Civic Identity and Civic Engagement: Meaning, Structure and Measurement[1]

A thesis submitted by

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Abstract

The study of civic engagement is complex and continues to evolve. Desired outcomes of civic engagement are well-framed within the Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective, a strength-based approach to understanding youth development derived from relational developmental systems theory (RDST). However, less is known about the psychological identity processes that might lead to civic engagement. In order to better understand the development of civic identity as a pathway toward active and engaged citizenship (AEC), a proposed three factor structure of civic identity, comprised of exploration, resolution, and centrality, was tested using data from the Assessment of Character in the Trades (ACT) Project. Results confirmed that the best fit model of civic identity is comprised of this three factor structure. In addition, indicative of construct validity, the subscales were moderately correlated with a measure of diversity attitudes and political awareness. Implications for using the tripartite model of civic identity to better understand individual ideology and pathways toward active and engaged citizenship from a PYD and RDST perspective are discussed. Recommendations are made for future research.

Civic Identity and Civic Engagement: Meaning, Structure and Measurement

Democratic social systems are sustained in part by positively engaged citizens who are connected to their communities and have a sense of self that transcends egoistic interests and involves investments in, or contributions to, society (Flanagan, 2003; Lerner, 2004). This sense of self may be termed civic identity. Thus, the study of civic engagement is increasingly a topic of interest within the field of applied developmental science (Sherrod et al., 2010), because the development of such a civic sense of self (civic identity) contributes to the support and maintenance of democracy. It is especially important to study civic engagement during adolescence and the transition to adulthood because it is during these times of life that an individual begins to engage in civic participation behaviors that may be manifested throughout the life span (Sherrod et al., 2010). These behaviors may shape, and be shaped by, the person's burgeoning civic identity.

Although current conceptualizations of civic engagement contribute valuable information about its predictors, correlates, and consequences, more information is needed about the processes through which an individual becomes positively engaged with his or her community and, as well, how civic identity is both a product and a producer of such processes. Thus, in order to optimize civic engagement outcomes for individuals (e.g., voting, working in civic organizations, or public service), and to foster the growth of civil society, a more differentiated conceptualization of the components of civic engagement is necessary and, as well, a clear operationalization and index of civic identity are needed.

Prior research (e.g., see Sherrod et al., 2010, for reviews) has explained outcomes of civic engagement generally, and has provided important conceptual discussions about how individuals become engaged with civil society. Much of this work focuses on knowledge and behaviors

encompassed by civic engagement. However, relatively less is known about the psychosocial

processes through which one comes to manifest these outcomes. Such processes are best framed

within a relational developmental systems model (Overton, 2010, 2013a, 2013b); one that helps

to elucidate the mutually influential relations between individuals and their contexts (represented

as individual ←→ context relations). In terms of civic engagement, these individual ← →context

relations represent the processes through which an individual engages with his or her community

and the ways that civic behavior and civic identity may arise as a result of experience within a

person's specific context.

For the purpose of this study, I propose that civic engagement and civic identity are best

understood from such a relational developmental systems perspective, and that civic identity

development represents the process through which an individual becomes an active and engaged

citizen. Based on the work of Johnson (2011), I hypothesize that the process of civic identity

development is represented by three elements: exploration, resolution, and centrality.

Exploration refers to thinking about, considering, and contemplating what it means to be a part

of a community. *Resolution* is having made choices about self-meanings in terms of being a

member of a community. *Centrality* is how important being a member of a community is to ones

sense of self (Johnson, 2011). In explaining the basis for this hypothesis, it is helpful to briefly

describe relational developmental systems theory.

Civic Engagement: A Relational Developmental Systems Perspective

Civic engagement involves the cognitions, emotions, and behaviors that lead an

individual to promote, support, or reform institutions and individuals within civil society. Civic

engagement is marked by individuals' actions within their community and arises as a result of

their unique experience within the social context. Therefore, to better understand the antecedents

and consequences of civically-engaged actions and ideology, it is important to take a relational

developmental systems approach (Overton, 2013a). In contemporary developmental science we

understand that human development does not arise solely from the characteristics of the

individual or purely as a result of environmental influence. Rather, human development results

from mutually influential relations between an active individual and a dynamic, fluid context,

(Lerner & Overton, 2008). All individuals are unique, and all contexts are unique. As a result,

the potential exists for virtually infinite combinations of individuals and contexts that would

produce equally varied instantiations of individual ←→ context relations, and furthermore for

multiple pathways through adolescence, and throughout the life span (Lerner, 2006). The study

of these multiple pathways of development may be key to understanding the ways through which

individuals come to exhibit civically engaged or disengaged behavior.

