American Educational Research Journal
December 2019, Vol. 56, No. 6, pp. 2262–2294
DOI: 10.3102/0002831219839033
Article reuse guidelines: sagepub.com/journals-permissions
© 2019 AERA. http://aerj.aera.net

Extracurricular Settings as a Space to Address Sociopolitical Crises: The Case of Discussing Immigration in Gender-Sexuality Alliances Following the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

V. Paul Poteat
Boston College
Jerel P. Calzo
San Diego State University
Hirokazu Yoshikawa
Sarah B. Rosenbach
New York University
Christopher J. Ceccolini
Boston College
Robert A. Marx
Vanderbilt University

School-based extracurricular settings could promote dialogue on sociopolitical crises. We considered immigration discussions within gender-sexuality alliances (GSAs), which address multiple systems of oppression. Among 361 youth and 58 advisors in 38 GSAs (19 in 2016–2017/Year 1; 19 in 2017–2018/Year 2), youth in Year 1 reported increased discussions from baseline throughout the remaining school year; differences were nonsignificant in Year 2. In both years, youth reporting greater self-efficacy to promote social justice, and GSAs with advisors reporting greater self-efficacy to address culture, race, and immigration discussed immigration more over the year (adjusting for baseline). In interviews, 38 youth described circumstances promoting or inhibiting discussions: demographic representation, open climates, critical reflection, fear or consequences of misspeaking, discomfort, agenda restrictions, and advisor roles.

KEYWORDS: extracurricular groups, gender-sexuality alliance, immigration, LGBTQ youth, social justice

Multiple factors leading up to and following the 2016 election of Donald Trump have increased the anti-immigrant climate in the United States.

Policies affecting immigrant communities shifted following Trump's inauguration in January 2017 (Pierce & Selee, 2017). A proposed temporary ban on legal immigration from eight countries with large Muslim populations was imposed in the month after the inauguration. Since early 2017, detention and deportation of undocumented individuals in the U.S. interior increased. Youth who are undocumented, or with at least one undocumented parent, make up 28% of all first- and second-generation immigrant youth (Yoshikawa, Suárez-Orozco, & Gonzales, 2017). The Trump administration cancelled the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program in September 2017, which had provided temporary reprieve from deportation to undocumented youth. In January 2018, efforts to exclude legal immigrants from U.S. safety-net programs began, culminating in federally proposed regulations in the fall (Perreira, Yoshikawa, & Oberlander, 2018). In April 2018, the Department of Justice (2018) enacted a policy where children were

---

V. Paul Poteat is an associate professor in the Department of Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology at Boston College, Campion Hall 307, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467; e-mail: *poteatp@bc.edu*. His research on gender-sexuality alliances (GSAs) has identified specific mechanisms by which GSAs promote mental health, well-being, and resilience among youth from diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

Jerel P. Calzo is an associate professor in the Division of Health Promotion and Behavioral Science at San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health. His research examines the development of gender and sexual orientation health disparities in adolescence and young adulthood and evaluates school- and community-based programs to promote the health and positive youth development of gender and sexual minority adolescents and young adults.

Hirokazu Yoshikawa is the Courtney Sale Ross University Professor of Globalization and Education at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. He studies Gay-Straight Alliances and their associations with youth development. In addition, he examines the effects of programs related to immigration, early childhood development, and poverty reduction on children and youth in the United States as well as in low- and middle-income countries.

Sarah B. Rosenbach is a PhD student at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development. Her research focuses on the ways in which school policies and practices can support the healthy development of LGBTQ adolescents.

Christopher J. Ceccolini is a PhD candidate in the Department of Counseling, Developmental, and Educational Psychology at Boston College. His research focuses on elucidating practices by which families and communities may promote empowerment and positive development for adolescents and young adults with marginalized identities.

Robert A. Marx recently completed his doctorate in Community Research and Action at Vanderbilt University and will be an assistant professor in the department of Child and Adolescent Development at San Jose State University. His research focuses on the growth and healthy development of queer youth and adolescents, in both school and community contexts.

separated from their parents in families crossing the U.S. southern border. Emerging findings suggest that these policy shifts and Trump's rhetoric have led to an increased climate of fear among immigrant families, with evidence of harmful effects on the well-being of children and youth, particularly, those in mixed-status families (Cervantes, Ullrich, & Matthews, 2018; Williams & Medlock, 2017).

Given the increased hostility against immigrant communities and the heightened public discourse on immigration policies, it is important for youth to have spaces and opportunities to discuss, learn about, and raise their own and others' awareness of these issues. Schools are a central setting where youth can discuss a range of social and cultural issues (Parker, 2006). Issues of immigration likely have been part of these discussions, as much of the discrimination targeting immigrant-origin youth during and after the election has occurred in schools (Costello, 2016; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016).

Extracurricular groups in school may be important, as they can provide opportunities for meaningful and sustained discussions of cultural and sociopolitical issues (Pollock, 2017; Poteat, Yoshikawa, Calzo, Russell, & Horn, 2017; Seider et al., 2018). These groups promote civic involvement in general (e.g., community service; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Less is known about whether they serve as settings for dialogue during sociopolitical crises or how they can support youth who want to act on urgent issues affecting their communities. This function of extracurricular settings may be increasingly important in the ongoing sociopolitical climate. Also, there has been limited attention to groups oriented around issues of social justice, yet some groups, including those in schools, have awareness-raising and advocacy explicit in their mission (Ginwright, 2007; Poteat et al., 2017; Seider et al., 2018). These functions warrant greater consideration. We focus on gender-sexuality alliances (GSAs; also referred to as gay-straight alliances) as one group organized around social justice and multiple systems of oppression where relevant discussions on discrimination faced by immigrant-origin youth and their communities may take place.

GSAs and Interlocking Systems of Oppression

GSAs are youth-led, adult-supported groups at school offering youth a setting for support and opportunities to engage in advocacy related primarily to sexuality and gender issues (Griffin, Lee, Waugh, & Beyer, 2004). More than 37% of U.S. high schools have GSAs (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015). Generally, they meet once weekly for 30 to 60 minutes at school and advisors are often teachers, nurses, or counselors. Time can be allocated to providing emotional support, learning about and discussing topics such as discrimination, or planning advocacy efforts (Griffin et al., 2004; Poteat et al., 2017). Their structure aligns with youth program models

that emphasize safe environments, opportunities for peer connection and leadership, and adult role models (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

In addition to their focus on sexuality and gender, many GSAs aspire to address interlocking systems of oppression (GSA Network, n.d.). Some GSAs may partner with other clubs to host joint events or to show solidarity over shared concerns (e.g., a partnership with the Black Student Union to address discrimination faced by members of both groups). Immigrant-origin youth constitute important segments of the LGBTQ population (Munro et al., 2013). Consequently, issues of immigration may arise in GSA discussions of topics such as the UndocuQueer movement (Seif, 2014; Terriquez, 2015). GSAs may provide favorable conditions for these conversations because they emphasize mutual respect, safety, and they aim to promote social justice for all individuals (Griffin et al., 2004; Poteat et al., 2017).

We aimed to understand the frequency with which youth discussed immigration in their GSA, and to identify factors that predicted which members discussed immigration more over the school year, adjusting for baseline levels. We focused on youth's frequency of discussions for several reasons. Intergroup dialogue research has shown that having conversations on issues of diversity can strengthen support for members of marginalized groups (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Peer discussions also can empower youth to act on social issues (Pollock, 2017). Moreover, repeated conversations—as opposed to single, isolated conversations—offer opportunities for individuals in both privileged and marginalized groups to develop a richer understanding of an issue and can carry greater benefits (Shipherd, 2015).

We also examined youth's descriptions of these discussions and the circumstances that shaped these discussions. In doing so, we aimed to further elucidate conditions that promoted or impeded these conversations and to consider not only how youth might have had more frequent conversations but also meaningful and constructive ones. We used quantitative data from youth members and advisors as well as qualitative data from interviews with youth members to examine how topics of immigration were discussed in GSAs over the school year.

Predicting Discussion Frequency Based on Youth, Advisor, and Contextual Factors

Recent GSA research has considered variability among members in their experiences in GSAs (Poteat et al., 2017). In this manner, individual members and GSAs as a whole may vary from one another in how frequently they discussed immigration issues during the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the subsequent Trump administration. Several factors may distinguish which members and GSAs were more likely to do so with greater frequency.

Youth's self-efficacy to promote social justice could be one attribute distinguishing GSA members who discussed immigration issues with greater

frequency during the school year. This attribute can be understood as one's perceived ability to take action to promote equity in society, to empower individuals from marginalized groups, and to oppose institutional policies and practices that perpetuate inequality (Torres-Harding, Siers, & Olson, 2012). The intergroup dialogue literature has shown that conversations on diversity and inequality can be challenging (Nagda, 2006; Zúñiga, Lopez, & Ford, 2016). Youth with greater social justice self-efficacy may feel more equipped to participate in these conversations. Thus, when certain sociopolitical issues come to the fore, youth in GSAs or similar groups who initially feel more confident in their ability to promote social justice may be more likely to discuss them.

