sweeps" for their apparent targeting of illegal immigrants. Arpaio has also

taken to making high-profile raids targeting businesses employing immigrants, such as water parks and car washes. These efforts have served to increase the profile of the illegal immigration issue, polarize Phoenix residents based upon their beliefs on immigration, and place immigrants directly in the sights of law enforcement (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 2008; Giblin, 2008).

Understanding Immigration Climate: Variations by Generation and Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity may be conceptualized in many different ways. Bernal et al. (1993) define "ethnic identity" as a set of ideas about one's membership in an ethnic group. This set of ideas encompasses knowledge of values, behaviors, feelings, language, art, food, etc., and serves to socialize an individual into a certain ethnic group (Bernal & Knight, 1993: 33). This description emphasizes knowledge of one's group, as well as membership, aspects shared with many other definitions as well.

All adolescents go through similar steps and processes to develop an ethnic identity, but differences, from large to small, exist between how different groups are socialized. Racial and cultural aspects are important aspects to consider when formulating a definition of ethnic identity. Language, phenotype, music, food, art, and religious beliefs are all important aspects to consider, by researchers and members of a given ethnic group, when attempting to establish a definition for ethnic identity (Breton et al., 1990; Cokley, 2007). Yet, while many researchers discuss the importance of ethnic identity, there is little consensus of the most optimal way to measure the concept in spite of the many instruments developed for the purpose (Roberts et al., 1999).

Ethnic identity will vary based upon aforementioned aspects (i.e. language, phenotype, music, food, art, religious beliefs), but also by proximity to the migration

experience. We would anticipate identity to change based upon whether one is an immigrant, or whether one's parent(s) are immigrants; that is, we would anticipate there to be varying degrees of impact on an individual's ethnic identity depending on their own life experiences. Rumbaut's work with the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey assessed the impact of self-reported ethnic identity between immigrant parents and children, and clearly differences exist between self-reported ethnic identities by generation, as well as by country of origin (Rumbaut, 1994). Thus, identity is shaped by one's nativity, the nativity of parents, country of origin, and context of reception.

Much of the work on identity formation has focused on adolescents. As adolescents grow older, their self-portrait, or self-described identity becomes more complex (Steinberg, 2008). Because of this, information solicited from adolescents will change over time. Based upon interactions with peer groups and relatives, adolescents may quickly change their view on their own identity, making adolescent identity very susceptible to arbitrary mood swings or rushed judgment. "During the transition from childhood to adulthood, young people make important decisions about who they are and who they hope to be in the future; that is, they form an identity" (Berry et al., 2006: 8). Abilities of adolescents to imagine their "possible selves", and/or "future orientation" will develop as they grow older, and adolescents will be able to better gauge long-term consequences and ramifications of their actions (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Nurmi, 2004). This cognitive switch to a more introspective view will affect the way in which adolescents see themselves, and their world, and their place therein. By the time they are adults, these identities may be quite firm and stable. Thus, the racial and ethnic

identification by adults likely reflects the family and societal context experienced in their youth.

The distinctions of "1.25", "1.5", and "1.75" generation immigrants, refer to preschool (ages 0 to 5), after primary socialization and the beginning of elementary school (ages 6 to 12), and adolescence and secondary school (ages 13 to 17), respectively (Halli & Vedanand, 2007; Rumbaut, 1997). These distinctions may serve to better explain differences in behaviors, as well as self-reported ethnic identity. Other distinctions, such as "P2", or "half-second" generation immigrants, or those who were born in other countries and moved to the U.S., have also been used, but to a less specified extent (Thomas & Zneniecki, 1958; Warner & Srole, 1945). For the purpose of this analysis, the divisions of the first generation will be simplified in order to make distinctions between first and second generation immigrants by using the "1.5" generation to indicate person who arrived in the U.S. before the age of 18, because those individuals arrived in pre-adolescence, and were socialized here and developed their ethnic identities here. Those who arrived at age 18 or older will be included in the first generation.

Just as ethnic identity may vary by migration, generation status and previous experiences in the receiving context, it seems likely that individual interpretations and understanding of current social environment is associated with ethnic identification. In this paper, therefore, we also consider variations in response to the social and political climate for immigrants and whether the perception of these conditions varies by ethnic identity.