In addition to varied manifestations of individual ←→ context relations, interindividual

differences, and intraindividual changes, there are changes within contexts and differences across

contexts within time. As a result, human lives, and processes of development, are unique within

and across people, settings, and time (Elder, 1998). This diversity is a defining feature of

relational developmental systems theory (Overton, 2013a). Civically engaged actions and

ideology may be the result of an individual's experience with a polity or community. This

experience is shaped by group membership (e.g., race, class, gender), physical location (e.g.,

rural/urban, national affiliation), and historical context. The central role of diversity within the

developmental system influences another defining feature of the developmental system: the

potential for plasticity.

Plasticity refers to the potential for systematic changes in individual ←→ context

relations (Lerner, 1984) that can arise out of experience. The potential for plasticity exists within

the relational developmental system because of temporality, which allows for emergent changes

throughout ontogeny, as a consequence of differences in variables present in development at

different points in time and /or in the timing of relations of continually present variables (Lerner,

1984). It is important to capitalize on the potential plasticity of young people's developmental

trajectories, by promoting efforts aimed at supporting and facilitating mutually beneficial

individual ⬅ ➡ context relations. Such supportive efforts may facilitate the processes through

which civic engagement arises, both at the level of the individual and at the level of the context.

Intervening at one level system will necessarily influence all other levels of the relational

developmental system.

When these mutually influential individual ⬅➡ context relations are also mutually

beneficial, they are termed adaptive developmental regulations (Brandstädter, 1998). Adaptive

developmental regulations involve an individual acting to support the context that is supporting

the individual. In other words, adaptive developmental regulations exist when a young person's

context is "supportive, nurturing, and growth promoting," and an individual reciprocates positive

actions that support the environment (Lerner, 2004, p. 44). When young people are engaged in

such positive relations, then they may be said to be thriving (Lerner, 2004). The potential for

positive development and thriving as a result of adaptive developmental regulations may be

constrained or facilitated as the result of relations between levels of the ecology which, as noted,

may vary across time, within contexts, and within time across contexts (Lerner, 2002).

Civic engagement is one instance of an adaptive developmental regulation that can lead

to thriving. As young people develop, they will be prompted to influence individuals and

institutions within their communities. This experience may lead them to engage productively

with their social and civic worlds in order to promote positive outcomes for themselves and for

civil society. These positive and productive relations are part of the Positive Youth

Development (PYD) perspective, a strength-based model of youth development.

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) Perspective

The Positive Youth Development (PYD) perspective, when framed within relational

developmental systems ideas, maintains that all youth have strengths (e.g., the potential for

plasticity), and all contexts have assets that can promote thriving when linked to youth strengths

(Lerner, 2004). PYD develops when the mutually influential relations between the person and

his or her context benefit both components of these relations (as in adaptive developmental

regulations; Brandstädter, 1998). For example, research has shown that adaptive developmental

regulations lead to indicators of thriving such as the Five Cs of PYD – Caring, Confidence,

Competence, Connection and Character (J. Lerner et al., 2012). In turn, this Five Cs model

specifies that when the Five Cs develop, young people are likely to show evidence of a 6th C –

Contribution. Young people whose developmental pathways are marked by PYD actively and

positively engage in their context and contribute to themselves, their families, and to civil society

(Lerner, 2004).

Civic engagement occurs when young people combine their individual strengths with

community assets to contribute to civil society. They develop a cognitive and emotional

commitment to contribute to their social world and, as well, they demonstrate behaviors (actions)

consistent with such ideological commitment (Lerner, 2004). One conception that integrates the

ideological and action-oriented aspects of civic engagement is Active and Engaged Citizenship.

Active and Engaged Citizenship

Within the PYD perspective advanced in the work of Lerner and Lerner (J. Lerner et al.,

2012; Lerner, Lerner & Benson, 2011), Active and Engaged Citizenship (AEC) may be framed

as a desired outcome of adaptive person ←→context relations. AEC is a conceptualization of

civic engagement that involves the integration of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral features of

intraindividual development. This integrated construct is derived, in part, from Erikson's Ego

Identity theory (e.g., Zaff et al., 2010a) and from action theories of developmental regulations

(e.g., Baltes, Linderberger, & Staudinger, 2006). From these two perspectives, which understand

behavior as derived from the dynamic interplay between the individual and his or her context, we

then may understand that civic engagement is derived from connection to community,

commitment to improving that community, and helping ones community (Zaff et al., 2010b).

These actions which support the community will result in a reciprocal benefit to the individual

(Lerner, 2004).

