

Youth Civic Engagement: Sociopolitical Development in Schools with Lessons
from and for Multicultural Education

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Social Work and Psychology)
in the University of Michigan
2014

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“...the future belongs to those who cultivate cultural sensitivities to differences and who use these abilities to forge a hybrid consciousness that transcends the “us” vs. “them” mentality and will carry us into a nosotras position bridging the extremes of our cultural realities.”

—Gloria Anzaldúa

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Dedication

A mi hermana y hermanos / To my siblings: Carolina, Rene, and Elias.

Acknowledgements

There are many people I wish to thank for their abundant support as I complete this dissertation. First, I would like to thank all those who agreed to be part of this dissertation project. The completion of this dissertation could not have been accomplished without the administrators at my research site, or the participants in these studies. The information and experiences they generously shared were extremely interesting and are the substance of this dissertation.

I cannot express enough thanks to my committee for their continued support and encouragement. I consider myself blessed to have two exceptional advisors and co-chairs. Barry Checkoway has been a great advisor, co-chair, and source of emotional support. I am delighted we have been able to work together over the years. Our collaborations have been instrumental in helping me think more deeply about the social work implications of my research, but more importantly, how to transcend academic expectations of applied scholarship. Thank you, Barry, for always reminding me that my work should be enjoyable and meaningful.

Stephanie Rowley is another amazing mentor and co-chair. She too has encouraged me without reservations to pursue my research and practice interests, even those that at times may have steered me away from this dissertation project. More importantly, she helped me to see the contributions that my “side hustles” brought to my academic progress and career objectives. Stephanie has also helped me understand and convey the importance of my work to developmental psychology. Moreover, she has led by example with her commitment to excellence in research, teaching, and mentorship. Stephanie, thank you in particular for guiding me through the dissertation process. You may have noticed that this task took me a little longer to tackle head on. I appreciate your forbearing, thoughtful, and detailed feedback on these chapters over the past months. I am in constant awe of you!

Lorraine Gutierrez and Michael Spencer have been incredible committee members. I have valued their insights and guidance throughout my time in graduate school. I could not have dreamed of a better pair to complete my dissertation committee. I have been lucky enough to teach a course and serve in committees with Lorraine, giving me the privilege to witness what an

incredible teacher and colleague she is. Thanks to Lorraine for her attention to theory, methodology, and rigor in this work. Thanks also to Mike for his insights on social justice education and social work practice. In particular, I enjoyed our conversations about the challenges of studying critical-dialogic pedagogy in schools. I also truly appreciate the candor with which Mike has supported me during the job search process. I offer my sincere appreciation to you both for the invaluable learning opportunities provided by your guidance throughout my doctoral studies.

Katie Richard-Schuster, whom I consider to be my unofficial doctoral advisor, has been a constant guide and cheerleader. Katie took me under her wing early in the program, and I continue to value her kindness, generosity, and wisdom. Without her I would have found this process a daunting task. Katie, I am so grateful to have you in my corner, and I look forward to many more years of friendship and collaboration.

There are other faculty members with whom I have been fortunate enough to interact and collaborate with over the years, all of whom have shaped my experiences in graduate school. I am grateful to them all. First, I would like to thank Dr. Gabriela Chavira, my undergraduate mentor at California State University, Northridge. I would not be in this position had it not been for her encouragement and guidance early on. I would like to thank Beth Reed, Monique L. Ward, and Kai Cortina for formal and informal conversations over the years that have informed my thinking about identity, socialization, and methodology. I would also like to thank Sandy Danzinger and Bill L. Vanderwill for their advisement during my earlier years in graduate school. To Berit Ingersoll-Dayton, Larry Gant, and Jorge Delva, a note of gratitude for always offering words of encouragement.

I would like to sincerely thank the administrative staff in the Joint Doctoral Program and the Psychology Department. Navigating the details of graduate school would have been impossible without their help. A heartfelt thank you to Todd Huynh and Laura Thomas in the Doctoral Office, and to Linda Anderson and Dianne Shute in the Developmental Psychology Office. I would also like to thank Lauri Brannan, Anne Muray, Therese Hustoles, Colleen Seifert, Danielle Joannette, Brian Wallace, Bakari Wooten, Susan Turkel, Erin Zimmer, and Tim Colenback for their assistance and support throughout the years.

In addition to the generous support from the Joint Program and the Psychology Department, which helped me complete my graduate program and dissertation, I have been lucky

enough to benefit from the generosity of other units on campus as well. Thank you to the Horace H. Rackham Graduate School for the Rackham Merit Fellowship, the Shapiro/John Malik/Jean Forrest Award, the Centennial Spring Summer Research Fellowship, and various research and travel grants; to the Center for the Education of Women for a critical difference grant. These awards provided much-needed financial support, as well as invaluable validation of my work. I would also like to thank the staff at the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) and the Center for Statistical Consultation and Research (CSCAR) for their assistance in refining my teaching and research skills. A special thank you to Gisselle E. Kolenic, for her helping me through various aspects of the dissertation analyses.

Thank you to the Program on Intergroup Relations for welcoming me into such a wonderful learning community. Teaching and working for the program has increased my theoretical and practical understanding of intergroup dialogues in ways I could not have gleaned from research alone. In collaboration with you all, I have learned so much about teaching, social justice, and myself. I can only hope that my future colleagues will be as conscientious and generous as you, and look forward to our continued work together. A special thanks to Adrienne Dessel, Roger Fisher, Mark Chesler, Susan King, Monita Thompson, Kelly Maxwell, and Taryn Petryk.

It is very important for me to take a moment to acknowledge my family. This accomplishment is a reflection of their love. My sister, Caro, has helped me in ways great in small throughout my time as a doctoral student. When I first began the dissertation project, and she was still in high school, she helped me refine measures used in this dissertation to ensure it was developmentally appropriate. Caro, thank you for providing encouragement every step of the way. To my younger brothers, Rene and Elias, your well-being inspires me to make this world a better place for all young men of color. My mother's strength and perseverance has taught me everything I know about facing challenges with courage and tenacity. 'Ama, you are my hero; thank you for all the personal sacrifices you have made to give me an opportunity to thrive. Although my father may not have had any formal schooling, he is one of the most intelligent people I know. His intellectual curiosity about the world nurtured my love of learning. I can attribute my worth ethic and relentless pursuit of knowledge to him. Daddy, muchas gracias por todo el amor y apoyo que me ha brindado. To my grandparents, although you are no longer with

us, your presence is felt every day. To all of my Aldana-Cardenas clan, thank you for your blessings and unconditional love.

Davin Phoenix and I met in the Fall of 2008 when I was entering my 2nd year of the doctoral program. Since then we have traveled through our respective programs together and shared the joys and frustrations of graduate school with one another. I feel blessed to have found a partner that cares so deeply about social justice and making a difference. Our conversations often prompt me to think more deeply about what I have to offer this world. More importantly, his encouragement and support has allowed me to fulfill my dreams with greater ease and peace of mind. Davin, you are my rock. Thank you for making me laugh, for taking care of Nena, and for always being on my side. I especially appreciate your editorial notes on previous versions of this dissertation. You have made this journey about so much more than just an academic pursuit. I will be forever grateful to you for making Ann Arbor feel like home.

Finally, thank you to my colleagues and friends here in Michigan and California. My peers have played a key role in shaping my intellectual interest and keeping me sanity intact. A special thanks to Sarah Trinh, my best valley friend (BVF), who has become very important to me these past few years. I would also like to thank Teresa Granillo, Cristina Mercado, and Fernando Rodriguez (and family) for welcoming me to the University of Michigan, and helping me find friendship and fellowship early on. To my colleagues Rebecca Timmermans and Bridget Christian, thank you for being such a pleasure to work with all these years. Thank you to all my friends from “home” who have celebrated with me along the way. A special thank you to my “townie friends”—Mina Hong, Nicole Mammo, Shayna Hall, Samara Anarbaeva, Jessica Heeringa—who have made living in Ann Arbor one of the greatest times of my life. I also want to thank all my peers who have journeyed through graduate school with me: Anuli Anyanwu, Chris Nellum, Yadira Enriquez, Elizabeth Gonzalez, Celeste Mendoza, my cohort members (especially my girl, Monica Foust), my writing groups, mi gente (LSPA, LSWC, and CIRLI), and Rowley Lab members past and present. I am so grateful to have you all in my life.