Research Questions

This paper takes advantage of a unique ongoing project in the south Phoenix area. The first set of analyses focus on variation in the self-identification of respondents when asked about their ethnic and racial identity. We expect racial/ethnic identification will vary by generation. We then examine generation status and ethnic differences in reported fear and discomfort with immigration enforcement and problems associated with the economic downturn. We expect that individuals who recently migrated from Mexico would see economic opportunities in a more positive light, relative to conditions in Mexico. However, recent immigrants are also more likely to experience more uncertainty or outright fear in the face of current conditions experienced by migrants. But for those who arrived at younger ages the economic downturn may yield greater concerns than immigration enforcement. But U.S. born respondents, raised and socialized in the United States and with U.S. citizenship may see the economic downturn as much more severe and have a more muted response to immigration enforcement.

Data and Methods

The data for these analyses come from a unique ongoing data collection project in an area of the city of Phoenix commonly referred to as "South Phoenix". This area, approximately contained within two zip codes, is 75% Latino and typified by high poverty levels. The motivation for the project originated in concern that recent immigration enforcement activities in the local area coupled with the economic downturn would create disproportionate fear and reduced access to economic resources making it more difficult for individuals to secure necessities including adequate food and health care. Thus, the data collection effort focused on the vulnerability of the population and

directly assess food security and resource use as well as individual perceptions of the social climate for foreign and U.S. born individuals in the community.

The sample is drawn through a random sample of Census Block Groups within these zip codes stratified by income to ensure representation of households above and below 185% of the poverty line. Property parcels were weighted by area to ensure equal probability of selection into the sample across property size. Units were randomly selected within multi-unit residential parcels.

Bilingual letters inviting participation are sent to randomly selected households in the community. Then, teams composed of interviewers and a Latino community educator visit sampled households, complete household rosters and secure agreements to participate in the study. Thus, information on basic household composition and language choice are available for some households even if the household decides not to schedule full interviews. Households successfully recruited into the study then schedule interviews at a time most convenient for the participants in an effort to ensure all household members are interviewed. All adults in the household are invited to participate in the study and interview teams are composed of anywhere from two to five bilingual interviewers depending on the size of the household. Interviews last an average of 2.5 hours and include basic demographic information, detailed migration histories, income and employment; household division of labor and intra-household resource allocation as well as food security, self reported health and personal social networks. In addition, height, weight and blood pressure are recorded.

The interviews included a series of questions asking respondents to assess the relative impact of immigration enforcement and economic conditions on their daily lives

including access to jobs, housing and health care. These questions were adapted from the 2007 National Survey of Latinos and included such items as, "Regardless of your own citizenship or immigration status, how much do you worry that you, a family member, or a close friend could be deported?", "Thinking about the past few months, how much attention has been given to the issue of illegal immigration by local officials and political leaders in your community?", or "Are you more likely to use government services, less likely to use government services, or hasn't it made a difference?" (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007).

Preliminary Results

Here we present preliminary descriptive results from the first set of respondents in the South Phoenix study. Data collection is still underway ensuring a larger sample will be available for subsequent analyses. As previously stated, this paper seeks to explore the extent to which self-reported ethnic identity varies across generation status, (first generation, "1.5" generation, second-plus generations), and what role this plays in how individuals interpret the economic downturn and the immigration "chill". Ethnic and racial identities are also assessed relative to generational status.

In considering generational status (Table 1), three generations are presented: first generation (immigrants who arrived after the age of 17), "1.5" generation (those who arrived in the U.S. before the age of 18), and the second-plus generation (native-born citizens). Over 50% of respondents were first generation immigrants, followed by 32% second-plus generation, and 15%+ "1.5" generation immigrants. The results in Table 2 demonstrate that a clear majority selected "Mexican" as their ethnic identity; although the rate at which respondents did so declined with concurrent generations (62.96% of first

generation immigrants v. only 14.81% of second generation immigrants). Table 3 reports the distribution of racial groups selected by respondents. It is important to note that, unlike the U.S. Census, respondents were first asked their ethnicity and then asked to select a racial group. Interviewers were instructed to allow 'other' as acceptable answers for either question and few respondents were willing to identify with any other racial group. Thus, over 70% of the respondents selected 'other' as their racial group. The options given for race (White, Black, Native American, Alaska Native, Asian, Other) are consistent with the race options given in the U.S. Census, which shows the difficulty in adequately capturing the issue of self-reported racial identity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Clearly, a large proportion of the population of South Phoenix (as well as sizeable populations throughout the rest of the country) are not willing or able to identity themselves in the current system for documenting race. No respondents selected from any category other than "White", "Other", or "Don't know", or the question was refused or no data was given. This indicates that the "Ethnicity" question better allowed individuals to capture aspects of their identity, rather than resort to selecting "Other".

