

Social Justice Attitudes and Their Demographic Correlates Among a Nationally Representative Sample of U.S. Adolescents

Justina Kamiel Grayman · Erin B. Godfrey

Published online: 17 October 2013
© Springer Science+Business Media New York 2013

Abstract Compared to extant studies, this study uses more rigorous analyses to describe social justice attitudes and their correlates among a nationally representative sample of 2,811 U.S. ninth-graders. Females and adolescents with more educated mothers tended to express more support for social justice. Strikingly, about 90 % of adolescents believed that equal opportunity to obtain a good education exists in the U.S. Adolescents were also more likely to support abstract social justice principles rather than solutions that promote social justice: about 80 % agreed that all races and genders should have equal opportunities, but only 55 % reported that government should be responsible for individuals' economic needs. Differences between U.S. adolescents' and adults' attitudes are noted, and implications for future research are presented.

Keywords Social justice attitudes · Political attitudes · Public opinion · Adolescents · Principle-implementation gap

Introduction

In all democracies, governments' decisions regarding redressing inequality are contingent upon the public's social justice attitudes—or their attitudes toward an equal society. While many studies have reported on adults' social justice attitudes, only one study has examined the social justice attitudes of a representative sample of U.S. adolescents (Baldi, Perie, Skidmore, Greeneberg, Hahn, 2001). This is striking given that adolescence is a period in which youth begin to actively negotiate their political identities and become increasingly able to grapple with complex

J. K. Grayman (✉) · E. B. Godfrey
Department of Applied Psychology, New York University, 246 Greene St., 8th Floor,
New York, NY 10003, USA
e-mail: justina.grayman@nyu.edu

political ideas related to social justice (Berman, 1997; Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998). Moreover, the attitudes developed toward social justice in youth are likely to inform attitudes in adulthood (see Krosnick & Alwin, 1989; Miller & Sears, 1986 on the impact of adolescent political attitudes). More research is needed not only to explore social justice attitudes among U.S. adolescents but also to examine variation by demographic groups: these groups often have shared cultural and societal experiences that may lead to systematic differences among groups' attitudes.

The purpose of this study is to create psychometrically sound measures of social justice attitudes and describe these attitudes and their demographic correlates among a nationally representative sample of U.S. adolescents. As a descriptive study, this study hopes to inspire further academic research on contexts that influence social justice attitudes throughout development and to inform practitioners seeking to understand the terrain of diverse adolescents' social justice attitudes.

What Are Social Justice Attitudes and Why Do They Matter?

Social justice attitudes are defined as beliefs and judgments about an equal society—a state of society where all groups have full and equal participation, resources are equitably distributed, and everyone is physically and psychologically safe (Bell, 1997; Broido & Reason, 2005; Reason & Davis, 2005). Social justice attitudes are similar to but not synonymous with political attitudes. Whereas a political attitude is an attitude about a political situation, entity, or social issue, social justice attitudes are particular types of political attitudes that focus *specifically* on beliefs about an equal society. Social justice attitudes include general attitudes toward an equal society, attitudes about appropriate interventions regarding social justice, and attitudes regarding particular social injustices, like racism or sexism (Broido, 2000; Chizhik & Chizhik, 2002). Social justice attitudes are significant primarily because of their relationship with political behavior. According to social psychological work documenting the relationship between attitudes and behavior (Glasman & Albarracín, 2006; Bohner & Dickel, 2011), social justice attitudes may relate to individuals' propensity to engage in political resistance and their likelihood of supporting various policies, political systems, and economic systems.

What Do U.S. Adolescents Believe About Social Justice?

Understanding the national adolescent population's social justice attitudes can provide one avenue for understanding individuals' changing political preferences and behaviors. This study focuses specifically on ninth-graders' social justice attitudes. Ninth-grade is a particularly opportune time to assess adolescents' social justice attitudes because this grade is characterized by transitions that are representative of adolescence. The transition to high school, which involves introduction to new curriculum and interaction with more politically experienced peers, may further stimulate adolescents' exploration of their social justice attitudes.

Since little research has explored adolescents' social justice attitudes, we begin by examining research on social justice attitudes among U.S. adults. Americans tend to endorse meritocratic views (Ghosh, 2008; Shepelak, 1989). For example, 62 % of

18–25 year olds in 2000 believed that Blacks should overcome prejudice and work their way up without any special favors (Olander, Kirby, & Schmitt, 2005). Kluegel and Smith (1986) even found that only 10 % of Americans in 1980 believed that all of the following groups—the poor, blacks, and women—had less opportunity than others. Americans’ belief in meritocracy and perception of equal opportunity are so characteristic of Americans that they have been deemed the “dominant American ideology” (Kluegel & Smith, 1986). American adults are also notable for their minimal support for direct redistributive policies to achieve equality, for example by raising taxes to redistribute wealth (Jacobs & Skocpol, 2005; McCall & Kenworthy, 2009). Americans are much more likely to support antipoverty initiatives that intend to equalize opportunity such as job training, antidiscrimination laws, or increased education spending (Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Kluegel, Mason, & Wegener, 1995; McCall & Kenworthy, 2009).

While several studies have reported adults’ social justice attitudes, only one study—which utilized the 1999 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study data—has examined U.S. adolescents’ social justice attitudes (Baldi et al., 2001). In this study, using a nationally representative sample of 2,811 U.S. ninth-graders and analyzing single items, researchers found a large degree of support for women’s rights and moderate support for government’s responsibility to provide basic services and equal opportunities, for example, by ensuring equal political opportunities for men and women (91.6 %), providing basic health care for all (87.6 %), and reducing differences in income and wealth (63.5 %).

Baldi et al.’s (2001) study contributed greatly to the literature by being the first to document the social justice attitudes of a representative sample of U.S. adolescents. This study builds upon Baldi et al.’s (2001) study by increasing the reliability and construct validity of the examined social justice attitudes. This study does so, first, by examining scales of social justice attitudes instead of individual items. Scales typically have less measurement error than individual items (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), it is possible to estimate their reliability, and it is easier for them to represent complex theoretical concepts (McIver & Carmines, 1981). We also build upon Baldi et al. (2001) by increasing the construct validity of social justice attitudes. We explore a more diverse array of social justice attitudes (namely, support for racial equal opportunity and perceptions of equal opportunity) that were available in the dataset used in the Baldi et al. (2001) study. Thus, we build upon Baldi et al.’s (2001) study by increasing the rigor with which the IEA Civic Education dataset is examined—particularly by using more rigorous psychometric techniques to describe a more diverse array of social justice attitudes. Therefore, one of the primary goals of this study is to create multiple psychometrically sound measures of social justice attitudes and to describe their endorsement among the national sample of ninth-graders in the IEA Civic Education dataset.

How Do Adolescents’ Social Justice Attitudes Vary by Demographic Characteristics?