This journey has been an amazing experience, and I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to study, grow, and build important relationships. It is almost impossible for me to mention everyone that has contributed in a meaningful way to this process. I am incredible grateful to everyone who has helped me in any way.

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Abstract

This dissertation employed multiple methodologies in two separate but related studies to examine the role of schools in developing youth's sociopolitical development. The first study examined whether the relationship between racism awareness and civic engagement varied by level of school-based youth agency, perceptions of school racial climate, and perceptions of student voice climate. This study used cross-sectional methodology that included a sample of 140 suburban high school students (13–19 years old) from diverse racial backgrounds. Results showed that students who were more aware of racism, who felt greater sense of agency in school-related scenarios, and that perceived more positive school racial climate were more likely to report higher scores on civic accountability. Students who felt greater sense of agency in school-related scenarios, had parents with higher education levels, and were in higher-grade levels were more likely to report higher scores on expectations for civic engagement.

The second study used a mixed-method design to explore the role of intergroup dialogues in promoting students' sociopolitical learning. First, I examined the effects of a high school intergroup dialogue course on students' sociopolitical development (i.e., racism awareness and civic engagement) using a quasi-experimental design. The second phase of the study included qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews from three key informants involved in the facilitation of the high school dialogue course. Interview data explored the process of facilitating dialogues and sociopolitical learning in secondary education. Quantitative analysis did not find any significant effects of the course on students' racism awareness or civic engagement. However, qualitative data suggests that the course provided opportunities for learning that raised

students' awareness of local intergroup dynamics across multiple social identities. Interviews with intergroup dialogue educators also identified factors that assisted and hindered the implementation of the high school dialogue course. Implications for intergroup dialogue pedagogy in secondary education and social work practice are discussed. This dissertation concludes with a discussion of the role of schools in promoting adolescents' sociopolitical competencies through an empowering school culture.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Understanding opportunities for more empowered participation of youth in the United States is of interest to community organizers, educators, and researchers alike. Early research on youth civic engagement focused on parental influences of political socialization (Connell, 1972; Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Jennings & Niemi, 1968; McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007). More recently, scholarship has focused on the role of schools in shaping youth's civic attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors (Ehman, 1980; Fine, Burns, Payne, & Torre, 2004; Torney-Purta, 2002b). While research on political socialization and civic engagement has regained popularity over the past decade, less is known about how multicultural education and intergroup relations within schools influence the development of civic participation and sociopolitical beliefs. To better understand how youth from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds acquire the capacity to think critically about society and take social action, the concept of sociopolitical development must be tied to public discourse on the requisites of a diverse democracy and role of multicultural education.

Sociopolitical Development in a Diverse Democracy

Over the past decade, American society has become more racially and ethnically diverse. What's more, vast inequalities across communities and social groups continue to persist, and have steadily increased (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). American democracy operates within a pervasive system of oppression that privileges some groups at the expense of marginalized groups at the individual, institutional, and structural levels (Johnson, 2001). America's democratic system has been labeled a diverse democracy by scholars who point out that young people will need to learn

to engage with and collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds (Banks, 2007; Bowman, 2011; Checkoway, 2009; Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, & Landreman, 2002). Consequently, it is useful to refer to a “diverse democracy” as a sociopolitical context in which citizens from diverse backgrounds and with diverse social positions act individually and collectively to shape public policy and civil institutions to be more equitable and inclusive.

While social diversity includes a range of social identities (e.g. gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) that are interconnected to systems of privilege and oppression that maintain social inequality, this dissertation will focus on race and ethnicity in order to examine their roles in shaping youth’s sociopolitical development within the school context more closely. *Race* is most often referred to as a socially constructed category for groups that appear to have similar physical traits due to shared genotypes (Quintana, 2007), whereas *ethnicity* has been conceptualized as a shared cultural, linguistic, religious, and historical background (Phinney, 1996). Ethnic identity has also been defined as a feature of personal self-awareness determined by membership in and emotional attachment to an ethnic group (Phinney, 1992; Tajfel 1981). Scholars have suggested that to conceptualize and study race and ethnicity as separate and/or interchangeable identities neglects the sociocultural experience of individuals who do not experience a differentiation between race and ethnicity (Cross & Cross, 2008; Quintana, 2007). Accordingly, I conceptualize race and ethnicity not as separate social entities, but rather a dynamic social phenomenon constructed by social, economic, and political forces that continually shape and redefine an individual’s identity, group membership, and social power. Consequently, hereafter I use the term *racial-ethnic* to discuss racial and/or ethnic identity and intergroup relations based on race and ethnicity.

There are several reasons for examining the development of sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors in the school context, with specific emphasis on racial-ethnic relations. American schools have a long history of racial and ethnic discrimination (Donaldson, 1996; Mullard, 1980; Spencer, 1998; Weissglass, 2001). Moreover, youth are continuously affected by racial-ethnic issues, such as intergroup conflict, lunchroom segregation, social exclusion, and bullying in schools (Crystal, Killen, & Ruck, 2008; Fine & Torre, 2004; Tatum, 1997, 2007). In a diverse democratic society, adolescents may need to be cognizant of racial-ethnic issues and intergroup dynamics embedded in society that perpetuate racial-ethnic injustice, in order to address and alleviate social inequality. Thus, educational practices for sociopolitical development in a diverse democracy may benefit from educational content, structures, and processes that empower youth of color and encourages allyhood development among white youth.

Despite previous concerns regarding young people's political apathy and decreasing participation (Putnam, 2000), youth's sociopolitical participation has increased in recent years (Sander & Putnam, 2010). For example, youth are involved in a variety of civic activities that range from service-learning to social activism (Noguera, Ginwright, & Cammarota, 2006; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Carpini, 2006). Youth have also increased their presence in public discourse on issues related to diversity and social justice through the use of social media tools (Raynes-Goldie & Walker, 2008; Rheingold, 2008). In an increasingly global society, national differences in social views and political activity are becoming less significant between individuals in younger generations. In fact, youth in most Western countries tend to have more liberal views and are more willing to participate in political activism than older adults (Tilley, 2002).

A strong democracy necessitates both individuals who participate in critically conscious ways and collective action by people coming together to advance a social justice agenda (Rosenblum, 1998). More than ever adolescents need opportunities to learn how to engage productively with people from diverse backgrounds, think critically about society, and take civic action for social justice (Checkoway, 2009a). Citizen education for a diverse democracy must have a goal to help all students (including white youth) to build their capacity to transform society. To this end, students must develop multicultural literacy and cross-cultural competencies, gain multiple perspectives on issues, understand that knowledge is a social construction, learn about stereotypes, and build collaborative relationships with others (Banks, 2007). This dissertation views sociopolitical development in a diverse democracy as a social justice education approach to civic participation that is inclusive and empowering.

Defining Sociopolitical Development

The capability to recognize, critically analyze, and take action on sociopolitical issues is a key component of wellbeing and civic participation, particularly for oppressed groups (Prilleltensky, 2003; Freire, 1970). Watts and colleagues (1999; 2003; 2007) coined the term sociopolitical development to refer to the process of growth in a young person's knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social systems. This definition suggests that the developmental process of acquiring sociopolitical competencies includes raising critical consciousness and building capacity for civic engagement. The following section will define the two main aspects of sociopolitical development—critical consciousness and civic engagement—in more detail.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness refers to one's ability to critically reflect and analyze one's sociopolitical context in order to take action. Paulo Freire (1973; 1993) proposed the notion of critical consciousness as an educational anecdote for oppression through the use of literacy as a tool for liberation and social justice. Freire's work suggests that building marginalized people's capacity to participate in social change involved engagement in critical analysis of the structural, political, and cultural systems that oppress them (Friere, 2005). The reflection and analysis of one's sociopolitical environment is expected to build capacity for involvement in social change (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). As such, critical consciousness is assumed to motivate strategic action and challenge oppressive conditions. Engagement with educational activities related to democratic principles and values of justice and fairness may promote critical consciousness and motivate students to take action for social change. Educational approaches aimed at raising young people's critical consciousness range from peer discussions on issues related to race to mobilizing for social justice (DiCamillo & Pace, 2010; Torney-Purta, 2002a; Youniss et al., 2002).