Advisors also can play important roles in promoting youth's efforts in GSAs. Successful youth programs have adults who provide support, scaffold decision making, and serve as models (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Yet this literature has not considered adults' efficacy to address issues of diversity or oppression, despite many youth in such programs coming from socially marginalized populations. In GSAs, advisors often provide emotional support, advocate on behalf of their members, and help facilitate discussions (Graybill, Varjas, Meyers, & Watson, 2009; Poteat et al., 2015). At the same time, advisors vary in how equipped they feel to address issues relevant to students with various intersecting identities, such as those for LGBTQ youth of color (Poteat & Scheer, 2016). GSAs whose advisors feel more equipped to address cultural issues and issues of immigration may discuss immigration more frequently than other GSAs because their advisors might be able to offer more support and scaffolding for these discussions.

Open, respectful climates may set apart some GSAs that came to more readily discuss immigration issues across the school year from other GSAs. In classrooms, open respectful climates (i.e., where youth can share opinions and express different beliefs in a respectful manner; Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Stout, 2007) are connected to greater youth civic engagement (Brock, Nishida, Chiong, Grimm, & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Campbell, 2008). Youth program models highlight the importance of prosocial norms in these settings (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Open and respectful group norms reflect not only prosocial behavior (e.g., showing respect) but also the ability to voice disagreements and contrasting views. Open, respectful group norms may be important to promote conversations where youth hold different views. Intergroup dialogue research has shown that safe and respectful norms need to be established prior to engaging in conversations on sociopolitical issues (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Zúñiga et al., 2016). Thus, GSA members may be more likely to participate in these discussions when they know their GSA is open to and respectful of different views.

Finally, we consider whether youth differed in their frequency of discussing immigration based on their immigration background. We consider this

an exploratory question because there are competing arguments for why first- or second-generation immigrant-origin youth might be more or less likely to discuss immigration than their peers, given the current sociopolitical climate. On one hand, immigrant-origin youth may be less likely to discuss immigration due to fears of discrimination or deportation of family or network members (Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco, & Dedios-Sanguineti, 2013). On the other hand, they may be more likely to discuss immigration, at least within GSAs, as GSAs may serve as a setting for social and emotional support from their peers (Griffin et al., 2004). We also consider this question at the group level: Were immigration discussions more frequent in GSAs with a greater proportion of members from immigrant-origin backgrounds?

Current Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study uses quantitative and qualitative data from a larger GSA project. The project was not planned in advance to coincide with the election; however, it provided a unique opportunity to consider how some youth and GSAs may have reacted to the election and subsequent actions taken by the Trump administration. Due to the design of the larger project, 19 GSAs participated in one school year (2016–2017) that covered the election, inauguration, and start of the Trump administration. A separate set of 19 GSAs participated in the subsequent school year (2017–2018) that covered a period during which anti-immigrant policies intensified (Pierce & Selee, 2017). In both years, baseline data were collected toward the beginning of the school year (Wave 1) and again at the end of the school year (Wave 2).

Preliminary Questions

We considered several preliminary descriptive questions prior to addressing the primary quantitative and qualitative aims of the study. What was the average frequency with which youth discussed immigration within their GSAs? On average, was there an overall change in youth's reported frequency of discussing immigration issues over the school year relative to baseline levels (i.e., as youth settled into their first several GSA meetings)? Furthermore, did this pattern differ for youth in Year 1 (2016–2017) or in Year 2 (2017–2018)? For instance, did GSA members report discussing immigration more frequently over the school year than at baseline for those who participated in Year 1 (during the immediate election period) but not for youth who participated in Year 2 (further into the Trump administration)?

Primary Quantitative Aims

We considered several hypotheses in testing our multilevel model of factors that could predict residualized change in youth's reported frequency of

discussing immigration over the school year (i.e., controlling for youth's baseline reported frequency of these discussions). First, at the individual level, we hypothesized that youth with greater self-efficacy to promote social justice would discuss immigration issues with greater frequency over the school year. Second, without a priori expectations, we examined whether first- or second-generation immigrant-origin youth discussed immigration issues with greater frequency than others. Third, at the group level, we hypothesized that GSAs with a more open, respectful climate and, fourth, GSAs whose advisors reported greater efficacy to address issues of race, culture, and immigration would have members who collectively discussed immigration more frequently over the school year. At the group level, we controlled for GSAs' collective baseline frequency of discussing immigration. Fifth, without a priori expectations, we examined whether GSAs with a greater proportion of first- or second-generation immigrant members discussed immigration more frequently over the school year. Finally, we considered whether GSAs in Year 2 discussed immigration with greater or lesser frequency over the year than GSAs in Year 1.

Primary Qualitative Aims

We considered several questions from our interviews with youth. What was the substance of immigration discussions within GSAs, which youth tended to raise these issues, what circumstances promoted or inhibited them, and what roles did advisors play? We also anticipated that the qualitative data would help contextualize why some of the factors in the quantitative data predicted increases in discussions of immigration.

Method

Participants

Participants included 361 youth members (M_{age} = 15.53 years, *SD* = 1.38 years; range = 10–20 years) and 58 advisors (M_{age} = 43.58 years, *SD* = 10.50 years; range = 27–62 years) in 38 high school GSAs across the state of Massachusetts who completed surveys at both waves, as well as 38 of these youth members who participated in individual interviews (Year 1 *n* = 25, Year 2 *n* = 13). There were 21 GSAs with one advisor and 17 GSAs with more than one advisor (15 had two advisors, one had three advisors, and one had four advisors). Of the initial 594 youth who completed Wave 1 surveys, 85 youth (14.3% of the original sample) had discontinued their involvement in the GSA earlier in the year (as reported by some advisors). The remaining 143 youth who did not complete the Wave 2 survey (24.1% of the original sample) either were not present at the Wave 2 data collection, did not complete the survey that was left for them prior to the end of the school year, or were in GSAs whose advisors did not provide feedback on

whether they had discontinued their involvement in the GSA. Thus, 71.9% of the original youth sample who were potentially still active GSA members at the end of the year completed Wave 2 surveys.

When comparing youth who participated at both Waves with youth lost at Wave 2 who were still potential GSA members, youth lost at Wave 2 reported more frequently discussing immigration at Wave 1 than youth who participated at both Waves, $F(1, 490) = 11.22$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$ (retained participants: $M = 1.43$, $SD = 1.08$; lost participants: $M = 1.80$, $SD = 1.19$), but they did not differ in their reported social justice self-efficacy, $F(1, 490) = 2.69$, $p = .10$. There was no differential attrition based on immigration background ($\chi^2 = 0.16$, $p = .69$) or gender ($\chi^2 = 0.48$, $p = .79$), but there was greater attrition for heterosexual than sexual minority youth ($\chi^2 = 13.72$, $p < .001$; 43% vs. 24%) and racial/ethnic minority youth than White youth ($\chi^2 = 11.49$, $p = .001$; 43% vs. 23%). Demographic data for the final youth and advisor sample are in Table 1.

Procedures

We purposively sampled GSAs across Massachusetts for geographic diversity and diversity in the size and racial and socioeconomic composition of the schools. We identified GSAs in consultation with the Massachusetts Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students. Among the schools were traditional public schools, charter public schools, and vocational schools. We secured permission from GSA advisors and principals to work with their GSA. We asked youth members to participate in a study to explore their experiences in the GSA. We stated that their answers would be confidential and that we would not share their individual responses with their peers, parents, or other adults. Advisors gave consent for all youth to participate and 100% of youth attending at the baseline recruitment session gave their assent. We used advisor adult consent over parent consent to avoid risks of inadvertently outing LGBTQ youth to their parents. This consent method is common in research with LGBTQ youth to protect their safety (Mustanski, 2011). All advisors also consented to complete their own survey. Procedures were approved by the primary institution's institutional review board and each school.