When the chilling and economic downturn opinion questions are assessed, reports of concerns over immigration issues are high, as those are concerning the economy, but proportions among categories in the sample are somewhat surprising, and contrary to out initial hypothesis. In assessing opinions on immigration enforcement (see Table 4), a high proportion of both first and "1.5" generation respondents reported that efforts had increased in the past year (40% and 43%, respectively). But the second generation-plus individuals reported increased chilling efforts in the past year, at 67% of the respective

sample. Also, no second-plus generation respondents reported a decrease in chilling efforts, while 33% of first generation respondents reported fewer efforts.

However, the most surprising results came in when assessing the impact of immigration enforcement efforts relative to the impact of the economic downturn (Table 5). Overwhelming, first, "1.5", and second-plus generation respondents reported that the economic downturn had the greater negative impact on them and their families. Seventy-seven percent of first generation, 72% of "1.5" generation, and 83% of second-plus generation respondents reported that the economy had a more negative impact on they and their families. Not a single second-plus generation responded reported immigration chilling efforts as having more negatively impacted them and their family when compared to the economy, and only 3% of the first generation immigrants reported immigration as affecting they and their family more negatively than the economy.

Tables 6, 7, and 8 show respondents' impressions of the effects of immigration enforcement on specific aspects of their daily lives: access to medical services, jobs, and housing. Most respondents indicated that conditions had remained the same as opposed to getting worse, by some significant margins. Nearly 70% of all respondents indicated that there was no difference in how they accessed medical services, and interestingly, 20% of immigrants indicated that they were *more* likely to access services. A majority (55%) of respondents indicated that conditions had not changed when considering ability to find and retain employment, and 57% of respondents reported no difference in finding and keeping housing.

Tables 9, 10, and 11 demonstrate responses to the economic downturn's impact on jobs, housing, and paying bills. A clear difference exists between the perceived impact

of immigration relative to the perceived impact of the economic downturn. Between 53% and 67% of respondents asked the economic downturn-related questions reported having more trouble in securing a job, housing, or paying bills. However, second-plus generation immigrants were more likely, relative to first and "1.5" generation immigrants, to report that the factors had remained the same, although not by significantly higher numbers. It is also important to note that a high percentage of respondents selected "Don't know", or either refused to answer the questions regarding the economic impact, relative to the questions regarding immigration. This may be related to a general preference of people to not disclose details regarding financial matters.

Conclusion

Despite a general consensus among respondents regarding the severity of the economic downturn relative to immigration, concerns over immigration are still significant, and will continue to affect the ways in which first, "1.5", and second-plus generation immigrants behave. The data gathered in the South Phoenix project will help to assess different aspects of generational differences among first, "1.5", and second-plus generations, and has already yielded an insight into opinions of residents in South Phoenix. As the number of respondents increases throughout the data-collection phase of this project (which should run through the end of 2009), new trends may present themselves, or established trends may become more clear. The final analyses will also be able to consider other socioeconomic and household characteristics to determine the extent to which the economic downturn and immigration enforcement vary across mixed nativity households or those with fewer economic resources. We can also disaggregate by gender and age.

When examining interview questions asked of the respondents, including open-ended interview questions such as, "Have you experienced any other impacts because of increased public attention to immigration?', or (regarding economy) "Are there any other impacts?", respondents often assess the impact on their life regardless of the questions asked, moving from immigration impacts to economic. For example, when asked the aforementioned question regarding immigration, people mention having less food, less working hours, lower wages. When asked about the impact of the economy, people mention difficulty finding work, even with papers; and difficulty making ends meet due to the deportation of a spouse. Clearly, in many peoples minds the issues and impacts are inextricably linked. Based upon the responses of those who participated in the survey, there is fear of deportation, regardless of immigration status, and that the economy has impacted many individuals. Regardless of generation status respondents clearly expressed empathy for their neighbors, family and friends who are impacted by the economy and immigration status.