Civic Engagement

In essence, civic engagement is a process in which people take action to address issues of public concern (Checkoway, 2012). The interdisciplinary nature of the literature on youth civic engagement has provided little consensus on how to define civic engagement. Yet, there are certain characteristics that help define youth's engagement in civil society. Civic engagement has been categorized as pro-social behavior expressed through participation in a range of activities that benefit the individual, others, and civil institutions (Balsano, 2005). Others from critical theoretical perspectives have discussed youth civic engagement in terms of collective voice and

social action (e.g., protest, activism) to push forward a social justice agenda, particularly among marginalized youth (Ginwright & James, 2002; Noguera, Ginwright, & Cammarota, 2006; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Some have conceptualized youth civic engagement to include a broad range of competencies such as conceptual understanding of government and civil society, formal and informal political action, and community service (Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Youniss et al., 2002). In this dissertation, civic engagement refers to individual and collective participation aimed at identifying and addressing issues in one's community or society at large. Civic engagement is a multidimensional construct that includes but is not limited to: civic behaviors, civic attitudes, political orientation, expectations and commitments to participate in formal civic activities, types of citizens, political voice, and alternative ways of engagement (Flanagan & Faison, 2001; Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002; Torney-Purta, 2002a).

Revisiting Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to education that is aimed at increasing educational equity. Multicultural education goes beyond sporadic celebrations of cultural diversity, such as multicultural fairs or cultural awareness months (e.g., Black History Month or Hispanic Heritage Month), to include critical analysis of structural barriers to ethnic and racial justice. To ground the dissertation research, I borrow from Grant's (1994) definition of multicultural education:

Multicultural education is a process that takes place in schools and other educational institutions and informs all subject areas and other aspects of the curriculum. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in the organizations and institutions of the United States.... It confronts social issues involving race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, gender, homophobia, and disability.... It encourages student investigations of world and national events and how these events affect their lives. It teaches critical thinking skills, as well as democratic decision-making, social action, and empowerment skills. (p. 31)

The reader may note that the date of this citation is 20 years old, which begs the question: why not seek more recent perspectives on the role of education in fostering multicultural competencies and citizen development?

A thorough historical review of the literature on multicultural education is beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, it is important to briefly consider the trends in multicultural education research over the past couple of decades and its continued relevance to the schooling of youth in the 21st century. Although multicultural education began as a challenge to inequalities that African Americans and other students of color experienced in schools (Banks, 1992; Grant, 1994; Rezai-Rashti, 1995; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995b), it has since then become an umbrella term for a variety of educational activities and efforts to showcase cultural diversity without concern for structural or institutional racism.

A long-standing critique has been that in practice multiculturalism has taken an array of forms, most of which move away from the aims of racial liberation and social justice set forth by multicultural education theory (Ladson-Billings, 2004; McLaren, 1997; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995). In light of this criticism, scholars have urged for more substantive educational approaches to education and schooling that address not only cultural distinctiveness, but also attend to social power and social change. Accordingly, scholarship has been done since then to address this concern but has yet to settle on a unifying framework. Instead, contemporary research has used various terminology, such as critical multiculturalism, anti-racist education, social justice education, critical pedagogy, culturally-responsive pedagogy, and transformative education to examine the role of education in addressing race-ethnicity and inequality (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Curry-Stevens, 2007; Derman-Sparks, 2004; Grant, 2012; Nagda, Gurin, & Lopez, 2003; Sleeter, 2011). Much of this work has focused on instructional and pedagogical

approaches that raise critical consciousness, reduce bias, foster positive intergroup relations and motivates action. Despite efforts to think more critically about multiculturalism and its role in developing citizens for a diverse democracy, we have mainly focused on improving curriculum and instruction, less attention has been paid to other aspects of education that may also shape adolescents' sociopolitical development.

In this dissertation, I hope to build on current social justice education research by using a critical multiculturalist perspective to better understand youth civic engagement among adolescents from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds, with lessons from and for multicultural education. Consequently, I seek to make a case for revising theoretical principles of multicultural education that are of particular relevance to the study of sociopolitical development in schools. Banks (1993) proposed five dimensions that are helpful in understanding the multifaceted nature of multicultural education: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, empowering school culture, and equity pedagogy. Two of these dimensions—an empowering school culture and equity pedagogy—and their features are particularly helpful in conceptualizing how schools may shape youth's sociopolitical development. Despite the utility in thinking about empowering school culture and equity pedagogy as means of promoting social justice in schools, much of the research (and debate) on education and schooling has focused on prejudice reduction and largely ignored other important aspects and outcomes of multicultural education (Sleeter, 2012; Zirkel, 2008b).

Empowering School Culture. An *empowering school culture* refers to social structures within schools that promote gender, racial, and social class equity (Banks, 1993) through practices such as equitable participation in extracurricular activities, enrollment in gifted and special education programs, and positive interactions of staff and students across ethnic and

racial lines (Banks, 2001). A school's focus on building strong relationships both among students and between students and teachers, as well as focus on pedagogical and institutional practices that reduce racism to build a more multiethnic and inclusive learning environment, are often considered when discussing an empowering school culture. This may include professional development for teachers to help manage group dynamics in the classroom, or efforts made to build positive teacher-student relationships. It may also include informal social interactions within the school hallways, lunchroom, and sports fields. "The school culture and social structure are powerful determinants of how students learn to perceive themselves (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. 153)." In order for schools to effectively prepare students for participation in a diverse democratic society, schools themselves must become democratic institutions that model ethnic diversity, inclusive and participatory norms, and effective citizen action (Banks, 2007). Empowering school culture is a useful theoretical principle for studying the development of youth civic engagement in schools, because it underscores the utility of considering racial-ethnic issues within this context (i.e. lunchroom segregation, classroom dynamics) that may informally facilitate or hinder youth's acquisition of sociopolitical skills and attitudes.

Equity Pedagogy. *Equity pedagogy* includes instructional strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds attain knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within and help create a just and democratic society (Banks & Banks, 1995, 2009). The purpose of equity pedagogy is to help students become reflective and active citizens of a democratic society. Equity pedagogy is an instructional approach that attends to both teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse backgrounds succeed (Banks & Banks, 2009). Equity pedagogy may be most effectively understood in relation to other dimensions of multicultural education. For

instance, equity pedagogy is most transformative when combined with social justice curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2012). Equity pedagogy may involve students in the process of knowledge construction by challenging the idea of instruction as the transmission of facts and students as passive recipients. Instead of memorization, students learn to generate knowledge and create new understanding (Banks, 2009). Under equity pedagogy, teaching may be framed as a multicultural encounter. Teachers who are skilled in equity pedagogy are able to use diversity to enrich instruction instead of fearing or ignoring it. Through equity pedagogy students may gain more than basic skills to fit into society, rather they use skills acquired to become effective agents of change.

Intergroup dialogues: A critical-dialogic approach. Critical multiculturalists and anti-racist scholars have called for curriculum and pedagogy that moves beyond celebrating diversity and cultural understanding toward engagement across difference for the purposes of analysis of power in American society and dismantling the normative status of Whiteness (Giroux, 2001; Jackson & Solis, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2004; McCarthy & Willis, 1995). On a similar note, Banks (2007) suggests that education should promote students' positive self-identification and self-understanding of how their group is similar and different to other groups; this can be achieved through cross-cultural exchange. Social justice education efforts using intergroup dialogue (IGD) pedagogy are a promising equity pedagogy approach for engaging young people in deliberative democracy (Schoem, 2003).

IGDs are typically repeated structured discussions between two or more social identity groups that focus on a particular social identity (e.g., gender, race-ethnicity, religion) examined within the context of systems of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism). Accordingly, the study of IGD participation can provide greater insight into developmental processes within

intergroup discussions of civic and sociopolitical issues that promote ethnic identity development, awareness of racism, and civic engagement (Berger, Zuñiga, & Williams, 2005; Nagda & Gurin, 2007; Nagda, 2006). Consequently, this dissertation seeks to examine the role of IGDs—as a form of equity pedagogy—in developing youth’s racial attitudes and civic engagement.