Zaff and colleagues tested a theoretically derived model of AEC and found evidence for a

proposed four-factor structure of civic action, civic skills, neighborhood social connection, and

civic duty. These four factors represent cognitive (e.g., civic duty, civic skills), social emotional

(e.g., social connection), and behavioral (e.g., civic action) aspects of civic engagement (Zaff et

al., 2010b).   In addition, they found that there is stability in AEC over time and between the

sexes. In other words, those who are actively engaged stay engaged, and those who are not

engaged remain disengaged. An important next step in understanding AEC, both empirically

and theoretically, is to better understand the process through which an individual becomes

integratively and actively engaged with his or her community.

Civic Identity

Civic identity represents a unique facet of civic engagement. Civic identity is often

referred to in the literature on civic engagement (Sherrod & Lauckhardt, 2009; Sherrod,

Tourney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010; Youniss & Yates, 1999), but is defined in a variety of ways.

For instance, civic identity is at times conflated with civic engagement, or it may be used interchangeably with citizenship, which implies group membership or connection to a polity or a state (Flanagan, 2004).

It is most appropriate to describe civic identity as related to (self-defined) community, especially when doing developmental research, because not all people participate in affairs of state. Some individuals may be restricted from political participation as a result of age or legal status. However, this restriction does not preclude the ability of youth to contribute to their social world, or, more broadly, to civil society.

Civic identity may be considered the "link across time, and the factor that differentiates adults in their degree of civic engagement" (Youniss, McLellen, & Yates, 1997). When conceptualized in this way, civic identity may represent the process through which individuals reach various forms and levels of civic engagement. For the purpose of this study, I refer to civic identity as "a sense of who one is in relation to society" (Youniss & Yates, 1999, p. 272). This description is distinct from political identity and moral identity in that it has to do with an individual's role in the community rather than the role in governmental affairs or a moral code. Nevertheless, civic identity is related to other constructs, such as school engagement (Li, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010), social trust (Flanagan, 2003), and empathy (Eisenberg, 2007), which have been found to positively correlate with subsequent civic engagement. Therefore, it is important to study civic identity, or sense of self within a community (organization, school, group, state), as a unique facet of civic engagement in order to better understand the intraindividual processes that may lead to civic engagement.

However, this research on developmental processes needs an adequate measure of civic identity. To date, none exist. Johnson (2011) has hypothesized that a theoretically meaningful

measure could be derived if items could be found that reflect three key components of her

tripartite conceptualization of civic identity. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to

attempt to verify empirically Johnson's (2011) conception within an RDST approach to PYD.

Using data from Wave 1 of the Assessment of Character in the Trades (ACT) Project (Johnson et

al., 2013), I assessed whether there was evidence for a tripartite conception of civic identity in

this data set. In addition, in order to look at the potential predictive validity of these factors, I

draw from two other constructs in this data set: political awareness and valuing diversity. These

constructs are important and relevant to a measure of civic identity because they reflect cognitive

(political awareness) and social emotional (diversity attitudes) components of the model of AEC.

The method associated with these analyses is discussed next.

A Tripartite Conceptualization of Civic Identity

Johnson (2011) has described civic identity as comprised of three elements: *exploration*,

resolution, and *centrality*. These three components are derived from developmental and social

psychological perspectives of identity. *Exploration*, includes thought-based and behaviorally-

based conceptions of self in community. *Resolution* represents a commitment toward personal

belief about self in community (as opposed to a commitment to action as exemplified in the AEC

model). *Centrality* represents the significance and importance of such a civic identity to one's

sense of self. Before civic identity can be tested as a developmental process, the proposed

elements must be established as relevant, appropriate, and distinct components of civic identity.

The present research tested this proposed three factor structure of the measure of civic

identity (Johnson, 2011). Although the present study used cross-sectional data and therefore did

not evaluate developmental processes, I identified whether there was evidence that these three

hypothesized components provided a clear structure for civic identity. In order to address this issue, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis for the proposed measure of civic identity.

I first tested a specified three-factor model of civic engagement. I then tested variations of this model by specifying one- and two-factor models. These tests were conducted to determine if the three-factor model provided better fit (i.e., a more accurate representation of the indicators of civic identity) than the alternative models. Finally, in order to establish that the civic identity subscales were indeed related to civic engagement, I tested for construct validity using measures of diversity attitudes and political awareness.

Method

Data were derived from the Assessment of Character and Trades (ACT Project), a three-year longitudinal study assessing character, citizenship, and vocational development in a sample of young men attending trade schools, community college, and a regional branch of a four year university in the greater Philadelphia area (Johnson et al., 2013). Participants were quantitatively surveyed and qualitatively interviewed to assess a variety of information about individual and contextual features of their development. Items were included to assess academics, social relationships, character related attributes, and self-description. Participants will be followed over three waves using a cohort-sequential longitudinal design (Baltes, Reese, & Nesselroade, 1977; Collins, 2006; Nesselroade & Baltes, 1974). The present study used data from the first wave of data collection.