Data collection was planned over a 2-year period, wherein 19 GSAs participated in Year 1 and a separate set of 19 GSAs participated in Year 2. We adopted this approach for issues of feasibility: This ensured that we could visit all GSAs within a close time frame at each wave, given that they were located across the state and some met on the same days. We coordinated three visits with identical protocols in both years. Advisors sent reminders to youth prior to each visit. At our first visit, we distributed and collected Wave 1 baseline surveys during a GSA meeting. The survey took 30 minutes to complete and proctors were present to answer questions. Youth and

Table 1
Youth and Advisor Demographics

	Youth, *n* (%)	Advisors, *n* (%)
Sexual orientation		
Bisexual	80 (22.2)	2 (3.4)
Pansexual	75 (20.8)	2 (3.4)
Heterosexual	52 (14.4)	31 (53.4)
Gay or lesbian	61 (16.9)	14 (24.1)
Questioning	26 (7.2)	1 (1.7)
Queer	18 (5.0)	4 (6.9)
Asexual	14 (3.9)	1 (1.7)
Other written-in response	32 (8.9)	1 (1.7)
Not reported	3 (0.8)	1 (1.7)
Gender identity		
Cisgender female	200 (55.4)	38 (65.5)
Cisgender male	57 (15.8)	15 (25.9)
Nonbinary	21 (5.8)	1 (1.7)
Transgender	31 (8.6)	1 (1.7)
Genderqueer	8 (2.2)	1 (1.7)
Gender fluid	7 (1.9)	1 (1.7)
Other written-in response	36 (10.0)	1 (1.7)
Not reported	1 (0.3)	0
Race or ethnicity		
White, non-Hispanic	261 (72.3)	51 (87.9)
Biracial or multiracial	37 (10.2)	0
Latino/a	38 (10.5)	0
Asian or Asian American	10 (2.8)	0
Black or African American	8 (2.2)	0
Middle Eastern, Arab, or Arab American	1 (0.3)	0
Other written-in response	4 (1.1)	1 (1.7)
Not reported	2 (0.6)	6 (10.3)
Immigration generation background		
Not first- or second-generation immigrant	266 (73.7)	48 (82.8)
First- or second-generation immigrant	95 (26.3)	4 (6.9)
Not reported	0	6 (10.3)

Note. Total youth N = 361. Total advisors N = 58.

advisors returned their surveys to the proctors at the end of the meeting. Each participant received a $10 gift card for completing the survey. The first visit occurred between mid-September and late-October of 2016 (Year 1) and 2017 (Year 2).

In Year 1, we identified one to three youth per GSA who completed the Wave 1 survey to participate in an interview between late-December 2016 and late-February 2017 (n = 25). In Year 2, we identified one to three youth

in eight of the GSAs in schools that were predominantly youth of color for an interview between late-January and early-March 2018 (n = 13). We focused on these eight GSAs to ensure a robust representation of youth of color in the interviewee sample. We used a purposive sampling strategy to ensure an over-representation of youth of color and the inclusion of immigrant-origin youth, and we aimed to achieve a balance between LGBTQ youth and heterosexual cisgender youth. We arranged a time to interview youth during a GSA meeting. All youth who we identified as potential interviewees assented to participate after advisors provided adult consent. Interviews were conducted by master's- or doctoral-level graduate students who completed a multicomponent training in interview techniques led by research team members with qualitative research expertise. Interviews were held in a separate and private location at the school (e.g., a classroom). The interviews were digitally recorded and lasted 30 to 60 minutes. All recordings were uploaded onto a secure server and were transcribed. Each interviewee received a $25 gift card.

At our third visit, we collected Wave 2 surveys for youth and advisors following identical procedures as those for Wave 1. Each participant received a $20 gift card. The Wave 2 visits occurred between late-April and late-May of 2017 (Year 1) and 2018 (Year 2).

Quantitative Measures

Individual Member and GSA Group Demographics

At Wave 1, youth reported their sexual orientation, gender identity, race/ethnicity, whether they were born outside of the United States, and whether either of their parents was born outside of the United States (the latter two items were coded to identify first- and second-generation immigrant-origin youth). Because of the small representation of youth within some of the specific sexual minority, racial/ethnic minority, and gender minority subgroups, we used binary indicators of sexual orientation (heterosexual or sexual minority), race/ethnicity (White or racial/ethnic minority) and three categories for gender identity (cisgender female, cisgender male, and gender-expansive) in our analyses. In addition to the identity options from which youth could select (see Table 1), we also reviewed and found that written-in responses (which youth could instead elect to provide) for demographic variables reflected sexual, racial, or gender minority identities and we coded them as such for these analyses.

For each GSA we calculated the proportion of members who were first- or second-generation immigrant-origin youth and racial/ethnic minority youth (based on youth's self-report data). Also, we recorded whether the GSA had one advisor or more than one advisor. At Wave 1, advisors reported the number of youth members in their GSA. At Wave 2, advisors reported the number of meetings held by their GSA since November (i.e., since the Wave 1 survey).

Youth Social Justice Self-Efficacy

At Wave 1, youth reported their efficacy to promote social justice using the five-item perceived behavioral control subscale of the Social Justice Scale (e.g., "I feel confident in my ability to talk to others about social injustices and the impact of social conditions on health and well-being" and "I am certain that I possess an ability to work with individuals and groups in ways that are empowering"; Torres-Harding et al., 2012). Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and higher average scale scores represented greater confidence in one's ability to promote social justice. The coefficient alpha reliability estimate was $\alpha = .91$.

GSA Advisor Self-Efficacy on Race, Culture, and Immigration

At Wave 1, advisors completed a five-item assessment of their perceived competence to address issues of race, culture, and immigration. The items were preceded by the stem, "How competent do you feel to do the following:" (a) talk about unique experiences that LGBTQ students of color face, (b) address issues related to the intersection of race and sexual orientation, (c) talk about experiences of racism that students of color face, (d) talk about immigration or experiences of anti-immigrant discrimination, and (e) talk about students' experiences in different cultures. Response options ranged from 1 (*not at all competent*) to 5 (*very competent*), and higher average scale scores represented greater confidence in one's ability to address issues related to race, culture, and immigration. For GSAs with more than one advisor, their scores were averaged and that score was used in the analyses (when we conducted the analyses using the score from the advisor who reported the highest self-efficacy, results were identical in statistical significance). The coefficient alpha reliability estimate was $\alpha = .89$.

Open Respectful GSA Climate

At Wave 1, GSA advisors completed the four-item Open Classroom Climate Scale (Flanagan et al., 2007) to report their perceptions of an open respectful climate in their GSA. The items were preceded by the stem, "Up to this point this year, in our GSA, students:" (a) have a voice in what happens; (b) can disagree with the advisor, if they are respectful; (c) can disagree with each other, if they are respectful; and, (d) are encouraged to express opinions. Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Higher average scale scores represented a more respectful GSA climate. For GSAs with more than one advisor, advisors' scores were averaged and that score was used in analyses (as a sensitivity analysis we used the score from the advisor who reported the highest open, respectful climate for their GSA. Results were identical in statistical significance). The coefficient alpha reliability estimate was $\alpha = .66$.

Immigration Discussions

At Wave 1, youth reported the frequency with which they had personally participated in discussions in their GSA on immigration up to that point in the school year (i.e., September to October). The preceding stem was, "How often do *you* talk about these topics in your GSA meetings up to this point this year:" (a) issues of discrimination or inequality related to immigrants, (b) experiences of students who are from immigrant backgrounds, and (c) LGBTQ issues within different immigrant groups. Response options were *never, rarely, sometimes, often*, and *very often* (scored 0 to 4). Higher average scale scores represented more frequently discussing immigration. At Wave 2, youth responded to the same items, preceded by the stem, "From November until now, how often did *you* talk about these topics in your GSA meetings." The coefficient alpha reliability estimate at Wave 1 was α = .93 and the estimate at Wave 2 was α = .94.

Qualitative Interview Questions

Participants took part in a semistructured interview that focused on specific instances in which they experienced discussions of immigration in their GSAs. Interviewers began their inquiry with the question, "Has your GSA ever talked about what it's like to be an immigrant (*if necessary, clarify: that is, someone who came from a different country*)?" The interviewer then probed for specific examples and details. In addition, the interviewer inquired into participants' recommendations for how immigration could be broached in GSAs, with probes to identify concrete suggestions and factors that might prevent or impede discussion of immigration topics.

Analytic Approach

Preliminary Questions

We conducted a repeated-measures analysis of variance (r-ANOVA) to test for differences in youth's reported frequency of discussing immigration from Wave 1 to Wave 2 with attention to a Wave × Year interaction. We followed this with r-ANOVAs separately by Year to probe the interaction.