Scholars that study IGD pedagogy emphasize that critical awareness regarding cultural distinctiveness and collaboration across differences are both needed to promote social change (Nagda & Gurin, 2007). This form of engagement assumes that democracy is a process in which people from distinct identity groups recognize their differences and build coalitions to engage in collective action (Gurin, Nagda, & Lopez, 2004; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007). Drawing from Freire’s (1970), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, IGD pedagogy recognizes that oppression exists and is maintained through structural, institutional, and social arrangements. Thus, a key characteristic of IGD involves fostering an environment that enables open communication between participants that facilitates the examination of power and equity as they relate to social identities (Nagda, Kim, & Truelove, 2004; Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003; Nagda, 2006). Youth participation in IGD has been shown to raise critical consciousness, increase communication with people who are different, and strengthen individual and collective capacity for engagement, which is especially salient among adolescent populations (Aldana, Rowley, Checkoway, & Richards-Schuster, 2012; Boulden, 2007; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Spencer, Brown, Griffin, & Abdullah, 2008). Adolescents are ideally positioned for engagement in IGD deliberation, since they are in a developmental phase characterized by the exploration of identity and civic roles.

The Role of Schools

As youth grow older the principal ecological niche they interact with—which typically includes parents in early childhood—changes as they get older to include peers, teachers, mentors, and other adults in the community. Consequently, the significance of schools as sites for sociopolitical socialization and intergroup social interactions may increase during adolescence. Schools may inform students’ sociopolitical development through course curriculum and extracurricular activities. Schooling also takes place in groups and social interactions outside of the classroom (Banks, 2007). Bronfenbrenner and Morrison (2006) propose that developmental processes also involve active engagement with objects and symbols. It may be that youth’s school engagement with learning materials (e.g., books, classroom activities), peer norms (e.g., lunchroom segregation), and educational policies (e.g., academic tracking, disciplinary actions) also inform and shape youth’s sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors. These theoretical assumptions suggest that closer examination of the development of sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors in the school context is necessary.

Schools may formally and informally socialize youth about race and intergroup relations. Formally, a school’s integration of multicultural curriculum may provide knowledge about diverse social groups, inform racial attitudes, and promote positive intergroup relations. For instance, K-12 teachers and staff have found various ways to incorporate culturally-based materials in their classrooms that celebrate cultural differences (Milner, 2005; Strange, 2009). Some schools also provide prejudice reduction interventions that foster students’ ability to resolve conflict peacefully and build relationships across difference (Nagda, McCoy, & Barrett, 2006; Spencer et al., 2008). Although less common, some educators also engage students in

participatory inquiry that transforms schools and teaches youth to critically analyze historical and contemporary racism (Cammarota & Fine, 2008).

Schools also informally socialize students' racial attitudes and behaviors. The transition to secondary school in particular has been theorized to elicit exploration of one's social identity and racial attitudes (Tatum, 1997). In secondary school—particularly racially and ethnically integrated schools—students are exposed to a broader set of peers than in elementary school. Encounters with new peers who do not share the same ethnic and racial background are expected to prompt exploration of one's ethnic and racial identity (Aldana et al., 2012; Cross & Cross, 2007; Tatum, 1997).

However, the propensity to form friendships with others who share similar social identities (e.g., gender, race, and ethnicity) tends to increase in adolescence (Hallinan & Williams, 1989; Hamm, 2001; Moody, 2001). In racially integrated schools, friendship segregation can limit intergroup interactions and foster group norms that maintain negative stereotypes, prejudice, and avoidance of others. To illustrate, self-segregation in the lunchroom may be a strategy used by youth of color to avoid being discriminated against by others (Tatum, 1994). Moreover, self-segregation is reinforced by racial segregation across schools (Orfield, 2001) and policies that limit intergroup interactions, such as academic tracking (Conger, 2005; Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987; Hallinan & Williams, 1989; Hallinan, 1998; Orfield, 2001; Tatum, 1997). All together, these findings suggest that schools inform students' racial identity and intergroup relationships through organizational characteristics and social norms.

Schools are also sites of sociopolitical learning. Schools offer civics courses that provide basic knowledge about the political system and legislative process (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003; Galston, 2001, 2007). Extra-curricular activities and service-learning early on

provide an introduction to civic engagement that increases individuals' likelihood of participating in civic activities later in life (Eccles, Barber, Stone, & Hunt, 2003; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Metz & Youniss, 2005; Reinders & Youniss, 2006). Most research on youth civic development has mainly focused on the role of formal curriculum and service-learning (Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005; Langton & Jennings, 1968; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Niemi & Junn, 1993). Although we are gaining greater understating of the formal ways in which schools develop young people's civic engagement, less is known about the informal role schools play in shaping adolescent's sociopolitical development.

Schools also shape young people's civic beliefs and expectations informally. Students' perceptions of fair and caring teachers, open classroom environment, and school climate have been linked to adolescents' civic attitudes (Campbell, 2005; Cohen, Pickeral, & Fege, 2009; Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007). Schools are also the focus of youth-led participation in activism and protest. For instance, many youth across the nation have successfully organized to create change in class curriculum, school facilities, and educational policies that perpetuate racial injustice (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Checkoway & Gutiérrez, 2006b; Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2001, 2006; Ginwright, 2000; Richards-Schuster & Checkoway, 2009). Together, literature on youth civic engagement suggests that schools are not only a place where students engage with civic content and service-learning, but also sites for youth-led sociopolitical action.

Public schools are well positioned to educate and prepare youth for citizen participation in a diverse society. Public high schools reach a greater number of the general population than higher education, community-based organizations, or work-based professional development programs. As one example, high school texts reach a wider audience than college texts (Morning,

2008). Indeed only 30% of the American population between 22- to 24 years old has been exposed to some college education, whereas the majority (96%) have had some high school education (Snyder, 2011). Despite the potential to reach a broader cross-section of young people, research on diversity learning and sociopolitical outcomes has mainly focused on college students (Berger et al., 2005; Gurin, et al., 2004; Hurtado et al., 2002; Nieto, 2006).

Furthermore, few schools remain committed to youth civic engagement in their curricula, or emphasize the competencies needed for participation in a society that values diversity as an asset. For example, empirical research has demonstrated that there is a decline in the number, range, and frequency of civics courses offered in K-12 (Levine, 2006; Niemi & Junn, 1993; Niemi & Smith, 2001). Similarly, schools tend to not focus their curricula on issues of diversity and inequality. More alarming, some school districts have banned social justice curricula that aims to empower students to think critically about race-ethnicity (Cammarota & Aguilera, 2012; Cammarota & Romero, 2014; Lundholm, 2011). In general, schools have focused on multicultural curriculum integration that aims to celebrate cultural diversity and is rarely connected to awareness of systematic inequality or civic development. Nevertheless, there is scholarship that highlights educational and practical experiences within schools that promote students' critical consciousness and social action (Balcazar, Tandon, Kaplan, & Izzo, 2001; Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Salzman, 2000).

Multicultural education within schools is essential in preparing high school students to participate in a diverse democracy (Parker, 2003). Multicultural education can promote youth's sociopolitical development in various ways. Participation in multicultural education is often related to young people's engagement and interest in civic participation, engagement in policy issues, and motivation to take action (Boulden, 2007; Wayne, 2008). Moreover, multicultural

leadership programs have shown to increase adolescents' sense of racial identities and their ability to talk openly about race and class factors, thus cultivating the new cadre of community builders who are more critically conscious about racial-ethnic issues than earlier generations (Boulden, 2007; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Teaching youth about diversity and racism promotes critical thinking and civic agency (Checkoway, 2009b; Gurin, Nagda, et al., 2004). Generally speaking, participation in multicultural education activities informs students' democratic beliefs, attitudes, and motivation to take action.

Dissertation Goals and Contributions

Theoretical assumptions suggest that critical consciousness about social inequality among groups that are politically and socially marginalized is a motivating factor for civic engagement (Freire, 1970; Gutiérrez, Parsons, & Cox, 1998; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). How is the relationship between critical consciousness and civic engagement affected by the school context? What is the role of equity pedagogy in promoting sociopolitical learning? What are key issues in fostering dialogic pedagogy in schools?

In this dissertation, I sought to explore these guiding questions and examine the role of schooling in promoting sociopolitical development, with an emphasis on the role of multicultural education in fostering critical consciousness and civic engagement. A primary goal of the dissertation is to expand our current understanding of youth's sociopolitical development by identifying the mechanisms that support and hinder youth's racial consciousness and civic engagement in a racially and ethnically integrated school setting. To this end, the dissertation will examine adolescents' sociopolitical development, among a diverse group of high school students, by considering school and multicultural education factors using multiple methodologies in two separate but related studies.