A rich description of U.S. adolescents’ social justice attitudes should also explore systematic differences across demographic groups. Adolescents in different

demographic groups are likely to form differing social justice attitudes for a number of reasons. First, different demographic groups often have distinct cultures, norms, and socialization practices that impact individuals' attitudes. For example, females are socialized into roles that are more empathic than males (Eagly, 1987) and therefore might adopt political attitudes based on this empathy. Second, demographic groups are treated differently by other groups and by societal institutions (e.g., see Skiba, Micheal, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, and Bachman, 2008 on the disproportionate amount of disciplinary action taken against racial minorities and males in schools). This treatment can impact how fair adolescents perceive society to be generally (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007). Lastly, the material interests of demographic groups often differ. For example, those in the lower classes have greater material interests in supporting policies for helping the poor (McCall & Manza, 2011). Taken together, these various experiences of demographic groups can shape the daily contexts that adolescents are embedded in, and, thus, their perceptions of the world (see Bronfenbrenner, Morris, Damon, & Lerner, 2006).

Despite the potential importance of these demographic groups, only two studies to our knowledge have systematically examined how adolescents' social justice attitudes vary by demographic characteristics (Baldi et al., 2001; Flanagan & Tucker, 1999). Baldi et al. (2001) examined demographic differences within single items that tapped social justice attitudes. In a smaller scale study of 434 adolescents, Flanagan and Tucker (1999) examined demographic correlates to political attitudes among 7th to 12th graders. Other studies (Flanagan, Syvertsen, Gill, Gallay, and Cumsille, 2009; Flanagan, Cumsille et al., 2007) have reported findings involving the relationship of demographic characteristics to adolescents' social justice attitudes simply because one or two demographic characteristics served as covariates in their primary analyses. We review both types of studies below, but primarily draw from the two studies that explicitly set out to examine demographic characteristics.

In both of the primary studies we review, gender was a significant correlate to social justice attitudes. In these studies, females were generally more supportive of social justice. Girls were more likely to support women's rights (Baldi et al., 2001) and less likely to believe that Americans experience equal opportunity (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999; see similar findings in Flanagan, Cumsille et al., 2007). Girls were also less likely to believe that government support encouraged dependence (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999) and more likely to believe that the government should be responsible for guaranteeing various services (Baldi et al., 2001). Consistent with these findings, research suggests that females tend to have greater prosocial orientations and egalitarian political attitudes (Beutel & Marini, 1995; Hughes & Tuch, 2003; Johnson & Marini, 1998).

Race and ethnicity, country of origin, and maternal education have also been documented as potential correlates with social justice attitudes. In previous studies, Black and Asian adolescents, U.S. born adolescents, and those in higher socioeconomic status (SES) families have been more supportive of social justice. In one study, Black adolescents were less likely than Whites to endorse the belief that the government is equally responsive to all groups (Flanagan et al., 2009) and,

in another, Asian and Black adolescents were more likely to say the government should be responsible for economy-related issues (e.g., guaranteeing a job for everyone who wants one; Baldi et al., 2001). Baldi et al. (2001) found that immigrant adolescents supported women's rights less than U.S. born adolescents. Finally, results from Flanagan and Tucker (1999) suggest that adolescents with higher maternal education were less likely to believe that equal opportunity exists or that government support encourages dependence.

Although all of these studies suggest possible important demographic correlates to social justice attitudes, they were limited by a lack of statistical sophistication and generalizability. Flanagan, Cumsille et al. (2007), Flanagan et al. (2009), and Baldi et al. (2001) took promising steps toward understanding the relationships between demographic characteristics and social justice attitudes. However, because they either did not use multivariate analyses (or only controlled for a limited number of other demographic characteristics), the relationship between each demographic characteristic and each social justice attitude may have been confounded by other demographic characteristics. Second, Flanagan and Tucker's (1999) analyses were limited by a lack of generalizability to the broader adolescent population. Third, although Baldi et al.'s (2001) study was nationally representative, the study's analyses did not use statistical tests to establish the significance of the differences.

Lastly, only one study (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999) of adolescents' social justice attitudes has examined variation by contextual demographics. Different contexts—for example, different types of schools, geographic regions, and levels of urbanicity—relate to different cultures, norms, and socialization practices that may influence adolescents' social justice attitudes. With regards to school type, results from Flanagan and Tucker (1999) suggest that adolescents in higher SES schools had lower belief in equal opportunity and less belief that government support encourages dependence. Early research suggests upper class schools, compared to working class schools, orient their students toward much more realistic views (e.g., emphasizing conflict) of the political process (Litt, 1963). According to this reasoning, the class composition and the level of resources in schools may relate to adolescents' social justice attitudes. Thus, adolescents in private schools or in schools that have a high proportion of high SES students may exhibit different social justice attitudes than other adolescents.

Region and urbanicity may also be important correlates to adolescents' social justice attitudes. Research on adults has found that, compared to people in other regions, southerners have held more conservative attitudes toward women and have been less likely to support policies designed to reduce racial inequality (Twenge, 1997; Tuch & Martin, 1997). Compared to southerners, northerners tend to support women's rights more and tend to be more supportive of improving race conditions (Seltzer & Smith, 1985). With regards to urbanicity, research has documented differences between suburban and urban adults in political preferences (see Walks, 2004 for a review), where suburban residents are often more conservative. Despite the importance of examining variation in social justice attitudes by contextual demographics, only one study (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999 on school SES) has examined this variation among adolescents' social justice attitudes.

The Present Study

The present study addresses the limitations of the literature on adolescent social justice attitudes in four ways. First, it uses a nationally representative sample of U.S. ninth-graders. Second, it assesses and describes multiple psychometrically sound social justice attitudes, including perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity, support for gender equal opportunity, support for racial equal opportunity, and attitudes toward government's responsibility for individuals' economic needs. Third, it uses multivariate statistical analyses that more precisely assess the relationships of demographic characteristics to social justice attitudes. Finally, this study examines contextual, as well as individual, demographics as correlates to social justice attitudes. Because the theoretical and empirical literature related to these topics are under-developed, this study is exploratory and no hypotheses are posited.

Method

Sample

This study uses data (IEA, 2004) from the 1999 IEA Civic Education Study, an international assessment of civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and participation across 28 countries, which was sponsored by The National Center for Education Statistics. This study uses data only from the U.S. sample. A three-stage probability sampling procedure was used to produce a representative sample of U.S. ninth-graders. The first stage was a random selection of primary sampling units (PSUs) according to geographic criteria (Schulz & Sibberns, 2004). Fifty-two PSU's were selected from a list of 1,027. In the second stage, schools were randomly selected within PSU's. In the third stage, one classroom was selected within each school. The selected classroom was a ninth-grade classroom in a required civic-related subject, with top preferences given to government and political science courses, followed by courses in history and social studies. The instruments were administered in October of 1998 to students, school principals, and classroom teachers. Student data was nested within 120 schools. Survey instruments were administered to 2,811 students. All students were ninth-graders at the time of assessment and, on average, were 14.2 years old ($SD = .41$). Table 1 describes the sample's characteristics.