Primary Quantitative Aims

We tested our primary research questions using multilevel modeling with maximum likelihood estimation in Mplus 8.1. Our dependent variable in the model was the frequency with which youth discussed immigration issues over the school year (as measured at Wave 2). The model is presented below:

$$\text{T2 Discussions}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{T1 discussions}_{ij}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{T1 SJ self-efficacy}_{ij}) + \beta_{3j}(\text{imm. generation}_{ij}) + \beta_{4j}(\text{s. minority}_{ij}) + \beta_{5j}(\text{r. minority}_{ij}) + \beta_{6j}(\text{male}_{ij}) + \beta_{7j}(\text{gender-expansive}_{ij}) + r_{ij}.$$

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{T1 collective discussions})_j + \gamma_{02}(\text{T1 advisor self-efficacy})_j + \gamma_{03}(\text{T1 climate})_j + \gamma_{04}(\text{immigrant percent})_j + \gamma_{05}(\text{Year})_j + \gamma_{06}(\text{GSA size})_j + \gamma_{07}(\text{number of advisors})_j + \gamma_{08}(\text{number of meetings})_j + \gamma_{09}(\text{r. minority percent})_j + u_{0j}.$$

At the individual level, we included our two focal variables—youth's social justice self-efficacy at Wave 1 and generation of immigration background—to predict any residualized change in discussing immigration issues over the school year while controlling for their frequency of discussing immigration issues at Wave 1. The continuous variables of social justice self-efficacy and immigration discussion frequency at Wave 1 were grand-mean centered. We also included three other covariates: sexual orientation (0 = *heterosexual*; 1 = *sexual minority*), race/ethnicity (0 = *White*; 1 = *racial/ethnic minority*), and gender identity, which was represented by two dummy variables to indicate whether youth identified as cisgender male (1 = *cisgender male*) or gender-expansive (1 = *gender-expansive*), making cisgender females the referent group.

At the group level, to predict the Level 1 intercept we included our four focal variables—advisor self-efficacy to address issues of race, culture, and immigration; open, respectful GSA climate at Wave 1; proportion of first- or second-generation immigrant-origin youth in the GSA; and year the GSA participated—to predict any residualized change in GSAs' collective immigration discussion frequency over the school year while controlling for GSAs' baseline frequency of discussing immigration issues at Wave 1 (the composite average scores of members in the GSA). GSA interrater agreement for youth's frequency of immigration discussions at Wave 1, calculated using the average deviation index for medians (Burke, Finkelstein, & Dusig, 1999), was strong (average $AD_{\mathrm{Md(j)}}$ = .82), suggesting that the aggregation of these data at the individual level (i.e., youth's own frequency of discussions) could be used as an indicator of a GSA-level construct (Chan, 1998). We also included four other covariates: number of GSA members, whether the GSA had more than one advisor, number of meetings held since Wave 1, and proportion of racial/ethnic minority youth in the GSA. For diagnostic purposes we tested interactions between year of GSA participation and our focal variables at Levels 1 and 2; none were significant.

Primary Qualitative Aims

We analyzed audio files and transcripts using an iterative combination of the template organizing style of interpretation (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) and immersion/crystallization analyses (Borkan, 1999). The template organizing style utilizes the theoretical framework for the study as the start for protocol design and analysis. Based on prior research and theory, we constructed an interview protocol to explore aspects of the GSA context that enable or impede immigration discussions (e.g., their climate; member demographics; advisor and student roles). These themes served as the foundation of the initial codebook. To edit and refine themes and topics, and to identify additional themes and topics within and outside of those we anticipated, we incorporated immersion/crystallization techniques during the audio file transcription. The immersion/crystallization process involved repeated cycles in which the coders (5 cisgender females: 2 queer, 3 heterosexual; 3 Asian American, 2 White; 3 second-generation immigrant-origin, 2 third-generation immigrant-origin or later) and co-investigator (cisgender male, gay, Asian American, second-generation immigrant-origin) immersed themselves in qualitative text, identified emergent themes (i.e., crystallization) after critical reflection, and engaged in group discussions to critique and refine themes. This process produced the final codebook used for the qualitative data analysis.

Results

Youth responded along the full range of how frequently they discussed immigration issues at both Waves, from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very often*; Wave 1: M = 1.42, SD = 1.08; Wave 2: M = 1.56, SD = 1.12). Also, advisors' self-efficacy scale scores covered a broad range from 1.60 to 5 (M = 3.40, SD = 0.83). In contrast, their scores for open, respectful GSA climates were restricted in range and were strongly positive, ranging from 3.50 to 5 (M = 4.66, SD = 0.42).

Average Change From Waves 1 to 2, Moderated by Year

In our r-ANOVA, there was a significant Wave × Year interaction for differences in youth's frequency of discussing immigration from baseline (Wave 1) to the remaining school year (Wave 2), Wilks's Λ = .97, $F(1, 345)$ = 12.18, p = .001, η_p^2 = .03. Follow-up r-ANOVAs conducted separately by year indicated that youth in Year 1, on average, reported significantly more frequent discussions of immigration over the remaining school year relative to their baseline levels, Wilks's Λ = .93, $F(1, 208)$ = 16.29, $p < .001$, η_p^2 = .07. For youth in Year 2, on average, this difference was not significant, Wilks's Λ = .99, $F(1, 137)$ = 1.53, p = .22, η_p^2 = .01.

Predicting Residualized Change in Immigration Discussions

Results from an initial null model indicated that GSAs varied significantly in the average frequency with which their members reported discussing immigration issues over the school year (Z = 1.95, p = .05; Level 1 variance component = 1.14, Level 2 variance component = 0.10, intraclass correlation coefficient = .08). Thus, some GSAs collectively discussed immigration issues more than other GSAs over the school year.

Our multilevel model results are presented in Table 2. As hypothesized at the individual level, while accounting for individual members' initial frequency of discussing immigration (b = 0.502, $p < .001$) and all other factors at Level 1, members who reported stronger self-efficacy to promote social justice discussed immigration more frequently than others over the remaining school year (b = 0.088, p = .05). As hypothesized at the group level, while accounting for the initial collective frequency of discussing immigration issues among members in each GSA (γ = .956, $p < .001$) and all other factors at Level 2, GSAs whose advisors reported greater efficacy to address issues of culture, race, and immigration (γ = 0.199, p = .003) went on to discuss immigration more frequently over the remaining school year than individuals in other GSAs. The associations between open, respectful climates (γ = −0.216, p = .36), proportion of immigrant-origin youth in the GSA (γ = 0.173, p = .80), and the frequency with which GSAs discussed immigration issues over the year were not significant when accounting for other factors. Finally, while adjusting for all other factors, youth in GSAs in Year 2 discussed immigration less frequently over the remaining school year than youth in GSAs in Year 1 (γ = −0.357, p = .001). The model accounted for 29% of Level 1 variance and 98% of Level 2 variance.

The Focus and Dynamics of Immigration Discussions

Overall, the qualitative results provided complementary insight into the substance and circumstances of discussions about immigration in GSAs. Themes from the template analysis with illustrative examples are in Table 3. At times, immigration was discussed in different ways for GSAs in Years 1 and 2, which we note in specific themes.

President Trump and Immigration Policies

One theme to emerge was the election of *President Trump and His Administration's Immigration Policies*. This topic generally arose in the context of meeting time allocated to discussing current events. Given the time in which many interviews were conducted in Year 1 (i.e., immediately following the 2016 election and presidential inauguration), the sociopolitical climate likely provided a source of discussion of immigration in GSAs. Year 2 interviews had fewer explicit references to the election or ongoing

Table 2
Predicting Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) Members' Frequency of Immigration Discussions Over the School Year

	Coefficient	*SE*	95% CI
Level 1: Individual level			
Sexual minority	–0.025	0.130	[–0.280, 0.231]
Racial/ethnic minority	–0.073	0.161	[–0.389, 0.243]
Cisgender male	0.157	0.178	[–0.193, 0.506]
Gender-expansive	0.085	0.137	[–0.183, 0.353]
First-/second-generation immigrant-origin youth	–0.028	0.162	[–0.346, 0.290]
T1 individual immigration discussion frequency	0.502***	0.052	[0.400, 0.604]
T1 social justice self-efficacy	0.088*	0.045	[0.000, 0.177]
Level 2: GSA level			
Number of students	0.004	0.007	[–0.009, 0.017]
Proportion racial/ethnic minority	–0.442	0.460	[–1.344, 0.460]
Proportion first-/second-generation immigrant-origin	0.173	0.670	[–1.140, 1.487]
More than one advisor	–0.119	0.096	[–0.308, 0.070]
Number of meetings	0.015	0.008	[–0.001, 0.030]
Year 2 of study	–0.357**	0.107	[–0.567, –0.147]
T1 advisor efficacy on race, culture, immigration	0.199**	0.068	[0.066, 0.332]
T1 collective immigration discussion frequency	0.956***	0.273	[0.420, 1.492]
T1 open, respectful climate	–0.157	0.178	[–0.505, 0.191]

Note. Values are unstandardized coefficient estimates, their standard errors (*SE*s), and 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Sexual minority is dichotomized 0 = *heterosexual*; 1 = *sexual minority*; racial/ethnic minority is dichotomized 0 = *White*; 1 = *racial/ethnic minority*; cisgender male is dichotomized 0 = *not cisgender male*; 1 = *cisgender male*; Gender-expansive is dichotomized 0 = *not gender-expansive*; 1 = *gender-expansive*; first-/second-generation immigrant-origin youth is dichotomized 0 = *not first-/second-generation immigrant-origin youth*; 1 = *first-/second-generation immigrant-origin youth*; more than one advisor is dichotomized 0 = *1 advisor*; 1 = *more than one advisor*; Year 2 of study is dichotomized 0 = *Year 1*; 1 = *Year 2*.
$^{*}p \leq .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

implications of immigration policies. The election and immigration topics related to the Trump administration were referenced by only one interviewee in Year 2, and only in the context of ways to potentially introduce discussion about immigration.