Study I

The first aim of the dissertation is to examine the relationship between civic engagement and racism awareness, and explore how this relationship is affected by individual experiences of the school context. More specifically, I examine how racism awareness (as a form of critical consciousness) relates to civic engagement, taking into consideration students' sense of agency and perceptions of the school's climate. In the first study, I consider civic engagement across two domains, including civic accountability and expectations for engagement. This definition of civic engagement considers general attitude towards civil responsibilities and commitment to future engagement. To meet the first aim, I use data from a self-reported survey of high school students in the Midwest. The sample includes high school students who range from 9th-12th grade and come from various racial-ethnic backgrounds.

In the first study, I also examine how psychological and environmental factors such as school-based youth agency and perceived school climate function across each type of civic engagement outcome. While previous empirical work on sociopolitical development has considered agency broadly, this dissertation adds to our understanding of context-specific sociopolitical efficacy within schools (i.e., school-based youth agency). Specifically, it will consider how school-based youth agency—such as advocating for fair school policies—has implications for adolescents' development of civic attitudes and intentions to participate in future civic activities. The dissertation will also account for school environmental factors, mainly school climate, to examine the role of opportunity structures that shape young people's civic attitudes. Expanding on previous work that has examined the relation between civic engagement and school climate (Flanagan et al., 2007), this study examines students' perceptions of school climate in two ways: perceived racial climate and perceived student voice climate.

Similar to racial segregation found across neighborhoods and schools (Orfield & Lee, 2005), literature on youth's sociopolitical development has largely functioned in separate theoretical and empirical academic collectives. Research on youth civic engagement tends to emphasize the experience of White middle-class youth, showing that White youth tend to participate more than youth of color (particularly underrepresented students in urban communities) and have access to a wider range of civic activities (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2007; Sander & Putnam, 2010). Meanwhile, studies on the experience of youth of color tend to focus on raising critical consciousness and activism among marginalized youth living in underserved communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Noguera et al., 2006; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). This theoretical and practical approach to civic engagement limits what is known about sociopolitical development among youth that fall outside of these categories.

This dissertation recognizes this limitation and aims to engage in a discussion on the sociopolitical development of youth living and learning in an ethnically and racially integrated school. To address this gap in the literature, this dissertation will examine both aspects of sociopolitical development (critical consciousness and civic engagement) among an ethnically-racially diverse sample of adolescents. This will broaden our understanding about the role of racism awareness in the development of civic attitudes among students of color and white youth. Furthermore, it will allow me to examine whether racial-ethnic group differences in civic engagement persist between White youth and racial-ethnic minorities (i.e., civic engagement gap) in racially integrated context.

Study II

The second aim of the dissertation is to explore the role of equity pedagogy—IGD pedagogy in particular—in promoting sociopolitical development, and how educators perceive youth’s sociopolitical learning in the school context. More specifically, the second study of the dissertation will examine the effects of school-based IGD course on students’ sociopolitical development using a mixed-method, quasi-experimental design. In the first phase of the study, self-reported pre- and post-test survey data from Study I are used. This sample includes IGD participants and a non-equivalent control group. The second phase of the study includes analysis of semi-structured interviews from educators involved in the facilitation of a high school dialogue course to provide an exploratory analysis of the process of facilitating IGD and sociopolitical learning.

This study will contribute to our understanding of how multicultural education influences sociopolitical development in a number of ways. The quasi-experimental design allows us to examine the effect of the dialogue on components of sociopolitical development more directly. The majority of studies on youth IGD programs are non-experimental or cross-sectional studies in community settings or afterschool conflict resolution interventions, which do not allow for causal explanations of effects or generalize findings to school settings. This study is the first, to my knowledge, to examine IGDs that are offered as part of a school district’s core curriculum.

Moreover, the dissertation will bring the discussion of IGD pedagogy, which has primarily been focused on higher education, to the secondary level. Even though adolescents have potential to acquire multicultural competencies, most research on the implementation of diversity learning or critical pedagogy has focused on institutions of higher education. For instance, diversity programs that emphasize the attainment of knowledge and skills for positive

interactions with people of different backgrounds target pre-service teachers (Stevens & Charles, 2005) and undergraduate students (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). Less is known about the experience of adolescents with equity pedagogy. This dissertation has the potential to help develop evidence-informed IGD practice with adolescents.

Pedagogy based on college samples, particularly IGD pedagogy, should not be widely adopted without evaluation and modification for use with younger students. In light of developmental differences between adolescents and emerging adults, more empirical evidence is needed on how to engage high school students from diverse backgrounds in meaningful discussions about race that foster their capacity to think critically about society and motivate them to participate in community change. To this end, I talk to educators about the factors that facilitate and challenge the implementation of IGD pedagogy within the school context. I also consider how IGD promotes sociopolitical learning (critical consciousness and civic attitudes). The study of IGD implementation in schools can provide greater insight into educational processes within intergroup discussions of civic and sociopolitical issues that promote awareness of racism and civic engagement.

Both studies draw from and integrate various theoretical and empirical literatures that have informed our understanding of how multicultural education helps adolescents develop sociopolitical attitudes and beliefs. Taken together, the two studies presented in this dissertation will help broaden our understanding of sociopolitical development in racially and ethnically integrated communities and among youth from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, these studies will expand our understanding of sociopolitical development and the role of multicultural education for a diverse democracy in building young people's capacity for racially just civic

participation. As such, this dissertation work will make substantial contributions to the fields of social work, psychology, and education.

Organization of the Dissertation

The following chapters present the dissertation research in greater detail. Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant theoretical and empirical research that considers sociopolitical development and related psychological factors. First, the chapter provides a brief discussion of the sociopolitical development theory (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts et al., 1999; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003) used in the conceptualization of this dissertation. Next, I give a description of the conceptual model, and the modifications made to the sociopolitical development framework. The literature review will also include a discussion of the various components of sociopolitical development as they relate to schools and multicultural education. This chapter concludes with my specific research questions, hypotheses, and assumptions for each of the studies. Chapter Three provides an overview of the research setting where I collected data, research methods, and the procedures for data collection. This chapter also includes a discussion of my research-practice tensions, participants, and the development of research tools. In Chapter Four, I present the first study in greater detail. This chapter includes the data analysis plan, results, and discussions of quantitative findings that address sociopolitical development in schools. Chapter Five presents the details of the second study, which includes a description of the IGD course intervention, the mixed-methods data analysis strategy, quantitative and qualitative results, and a discussion of the integrated findings. Finally, in Chapter Six, I conclude with a summary of the findings from both studies. This chapter includes a brief discussion of the research limitations and future research directions. The dissertation closes with practical implications for multicultural education and social work practice.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Over the last two decades, the apparent civic apathy among young people prompted greater interest in examining the precursors and methods of youth civic engagement. Despite declining youth participation in civic activities (Putnam, 2000), recent historical sociopolitical events, such as the attacks of 9/11 and President's Barack Obama's campaign, have instigated a recent increase in youth participation in civic activities (Sander & Putnam, 2010). Moreover, understanding youth's acquisition of sociopolitical attitudes and skills is important given its link to positive youth development and potential contributions to political and social change. At the individual level, literature on high school and college students demonstrates that engagement in civic activities promotes social development and positively impacts their occupational aspirations and accomplishments (Diemer, 2009; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005; Ozer & Schotland, 2011). Also, youth who are involved in community service activities are more likely to report greater senses of social responsibility and community belonging (McGuire & Gamble, 2006). In addition to the positive relationship with social and academic development, participation in civil society at an early age is associated with engagement in civic activities as adults (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007; Reinders & Youniss, 2006). Adolescents and American society have much to gain from the civic and political engagement of all young citizens.

In recent decades we have also experienced a rapidly changing composition of America's population. Children and youth disproportionately account for the marked demographic changes

in the nation's racial and ethnic composition (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012b). The increasing racial-ethnic diversity of children and youth is likely to reshape America's politics and intergroup relations in the future (Johnson & Lichter, 2010). These demographic trends suggest that citizen engagement in the future will require people to engage across ethnic and racial differences and bridge multiple social worlds (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; Checkoway, 2009a). That is, as the U.S. becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, it may be that participation in a diverse democracy will require multicultural competencies such as racial-ethnic consciousness (e.g., knowledge of self and others, awareness of social systems of hierarchy, etc.), intergroup empathy, and justice oriented civic attitudes. As such, discourse on youth's sociopolitical development must attend to issues of race and intergroup relations.