Measures

Social Justice Attitudes

Few studies have assessed social justice attitudes quantitatively using multi-item scales (Chizhik & Chizhik, 2002; Flanagan, Cumsille et al., 2007; Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Stout, 2007; Flanagan et al., 2009). Therefore, we used items within the data to create four original social justice attitude measures. Based on face validity, we extracted every set of items that concerned beliefs about the current state of social justice, the desirability of social justice, or the means through which social justice should be achieved. The only

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

	Demographic Characteristic	%
	Born abroad	11
	Female	51
	Race/ethnicity	
	Hispanic or Latino	14
	American Indian/Alaska Native	2
	Asian	5
	Black	14
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3
	White	63
	Parent characteristics	
	Mother finished high school or more	84
	Mother completed some college or more	27
	Mother completed bachelor's degree or more	25
	Living situation	
	Lives with female guardian	95
	Lives with male guardian	82
	School characteristics	
	Attend public school	93
	Attends private school	7
	School is in urban region	36
	School is in suburban region	55
	School is in rural region	10
	School is in Northeast U.S.	23
	School is in Southeast U.S.	20
	School is in Central U.S.	26
	School is in Western U.S.	30
	Less than 25 % of students in the school are on reduced/free lunch	53
	Over 50 % of students in the school are on reduced/free lunch	22

Percentages of adolescents in the sample who have each demographic characteristic. "Parent characteristics" (maternal education) are represented by cumulative percentages, not the highest level of education completed. Maternal education is an ordinal variable, with mutually exclusive levels. Characteristics under "Living Situation" are not mutually exclusive

exception is that we did not extract a set of items concerning equal opportunity for immigrants, which would have been beyond the scope of this paper. The first two sets of items (one regarding the government's responsibility for individuals' economic needs and the other regarding perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity) addressed *reality-based social justice attitudes*, those involving concrete interpretations about the state of inequality and solutions to inequality. Two other sets of items (one regarding support for racial equal opportunity and the other regarding support for gender equal opportunity) addressed *abstract social justice attitudes*, those that express judgments about abstract principles of social justice.

Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2007) was used to perform (separate) confirmatory factor analyses on each of the four sets of items. Items were iteratively dropped to maximize the fit of the items to each construct. The analyses used a maximum

Table 2 Fit statistics and Cronbach's alphas for social justice attitudes

Attitude	SRMR	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	90 % CI	α
Inequal opp.	.021	.978	.934	.070	.048–.094	.78
Government	.025	.959	.877	.068	.046–.091	.60
Racial opp.	.022	.983	.950	.065	.043–.089	.78
Gender opp.	.037	.945	.908	.076	.066–.087	.79

Inequal opp. perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity, *government* government responsibility for individuals' economic needs, *racial opp.* support for racial equal opportunity, *gender opp.* support for gender equal opportunity, *CI* confidence interval for the RMSEA statistic

likelihood estimator with robust standard errors and accounted for the complex survey design. Fit statistics (RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, and TLI) and Cronbach's alphas for each social justice attitude are presented in Table 2. RMSEA and SRMR values equal to or less than .06 suggest a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and values up to .10 suggest a mediocre fit (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). CFI or TLI values that are greater than .95 indicate an excellent fit and CFI or TLI values greater than .90 indicate an adequate fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All measures exhibited adequate or good fit to the data, although government responsibility for individuals' economic needs exhibited a TLI value and alpha that were on the lower end of acceptability. The following section describes the four social justice attitudes.

Perceptions of Inequality of Educational Opportunity

Students responded to four items on a 4-point scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) about whether girls, poor children, rural children, and racial and ethnic minority children have fewer chances at obtaining a good high school education. Higher scores for this scale equate to higher perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity. A sample item is "Children from poor families have fewer chances than others to get a good high school education in this country" ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.06$).

Government Responsibility for Individuals' Economic Needs

Students responded to four items on a 4-point scale (ranging from "definitely should not be" to "definitely should be the government's responsibility") about whether the government should have the responsibility to "guarantee a job for everyone who wants one," "provide an adequate standard of living for old people and the unemployed," "provide basic health care for everyone," and "reduce differences in income and wealth among people" ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 0.87$).

Support for Racial Equal Opportunity

Students responded to four items on a 4-point scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) about whether members of ethnic and minority groups in the United States should receive equal opportunities with respect to education, employment, political participation, and free speech. Higher scores for this scale equate to more support for racial

equal opportunity. A sample item is “All ethnic and racial groups should have equal chances to get a good education in this country” ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.13$).

Support for Gender Equal Opportunity

Students responded to six items on a 4-point scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree) about whether women should receive equal opportunities (with respect to education, employment, political participation, and free speech), the same rights, and equal pay as men. Higher scores for this scale equate to more support for gender equal opportunity. A sample item is “Women should run for public office and take part in the government just as men do” ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.23$).

Table 3 presents correlations among all four social justice attitudes. Most correlations were relatively weak ($r = -.29$ to $r = .18$). The only exception was the moderate correlation between support for racial equal opportunity and support for gender equal opportunity ($r = .55$). The only negative correlations were perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity with support for racial equal opportunity ($r = -.15$) and support for gender equal opportunity ($r = -.29$).

Demographic Correlates

Individual demographics were collected from student surveys and included gender, race, country of origin, and maternal education. Contextual demographics were collected from school principal surveys and included reduced price and free lunch participation (a proxy for school SES), urbanicity, region, and school type (private vs. public). Means and standard deviations are presented below for demographics not described in the sample description.

Individual Demographics

Gender was dichotomous (1 = female; $M = .51$, $SD = .80$). *Race/ethnicity* was measured by six dummy codes representing six racial and ethnic groups—Latino,

Table 3 Descriptive statistics, intraclass correlations, and bivariate correlations among social justice attitudes

Social justice attitude	Descriptives			Intraclass correlations			Bivariate correlations		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skew</i>	<i>ICC</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>F</i>	1	2	3
1. Inequal opp.	2.00	1.06	.25	.06	.01	14.99***			
2. Government	2.92	.87	-.32	.06	.01	14.68***	.05*		
3. Racial opp.	3.30	1.13	-1.13	.14	.02	26.04***	-.15***	.18***	
4. Gender opp.	3.36	1.23	-.97	.17	.02	30.82***	-.29***	.13**	.55***

Inequal opp. perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity, *government* government responsibility for individuals' economic needs, *racial opp.* support for racial equal opportunity, *gender opp.* support for gender equal opportunity, *Skew* skewness statistic, *ICC* intraclass correlations

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and White (the reference group). *Country of origin* was a dichotomous variable indicating whether or not the adolescent was born in the United States (1 = born abroad; $M = .11$, $SD = .52$). *Maternal education* was a seven-category ordinal variable, where 1 indicated that the adolescent's mother "did not finish elementary school" and 7 indicated that the adolescent's mother "completed a bachelor's degree at a college or university" ($M = 5.11$, $SD = .85$). Maternal education was used as a proxy for students' SES, as maternal education is one component of SES (Hauser, 1994).

Contextual Demographics

Reduced price and free lunch participation was used as a proxy for school SES. Reduced price and free lunch participation was measured by four dummy codes representing schools with 0–25 % (high school SES, the reference group), 25–50 % (moderately high school SES), 50–75 % (moderately low school SES), and 75–100 % (low school SES) of students within the school eligible for the National School Lunch Program in October 1998. *Urbanicity* was measured by three dummy codes representing urban, suburban (reference group), and rural locale. *Region* was measured by dummy codes representing four categories: northeast, southeast, central (reference group), and west. *School type* was a dichotomous variable, indicating whether the school was public or private (1 = private; $M = .07$, $SD = .86$).