Discussions focused primarily on (in participants' words) "the Muslim ban," and implications of Trump's election on U.S.-Mexico relations, specifically regarding the border wall. On "the Muslim ban," participants discussed

Table 3

Themes and Examples From Qualitative Interviews

Theme	Definition	Examples
Enabling factors		
President Trump and His Administration's Immigration Policies	Topic concerning immigration is discussed in the gender-sexuality alliance (GSA) in relation to current events, specifically with regards to the President Trump administration and immigration policy	*Regarding the "Muslim Ban"* . . . you know some people participated, some didn't. Um, it's mainly kinda like the sophomores through seniors that definitely participated in it. Um, and you know like, we discuss you know like, we kinda like broke it down, like what the ban does, like . . . like why it's like bad, and it's like, and you know like, we were like, "okay well, let's look it on the other side," like how is it . . . like what makes it a Muslim ban, so you know we took the time to dissect that, and we did research on the, on the ban . . . *Regarding U.S.-Mexico Relations and "The Border Wall"* **P**: If I can make a summary of it, they were saying along the lines of how they were from Mexico, well their family was all from Mexico, and before they were born, their family moved to America around the Boston area and so when he was born, he was a citizen, of course, and he was talking about how growing up, everything was fine. He was bilingual, so he knows Spanish and English and he thought that was a really great key factor, especially in the school, if you already know two languages and there's also other language options, he was talking about how he could learn more than just two languages and he thought that was fantastic and then with Trump's inauguration and stuff, we were talking about how he felt and the impact of his family because he's up going eighteen. He's becoming an adult and he is a citizen here, but some of his family isn't and he wouldn't know if he would be able to see his family outside of the state if they were to move or something like that.

(continued)

Table 3 **(continued)**

Theme	Definition	Examples
		I: How did folks respond? **P**: They were very—some were crying because he was obviously a known member in the GSA, so some were crying and others just went up to him and pat his back and it wasn't like he was sad about it. He was more fearful about what was to come and I thought that was really interesting because everybody was very close and intact and no one else really talked that day, but it was mainly just him talking about how he felt about Trump's presidency and how it was would affect his family and how it would affect him in the long-run . . ."
Representation	Topic discussions occur based on who is present in a GSA meeting. For example, topics concerning immigration occur if students who are of first- or second-generation immigrant backgrounds are present or raise the topic (*Note: Discussion can also be impeded if no members of a relevant group are present*)	**I**: Has the topic of immigration, or like, what it's like to be an immigrant ever, ever come up in the GSA? **P**: Not really, no. Um, yeah, no not really, not specifically in any way. Doesn't really come up too much. **I**: Okay. Um, why do you think that might be? That it hasn't come up—either the immigrant experience. **P**: Um, I don't think that the members of the GSA are insensitive, but I think it's kind of the type of thing where not a lot of people in the GSA are immigrants, so you can't really, um, elaborate on the topic.
Open-Mindedness	The notion that students view the GSA space as one that creates the possibility for discussions that can challenge their ideas and beliefs	**I**: If there was a student within the GSA that wanted to bring up issues of immigration and undocumented status, how do you think other students would react? **P**: They'd feel fine with it. Um, you know . . . for the most part, you know, we're free about talking about anything, you know kinda like, everything's game. So, we . . . you know, talk about like whatever comes on our mind, so um . . . for the most part, kids are relaxed about it, like depending on the topic, sometimes they participate, sometimes they don't, but um it's not something that we kinda push to the side.

(continued)

Table 3 **(continued)**

Theme	Definition	Examples
Critical Reflection	Educational experiences and activities that lead to the process of learning to question social hierarchies and structures that marginalize groups of people	There was this thing helping educate teachers about how [inaudible] minority experiences and GSA was contributing and we got to see some of the examples of other minorities' experience and [inaudible] microaggressions and that was pretty cool. We got to see some examples of the immigrant side and the racial minorities' side and as like the examples that were already there and then we provided the queer examples.
Impeding factors		
Not on the Agenda	Because of time limitation or a perceived focus on LGBTQ+ issues, topic is not discussed in this space	Um, well I feel like it should come up. But I feel like . . . I don't, I feel like we need to discuss things that are relevant and I don't know how relevant that is now and maybe I don't know how relevant it is just 'cause like, no one's told me that, you know? And I'm not saying that it's not relevant. Um, but I think that we also, we focus a lot on issues around here and I think that, honestly there aren't that many issues [discussed] around here and we should focus more on . . . kind of like, more things around um. . . . Like, just around the country especially like, with the situation on immigration now. Um, yeah. I mean . . . [pause] my mom when she came out to her dad in Guatemala, she got kicked out, you know? She like, got asylum to come here because of, that she faced for being like, a lesbian, you know? So I feel like a lot of us have connections like that. Um, but we don't really talk a lot about that just 'cause . . . yeah, I don't know. I don't know I guess . . . it doesn't come up.

(continued)

Table 3 **(continued)**

Theme	Definition	Examples
Discomfort	Discussion impeded/avoided due to discomfort around the topic or assuming that others will feel uncomfortable discussing the topic	. . . it might be a touchy subject to some people, with maybe the way that it was before they immigrated or the process of immigration and stuff like that, might be a touchy subject. I think it's just, yeah, that type of a thing. And I think it's also a very controversial topic because, you know, with um, things like terrorism and radicalism, and stuff like that, and um, the idea of people coming over, like refugees, or um, people coming here as—considering America as a safe haven, that type of thing would be um, I don't know if it would be in the GSA—we haven't really brought it up so I don't really know—but if it would be a controversial topic, it would be yeah, it would be kind of um, uncomfortable to talk about as well.
Fear of Consequences	Discussion impeded/avoided due to potential legal ramifications (e.g., deportation)	I feel like it's also because it's a touchy subject to do so because um maybe like a lot of people—not a lot of people—but like some people from the families have someone who like isn't written down and like maybe they could be scared to like oh what if I accidentally say something and they get like sent back so I feel like that's like a bit of a touchy subject for some people.
Fear of Misspeaking	Concern about seeming ignorant or speaking for another person's or group's experience	I also feel like sometimes I'm worried that I want to think before I speak so I don't accidentally speak for other people who I don't actually know what they're speaking, you know, who I don't actually know what their experience is because I haven't lived it, so I'm more careful, then, when I speak, not to accidentally speak inaccurately for other people, but we can speak about it.

Note. Responses are from youth participants unless otherwise noted by I = *interviewer*, P = *participant*.

how immigration rights were social justice issues, which fit under the collective mission of the GSA. As one student noted,

> . . . we're big advocates but it's just like, human rights in general . . . the GSA as a whole like, we strongly . . . you know like, go against like Trump and a lot of his executive orders um especially the immigration ban um, the Muslim ban, like we definitely feel very strongly about that, and we talk about it all the time.

Discussions about the border wall tended to take on a more personal tone, with some students noting a more direct connection to the effects of Trump's proposed immigration policies. One student discussed a GSA member affected by border policy:

> he was talking about how he could learn more than just two languages and he thought that was fantastic and then with Trump's inauguration and stuff, we were talking about how he felt and the impact of his family because he's up going eighteen. He's becoming an adult and he is a citizen here, but some of his family isn't and he wouldn't know if he would be able to see his family outside of the state if they were to move or something like that.

The contrast in framing of the discussions, with issues of "the Muslim ban" being discussed collectively and issues of the border wall being discussed on a more personal level, may reflect that issues related to U.S.-Mexico relations were more directly relevant to the students, some of whom self-identified as Latinx. Issues related to "the Muslim ban," may not have directly affected students if students with Muslim backgrounds were not present in the GSA. In some ways, this would tie into the theme below on representation within GSAs.