Sociopolitical Development Theory

Sociopolitical Development theory provides an integrative model that articulates the process by which youth come to think critically about their world and become active participants in society (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts et al., 1999; Watts, Guessous, Ginwright, Noguera, & Cammarota, 2006; Watts et al., 2003). Expanding on fundamental tenets of developmental psychology, liberation pedagogy, and critical youth perspectives, sociopolitical development theory suggests that: a) youth's sociopolitical development is contextualized (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Garcia Coll et al., 1996); b) social power and inequity operate through formative social institutions such as schools (Freire, 1985; Prilleltensky, 2003; Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002); and c) youth are change agents that can contribute to society and social justice (Checkoway et al., 2003; Ginwright & James, 2002). This sociopolitical development framework expands the study of youth civic engagement by articulating the ways in which contextual factors and the systems of oppression promote or hinder the development of social action among young people.

More specifically, Watts and Flanagan (2007) propose that youth's sociopolitical development includes building young people's sense of *agency* (ability to voice concerns that yield social power) and providing (in)formal *opportunity structures* that make engagement in community action accessible for diverse groups, which in turn moderates the relation between *social analysis* (e.g., critical consciousness, racism awareness) and *societal involvement*—a full range of civic engagement activities and civic orientation attitudes (Figure 2.1). In short, sociopolitical development is the process by which young people come to critically analyze their sociopolitical context and engage in social change.

The sociopolitical development framework proposed by Watts and colleagues (2007; 1999, 2006, 2003), is particularly relevant to this dissertation work due to the interdisciplinary nature of its theoretical principles and the developmental appropriateness of the model. For instance, the model proposed by Watts and Flanagan (2007), which is rooted in the critical examination of oppression, allowed me to better conceptualize the connection between psychological concepts within a social justice perspective. Similar to other conceptualizations of empowerment—as articulated by Freire (1970), Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), and Zimmerman and Rappaport (1988)—the sociopolitical development model used in this dissertation highlights the importance of increasing individuals' consciousness in order to promote action.

The sociopolitical development model (Watts & Flanagan, 2007) used in this dissertation also resembles Zimmerman's scholarship on empowerment in that it highlights the importance of agency or sociopolitical control in taking action. However, much of the early scholarship resulting from Zimmerman's theory of empowerment has focused on adult populations (Gutiérrez, 1990; Reitzug, 1994; Short & Rinehart, 1993). Recent validation of a sociopolitical

control possessed by adolescents is an exciting contribution to this line of work (Christens & Peterson, 2012; Peterson, Peterson, Agre, Christens, & Morton, 2011). In fact, empirical studies on sociopolitical development have used Zimmerman’s measure of sociopolitical control (Diemer, Hsieh, & Pan, 2009; Diemer & Hsieh, 2008; Diemer, 2009). Nevertheless, much of our theoretical understanding of the process of sociopolitical *development* among adolescence may be attributed to Watts and colleagues (1999, 2003, 2006, 2007).

This sociopolitical development framework is particularly useful in exploring both the developmental relationship between psychological factors and structural context of adolescence that fosters critical consciousness and civic engagement. While the sociopolitical development model used in this dissertation is related to other conceptualizations of empowerment, it expands on theoretical notions of empowerment by attending to both developmental and contextual factors that may be involved the building of youth’s sociopolitical capacities.

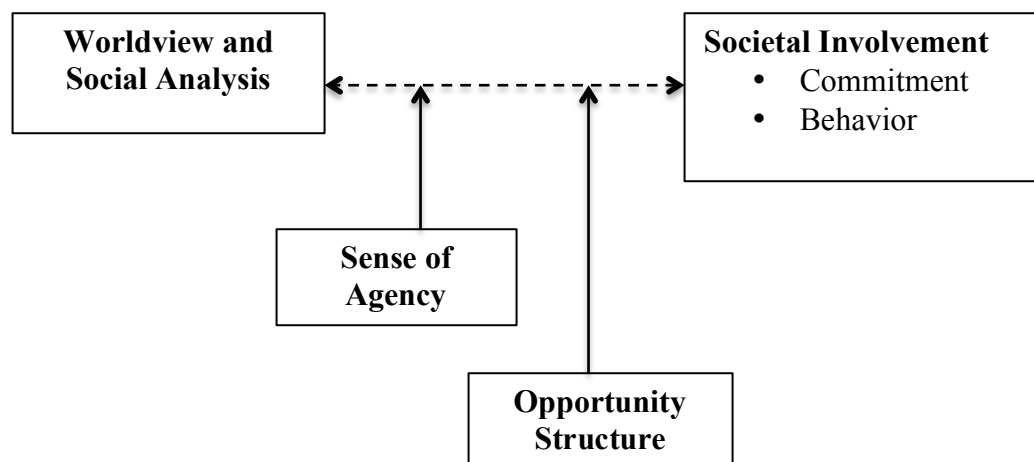


Figure 2.1 Model of Sociopolitical Development (Watts & Flanagan, 2007)

Ginwright & Cammarota’s (2002) social justice perspective on youth development has also greatly contributed to the study of youth empowerment. This social justice framework has identified three key principles of the empowerment process: centrality of social identity, analysis

of power, and collective action. *Centrality of social identity* suggests that in order for educational or intervention strategies to be effective, they must help youth explore their identity (e.g., ethnic-racial identity) and how people's identity positions them within a matrix of privilege and oppression (e.g., racism awareness). *Analysis of power* refers to building youth's ability to examine power dynamics within interpersonal relationships, institutions, and social structures. Finally, encouraging *collective action* refers to practices that help youth build coalitions and work collaboratively with others to enact change.

These principles were taken into account during the early conceptualization of this research, in order to determine whether the sociopolitical development theory would be an appropriate conceptual model for this dissertation. As such, conceptual adaptations made to the sociopolitical development model proposed by Watts and Flanagan (2007), which are presented in the following section, were influenced by the social justice youth development model (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

Conceptual Framework

This dissertation integrates developmental perspectives, along with multicultural education and social justice frameworks to adapt the sociopolitical development theory proposed by Watts and Flanagan (2007). The conceptual model used in this dissertation is presented in Figure 2.2. The relationships proposed in the original sociopolitical development model were left unaltered. Rather, modifications were made to the conceptualization and operationalization of the various components of sociopolitical development. As noted earlier, principles of youth empowerment highlight the need for explicitly addressing social identity (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Therefore, the first adaptation made to the sociopolitical development model was to operationalize social analysis (or critical consciousness) as *racism awareness*. Racism

awareness refers to conceptual understanding of the social hierarchy that privileges White people and perpetuates racial inequalities that put racial-ethnic minorities at a social disadvantage.

Second, I adapted the model to more directly assess contextual factors in schools that may also be related to sociopolitical development. Banks' (2007) multicultural education perspective on an empowering school culture provides a useful rubric for considering school-related factors (e.g. school climate, intergroup interactions) that may facilitate or hinder youth's capacity for civic participation in an increasingly diverse democracy. Consequently, I conceptualized youth's sociopolitical control (agency) more narrowly within the confines of the school setting to create a new measure that tapped into *school-based youth agency*. School-based youth agency refers to belief about one's capabilities and efficacy in the school's sociopolitical environment. Examples of school-based youth agency include perceptions of one's influence in school policy decisions, engagement in student organizations, efficacy in voicing concerns, or confidence enacting positive change in school.

Similarly, I conceptualized opportunity structures to include both formal and informal ways in which youth may perceive their school to support youth participation within the school context by measuring students' perceptions of *racial climate* and *student voice climate*. Perceived racial climate refers to students' perceptions about their school's support of racial-ethnic inclusivity and cultural pluralism. Research on school culture suggests that the opportunity for youth of color to succeed in schools may be structured by racial stratification in institutional policies; such as unfair discipline policies or the disproportionate number of White students placed in advanced classes compared to underrepresented students of color (Hunter & Bartee, 2003; Oakes, 1990, 2005; Schwarzwald & Cohen, 1982). It may be that a student's perceived school racial climate provides students with informal cues about the racial inclusivity of

opportunity structures at their school. Student voice climate refers to youth's perceptions of their inclusion in the decision-making process at their school. Student voice in service-learning and school life has been related to greater civic engagement (Morgan & Streb, 2001). Consequently, we may expect that students' perceptions of the school's support of student input (student voice) may also influence how students interpret school leadership as opportunities for civic engagement.