Data Analysis

To answer the study's research questions, we used descriptive statistics and regression analyses. In order to obtain stable estimates that represented the national ninth-grade population in these analyses, we treated the missing data and accounted for sampling weights included in the dataset. We treated the missing data using the STATA MI ICE procedure, which performs multiple imputation. Essentially, each missing variable was regressed on all of the study's variables. These predicted values replaced the original missing values, resulting in a fully imputed dataset. In total, we obtained 10 fully imputed datasets, and, in each analysis, MI ICE averaged across these datasets to obtain stable estimates. Unlike studies that fail to treat missing data, this study is able to generalize to the study's original sample (and the population the sample represents).

In order to obtain stable estimates (accurate standard errors) that represent the national ninth-grade population, it was also necessary to account for the study's sampling design. IEA provided a stratification variable, which identified the PSUs from which schools were chosen, a school identification variable, which identified the schools from which students were chosen, and a student weighting variable, which identified the nonrandom probability of each student being selected for participation. We included these variables in each analysis on the multiply imputed data using STATA's *mi svyset* command, which calculates estimates using Taylor

series linearization. Lastly, we accounted for clustering by estimating cluster-robust standard errors, thereby addressing concerns that the correlated observations produced unreliable estimates. This procedure for adjusting standard errors is equivalent to using MLM to adjust standard errors. We chose not to use MLM because our primary goal in this paper is to examine adolescents' social justice attitudes and their demographic correlates. Thus, exploring between-classroom differences was beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, we chose to adjust the standard errors of the estimates. In summary, by accounting for the sampling design and treating missing data, the results of the study represent the national ninth-grade population in 1998 and the reliability of the estimated relationships is optimized.

Results

What Are the Social Justice Attitudes of a Representative Sample of U.S. Ninth-Graders?

To examine this question, we calculated descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions of all four social justice attitudes (see Table 3). Adolescents endorsed reality-based social justice attitudes far less than they endorsed abstract social justice attitudes. 54.8 % believed meeting individuals' economic needs probably or definitely is the responsibility of the government. Strikingly, only 11.96 % of adolescents agreed or strongly agreed that children within marginalized groups have fewer chances to get a good education. Adolescents' strongest agreement was with the abstract social justice attitudes. 77.6 % agreed or strongly agreed that both genders should have equal opportunities. 81.4 % agreed or strongly agreed that all racial/ethnic groups should have equal opportunities.

What Are the Demographic Correlates of Social Justice Attitudes?

We regressed each of the four social justice attitudes on the following demographic characteristics—country of origin, maternal education, race, gender, region, urbanicity, school type, and school SES. These regressions estimate the relationship between each demographic characteristic and each social justice attitude, partialing out the linear relationships of all other demographic characteristics. Full results for the reality-based and abstract social justice attitudes are presented in Tables 4 and 5, respectively. For ease of interpretation, we present unstandardized coefficients when interpreting effect sizes in text.

All four of the regression models were significant. However, demographics only explained about 2 % of the variance in each of the reality-based social justice attitudes—perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity and government responsibility for individuals' economic needs. Demographics explained much more variance in the abstract social justice attitudes—9 % of the variance in support for racial equal opportunity and 20 % of the variance in support for gender equal opportunity.

Table 4 Demographic characteristics regressed on each reality-based social justice attitude

	Social justice attitude (dependent variable)					
	Inequal opp.			Government		
	β	<i>b</i>	SE	β	<i>b</i>	SE
Country of origin	.03	.04	.05	−.09	−.08	.04
Maternal education	−.00	−.00	.01	−.03	−.03	.01
Latino	−.02	−.01	.05	.08	.05	.05
Amer. Indian/Alask N.	.02	.02	.07	−.09	−.06	.07
Asian	−.03	−.02	.09	.15**	.15	.06
Black/African Am.	.16***	.17	.04	.10**	.11	.04
Nat. Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.	.15	.24	.09	−.09	−.07	.09
Female	−.15***	−.17	.03	.08***	.09	.03
Northeast region	.03	.04	.05	.11*	.11	.04
Southeast region	.04	.04	.05	.06	.06	.05
West region	.03	.00	.06	−.01	−.01	.05
Urban locale	−.06	−.05	.04	−.02	−.01	.02
Rural locale	.06	.04	.07	.02	.03	.04
Private school	.13*	.12	.05	.05	.05	.06
School SES: mod high	.02	.02	.04	.00	−.02	.04
School SES: mod low	.05	.06	.05	.03	.01	.04
School SES: low	.12	.12	.10	−.03	−.01	.10
<i>R</i> ²	.029			.024		
<i>F</i>	3.79***			3.46***		

Inequal opp. perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity, *government* government responsibility for individuals’ economic needs, *Amer. Indian/Alask N.* American Indian or Alaskan Native, *Black/African Am.* Black or African American, *Nat. Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.* Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, *school SES: mod high* moderately high school SES, *school SES: mod low* moderately low school SES, *school SES: low* low school SES

p < .10; * *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; *** *p* < .001

Gender was the most consistent correlate across all four dependent variables. Compared to males, females had significantly higher support for government’s responsibility for individuals’ economic needs (*b* = .09, *p* = .003), support for racial equal opportunity (*b* = .30, *p* = .000), and support for gender equal opportunity (*b* = .48, *p* = .000). This means that, if the average male were neutral about all of these attitudes, the average female would also be about neutral in their endorsement of government’s responsibility for individuals’ economic needs, almost agree that all races should have equal opportunities, and definitely agree that both genders should have equal opportunities. Unexpectedly, however, females also had significantly lower perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity (*b* = −.17, *p* = .000) than males.

Maternal education was also a significant predictor of multiple social justice attitudes. Particularly, maternal education predicted both abstract social justice

Table 5 Demographic characteristics regressed on each abstract social justice attitude

	Social justice attitude (dependent variable)					
	Racial opp.			Gender opp.		
	β	<i>b</i>	SE	β	<i>b</i>	SE
Country of origin	−.03	−.09	.04	−.06***	−.13	.04
Maternal education	.15***	.06	.01	.11***	.04	.01
Latino	.03	.04	.04	−.01	−.02	.04
Amer. Indian/Alask N.	−.00	.02	.07	.00	.02	.05
Asian	.06**	.22	.06	.03	.12	.05
Black/African Am.	−.04	−.07	.05	−.12***	−.16	.04
Nat. Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.	−.03	−.03	.08	.01	.01	.07
Female	.24***	.30	.02	.40***	.48	.02
Northeast region	.01	−.03	.04	.03	.03	.03
Southeast region	−.04	−.08	.04	−.02	−.03	.03
West region	.01	−.02	.04	.02	.01	.03
Urban locale	.03	.04	.03	.02	.03	.03
Rural locale	.01	.06	.05	−.02	−.01	.04
Private school	−.01	−.04	.06	−.02	−.06	.05
School SES: mod high	.01	.01	.03	−.03	−.08	.03
School SES: mod low	−.05*	−.22	.04	−.03	−.12	.04
School SES: low	−.02	−.02	.08	−.03	−.09	.09
R^2	.09			.20		
<i>F</i>	12.77***			31.46***		

Racial opp. support for racial equal opportunity, *gender opp.* support for gender equal opportunity, *Amer. Indian/Alask N.* American Indian or Alaskan Native, *Black/African Am.* Black or African American, *Nat. Hawaiian/Pac. Isl.* Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, *school SES: mod high* moderately high school SES, *school SES: mod low* moderately low school SES, *school SES: low* low school SES

$p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

attitudes. It predicted more support for racial ($b = .06$, $p = .000$) and gender ($b = .04$, $p = .000$) equal opportunity. If, on average, adolescents whose mothers had less than an elementary education were neutral that all races and genders should have equal opportunities, adolescents who had mothers with a bachelor's degree would be halfway between neutrality and agreeing that all races and genders should have equal opportunities.