Representation

Frequently, the theme of *Representation* co-occurred with the theme of *President Trump* (e.g., in the context of seeking emotional support or discussing how the election might affect one's family). Under both themes, participants' discussions focused predominantly on immigrant identity and the immigrant experience, not explicitly on the intersections of immigrant identity with sexual orientation or gender identity. In contrast to Year 1 interview participants, Year 2 participants described discussions of immigration based on experiences that were personally relevant to their lives as first- or second-generation immigrants (e.g., "there are several like, first-generation students who like, talk about, kind of like, struggles with their parents"). The *Representation* theme also included instances in which students noted that the absence of GSA members who were first- or second-generation immigrants impeded discussion of immigration (for an example, see Table 3).

Critical Reflection

In addition, Year 2 participants described discussions of immigration in the context of educational experiences and activities on *Critical Reflection*, in which students and advisors focused on learning about social hierarchies and structures that lead to inequality and marginalization of groups of people. This is consistent with the function of GSAs as a setting for information and education. One participant described an instance in which the topic of immigration arose in the context of an activity focused on teaching about microaggressions:

> **P**: There was this thing helping educate teachers about how [inaudible] minority experiences and GSA was contributing and we got to see some of the examples of other minorities' experience and [inaudible] microaggressions and that was pretty cool. We got to see some examples of the immigrant side and the racial minorities' side and as like the examples that were already there and then we provided the queer examples.
> **I**: So what did the meeting look like?
> **P**: [inaudible] wrote them down on signs and held them up and they took a picture of us without our face in it and it was pretty cool. A microaggression you have experienced . . . or seen others experience.

The above example describes an instance in which students could broach the topic about intersectional oppression (i.e., connections between xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia). Another participant described a concrete example in which a GSA member spoke in a student assembly related to their school's Black Lives Matter chapter. In this example, the participant also pointed to how LGBT identities can intersect with racial and immigrant identities:

> we had a recently um, an assembly that had to do with, um, Black Lives Matter. And um, there was a girl on stage, she was non-African American, her culture and her heritage, she felt some of the pain that they felt, so she wrote a poem and displayed it on the stage. So, she and her family has a, like a very, long line of immigration, so it kinda popped up in that type of way, but for instance, um you don't have to be technically from this country and a nonimmigrant to be a part of the LGBT community. You can be out of—you can be an immigrant—you can be a person of color, you can be anything else besides that and still identify as LGBT so it—like I said, it all incorporates together in some sort of way.

Open-Mindedness

Students tended to emphasize the potential for their GSA to address immigration topics due to the *Open-Mindedness* of the setting. Often this point would be raised by students who could not recall when—or who

did not have specific examples in which—their GSA discussed immigration. As one student noted,

> I think the um GSA that we have here is pretty open to be learning about pretty much anything that has to do with LGBT issue and race issues. Um, just like human rights issues in general, so um I don't think anyone would be against . . . learning anything new.

In contrast to the nonsignificant association in the quantitative findings, this theme of *Open-Mindedness* suggests that respectful and open climates may be essential to facilitate dialogue about immigration.

The Agenda

Some participants in both years indicated that immigration did not come up in the GSA (*Not on the Agenda*). In some cases, the topic was perceived as not meriting attention or the same degree of focus as topics of gender and sexuality. One participant noted:

> We don't really mention the word immigration, but when it comes to like watching that have to do with it, that are around the world, obviously that's from immigration and stuff like that, places that are not from here, anything like that, so like it pops up, like I said, once in a while, . . . Like it's not gonna be like "OK, so today we're gonna talk about immigration stuff" . . . it's mostly like, like I said, mostly about LGBT and GSA in general, but like I said, it pops up like once in a while so . . .

This lack of focus on the topic of immigration can potentially impede exploration or recognition of key aspects of individual members' experiences. In another example (see Table 3 for full quote), a Latinx student questioned the relevance of topics concerning her immigrant identity and history, potentially in part due to the lack of attention her GSA gave to these topics.

Discomfort

Predominantly in Year 1 interviews, some participants noted a general *Discomfort* with the topic of immigration, either personally felt or anticipated among the members, which could stifle discussion. In these instances, participants described the topics of immigration and people who are undocumented as "touchy" subjects that could upset the safe space climate of the GSA. One participant described,

> I know that there are different or differing views where it comes to immigration, and stuff like that, and so, I mean, I personally, wouldn't really feel too uncomfortable talking about it . . . but other people might. . . . It's so controversial that people might not want to be specific when talking about it because they might be afraid of revealing

> what their views are on it and then creating kind of a rift in a way. I don't—not a rift, but um . . . just showing what you believe in, and that may cause conflicts in itself.

Fear of Consequences

There was also *Fear of Consequences* from discussions that emerged in Year 2 interviews. Participants described a reluctance to discuss immigration because it could lead to potential identifying information with risk of deportation:

> I feel like it's also because it's a touchy subject . . . like some people from the families have someone who like isn't written down and like maybe they could be scared to like oh what if like I accidentally say something and they get like sent back so I feel like that's like a bit of a touchy subject for some people.

This fear of repercussions for the GSA members who might place themselves or their families in precarious positions by discussing immigration was expressed primarily by GSA members who themselves were not in danger of such consequences. Thus, while the theme of *Discomfort* referenced a fear of conditions within the GSA, *Fear of Consequences* referenced a fear of conditions external to the GSA.

Fear of Misspeaking

Participants described that a lack of discussion also was due to a *Fear of Misspeaking*. This was manifested as fear of seeming ignorant (e.g., not knowing enough about the issue; fear of making mistakes), or reluctance to speak for another person's or group's experience. In contrast to *Discomfort* with the topic in general, *Fear of Misspeaking* did not represent an aversion to immigration being discussed, but rather represented youth's fear of making assumptions—or fear that peers would perceive them to make assumptions—in these discussions. As one student indicated, "I want to think before I speak so I don't accidentally speak for other people who I don't actually know what they're speaking, you know, who I don't actually know what their experience is because I haven't lived it."

Suggestions for Encouraging Immigration Discussion

Many students identified concrete methods to stimulate discussion. Two nearly universal recommendations were (a) discuss current events (e.g., "we could . . . find some sort of current news about it, maybe? Since we already talk about current news, we could just find something that has to do with race or immigration. Something that's going on, somewhere"), and (b) have the GSA advisor broach the topic (e.g., "I think the advisor should

bring it up first"). Current event topics, such as those on immigration policies, could provide a more open entry-point to discuss these issues than personal testimony, which may be more difficult for others to follow with a differing perspective. This focus could mitigate some members' discomfort or fear of misspeaking. As youth described, students broached these topics in discussing current events, documentaries, or in presentations. The suggestion to have an advisor raise the topic aligns with the quantitative results that having advisors with greater self-efficacy to address issues of race, culture, and immigration was related to having more discussions about immigration.

Discussion

There has been limited attention to how school settings promote dialogue on current sociopolitical crises. Our findings showed that GSAs were one space in which members discussed current events, policies, and discrimination related to immigration. With quantitative and qualitative data, we identified predictors of which youth and GSAs discussed immigration with greater frequency than others over the school year, and dynamics that promoted or inhibited these discussions. The results underscore the need to consider how settings outside the classroom also could serve youth during times of sociopolitical crises and promote their civic discourse.

Overall Frequency and Content of Conversations on Immigration

A number of GSA members reported discussing discrimination faced by immigrant communities with some frequency, aligning with the aspiration of GSAs to address interlocking systems of oppression (GSA Network, n.d.). Still, although responses covered the full range, average scores fell between the anchors of "rarely" and "sometimes." This suggests that immigration tended to be a peripheral focus of these groups. In some ways, this was evident in the theme of *Not on the Agenda* in youth's interviews. In the interviews, youth noted that conversations on immigration focused overwhelmingly on current events related to President Trump and his administration's policies (e.g., the U.S.-Mexico border wall), particularly in Year 1. In Year 2, however, youth did share that topics focused on students' own experiences as first- or second-generation immigrants. Intersectionality issues were not discussed as explicitly, though, despite areas where such overlap would have been relevant in the GSA (e.g., discussing unique concerns for undocumented LGBTQ youth; Seif, 2014; Terriquez, 2015). It is possible that youth tended to consider their social identities in isolation as opposed to their intersection with one another. Students also may have viewed discussions about sexuality and gender and discussions about race and racism as being siloed to specific spaces (e.g., GSA vs. Black Lives Matter), which arose in the *Critical Reflection* theme. Because most GSA members in this study were not first- or second-generation immigrants, this overlap may not have been immediately evident to them. At the same time,

having these discussions in GSAs—which focus on sexual orientation and gender identity—raises the potential for youth to develop an understanding of intersectionality (Terriquez, 2015). Our findings suggest that GSAs and similar groups could use activities such as current event discussions, documentaries, and student presentations to introduce topics that are more peripheral to their focus. However, advisors or student leaders may need to make deliberate efforts to deepen these conversations to go beyond simply voicing opposition or support for certain actions or policies.