Sample

The sample consisted of 374 male participants (M_{age} = 20.50 years, SD = 1.76). Participants, who self-identified race, were 75.4% White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American, not Hispanic; 10.6% Black, African American, or of African Descent; 3.6% Asian, or

Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, or other East Asian; 2.4% Hispanic or Latino; .6%

Pacific Islander; 1.2% Arab or Middle Eastern; 1.8% South Asian or Indian; .3% Other; 4.0%

Multi-Ethnic or Multi-Racial. Forty-five participants did not identify their race or ethnicity.

Participants were recruited from four schools in the greater Philadelphia area. These four

post-secondary schools represent unique educational opportunities. School 1 is a trade school in

central Pennsylvania and 9.6% of the sample was drawn from this site. There are approximately

300 students attending this school, and 15 Associates in Science and Associates in Applied

Science degrees offered. Most students commute to attend classes. School 2 is a community

college in the greater Philadelphia area, from which 33.2% of the sample was drawn. There are

approximately 10,000 students attending this school, and 58 Associates in Science, Associates in

Arts, and Certificate programs offered. Most students commute to attend classes. School 3 is a

branch of a large state university, located in greater Philadelphia and 15% of the sample was

recruited from this site. This school offers 15 Associates degrees and Bachelor degrees. Most

students commute to attend class. About 42.2% of our sample came from School 4. This site is

a trade school in the greater Philadelphia area. There are five areas of study, and students may

earn Associate degrees or Certificates. One unique aspect of this school is that all students

attend on full scholarship and live at the school for the duration of their studies. In addition, all

students at this school are exposed to character and citizenship training.

Measures

Civic Identity. Civic Identity was assessed using three subscales developed by Johnson

(2011) to test her conception of this construct: *exploration*, *resolution*, and *centrality*. The

measure is comprised of 9 items in the current study, with three items per subscale. Items were

scored on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree, through 5 = strongly agree, such that higher scores

reflected greater levels of exploration, resolution, and centrality. Table 1 presents item stems and descriptive information.

Diversity Attitudes. Five items measuring diversity attitudes were drawn from the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (Moely et al., 2002). A sample item includes: "I have a strong interest in working with people from diverse backgrounds." Items were scored on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree, through 5 = strongly agree.

Political Awareness. An understanding of community and polity issues is also related to establishing a sense of self-in-community. Civic awareness was assessed by the political awareness subscale of the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (Moely et al., 2002). A sample item reads: "I understand the issues facing this nation." Items were scored on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree, through 5 = strongly agree.

Procedure

Surveys were electronically administered to one group of participants who were at the beginning of their first year and another group that was in the middle of their second year of post-secondary education. Both cohorts will be followed longitudinally over the next three years. Both cohorts represent a Time 1 test, and so were combined for the present study. Participants were recruited with the support of the post-secondary schools. About half the sample completed the survey during designated time in a computer lab, and the other half completed the survey online or on paper at their own convenience.

The survey took an estimated 45 minutes to complete and included items about academics, social relationships, character related attributes, and self-description. In addition, a subsample was selected to participate in qualitative interviews about their experience at school and the pathways that led them to their current situation. Participants will complete wave two

approximately one year later, and wave three two years later. Full details about the method may

be found in Johnson et al., (2013).

Results

In order to validate the measure of civic identity, confirmatory factor analyses were

conducted. First the hypothesized three factor model was specified. Then, to ensure that this

three factor model was indeed the best fit to the data, alternate models with one factor and two

factors were tested. After scale validation, construct validation of the scale was conducted with

the diversity attitudes and political awareness subscales. This analysis was done in order to test

for predictive validity of the measure of civic identity.

Exploratory Data Analysis

Prior to testing the proposed three-factor structure of civic identity, comprised of

exploration, resolution, and centrality, I examined descriptive statistics on the measures of civic

identity, diversity attitudes, and political awareness. In this sample, about 8% of data were

missing. Data from all measures were considered normally distributed upon examination of

histograms, means, standard deviations, skew, and kurtosis for all items (see Table 1 and Table

2). No univariate outliers were detected. Because of adequate sample size ($N = 374$),

continuous indicators, low percentage of missing data, and normal distribution, maximum

likelihood (FIML) methods were used in these analyses.