Although race and country of origin were not consistent correlates across social justice attitudes, there were some notable findings among Black, Asian, and foreign-born adolescents. Compared to White adolescents, Black adolescents were more likely to endorse government's responsibility for individuals' economic needs ($b = .11$, $p = .003$). They also had higher perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity ($b = .16$, $p = .000$). Interestingly, Black adolescents were significantly less likely than White adolescents to support gender equal opportunity ($b = −.16$, $p = .013$). Compared to White adolescents, Asian adolescents were more likely to

support government's responsibility for individuals' economic needs ($b = .15$, $p = .013$) and to support racial equal opportunity ($b = .22$, $p = .002$). Latino, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander adolescents did not have social justice attitudes that were significantly different from Whites. Finally, adolescents who were born abroad had significantly lower support for gender equal opportunity ($b = -.13$, $p = .003$) than adolescents born in the U.S.

For the most part, region, urbanicity, school type, and school SES were unrelated or weakly related to adolescents' social justice attitudes. However, adolescents who lived in the northeast (versus central regions), on average, reported more support for government's responsibility for individuals' economic needs ($b = .11$, $p = .016$). In addition, adolescents who attended private school, on average, had higher perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity than adolescents who attended public school ($b = .13$, $p = .020$).

Discussion

The goal of this study was to describe social justice attitudes and their correlates among a nationally representative sample of U.S. ninth-graders in 1998. This study added to the literature by using more rigorous psychometric and statistical analyses to explore U.S. adolescents' social justice attitudes. Compared to the extant national study (Baldi et al., 2001) of adolescent social justice attitudes, the use of psychometrically tested scales instead of single items and inclusion of a more diverse set of social justice attitudes (support for racial equal opportunity and perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity) allowed us to gain a more comprehensive and accurate portrait of adolescents' social justice attitudes. This study also set out to examine variation in social justice attitudes by individual-level demographic characteristics. In addition, it explored contextual demographics, which have rarely been explored by previous studies. By using multivariate analyses to describe the relationship between demographic characteristics and social justice attitudes, this study has increased confidence in the demographic correlates it has documented. This work has built descriptive knowledge of adolescents' social justice attitudes and has provided a foundation for research on the development of social justice attitudes. Importantly, readers should be mindful, as they interpret the results that the study's results generalize to ninth-graders in 1998.

Overall, this study found that ninth-graders in 1998 overwhelmingly supported abstract social justice attitudes (support for racial and gender equal opportunity), but they were less likely to endorse reality-based social justice attitudes (governments' responsibility for individuals' economic needs and perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity). About half believed that the government should be responsible for individuals' economic needs, and an overwhelming majority believed that equal opportunity in education exists in the U.S. Finally, individual and contextual demographic characteristics did relate to social justice attitudes. The most notable correlates included gender and maternal education. Females and adolescents with more educated mothers tended to express more support for social

justice. Surprising group differences included females' lower perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity (compared to males) and private school students' higher perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity (compared to public school students).

A primary contribution of this study was to document adolescents' weak endorsement of reality-based social justice attitudes, compared to their support for abstract social justice attitudes. Most strikingly, less than 12 % of adolescents agreed that marginalized groups have fewer opportunities to get a good education. It is imperative to investigate the socialization forces that led almost 90 % of ninth-graders to agree that all groups have equal opportunity to obtain a good education. This is especially true given the overwhelming evidence that racial and ethnic minorities, the poor, and other marginalized groups do not have an equal opportunity to succeed in the U.S.—for example, by attaining an education or obtaining a job (McNamee & Miller, 2004; Rumberger, 2010). If we desire to educate a citizenry that is fully informed and prepared to participate in political life, developing theoretical and empirical knowledge of why U.S. adolescents develop false perceptions of equal opportunity in education is critical.

While these adolescents tended not to believe in inequality of educational opportunity, they overwhelmingly supported the notion that there *should be* racial and gender equal opportunity. This tension stresses the difference between adolescents' abstract social justice attitudes and their reality-based social justice attitudes. Reality-based social justice attitudes, like perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity and governments' responsibility for individuals' economic needs, involve concrete interpretations about the state of inequality and solutions to inequality. Abstract social justice attitudes, like support for racial and gender equal opportunity, are social justice attitudes that express judgments about abstract principles without endorsing specific solutions to or representations of inequality. While there was overwhelming support for abstract social justice attitudes, fewer adolescents believed inequality of educational opportunity exists or that the government should meet individuals' economic needs. This discrepancy is similar to one documented by Mickelson (1990), who studied educational beliefs and highlighted large discrepancies between minority adolescents' concrete versus abstract beliefs about the rewards of education.

This trend is also consistent with multiple literatures on adults, including the system justification literature, which emphasizes individuals' tendency to justify the status quo (see Jost & Hunyady, 2003). Notably, this study's results have also mirrored findings on the principle-implementation gap. Many White adults support the principles of racial equality (e.g., all races should be treated equally) but oppose the implementation of policies that intend to minimize group differences (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2007; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997). Significantly, this study found that this principle-implementation gap might occur at an earlier age (adolescence or younger) than documented previously. Interestingly, this study found that Asian and Black adolescents were more likely (than Whites) to endorse governments' responsibility for individuals' economic needs. Effect sizes of these estimates suggest that the principle-implementation gap might be smaller among Asian and Black adolescents, but it still may not be closed. The principle-

implementation gap may exist in some form among adolescents of all races. Interestingly, this might indicate U.S. adults and adolescents' political preferences and behaviors may be discordant with their principles. Because of its implications for increasing the authenticity of individuals' political preferences, more academic research is needed on what produces this gap and how to reduce it.

This study has also highlighted other similarities and differences between adolescents' and adults' social justice attitudes. Adolescents' overwhelming support for racial and gender equal opportunity and low perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity mirrors U.S. adults' tendency to support equal rights for all races and women and to perceive equal opportunity (Ghosh, 2008; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). However, this study's findings indicated that adults may tend to be more resistant than adolescents to endorse governments' responsibility for individuals' economic needs. Only 30–35 % of Americans agree that the government should provide citizens with a basic income, reduce income differences, or provide an adequate standard of living (Janda, Berry, & Goldman, 2008; Pammett, 1996; Sawhill & Morton, 2007). However, a majority (about 55 %) of adolescents in this study stated that it is probably or definitely the government's responsibility to guarantee jobs, provide an adequate standard of living and basic health care, and reduce differences in income and wealth.

