

*Coming of Political Age: American Schools and the Civic Development of Immigrant Youth.* By Rebecca M. Callahan and Chandra Muller. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2013. Pp. xviii+170. \$27.50.

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How do immigrant youths become active civil participants in the United States? Rebecca Callahan and Chandra Muller's *Coming of Political Age* asks this important question by using two nationally representative longitudinal data sets to examine how academic and extracurricular activities during adolescence may be associated with voting behavior in adulthood. This question is especially timely given that a nontrivial segment of the immigrant population cannot participate in voting due to their ineligibility because they are permanent residents (with a green card) or undocumented. Foreign-born young people and native-born young people with immigrant parents comprise almost one-quarter of the school-age population and are almost all Latino or Asian American. They also account for almost all of the growth of the youth population (p. 16).

Specifically, the authors' analysis primarily relies on the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) and the Education Longitudinal Study (ELS) with supplemental interviews with social science teachers. The authors examine the associations between high school grades, course taking, extracurricular activities with voting and party affiliation during young adulthood. There are also several figures that rely on U.S. census data. Add Health is a longitudinal school-based student that began with seventh to twelfth graders in 1994–95 while ELS began with a cohort of tenth graders in 2002. Both data sets collected information on parents' and children's birthplaces so that the authors could determine whether their subjects were first generation (foreign-born offspring of foreign-born parents), second generation (native-born offspring of foreign-born parents), or third generation and beyond (native-born offspring of native-born parents). Following much prior work, these authors focus primarily on examining differences between the immigrant status of families—they compare native-born youths from native-born families to foreign-born and native-born youths with immigrant parents (immigrant youths). These are probably the only data sets that are appropriate for examining this research question on a national level, and the authors are well-versed with the strengths and weaknesses of their approach.

Speaking as someone who works in the area of immigrant youth and educational outcomes, I found that some of their findings on grades were quite familiar and consistent with their own previous work as well as that of other scholars. However, several findings particularly stand out. First, Callahan and Muller found that while parental education affects the political participation (voting) of native-born youths, it had no effect on the voting behavior of immigrant youths. In fact, what mattered most in de-

termining the political participation of immigrant young adults was their high achievement in social science classes, experiences with volunteering, and the feeling of being connected in high school (see table 6.2 on pp. 106–7). It is hard to determine whether these were young people who were also more interested in civic activities or if their related experiences in high school promoted these ideas, but it is likely some combination of both forces. The authors also expected to find that the proportion of a school's student body that was of immigrant origin would affect political participation, but they found no effect. Because of the paramount importance of social studies classes on voting, one of Callahan and Muller's policy recommendations is for schools to consider the importance of offering social science curricula—of course this is an idea with which most sociologists would agree. It is also a relatively novel finding among studies of immigrant youths in school.

Their interviews with social science teachers suggest the ways that social science course taking and grades may work to increase political awareness, at least in the classroom. Teachers talked about bringing voter registration cards to classes. They also discussed current political debates and emphasized how past historical events (like the Civil Rights movement) were related to current issues. Other teachers gave assignments for students to critically read and identify biases in a particular newspaper article. While the qualitative data were extremely interesting and gave me a glimpse into how these processes might work, it was difficult to directly link the quotes from teachers to the quantitative findings from two large data sets. Having said that, I do not think this could be helped.

My only quibble with this excellent book is that the authors could have spent more time disentangling the *immigrant youth* population. While conceptually race/ethnicity and immigrant status are distinct, in reality they substantially overlap when we think about the current U.S. population. Immigrant young people are largely Asian and Hispanic, and almost all of the Asians fall into the group. The native-born population is primarily white and black. This fact means that when I see that Asian American youth are less likely to vote compared to blacks and whites, but that civics education matters more for immigrant youth, I wonder if that means it matters more for Asian youth. Also, given the vastly different parental educational backgrounds by ethnic group (about 74% of South Asian immigrant adults have a college education compared to about 5% of Mexican foreign-born adults [Grace Kao, Elizabeth Vaquera, and Kimberly Goyette, *Education and Immigration* (Polity Press, 2013)]), what does it mean that parental education has no effect on the voting behavior of immigrant youth?

Overall, *Coming of Political Age* is an interesting monograph on a timely question. It is extremely clearly written, and I appreciate the succinctness and lack of repetition throughout the manuscript. The book is well suited for an advanced undergraduate or graduate seminar on immigration and the sociology of education.