Item correlations were also examined across subscales and within subscales and are

displayed in Table 3. Items had better correlations with their subscales than with other items in

the full measure (e.g., exploration items had slightly, better correlations with each other than

with other items in the full measure). These results provide preliminary evidence supporting the

relationship of items to the three subscales.

Testing the Hypothesized Model

The hypothesized structural model of civic identity is displayed in Figure 1. As shown in this figure, the model of civic identity is comprised of three factors: exploration, resolution, and centrality; and involves nine manifest indicators. Each indicator was constrained to load onto one factor. Three items loaded onto the *exploration* factor; three items loaded onto *resolution*; and three items loaded onto c*entrality*. The model was over-identified with 36 degrees of freedom. The variance of each factor was constrained to 1.00. The measurement model contained no double-loading indicators and all measurement errors were presumed to be uncorrelated. The three latent factors of exploration, resolution, and centrality were permitted to correlate, based on theoretical evidence about identity development and civic engagement, in addition to evidence from the exploratory factor analyses, tested on a separate sample, about a potential factor structure (Johnson, 2011).

The raw data were analyzed using MPLUS (Version 7). Goodness of fit was evaluated using recommendations from Brown (2006) and involved multiple fit indices. Absolute fit was tested by checking for significance of χ^2 and for the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), with values close to 0 indicating better fit. Parsimony–corrected fit was assessed by evaluating the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and its confidence interval. Values close to 0 indicate better model fit. Comparative fit, that is, the evaluation of the specified solution in comparison to the null model, was tested with the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), with values closer to 1 indicating better model fit.

Taken together, these fit indices provide a reliable evaluation of the model solution. The hypothesized three factor model displayed good fit: $\chi^2(24) = 42.05$, $p = 0.013$; RMSEA = 0.047 (90% CI: .020 to .070); CFI = 0.990; TLI = 0.985; SRMR = 0.024. All indicators had strong

standardized factor loadings of between 0.710 and 0.886. The subscales had a relatively strong

relationship, such that exploration, resolution, and centrality each represented unique, but related,

constructs. The latent correlations for these subscales may be found in Table 4. Standardized

residuals were inspected for values greater than 2 and modification indices indicated no localized

points of ill fit in the solution (e.g., the largest standardized residual = 0.50; the largest

modification index = 7.02). The standardized parameter estimates from this solution are

presented in Figure 1.

Testing Differentiated Models

Given the relatively strong pairwise correlations between the factors, different models

were specified. Complete model fit statistics for these models may be found in Table 5. The

first alternate model tested whether exploration and resolution were undifferentiated (i.e.,

correlated perfectly). This model showed a significant decrease in fit as compared with the three

factor model: $\Delta\chi^2$ (2) = 112.57, p < .001. The second alternate model tested exploration as

Factor 1 and resolution and centrality together as an undifferentiated Factor 2. Again, the fit of

this two-factor model was not as good as the three-factor model: $\Delta\chi^2$ (2) = 239.75, p < .001. The

third alternate model that I tested constrained all nine indicators to load onto one global civic

identity factor. This model also did not fit as well as the three factor model: $\Delta\chi^2$ (3) = 320.37, p

< .001. The alternative model fit statistics indicated adequate fit to the data; however the

likelihood ratio tests indicated that the alternative models provide significantly worse model fit

than the three-factor model.

Taken together, results of the tests of the alternative models indicated that, despite the

adequacy of the alternative models, the best fitting model of civic identity is comprised of three

factors: exploration, resolution, and centrality, with three indicators loading onto each factor. In

addition, as argued by Johnson (2011), from a developmental perspective, this model makes the most theoretical sense.

Tests of Construct Validity

As previously described, Active and Engaged Citizenship is an integration of social-emotional, cognitive, and behavioral constructs. If civic identity may reflect the process through which one becomes an active and engaged citizen, then the components of civic identity should relate to components of AEC. Such tests of construct validity could further validate the scale for future use in understanding human development from the RDST perspective.

Within the ACT Project two constructs reflect aspects of AEC. Diversity attitudes are a social emotional component of AEC, and political awareness would be the cognitive component of AEC. A new CFA model was specified which included diversity attitudes, political awareness, exploration, resolution, and centrality. Six items were constrained to load on the political awareness factor, five items on the diversity attitudes factor, three items onto exploration, three items onto resolution, and three items onto centrality. The model was over-identified with 160 degrees of freedom. This measurement model contained no double loading indicators and all measurement errors were assumed to be uncorrelated. Based on the theoretical evidence previously described, these two factors were permitted to be correlated with each other and with the three subscales of civic identity. Table 2 presents descriptive information.