Research should further explore these similarities and differences between adolescents' and adults' attitudes. For example, why do adolescents' perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity and support for racial and equal opportunity adhere so closely to adult norms? Is this because there are educational and contextual experiences that send more direct messages about these attitudes? Another interesting question is why adolescents' attitudes about governments' responsibility for individuals' economic needs diverges from adult norms. Since we know that political attitudes typically undergo considerable development from early adolescence until at least the mid-20s (Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998), there are many possible developmental reasons why adolescents may agree less with government support as they develop into adulthood. For example, as individuals age their sociodemographic group identity (for example, class or race) may become more salient (for example, see Yip, Seaton, & Sellers, 2006) and they may adopt that group's material interests. Similarly, as individuals age, they may be more exposed to the norms about government support in American society. Research on differences between children's and adolescents' (ranging from age 5 to age 17) beliefs about the causes of inequality indicate that adolescents are more likely than children to identify both individual and structural causes for inequality (e.g., Flanagan & Tucker, 1999; Harrah & Friedman, 1990; Leahy, 1983), where researchers have typically attributed this to adolescents' increasing individual-level explanations for inequality as they age (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999). Increasing individual-level attributions could explain why adolescents' agreement with government support might decrease over time. Whatever the reasons for these findings, the similarities of and differences between adolescents' and adults' social justice attitudes provide compelling rationales for further research on adolescents' social justice attitudes.

Another contribution of this study was to illuminate differences in the social justice attitudes of various demographic groups. By using multivariate statistical analyses, this study was able to provide more robust evidence for the key demographic correlates to social justice attitudes. This study has lent further support to prior work (Baldi et al., 2001; Flanagan & Tucker, 1999; Flanagan, Cumsille et al., 2007) finding that gender is a robust predictor of adolescents' social justice attitudes. Females exhibited greater support for social justice (particularly for support for racial and gender equal opportunity). One explanation for these gender differences is that girls are socialized differently. For example, girls are taught to be caring and boys are taught to be aggressive (Fridkin & Kenney, 2007). This study's findings, combined with previous research on the socialization of different groups, indicates that certain demographic groups may be "predisposed" to certain social justice attitudes simply by virtue of the socialization that occurs on the basis of their demographic group.

Another contribution of this study is to highlight an unexpected finding regarding females' perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity. Although girls, on average, expressed significantly higher levels of support for racial and gender equal opportunity, they also expressed significantly lower perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity than males. At the surface, these findings seem contradictory with previous literature, which found females were less likely to believe in equal opportunity in America and less likely to believe in a just world (O'Connor, Morrison, McLeod, & Anderson, 1996; Feygina, Jost, & Goldsmith, 2010; Flanagan, Cumsille et al., 2007; Flanagan & Tucker, 1999). However, these studies may have found opposite results because the constructs were broader than belief in equal opportunity in education. That is, beliefs about the existence of justice and equal opportunity may vary according to the domain (e.g., education, criminal justice, housing, etc.) that is addressed by the construct. This is because individuals have different experiences in these domains that might influence their attitudes. Specifically, females may be more likely to believe in equal opportunity in education because they tend to perform better than boys (Dwyer & Johnson, 1997) and are treated preferentially in school (see Jones & Dindia, 2004 on teacher–student interactions; Wallace et al., 2008 on discipline).

Maternal education was also a consistent predictor of social justice attitudes. Consistent with Flanagan and Tucker's (1999) study, maternal education was positively related to support for racial and gender equal opportunity. Maternal education might relate to more support for equal opportunity because higher education institutions tend to espouse liberal values (e.g., most professors are politically liberal; Gross & Simmons, 2007) and mothers might transmit these more liberal messages to their children. Another possible explanation is that mothers who are more resourced may send fewer messages about self-reliance to their children because they can afford to assist their children (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999). Examining what produces attitudinal differences according to family-level demographic characteristics (like maternal education or social class), contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of family and parents on political development. Exploring differences by education and class also provides a foundation for understanding contextual experiences that might produce class-based divides in social justice attitudes.

This study also documented some interesting racial differences in social justice attitudes. Consistent with Flanagan et al.'s (2009) finding that Black adolescents were less likely than Whites to believe that the government is equally responsive to all people, Black adolescents reported higher perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity than Whites, indicating that there may be specific experiences within the social contexts of Black youth that increase their belief in unequal opportunity. For example, more discrimination experiences generally relate to less belief in a just world (Lipkus & Siegler, 1993) and personal discrimination has been related to more belief in unequal opportunity among Black youth in particular (Cohen, 2010). In addition, consistent with Baldi et al.'s (2001) study, Black and Asian adolescents were more likely than Whites to support governments' responsibility for individuals' economic needs. Cultural norms regarding collectivism (which are sometimes evident in Asian and Black communities), might be one of many factors that might have fostered these attitudes among these groups. Like understanding the impact of class on social justice attitudes, understanding racial differences in social justice attitudes can help to understand what produces racial divisions in terms of political orientations and engagement in political resistance.

Another contribution of this study was to extend our understanding of adolescents' social justice attitudes by examining contextual demographics (region, urbanicity, school type, and school SES) as correlates to social justice attitudes. Students in the northeast (versus central) region reported more agreement with government's responsibility for individuals' economic needs. This indicates there may be political norms within the northeast that promote more support for these ideas. For example, it is well known that New England states typically vote for the Democratic party, which is more likely to endorse government-sponsored social programs. Quite unexpectedly, compared to adolescents who attended public school, those who attended private school had higher perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity. Research on upper class schools suggest that this might be because these schools encourage more critical thinking or encourage students to think about conflict in the political process (Litt, 1963). It may also be that, by being given a costly education, students become aware that not all other children have the same opportunity to attain a good education. These findings emphasize the importance of continuing to examine whether and how different contexts relate to social justice attitudes.

In sum, this study highlights that the principle-implementation gap previously documented among adults may also be prevalent among U.S. adolescents. We also have noted some predictable and some surprising correlates of U.S. adolescents' social justice attitudes (e.g., girls' lower perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity and private school students' higher perceptions of inequality of educational opportunity). Lastly, we have emphasized important distinctions between adolescents' reality-based and abstract social justice attitudes. In this study, we found that all demographics taken together explained the largest variation in abstract social justice attitudes—support for racial equal opportunity and support for gender equal opportunity. This suggests that adolescents' reality-based social justice attitudes may not be as strongly related to demographic characteristics. Instead, experiences that engage the critical thinking of adolescents might alter these attitudes. For example, political and educational experiences like explicit

learning about, witnessing, and discussing racism and sexism may be more related to reality-based social justice attitudes. This knowledge might guide scholars as they attempt to build theoretical and empirical knowledge of social justice attitudes. Separate conceptual frameworks may be needed to describe the development of reality-based and abstract social justice attitudes. Lastly, we must consider the consequences of reality-based versus abstract social justice attitudes. Drawing on Mickelson's (1990) work finding that concrete educational beliefs better predict educational outcomes than abstract beliefs, reality-based attitudes might be more reliable predictors of adolescents' engagement in social justice actions and activities. This indicates, perhaps, that more work should be done to understand the development of reality-based social justice attitudes in particular.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study has provided a preliminary exploration of U.S. adolescents' social justice attitudes, several limitations of the study should be noted. First, we were unable to test the mechanisms through which demographic characteristics related to social justice attitudes. For example, we do not know what types of shared experiences might have produced differences in the attitudes of demographic groups. Still, this study has provided preliminary evidence that maternal education and gender have significant relationships with social justice attitudes. Future studies should delve deeper into the processes by which social justice attitudes develop among adolescents and the social contexts that explain differences in social justice attitudes among demographic groups. For example, studies should document educational and political experiences that engage adolescents' thinking about social justice issues.