The dissertation sought to examine two dimensions of civic engagement: attitudes and expectations. Indicators of civic attitudes may include trust in government and civil institutions, attitudes towards policies, support for political rights of marginalized groups, and general orientation towards civic engagement (Crystal & DeBell, 2002; Flanagan, 2003; Torney-Purta, 2002a). Civic attitudes are particularly relevant to examine during adolescence, because civic and political development may be more susceptible to educational factors than other dimensions of civic engagement. For instance, schools may provide learning experiences that inform an individual's beliefs about civil society and one's role in it. In this dissertation, I look at adolescents' beliefs regarding one's civic responsibility to think critically about social issues and policies, voice concerns, and take steps to improve conditions at the local and national level (i.e., *civic accountability*). I also look at students' *expectations for engagement*, or their intentions to participate in civic activities after graduating from high school. Given that many students may not have the opportunity to engage in formal civic activities until after they graduate from high school, I sought to examine students' future intentions to participate in a range of civic activities.

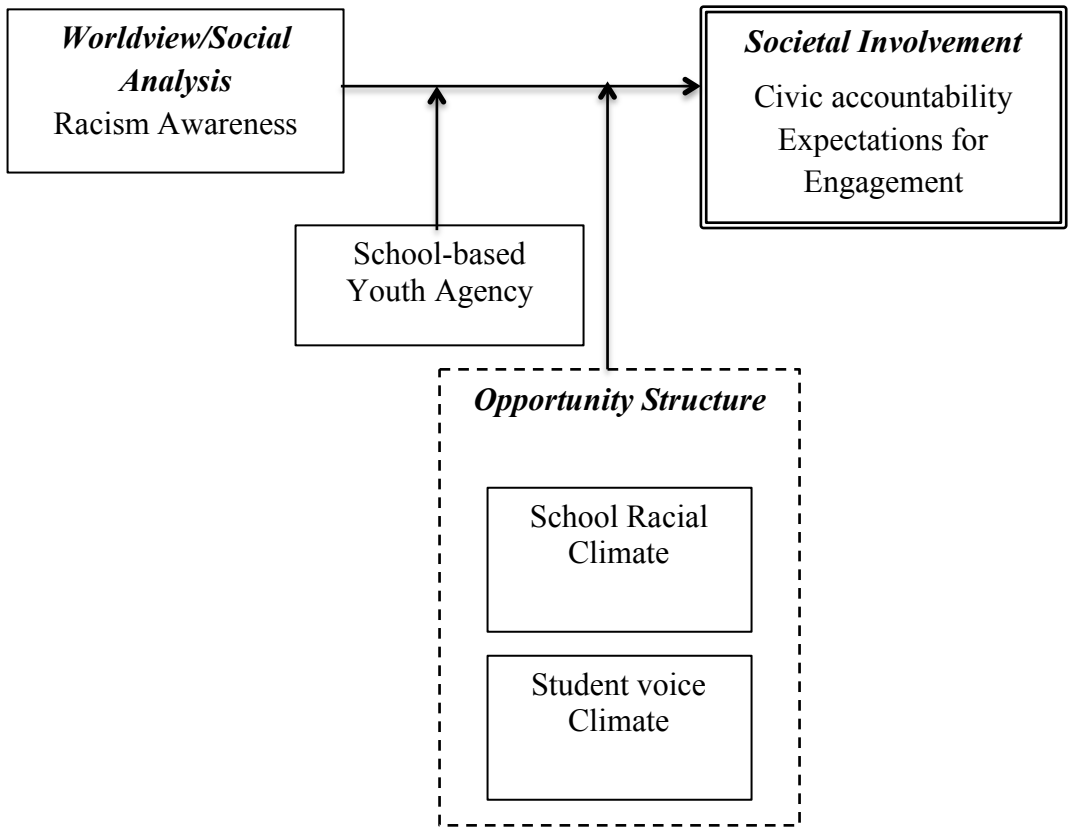


Figure 2.2 Conceptual Model: Sociopolitical Development within Schools

The aim of the conceptual framework in this dissertation is to move beyond previous models that theoretically segregate the social and political development of youth of color and their White counterparts. Developmental perspectives suggest that the experience of marginalized youth is shaped by the social stratification mechanisms (e.g., discrimination, prejudice, and segregation) that foster or constrain developmental processes (Garcia Coll et al., 1996). Thus, greater attention should be paid to sociohistorical factors (e.g., the historical context of oppression and racism) in which marginalized youth’s sociopolitical capacity develops in. I argue that, by the same token, social mechanisms embedded in a stratified society are pertinent to socially privileged youth as well—albeit in different ways. Oppression cannot be understood

without acknowledging and unpacking privilege (Johnson, 2001; McIntosh, 1988). For instance, while racial oppression may limit access to formal venues of civic engagement for youth of color, racial privilege may grant White youth with more resources in their school, access to key stakeholders, or broader social networks that foster their engagement in civic society. Thus, given that the sociopolitical development model outlines possible developmental relationships between consciousness, agency, and opportunity structures, it provides a clear foundation for exploring how contextual factors shape both marginalized and privileged youth's sociopolitical development. To this end, shared contexts such as integrated schools may provide insight into both universal and race-based differences in developmental changes.

In sum, the dissertation research integrates theoretical dimensions of multicultural education and sociopolitical development to develop an organizational framework that explores the development of critical consciousness and civic engagement among high school students from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds. The following literature review draws from various fields to further describe and support the conceptual framework, as well as provide a brief discussion of previous scholarship that has helped shaped our understanding of youth sociopolitical development.

Components of Sociopolitical Development and Schooling

Preparation for participation in a diverse democracy requires knowledge and skills for critical analysis, intergroup communication, and collective action (Lopez & Zúñiga, 2010; Nagda et al., 2006; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). As such, education for diverse democracy should include information about social identities, group similarities and differences, patterns of dominance and subservience, and struggles to challenge structures that perpetuate injustices. Youth's engagement in educational programs that foster sociopolitical development for a diverse

democracy is not commonly practiced, although there are exceptional educators who approach this topic with fervor (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006; Noguera et al., 2006; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). The following sections provide more in-depth discussion about the role of schools and multicultural education in relation to the various components of sociopolitical development theory: social analysis and worldviews, agency, opportunity structures, and societal involvement.

Social Analysis: Racism Awareness and Education

Taking into consideration the sociopolitical context of urban adolescents, Watts and colleagues (1999) describes the process by which youth of color develop a multileveled sociopolitical analysis of oppression and group-based inequality, such as awareness of inequitable distribution of resources across racial groups, to build capacity for individual and/or collective action within systems of inequity. Expanding on Freirian critical consciousness, Watts and colleagues (1999, 2006, 2003) suggest that sociopolitical development occurs when the individual is able to integrate experiences in different power relationships into a structural understanding of oppression. Social analysis often involves the development of critical consciousness through critical inquiry, engagement with others, and reflective action. Thus, social analysis is theorized to be one “antidote” for oppression by serving as an internal resource to draw upon in coping with oppression and overcoming sociopolitical barriers (Freire, 1970; Watts et al., 1999).

Expanding on Freire’s work, the fields of community psychology, social work, and education have articulated various practice methods of empowerment that promote critical reflection and social analysis that leads to political efficacy and action (Gutiérrez et al., 1998; Morsillo & Prilleltensky, 2007; Nagda et al., 2006; Prilleltensky & Gonick, 1994; Watts et al.,

2011). A key component of the process of raising consciousness is engagement in social interactions with others. The Freirian “cultural circle” method consisted of participatory discussions and collaboration among members of oppressed groups to unpack and build greater understanding of their position in society and systems of oppression (Freire, 1973).