Under this specification, the model did not display good fit: $\chi^2(160)= 603.61$, p= 0.000; RMSEA = 0.090 (90% CI: .082 to .097); CFI = 0.862; TLI = 0.836; SRMR=0.097. Factor loadings for the civic identity subscales were still relatively strong. The factor loadings for the political awareness scale were not as strong as for the civic identity subscales, but were good and ranged from 0.41 to 0.77. The factor loadings for the diversity attitudes scale were not

consistent. Two items had strong loadings: 0.78 and 0.81, and three items had relatively weak

loadings: 0.37, 0.37, and 0.23. In addition, the modification indices suggested two changes to

model specification to improve model fit. The first suggested change was that the two items

which indicate knowledge of current events in a distal community (nation and world) should

correlate. The second change suggested correlation between the two items that had to do with

knowledge of local issues.

Given the weak loadings of some indicators of diversity attitudes and the suggested

correlations in the modification indices, a new model was specified. This new model divided

diversity attitudes into two factors: valuing diversity, and diversity discomfort.   In addition,

correlations were set between items indicating knowledge of distal political issues and

knowledge of local political issues.

The respecified model fit the data very well: $\chi^2(153)= 33.15$, p= 0.000; RMSEA = 0.058

(90% CI: .050 to .067); CFI = 0.944; TLI = 0.930; SRMR=0.062. Factor loadings remained

strong for the three subscales of the civic identity measure. Factor loadings improved for

political awareness scale: 0.46 to 0.76. The divided diversity attitudes subscale also showed

improved factor loadings. Valuing diversity had loadings of 0.79 and 0.82 and diversity

discomfort had loadings of 0.75, 0.75, and 0.46. Table 6 presents the factor loadings for all

indicators in the final model.

The correlations in this model provide further information about the relationship between

the civic identity factors, diversity attitudes, and political awareness. Political awareness was

moderately correlated with exploration and resolution, and had a somewhat lower correlation

with centrality. Valuing diversity also had moderate correlations with exploration, resolution,

and centrality. Diversity discomfort was only significantly correlated with valuing diversity.

Diversity discomfort was not significantly correlated with exploration, resolution, centrality or political awareness. Subscale correlations are presented in Table 4 and item loadings for the full model are presented in Table 6.

Discussion

The study of civic engagement continues to contribute important information about positive development (Lerner, 2004; Sherrod & Lauckhardt, 2009; Sherrod et al., 2010; Zaff et al., 2010a, 2010b). Civic engagement has been conceptualized as involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement, exemplified by the model of Active and Engaged Citizenship (AEC; Zaff et al., 2010a). Civic identity development may involve the process through which an individual comes to be civically engaged and subsequently reach an ideal form of civic engagement. The purpose of this study was to validate a measure of civic identity. The conceptualization of civic identity in the present study is derived from Johnson (2011) and is comprised of three factors: *exploration, resolution,* and *centrality*. I tested this proposed three factor structure of civic identity, and anticipated that this factor structure would exist in the population of young men attending post-secondary school in greater Philadelphia.

Confirmatory factor analyses provided strong support for the three factor solution, and for the theoretical validity of the measure within AEC and PYD models. The first CFA conducted constrained civic identity indicators onto three factors. The results were strong indicator loadings onto each factor, and low residuals. In addition the correlations between the subscales indicated that they are related, but distinct constructs. Absolute fit, parsimony tests, and comparative fit indices all provided support for a best fit solution that was comprised of the three factors of civic identity: *exploration*, *resolution*, and *centrality*.

Next, in order to test for construct validity, the civic identity factors were correlated with diversity attitudes and political awareness. As previously described, diversity attitudes represent social emotional engagement and political awareness represents cognitive engagement within the model of AEC. The CFA test of these latent relationships showed that diversity attitudes should be differentiated into two factors: valuing diversity, and diversity discomfort.

Once this differentiation was made, the final CFA model showed that the civic identity subscales were moderately correlated with valuing diversity, and not correlated with diversity discomfort. This social-emotional engagement may suggest that the process through which one comes to be positively and productively engaged with civil society is related to community connection and a desire to engage with diverse individuals.   The civic identity subscales were also moderately correlated with political awareness. This finding suggests that the subscales are connected with the cognitive component of civic engagement, civic knowledge (Zaff et al., 2010a).

These findings show that the measure of civic identity is indeed an appropriate instrument for assessing civic identity, and that civic identity is comprised of exploration, resolution, and centrality.   In addition, given the results from the tests of construct validity, the Measure of civic identity is appropriate for use within the Active and Engaged Citizenship model derived from a relational developmental systems approach (Zaff et al., 2010a).