Youth Factors Related to Immigration Discussions

As hypothesized, youth who felt more self-efficacy to promote social justice discussed immigration issues with more frequency over the school year, controlling for their baseline frequency levels. We expected that this specific type of self-efficacy (i.e., social justice self-efficacy; Torres-Harding et al., 2012) would be an important predictor of a youth's increased discussion of immigration because such dialogues can be challenging (Nagda, 2006; Zúñiga et al., 2016). Some youth pointed to these challenges in their interviews. They noted that immigration discussions could raise a general *Discomfort* for themselves or others in the GSA. In the *Fear of Misspeaking* theme, some youth also shared a fear of appearing ignorant. Thus, youth may have needed to feel confident in their ability to address issues of social justice in order to engage in greater dialogue with their peers. Youth with greater social justice self-efficacy may have felt more informed and better able to address a broader range of social injustices. This confidence may have enabled them to discuss immigration issues with greater frequency as several crises arose during the election and ensuing Trump administration. This might be tied in some ways to the *Critical Reflection* theme that emerged where some youth reflected on how, in their GSA, they learned about social hierarchies that perpetuated inequality.

Building on these findings, when certain social issues come to the forefront, GSAs and similar groups might encourage youth with greater social justice self-efficacy to lead dialogues on these specific issues or to facilitate critical reflection more broadly. This approach would align with youth program models that aim to place youth in leadership positions (Eccles & Gootman, 2002) and an aim of GSAs to address multiple forms of oppression. GSAs and other groups also might work with more efficacious youth on strategies to bring less confident members into these dialogues.

Our findings were nuanced in identifying differences among youth in their discussion of immigration based on their first- or second-generation immigration status. Differences in discussion frequency were not significant in the quantitative data. However, *Representation* emerged as a theme in our qualitative data where youth reported that immigrant-origin youth played an important role in *raising* these issues in the GSA. It may be important to distinguish

between initiating versus joining in these conversations: Our qualitative data suggest that immigrant youth were key initiators of conversations in which others could then participate. At the same time, the *Fear of Consequences* theme highlighted at least one serious reason why initiating these conversations should not fall entirely on immigrant youth (e.g., risks of discrimination).

Advisor and Contextual Factors Related to Discussions of Immigration

Youth in GSAs whose advisors felt more equipped to address issues of race, culture, and immigration discussed immigration issues more frequently over the school year. Some advisors feel more prepared than others to discuss issues of race and culture in their GSA (Poteat & Scheer, 2016), and the current findings further show that this carries implications for discussing such issues, specifically immigration, over time. Our findings add to the general youth program literature emphasizing the role of adults in supporting and scaffolding youth's efforts in these groups (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). This finding underscores a key issue that has been overlooked in this literature, which has examined the general scaffolding role of advisors but not specifically in terms of working with youth from diverse backgrounds or addressing issues related to social inequity. This could be a critical skill for advisors, given the growing number of extracurricular settings that aim to address these issues and with the increasingly diverse population of youth in schools overall. GSA advisors may have been important in fostering ongoing discussions on immigration, as some youth feared misspeaking or were unfamiliar with the intricacies of the topic. Youth shared in their interviews that their advisors could play a role by raising this issue in their GSA. Youth may have seen advisors as trusted sources of information or as being able to legitimize immigration as a relevant issue in the GSA. Our combined findings for youth and advisors suggest that a sense of efficacy among both may be essential for elevating and sustaining discussions during times of sociopolitical crises.

We documented mixed support for the role of open, respectful climates. The quantitative data indicated that this climate, at least as we measured it, did not predict greater discussion of immigration over the school year. This could have been due to the restricted range of responses provided by advisors, which were positive across GSAs. Also, given the nuance that emerged in the qualitative data, it may be important to consider each member's perception of their GSA's climate, not a global assessment from the advisor. Youth emphasized the importance of this type of climate in the *Open-Mindedness* theme. Some youth positively described their GSA as a space where they could have conversations with peers that would challenge their own ideas and beliefs. This description largely aligns with the definition of open, respectful climates (i.e., where youth can share differing views in a respectful manner; Flanagan et al., 2007). Reflecting some possible tension inherent to this, however, youth also voiced a *Fear of Misspeaking* when

having these conversations due to risk of judgment from their peers. Youth shared their struggle in maintaining a supportive space when members might disagree and creating a safe space that would not restrict conversation to avoid conflict (reflected in the *Discomfort* theme). Some of these tensions have been raised in the adult intergroup dialogue literature (Zúñiga et al., 2016), yet the literature on youth programs and extracurricular groups has given them limited attention (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

Ongoing research should further attend to the role of the GSA climate, given that group discussions comprise a major part of GSA meetings (Poteat et al., 2017). Our qualitative findings do underscore the importance of setting a tone that encourages diverse views expressed in a respectful manner. Although GSAs strive to provide a supportive climate for LGBTQ youth (Griffin et al., 2004), they may need to make deliberate efforts to ensure that this is inclusive of members who are marginalized in other ways as well. Also, members may need to discuss their understanding or expectations of safety when having challenging dialogues. For instance, how can a space be safe or nonjudgmental even when members disagree? How can discomfort or misspeaking be tolerated as part of grappling with these topics at a deeper level?

Youth in GSAs who participated during the election year (Year 1) discussed immigration more over the school year than youth in GSAs in the ensuing year of the Trump administration (Year 2). Also, on average, there was more frequent discussion of immigration at Wave 2 than Wave 1 for youth in Year 1, but not in Year 2. Still, our predictors of increased discussions over the year applied to youth in both years of the study (as there was no significant interaction effect with year of participation). It is possible that, on average, GSAs in Year 2 may have had less frequent discussions due to election fatigue or other pressing sociopolitical issues that arose—even in a year in which anti-immigration policies actually intensified (Perreira et al., 2018; Pierce & Selee, 2017). Although we controlled for various other factors, because the GSAs differed between years, we consider these findings important but nonetheless tentative and in need of closer attention in future work. Our qualitative data further suggest that the content of discussions differed for GSAs in Years 1 and 2. The election may have been a primary factor that prompted heightened immigration discussions among Year 1 participants, whereas Year 2 participants tended to focus less on Trump or specific policies and more on personal experiences. This could have carried a greater sense of vulnerability, which could have limited the frequency with which youth discussed these issues.

Limitations, Strengths, and Implications

We note several limitations to the study. Although we recruited 38 diverse schools across Massachusetts, the nature of youth's immigration discussions could vary in different parts of the United States. For instance,

Massachusetts has an established network of GSAs (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, n.d.), and Massachusetts is considered relatively more progressive as a state, on average, than others. In other states, GSAs may be more isolated from one another (geographically and socially), and some GSAs may be located in more politically conservative states or school districts. Each of these factors may place unique challenges or restraints on the ability of GSAs to discuss or act upon immigration and other sociopolitical issues and events. At the same time, the immigration enforcement policies under the Trump administration have spread beyond traditional "sanctuary" type contexts to the entire nation (Cervantes et al., 2018). Also, although we utilized data from two time points, more time points would have allowed us to consider nuanced trajectories of change in dialogue. Similarly, because of the study's design, different GSAs participated in each year; thus, despite accounting for many covariates, year-based comparisons should be interpreted with caution. Further, we cannot make attributions that the 2016 election actually caused increases in youth's immigration discussions, although the qualitative data suggested that this was very much a driving force. Finally, our interview data provided a richer sense of youth's perceptions of these discussions and group dynamics, but we could not capture specific dialogue and actions as they occurred. Other methods such as meeting observations could provide such additional data. Other methods (e.g., observations) also could potentially mitigate participant reactivity to being asked about their discussions directly (e.g., by influencing subsequent behavior). Still, because our questions were embedded within a much broader project, we suspect that asking these questions in the survey or in interviews with some youth did not have a large or prolonged effect on the collective behaviors of GSA members or advisors.

The current study also had several strengths. It is one of the few GSA studies to go beyond cross-sectional comparisons to look at longitudinal associations; it capitalized on quantitative and qualitative data to gain a fuller understanding of the frequency, focus, and interpersonal dynamics of conversations on immigration; it utilized multi-informant data from youth and advisors; it accounted for variability at the individual and group levels; and it included a diverse representation of schools. Further, although GSAs aspire to address interlocking systems of oppression, this has been given limited consideration in GSA research; our study did so by focusing on how immigration was discussed in this context. Finally, our study added to the broader youth program literature in several important ways. We moved beyond traditional indicators of civic engagement (e.g., volunteering, voting) and gave explicit focus to how these settings could serve as a place for dialogue during immediate sociopolitical crises so as to support youth to engage with one another on urgent civic issues. Also, our study highlighted several variables largely unexamined in the general youth program literature

that could have implications for many youth's experiences in such settings given the increasingly diverse youth population: advisors' self-efficacy in addressing issues explicitly on race, culture, and immigration, as well as open, respectful group climates.