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Tables

Table 1

Generation Status	Frequency	Percent	Cum.
1	30	52.63	52.63
1.5	9	15.79	68.42
2+	18	31.58	100.00

Table 2

Generation	Mexican	Latino	Central American	Other Hispanic	Other not listed	Refused/ Don't know/Missing	Total
1	58.62%	10.34%	3.45%	17.24%	0.00%	10.34%	100.00%
1.5	66.67%	0.00%	0.00%	22.22%	0.00%	11.11%	100.00%
2+	23.53%	11.76%	0.00%	17.65%	35.29%	11.76%	100.00%
Total	27 49.09%	5 9.09%	1 1.82%	10 18.18%	6 10.91%	6 10.91%	55 100.00%

Table 3

Generation	White	Other	Refused/ Don't know/Missing	Total
1	10.34%	68.97%	20.69%	100.00%
1.5	11.11%	88.89%	0.00	100.00%
2+	23.53%	64.71%	11.76%	100.00%
Total	8 14.55%	39 70.91%	8 14.55%	55 100.00%

Table 4

	In your opinion, in the past year in your community, have there been more efforts to discourage immigration or immigrants, fewer efforts, or has there been no change?				
Generation	**More efforts**	**Fewer efforts**	**No change**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	40.00%	23.33%	33.33%	3.33%	100.00%
1.5	42.86%	14.29%	42.86%	0.00%	100.00%
2+	66.67%	0.00%	20.00%	13.33%	100.00%
Total	25 48.08%	8 15.38%	16 30.77%	3 5.77%	52 100.00%

Table 5

	Which do you think currently has a greater negative impacts on you and your family: the public attention to immigration in Arizona, or the economic downturn?				
Generation	**Immigration**	**Economy**	**Neither**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	3.33%	76.67%	3.33%	16.67%	100.00%
1.5	14.29%	71.43%	14.29%	0.00%	100.00%
2+	0.00%	83.33%	0.00%	16.67%	100.00%
Total	2 4.08%	38 77.55%	2 4.08%	7 14.28%	49 100.00%

Table 6

	Are you more likely to use medical services in Phoenix for yourself and your children, less likely, or hasn't it made any difference?				
Generation	**More likely**	**Less likely**	**No difference**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	20.00%	13.33%	63.33%	3.33%	100.00%
1.5	14.29%	28.57%	57.14%	0.00%	100.00%
2+	8.33%	8.33%	83.33%	0.00%	100.00%
Total	8 16.33%	7 14.29%	33 67.35%	1 2.04%	49 100.00%

Table 7

	Have you had more trouble getting or keeping a job or has it been about the same?			
Generation	**More trouble**	**About the same**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	43.33%	53.33%	3.33%	100.00%
1.5	42.86%	42.86%	14.29%	100.00%
2+	8.33%	66.67%	25.00%	100.00%
Total	17 34.69%	27 55.10%	5 10.2%	49 100.00%

Table 8

	Have you had more difficulty finding or keeping housing or has it been about the same?			
Generation	**More difficult**	**About the same**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	36.67%	56.67%	6.67%	100.00%
1.5	28.57%	57.14%	14.29%	100.00%
2+	8.33%	58.33%	33.34%	100.00%
Total	14 28.57%	28 57.14%	7 14.28%	49 100.00%

Table 9

	Has the economic downturn made it more difficult to get or keep a job, or has it been about the same?			
Generation	**More trouble**	**About the same**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	82.76%	13.79%	3.45%	100.00%
1.5	55.56%	11.11%	33.33%	100.00%
2+	47.06%	17.65%	35.29%	100.00%
Total	37 67.27%	8 14.55%	10 18.18%	55 100.00%

Table 10

	Have you had more difficulty finding or keeping housing or has it been about the same?			
Generation	**More trouble**	**About the same**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	68.97%	27.59%	3.45%	100.00%
1.5	44.44%	33.33%	22.22%	100.00%
2+	29.41%	35.29%	35.29%	100.00%
Total	29 52.73%	17 30.91%	9 16.36%	55 100.00%

Table 11

	Have you had more difficulty paying bills or has it been about the same?			
Generation	**More trouble**	**About the same**	**Refused/Don't know**	**Total**
1	89.66%	6.90%	3.45%	100.00%
1.5	55.56%	22.22%	22.22%	100.00%
2+	29.41%	41.18%	29.41%	100.00%
Total	36 65.45%	11 20.00%	8 14.55%	55 100.00%