Limitations and Future Research

The findings in the present study should be interpreted in light of several limitations involving generalizability. First, this study was cross sectional and does not assess development. Therefore, we only have limited information about the structure of civic identity. The factor

structure might change with multiple points of measurement and, therefore, should not be generalized across ontogenetic points.

The second generalizability limitation involves the sample. The model was tested on an all-male, largely White sample from one geographic region (greater Philadelphia). Therefore these findings may not apply to other samples, such as those drawn from other demographic and geographic populations, or even in more heterogeneous samples from the same geographic area. The measure of civic identity should be tested on different populations in order to further test the validity of the instrument, and also to learn about how civic identity may be manifested in different populations.

In addition, different measurement of civic identity may provide different information about the structure of civic identity. For example, observations or interviews may show that the meaning of civic identity is different when assessed through participant interviews, or other reports.

Nevertheless the validation of this measure provides evidence about the components of civic identity and their relationship to civic engagement. These analyses may lay the groundwork for testing the development of civic identity longitudinally. Future research should therefore test the links between civic identity and AEC as it develops within individuals across the adolescent period, as well as examine between-person differences in these relations across time.

Conclusions

The longitudinal study of civic identity might elucidate more information about how to induce positive and productive engagement across the life span. Perhaps in some individuals, civic identity is a sequential process and they will progress through the phases of exploration,

resolution, and centrality respectively. There may be others whose civic identity will be stable

and most strongly related to resolution. Still others may not at all identify with community

connection and involvement.   It may be the case that differing levels of civic identity and civic

engagement are present in the same individual but are manifest in different ways, depending on

context. Alternatively an individual may exhibit the same levels of engagement across contexts.

All of these possible developmental scenarios are worthy targets of future research.

      In addition, according to the orthogenetic principle, development occurs from a state of

globality, to differentiation, to hierarchic integration (Werner, 1957). As applied to civic

identity, perhaps one may experience a sense of self in community in a unidimensional manner.

To have a civic identity may mean that one knows and relates to one's immediate neighbors. As

an individual develops and is exposed to multiple contexts, and also with the increased ability to

engage in different tasks, perception of sense of self in community may become differentiated.

Therefore, there would be different ways of establishing a sense of self in community, in

addition to different meanings of sense of self in community. Consistent with the orthogenetic

principle, the development of civic identity may begin as global, that is it may be represented by

one factor. Then if differentiated, there would be different ways that an individual would make

sense of their community – through exploration, resolution, and centrality—or some combination

of these three. Finally, civic identity may become hierarchically integrated with the sequential

progressing of exploration, resolution and then centrality as an individual establishes a sense of

self in one or more communities.

      In sum, the study of civic engagement continues to contribute important information

about positive development (Lerner, 2004; Sherrod et al., 2010; Zaff et al., 2010b). The present

focus on emotions, cognitions, and behaviors that comprise civic engagement must be expanded

to focus on the process through which individuals come to manifest such facets of civic

engagement. In addition, the longitudinal study of civic identity development should be a focus

of the integrated study of civic engagement in order to better understand intraindividual

psychological processes which may lead to civic engagement.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Other Descriptive Information for Civic Identity Items

	N	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
1. I have gone through a period of questioning what it means to be to be an active citizen of my community	344	3.21	1.04	-.25	-.41
2. I have reflected on how I want to act or behave in my role as a citizen of my community	344	3.47	.96	-.35	-.13
3. I have spent time trying to figure out what it means to me to be an involved member of my community.	344	3.19	.99	-.30	-.34
4. I have decided what is best for me in terms of being involved in my community.	345	3.31	.93	-.15	-.27
5. I am sure about how I want to be involved in my community	345	3.28	.95	-.16	-.28
6. I have made up my mind about what my responsibilities are as a member of my community.	345	3.30	.89	-.25	-.11
7. My involvement in my community is an important part of my identity.	344	3.14	1.02	-.22	-.41
8. Being an active citizen of my community is a critical part of my sense of self.	345	3.13	1.03	-.26	-.39
9. When I think about who I am as a person, being an involved member of my community is an important part.	344	3.19	1.01	-.27	-.32

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Other Descriptive Information for Diversity Attitudes and Political Awareness Items