The second set of limitations concerns the measurement of social justice attitudes. Significantly, this study examined an array of adolescents' social justice attitudes, which were psychometrically tested for reliability and validity. However, the construct validity of government responsibility for individuals' economic needs was not optimal, suggesting further research should be done that replicates or extends these findings with more psychometrically sound measures. Future studies should also examine measures of perceptions of equal opportunity that address other domains outside of education. Other domains must be addressed in order to comprehensively assess adolescents' perceptions of equal opportunity, and, in turn, their reality-based social justice attitudes. Lastly, future work should use social justice attitudes that elicit more balanced levels of support and opposition.

Although this study made an important contribution by simply describing the social justice attitudes of a nationally representative sample, the generalizability of these results must be noted. As this study was conducted in 1998, we can only generalize to U.S. ninth-graders in 1998. Because 15 years have passed since 1998, current U.S. adolescents may differ in their attitudes due to changes in the historical, economic, and political climate, for example. However, previous studies have demonstrated that some of U.S. adults' social justice attitudes—for example, beliefs in meritocracy from the mid-1960s to mid-1980s (Kluegel & Smith, 1986)—showed surprising consistency across decades, suggesting adolescents' social justice

attitudes currently may not diverge far from those of 1998. Still, future research should explore the development of social justice attitudes among current adolescents. In addition, this study is limited in that only ninth-graders' attitudes were examined. Because adolescents undergo changes in their political attitudes, our study may not generalize to ages beyond the primarily 14-year-old adolescent represented by this study. Future research must document social justice attitude development from childhood into adolescence and adulthood.

Despite these limitations, this study has added to the literature on social justice attitudes by using psychometrically tested scales to explore various social justice attitudes and their demographic correlates among a nationally representative sample of U.S. adolescents. This study has illuminated that adolescents' social justice attitudes are consistent with U.S. adults' belief in equal opportunity and agreement with meritocracy; this "dominant ideology" (Kluegel & Smith, 1986) is likely embedded in American culture and adherence to it likely starts very young. This study has also highlighted that, as a group, adolescents' social justice attitudes may be both similar to and distinct from adults. The fact that (compared to adults) adolescents exhibited higher levels of agreement that government should be responsible for individuals' economic needs leads to interesting questions about why this difference existed. In addition, this study has highlighted the need for more research on the contexts of girls and higher educated families that explain why they typically express more support for social justice. Finally, this study has stressed that a conceptual distinction should be made between abstract social justice attitudes and reality-based social justice attitudes; while U.S. adolescents are strikingly high in their abstract support for social justice, they are less likely to support interventions regarding social justice and are far less likely to understand the current state of social injustice (at least with regards to education). These differences provide preliminary evidence that a principle-implementation gap, previously documented among U.S. adults, exists among adolescents as well. Overall, this study hopes (1) to inspire further research on contexts that impact social justice attitudes throughout the life span and (2) to incite reflection and action on the part of educators, parents, and citizens committed to promoting an awareness of social justice issues among youth.

Acknowledgments The authors would like to thank Dr. Ed Seidman for his guidance on an earlier version of this article. The first author's involvement in this research was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305B080019 to New York University.

Ethical Standards This research complies with the laws of the United States. APA ethical standards were followed in the conduct of the study.

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest with the organization that sponsored this research.

References

Baldi, S., Perie, M., Skidmore, D., Greenberg, E., & Hahn, C. (2001). *What democracy means to ninth-graders: US results from the international IEA civic education study*. Washington, DC: National

- Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved March 6, 2011 from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001096.pdf>.
- Bell, L. A. (1997). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook* (pp. 3–15). New York: Routledge.
- Berman, S. (1997). *Children's social consciousness and the development of social responsibility*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Beutel, A. M., & Marini, M. M. (1995). Gender and values. *American Sociological Review*, *60*(3), 436–448. doi:10.2307/2096423.
- Bohner, G., & Dickel, N. (2011). Attitudes and attitude change. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *62*(1), 391–417. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.121208.131609.
- Broido, E. M. (2000). The development of social justice allies during college: A phenomenological investigation. *Journal of College Student Development*, *41*(1), 3–18.
- Broido, Ellen. M., & Reason, R. D. (2005). The development of social justice attitudes and actions: An overview of current understandings. *New Directions for Student Services*, *110*, 17–28. doi:10.1002/ss.162.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., Morris, P. A., Damon, W., & Lerner, R. M. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R. M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (6th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 793–828). New York: Wiley.
- Chizhik, E. W., & Chizhik, A. W. (2002). A path to social change: Examining students' responsibility, opportunity, and emotion toward social justice. *Education and Urban Society*, *34*(3), 283–297. doi:10.1177/0013124502034003001.
- Cohen, C. J. (2010). *Democracy remixed: Black youth and the future of American politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dixon, J., Durrheim, K., & Tredoux, C. (2007). Intergroup contact and attitudes toward the principle and practice of racial equality. *Psychological Science*, *18*(10), 867–872. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01993.x.
- Dwyer, C. A., & Johnson, L. M. (1997). Grades, accomplishments, and correlates. In W. W. Willingham & N. S. Cole (Eds.), *Gender and fair assessment* (pp. 127–156). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Eagly, A. H. (1987). *Sex differences in social behavior: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Feygina, I., Jost, J. T., & Goldsmith, R. E. (2010). System justification, the denial of global warming, and the possibility of “system-sanctioned change.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *36*(3), 326–338. doi:10.1177/0146167209351435.
- Flanagan, C. A., Cumsille, P., Gill, S., & Gallay, L. S. (2007). School and community climates and civic commitments: Patterns for ethnic minority and majority students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *99*(2), 421–431. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.99.2.421.
- Flanagan, C. A., & Sherrod, L. R. (1998). Youth political development: An introduction. *Journal of Social Issues*, *54*(3), 447–456. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.1998.tb01229.x.
- Flanagan, C. A., Syvertsen, A. K., Gill, S., Gallay, L. S., & Cumsille, P. (2009). Ethnic awareness, prejudice, and civic commitments in four ethnic groups of American adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *38*(4), 500–518. doi:10.1007/s10964-009-9394-z.
- Flanagan, C. A., Syvertsen, A. K., & Stout, M. D. (2007). *Civic measurement models: Tapping adolescents' civic engagement* (p. 40). College Park, MD: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), University of Maryland. Retrieved on February 2, 2012 from <http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/WorkingPapers/WP55Flanagan.pdf>.
- Flanagan, C. A., & Tucker, C. J. (1999). Adolescents' explanations for political issues: Concordance with their views of self and society. *Developmental Psychology*, *35*(5), 1198–1209. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.35.5.1198.
- Fridkin, K. L., & Kenney, P. J. (2007). Examining the gender gap in children's attitudes toward politics. *Sex Roles*, *56*(3–4), 133–140. doi:10.1007/s11199-006-9156-2.
- Ghosh, C. A. (2008). *The politics of the American dream: Locke and Puritan thought revisited in an era of open immigration and identity politics*. Unpublished dissertation, Syracuse University. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.
- Glasman, L. R., & Albarracín, D. (2006). Forming attitudes that predict future behavior: A meta-analysis of the attitude-behavior relation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *132*(5), 778–822. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.132.5.778.