Future research on GSAs and similar groups also should consider several interrelated questions that build on the focus of the current study. For instance, to what extent do such groups discuss varying forms of inequity outside the immediate occurrence or coverage of a major event related to that form of inequity? Also, whether in direct response to an immediate crisis or not, how do their discussions compare to discussions that may occur in other school settings (e.g., in classrooms or in groups not focused on issues of equity and justice)? Finally, whereas our study relied on two waves of data to consider residualized change in youth's discussions over the school year, it would be informative to collect multiple successive waves of data on youth's conversations as they occur in closer proximity to the occurrence of specific events. Doing so would help determine the potential sustained or differential impact of specific events on discussions and ultimately any larger actions taken among youth.

As the United States becomes increasingly diverse across myriad demographic indictors, schools must be equipped to address the needs that are relevant to diverse student populations. To this end, outside the immediate classroom a growing number of extracurricular groups are incorporating advocacy into their work. It will be important to identify how these groups can engage their members in these efforts effectively. For instance, materials might be developed to help facilitate discussions of diversity in a more intersectional way, and programs might identify ways to increase youth's critical awareness of interlocking systems of oppression (e.g., Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). Also, collaborations across extracurricular groups focused on different forms of diversity could be encouraged for larger responses to major sociopolitical crises—the ramifications of which are often experienced in schools (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). Our study began to address these issues by identifying specific factors that could inform the way in which GSAs and other similar groups in schools may promote discussions of discrimination against immigrant communities when pressing sociopolitical crises emerge for these, and potentially other, communities.

Note

This study was supported by a grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), R01MD009458, to Poteat (Principal Investigator) and Calzo and Yoshikawa (Co-Investigators). In addition, the fourth author (Rosenbach) was supported by an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Predoctoral Interdisciplinary Research Training Fellowship, R305A080512.

References

Borkan, J. (1999). Immersion/crystallization. In B. F. Crabtree & W. L. Miller (Eds.), *Doing qualitative research* (pp. 179–194). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brock, L. L., Nishida, T. K., Chiong, C., Grimm, K. J., & Rimm-Kaufman, S. E. (2008). Children's perceptions of the classroom environment and social and academic performance: A longitudinal analysis of the contribution of the Responsive Classroom approach. *Journal of School Psychology*, *46*, 129–149.

Burke, M. J., Finkelstein, L. M., & Dusig, M. S. (1999). On average deviation indices for estimating interrater agreement. *Organizational Research Methods*, *2*, 49–68.

Campbell, D. E. (2008). Voice in the classroom: How an open classroom climate fosters political engagement among adolescents. *Political Behavior*, *30*, 437–454.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). *Results from the School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014*. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/shpps/results.htm

Cervantes, W., Ullrich, R., & Matthews, H. (2018). *Our children's fears: Immigration policy's effects on young children*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

Chan, D. (1998). Functional relations among constructs in the same content domain at different levels of analysis: A typology of composition models. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *82*, 234–246.

Costello, M. B. (2016). *The Trump effect: The impact of the presidential campaign on our nation's schools*. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center.

Crabtree, B. F., & Miller, W. L. (1999). *Doing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department of Justice. (2018, April 6). *Attorney General announces zero-tolerance policy for criminal illegal entry*. Retrieved from http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-announces-zero-tolerance-policy-criminal-illegal-entry

Dessel, A., & Rogge, M. E. (2008). Evaluation of intergroup dialogue: A review of the empirical literature. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, *26*, 199–238.

Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. A. (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Flanagan, C. A., Syvertsen, A. K., & Stout, M. D. (2007, May). *Civic measurement models: Tapping adolescents' civic engagement* (CIRCLE Work. Pap. No. 55). Medford, MA: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

Ginwright, S. (2007). Black youth activism and the role of critical social capital in Black community organizations. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*, 403–418.

Godfrey, E. B., & Grayman, J. K. (2014). Teaching citizens: The role of open classroom climate in fostering critical consciousness among youth. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *43*, 1801–1817.

Gonzales, R. G., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Dedios-Sanguineti, M. C. (2013). No place to belong: Contextualizing concepts of mental health among undocumented immigrant youth in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *57*, 1174–1199.

Graybill, E. C., Varjas, K., Meyers, J., & Watson, L. B. (2009). Content-specific strategies to advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: An exploratory study. *School Psychology Review*, *38*, 570–584.

Griffin, P., Lee, C., Waugh, J., & Beyer, C. (2004). Describing roles that Gay-Straight Alliances play in schools: From individual support to social change. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*, *1*, 7–22.

GSA Network. (n.d.). *Our approach*. Retrieved from https://gsanetwork.org/mission-vision-history/

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). *Massachusetts Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) Leadership Council*. Retrieved from http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/GSALcouncil.html

Munro, L., Travers, R., St. John, A., Klein, K., Hunter, H., Brennan, D., & Brett, C. (2013). A bed of roses? Exploring the experiences of LGBT newcomer youth who migrate to Toronto. *Ethnicity and Inequalities in Health and Social Care*, *6*, 137–150.

Mustanski, B. (2011). Ethical and regulatory issues with conducting sexuality research with LGBT adolescents: A call to action for a scientifically informed approach. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *40*, 673–686.

Nagda, B. R. A. (2006). Breaking barriers, crossing borders, building bridges: Communication processes in intergroup dialogues. *Journal of Social Issues*, *62*, 553–576.

Parker, W. C. (2006). Public discourses in schools: Purposes, problems, possibilities. *Educational Researcher*, *35*(8), 11–18.

Perreira, K., Yoshikawa, H., & Oberlander, J. (2018). A new threat to immigrant health: Redefining the public charge rule. *New England Journal of Medicine*, *379*, 901–903.

Pierce, S., & Selee, A. (2017). *Immigration under Trump: A review of policy shifts in the year since the election*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

Pollock, M. (2017). *Schooltalk: Rethinking what we say about and to students every day*. New York, NY: New Press.

Poteat, V. P., & Scheer, J. R. (2016). GSA advisors' self-efficacy related to LGBT youth of color and transgender youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *13*, 311–325.

Poteat, V. P., Yoshikawa, H., Calzo, J. P., Gray, M. L., DiGiovanni, C. D., Lipkin, A., . . . Shaw, M. P. (2015). Contextualizing gay-straight alliances: Student, advisor, and structural factors related to positive youth development among members. *Child Development*, *86*, 176–193.

Poteat, V. P., Yoshikawa, H., Calzo, J. P., Russell, S. T., & Horn, S. S. (2017). Gay-straight alliances as settings for youth inclusion and development: Future conceptual and methodological directions for these and other student groups in schools. *Educational Researcher*, *46*, 508–516.

Rhodes, J. E., & DuBois, D. L. (2008). Mentoring relationships and programs for youth. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *17*, 254–258.

Seider, S., Kelly, L., Clark, S., Jennett, P., El-Amin, A., Graves, D., . . . Cabral, M. (2018). Fostering the sociopolitical development of African American and Latinx adolescents to analyze and challenge racial and economic inequality. *Youth & Society*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/0044118X18767783

Seif, H. (2014). "Coming out of the shadows" and "undocuqueer": Undocumented immigrants transforming sexuality discourse and activism. *Journal of Language and Sexuality*, *3*, 87–120.

Shipherd, J. C. (2015). Defining competence when working with sexual and gender minority populations: Training models for professional development. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *22*, 101–104.

Southern Poverty Law Center. (2016). *Ten days after: Harassment and intimidation in the aftermath of the election*. Montgomery, AL: Southern Poverty Law Center.

Terriquez, V. (2015). Intersectional mobilization, social movement spillover, and queer youth leadership in the immigrant rights movement. *Social Problems*, *62*, 343–362.

Torres-Harding, S. R., Siers, B., & Olson, B. D. (2012). Development and psychometric evaluation of the Social Justice Scale. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *50*, 77–88.

Watts, R. J., Abdul-Adil, J. K., & Pratt, T. (2002). Enhancing critical consciousness in young African American men: A psychoeducational approach. *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*, *3*, 41–50.
Williams, D. R., & Medlock, M. M. (2017). Health effects of dramatic societal events—Ramifications of the recent presidential election. *New England Journal of Medicine*, *376*, 2295–2299.
Yoshikawa, H., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Gonzales, R. G. (2017). Unauthorized status and youth development in the United States: Consensus statement of the Society for Research on Adolescence. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *27*, 4–19.
Zúñiga, X., Lopez, G., & Ford, K. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Intergroup dialogue: Engaging difference, social identities and social justice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Manuscript received November 29, 2018
Final revision received February 28, 2019
Accepted February 28, 2019