		N	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Diversity Attitudes	1. I have a strong interest in working with people from diverse backgrounds.	343	3.73	.90	-.33	-.19
	2. I want to gain an understanding of the lives of people from different backgrounds.	343	3.76	.87	-.59	.41
	3. I find it difficult to relate to people from a different race or culture.	343	3.65	1.04	-.45	-.48
	4. It is hard for a group to function effectively when the people involved come from very diverse backgrounds.	341	3.45	1.03	-.20	-.61
	5. I prefer the company of people who are very similar to me in background and expressions.	343	2.78	1.00	.34	-.11
Political Awareness	1. I am aware of current events.	342	3.82	.87	-.87	1.02
	2. I understand the issues facing this nation.	343	3.85	.85	-.83	1.15
	3. I am knowledgeable of the issues facing the world.	345	3.77	.82	-.60	.70
	4. I am aware of events happening in my local community.	344	3.58	.95	-.67	.28
	5. I plan to be involved in the political process.	344	3.15	1.18	-.22	-.78
	6. I understand the issues facing my local community.	344	3.46	.95	-.49	.07

Note: Diversity attitudes and political awareness items were drawn from the Civic Attitudes and Skills Questionnaire (Moely et al., 2002).

Table 3

Correlations between Civic Identity Items

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Exploration	1. I have gone through a period of questioning what it means to be to be an active citizen of my community.	—								
	2. I have reflected on how I want to act or behave in my role as a citizen of my community.	.57*	—							
	3. I have spent time trying to figure out what it means to me to be an involved member of my community.	.62*	.62*	—						
Resolution	4. I have decided what is best for me in terms of being involved in my community.	.45*	.49*	.60*	—					
	5. I am sure about how I want to be involved in my community.	.43	.48*	.53*	.68*	—				
	6. I have made up my mind about what my responsibilities are as a member of my community.	.34*	.37	.41*	.64*	.54*	—			
Centrality	7. My involvement in my community is an important part of my identity.	.42*	.46*	.54	.49*	.46*	.46*	—		
	8. Being an active citizen of my community is a critical part of my sense of self.	.50*	.49*	.57*	.44	.46*	.42*	.74*	—	
	9. When I think about who I am as a person, being an involved member of my community is an important part	.46	.51*	.58*	.46*	.44*	.45*	.73*	.78*	—

*p<.01

Table 4

Latent Correlations for Civic Identity Subscales, Valuing Diversity, Diversity Discomfort, and Political Awareness

	Exp	Res	Cen	ValDiv	DivDisc	PolAw
Exp	--	0.756^*	0.753^*	0.353^*	-0.112	0.579^*
Res		--	0.631^*	0.325^*	-0.085	0.550^*
Cen			--	0.310^*	-0.152	0.396^*
ValDiv				--	0.393^*	0.478^*
DivDisc					--	0.096
PolAw						--

Note: Exp: exploration; Res = resolution; Cen = centrality; ValDiv = valuing diversity; DivDisc= diversity discomfort PolAw = political awareness
**p<.001

Table 5

Fit Statistics for Differentiated Models

	χ^2	df	*p*	RMSEA	90% CI	CFI	TLI	SRMR
F1: Exp F2: Res F3: Cen	1860.90	36	0.000	0.047	0.02 to 0.07	0.990	0.985	0.024
F1: ExpRes F2: Cen	155.07	26	0.000	0.12	0.10 to 0.14	0.929	0.902	0.049
F1: Exp F2: ResCen	282.25	26	0.000	0.169	0.15 to 0.19	0.860	0.806	0.049
F1:ExpResCen	362.87	27	0.000	0.190	0.17 to 0.21	0.816	0.755	0.075
F1: Exp F2: Res F3: Cen F4: DivAtt F5: PolAw	603.61	160	0.000	0.090	0.08 to 0.097	0.862	0.836	0.097
F1: Exp F2: Res F3: Cen F4: ValDiv F5: DivDisc F6: PolAw	333.147	153	0.0000	0.058	0.050 to 0.067	0.944	0.930	0.062

Note: Exp = Exploration; Res = Resolution; Cen = Centrality; DivAtt = Diversity Attitudes; ValDiv = Valuing Diversity; DivDisc = Diversity Discomfort; PolAw = Political Awareness; F = Factor

Table 6

Factor Loadings for Final Model

	Exp	Res	Cen	ValDiv	DivDisc	PolAw
Exp01	0.725					
Exp02	0.748					
Exp03	0.850					
Res04		0.889				
Res05		0.775				
Res06		0.708				
Cen07			0.838			
Cen08			0.887			
Cen09			0.877			
DivAtt01				0.786		
DivAtt02				0.820		
DivAtt03					0.813	
DivAtt04					0.815	
DivAtt05					0.431	
PolAw01						0.550
PolAw02						0.570
PolAw03						0.660
PolAw04						0.661
PolAw05						0.459
PolAw06						0.759

Note: Exp = exploration; Res = resolution; Cen = centrality; DivAtt = diversity attitudes; PolAw = political awareness

Figure 1. Parameter estimates for a three factor structure of civic identity: exploration, resolution, and centrality