- Gross, N., & Simmons, S. (2007). *The social and political views of American professors*. Unpublished manuscript, Harvard University. Retrieved on May 14, 2012 from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.147.6141&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.
- Harrah, J., & Friedman, M. (1990). Economic socialization in children in a midwestern American community. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 11(4), 495–513. doi:10.1016/0167-4870(90)90031-4.
- Hauser, R. M. (1994). Measuring socioeconomic status in studies of child development. *Child Development*, 65(6), 1541–1545. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.1994.tb00834.x.
- Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6(1), 1–55. doi:10.1080/10705519909540118.
- Hughes, M., & Tuch, S. A. (2003). Gender differences in whites' racial attitudes: Are women's attitudes really more favorable? *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66(4), 384–401. doi:10.2307/1519836.
- International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). (2004). *1999 IEA civic education study data: United States sample [computer file]*. Ann Arbor, MI: Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor]. Retrieved on December 19, 2009 from <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/access/index.jsp>.
- Jacobs, L. R., & Skocpol, T. (Eds.). (2005). *Inequality and American democracy: What we know and what we need to learn*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Janda, K., Berry, J. M., & Goldman, J. (2008). *The challenge of democracy: Government in America* (9th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Johnson, M. K., & Marini, M. M. (1998). Bridging the racial divide in the United States: The effect of gender. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 61(3), 247–258. doi:10.2307/2787111.
- Jones, S. M., & Dindia, K. (2004). A meta-analytic perspective on sex equity in the classroom. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(4), 443–471. doi:10.3102/00346543074004443.
- Jost, J., & Hunyady, O. (2003). The psychology of system justification and the palliative function of ideology. *European review of social psychology*, 13(1), 111–153. doi:10.1080/10463280240000046.
- Kluegel, J., Mason, D., & Wegener, B. (1995). *Social justice and political change: Public opinion in capitalist and post-communist states*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (1986). *Beliefs about inequality: Americans' views of what is and what ought to be*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Krosnick, J. A., & Alwin, D. F. (1989). Aging and susceptibility to attitude change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(3), 416–425. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.57.3.416.
- Leahy, R. L. (1983). Development of the conception of economic inequality: II. Explanations, justifications, and concepts of social mobility and change. *Developmental Psychology*, 19(1), 111–125. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.19.1.111.
- Lipkus, I. M., & Siegler, I. C. (1993). The belief in a just world and perceptions of discrimination. *The Journal of Psychology*, 127(4), 465–474. doi:10.1080/00223980.1993.9915583.
- Litt, E. (1963). Civic education, community norms, and political indoctrination. *American Sociological Review*, 28(1), 69–75. doi:10.2307/2090460.
- MacCallum, R. C., Browne, M. W., & Sugawara, H. M. (1996). Power analysis and determination of sample size for covariance structure modeling. *Psychological Methods*, 1(2), 130. doi:10.1037/1082-989X.1.2.130.
- McCall, L., & Kenworthy, L. (2009). Americans' social policy preferences in the era of rising inequality. *Perspectives on Politics*, 7(3), 459–484. doi:10.1017/S1537592709990818.
- McCall, L., & Manza, J. (2011). Class differences in social and political attitudes in the United States. In L. Jacobs & R. Shapiro (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Public Opinion and the Media*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- McIver, J. P., & Carmines, E. G. (1981). *Unidimensional scaling*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- McNamee, S. J., & Miller, R. K. (2004). *The meritocracy myth*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Mickelson, R. A. (1990). The attitude-achievement paradox among Black adolescents. *Sociology of Education*, 63, 44–61. doi:10.2307/2112896.
- Miller, S. D., & Sears, D. O. (1986). Stability and change in social tolerance: A test of the persistence hypothesis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 30(1), 214–236. doi:10.2307/2111302.
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (1998–2007). *Mplus user's guide*. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
- Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- O'Connor, W. E., Morrison, T. G., McLeod, L. D., & Anderson, D. (1996). A meta-analytic review of the relationship between gender and belief in a just world. *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*, 11(1), 141–148.

- Olander, M., Kirby, E. H., & Schmitt, K. (2005). *Attitudes of young people toward diversity*. College Park, MD: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE), University of Maryland. Retrieved on February 2, 2012 from www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/FactSheets/Attitudes.
- Pammett, J. H. (1996). Getting ahead around the world. In A. Frizzell & J. H. Pammett (Eds.), *Social inequality in Canada*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press.
- Reason, R. D., & Davis, T. L. (2005). Antecedents, precursors, and concurrent concepts in the development of social justice attitudes and actions. *New Directions for Student Services*, 110, 5–15. doi:10.1002/ss.161.
- Rumberger, R. W. (2010). Education and the reproduction of economic inequality in the United States: An empirical investigation. *Economics of Education Review*, 29(2), 246–254. doi:10.1016/j.econedurev.2009.07.006.
- Sawhill, I. V., & Morton, J. E. (2007). *Economic mobility: Is the American dream alive and well?* Economic Mobility Project, an Institution of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Retrieved on February 2, 2012 from www.economicmobility.org/assets/pdfs/EMP%20American%20Dream%20Report.pdf.
- Schulz, W., & Sibbens, H. (2004). *IEA civic education study: Technical report*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).
- Schuman, H., Steeh, L., Bobo, L., & Krysan, M. (1997). *Racial attitudes in America: Trends and interpretations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Seltzer, R., & Smith, R. C. (1985). Race and ideology: A research note measuring liberalism and conservatism in Black America. *Phylon (1960-)*, 46(2), 98–105. doi:10.2307/274409.
- Shepelak, N. J. (1989). Ideological stratification: American beliefs about economic justice. *Social Justice Research*, 3(3), 217–231. doi:10.1007/BF01048450.
- Skiba, R. J., Michael, R. S., Nardo, A. C., & Peterson, R. L. (2002). The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment. *The Urban Review*, 34(4), 317–342. doi:10.1023/A:1021320817372.
- Tuch, S. A., & Martin, J. K. (1997). Regional differences in whites' racial policy attitudes. In S. A. Tuch & J. K. Martin (Eds.), *Racial attitudes in the 1990s: Continuity and change* (pp. 165–176). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Twenge, J. M. (1997). Attitudes toward women, 1970–1995. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 21(1), 35–51. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00099.x.
- Walks, A. R. (2004). Place of residence, party preferences, and political attitudes in Canadian cities and suburbs. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 26(3), 269–295. doi:10.1111/j.0735-2166.2004.00200.x.
- Wallace, J. M., Jr, Goodkind, S., Wallace, C. M., & Bachman, J. G. (2008). Racial, ethnic, and gender differences in school discipline among U.S. high school students: 1991–2005. *The Negro Educational Review*, 59(1–2), 47–62.
- Yip, T., Seaton, E. K., & Sellers, R. M. (2006). African-American racial identity across the lifespan: Identity status, identity content, and depressive symptoms. *Child Development*, 77(5), 1504–1517. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00950.x.