Expanding on this tradition, IGD argues that bringing people who hold different social identities together to examine systems of privilege and oppression within their own experience results in greater understanding of power and intergroup relations (Nagda & Gurin, 2007). Research on IGD programs has demonstrated that critical-dialogic engagement with others who are different from oneself increases knowledge of other racial-ethnic groups, awareness of interpersonal and institutional discrimination, and greater understanding of local intergroup dynamics (Dessel, 2010; Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002). These theoretical perspectives and empirical findings suggest that engaging youth in equity pedagogy, like IGD, that prompts critical thinking about one’s position in society may help develop students’ social analysis skills.

The role of schools in developing youth’s critical analysis of society has been of interest to many multicultural education scholars. There is research that examines methods for raising youth critical consciousness, which demonstrates that discussions about educational inequality or school policies are often topics that youth are passionate about (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2006; Fine, Torre, Burns, & Payne, 2007; Morgan & Streb, 2001). For instance, through participatory action research, youth have critically examined their education and expressed concerns related to school segregation, lack of educational resources, and the desire for more culturally-relevant curriculum (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). There is also some research on multicultural education efforts in schools that focus on helping students’ think critically about

race, their school, and intergroup relations (Griffin, Brown, & Warren, 2012; Nagda et al., 2006; Spencer et al., 2008). These school efforts often seek to raise awareness, reduce prejudice, and reduce conflict among students. Despite the promise of multicultural education with adolescents, the role of critical pedagogy in promoting high school students' ability to critically analyze their sociopolitical environment continues to be understudied.

Racism awareness. In this dissertation, I look at racism awareness as a form of social analysis and worldview. There are a few reasons for looking specifically at youth's awareness of racism rather than general beliefs about justice and inequality. First, there is little empirical research on adolescents' knowledge and understanding of racism. Instead, there is a wealth of research that documents adolescents' perceived discrimination—reports of and psychological responses to past discriminatory experiences—in relation to psychological, social, and academic outcomes (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006; Greene et al., 2006; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996). But less is known about youth's analysis of racial inequality. Second, understanding youth's racism awareness is important because it may influence future civic and political engagement. To illustrate, Hughes and Bigler (2011) found that for most adolescents, perceptions of current racial disparities and the role of racism in producing these disparities significantly predicted their support of race-conscious policies. Moreover, learning about historical racism has been associated with increased valuing of racial fairness among African American and European American children (Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007). In light of the racial-ethnic diversification of American youth, examining adolescents' beliefs about racial inequality appears to be pertinent to the study of their sociopolitical development.

Agency: Sociopolitical Control in Schools

A sense of agency is defined as the belief that one can make an impact on one's sociopolitical environment (Watts et al., 2006). In other words, agency is a construct that describes an individual's capacity to act independently and make their own free choices, and impose those choices on the world. A positive sense of agency is beneficial to individuals in many ways. Similar to the concept of agency, higher levels of sociopolitical control, defined as the beliefs about one's capabilities and efficacy in social and political systems, predict greater general health, fewer depressive symptoms, and higher self-esteem (Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, & Maton, 1999). Sociopolitical control is believed to not only lead to greater political and social involvement, but is also associated with fewer symptoms of psychological distress (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). Moreover agency is also a vital connection between youth's participating in political discussions and their participation in civic engagement activities. In the sociopolitical development model proposed by Watts and Flanagan (2007), agency is conceptualized as a moderator between social analysis and civic engagement. That is, greater levels of agency may strengthen the relationship between racism awareness and civic engagement.

In general, a sense of agency has been conceptualized in different ways, and it is oftentimes mentioned in conjunction with (or sometimes interchangeably with) related concepts such as empowerment, self-efficacy, and political control. Bandura (1982, 2006) defined self-efficacy as the ability to intentionally influence one's functioning and the course of environmental events. Zimmerman & Rappaport (1988), conceptualize sociopolitical control through empowerment as a combination of self-acceptance and self-confidence, social and political understanding, and the ability to influence resources and decisions in one's community.

Agency, self-efficacy, and sociopolitical control are closely related concepts that may help us understand what youth agency within the school context may look like. Whether the concept is discussed in terms of agency, sociopolitical control, or any other self-efficacy related term, it is generally agreed that a sense of agency is necessary for engendering psychological empowerment.

School-based youth agency. This dissertation will explore a context-specific form of agency—school-based youth agency. In studying the role of agency in youth’s civic engagement, one must consider how perceived sense of agency may look like within their school domain. For instance, a young person may feel like she has a general sense of sociopolitical control in her neighborhood due to participation in religious or community-based organizations, but within the school context she may feel disenfranchised and powerless. Previous research on youth agency has relied on broad-sweeping measures, such as the Sociopolitical Control Scale (Peterson et al., 2011), and the Perceived Control Scale (Paulhus, 1983), that examines individuals’ beliefs about their perceived self-efficacy and control in general sociopolitical domains. Yet, Zimmerman (1995) suggests that the development of empowerment (i.e. sociopolitical control) takes different forms in different context, populations, and developmental stages and thus cannot be adequately captured by a single operationalization, separate from its situational conditions. It may useful, therefore, to have a scale that directs attention to both the psychological aspects of agency and its environmental context. The School-Based Youth Agency Scale used in this dissertation may prove to be that measure.

Opportunity Structure: Perceived School Climate

In general, opportunity structure refers to the availability of meaningful opportunities for civic action in one’s local environment. Community psychology had underscored the

significance of schools and other social environments in providing opportunities for engagement (Trickett, Watts, & Birman, 1994). Watts & Flanagan (2007) view opportunity structure as a moderator, along with sense of agency, of the association between social analysis and sociopolitical involvement. High levels of opportunity structures are expected to strengthen the relationship between social analysis and civic engagement. Watts and colleagues' (1999) conceptualization of opportunity structure includes various extra-curricular and community-based venues for youth to engage in educational and social activities. Indeed, high school students' engagement in after-school activities, student organizations, and service-learning are all positively related to civic involvement in adulthood (Kirlin, 2002). Watts and colleagues have mainly operationalized opportunity structures as an inventory (i.e., checklist) of school and community-based activities, programs, and social groups available for youth. Although there is great evidence of the benefits of raising individuals' participation in extra-curricular activities and service-learning, there is a dearth of knowledge regarding the role of high schools—as proxies for democratic institutions—in fostering an environment that nourishes civic attitudes and behaviors.

The term “opportunity structure” was first developed by Cloward & Ohlin (1960) to describe pathways that lead to success or delinquency in American culture, particularly for teens and young adults. It refers to the notion that opportunity, the chance to gain certain rewards or goals, is shaped by the way society or an institution is organized (or structured). Cloward and Ohlin also speculated that when positive pathways are blocked (for example through failed schooling), other opportunity structures may be found, like community-based youth program. In schools, opportunity structures may include both concrete venues for participation (e.g., debate

team) and structural norms (e.g., academic tracking) that make opportunities available for some students and not others.

Returning to the assumption that youth's prospects can be shaped by institutional structures (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960), we must also consider broader organizational features of schools, beyond the availability of extracurricular activities that may foster or hinder students' civic development. It is also important to consider youth's perceptions of opportunities. Many theoretical perspectives emphasize the significance of people's perceptions—rather than the accuracy of these perceptions—in influencing attitudes and behavior (Aronson, Quinn, & Spencer, 1998; Clark & Watson, 1995; Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999). One example of an organizational feature that may provide students with cues regarding opportunity structures is the school climate. Many schools may systematically deny students of color equal educational opportunities, while providing White youth better learning opportunities (Banks, 1993b)

School climate is a multidimensional construct that touches every aspect of school life, ranging from academics to social interactions, and can be observed through objective (e.g., evaluative reports by a third party) and subjective measures (e.g., student perceptions of school climate). School climate may include institutional norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures in schools (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Schools that encourage a participatory school climate are successful in fostering civic engagement among their students (Torney-Purta, 2002b). Students' perceptions of school climate are of particular interest, as they may provide insight into students' individual experience within a school. In this dissertation, I conceptualize perceived opportunities structures within the schools context to include students' perceptions of racial climate and student voice climate.

Racial climate. The study of school racial climate is concerned with the aspects of school climate issues addressing race and ethnic diversity. Though researchers have sought to organize the dimensions of general school climate into a coherent framework (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003; Thapa et al., 2013; Zullig, Koopman, Patton, & Ubbes, 2010), and examined the link between perceptions of class climate and teachers and civic engagement (Flanagan et al., 2007; Torney-Purta, 2002b), the relationship between school racial climate and civic engagement remains unclear. It may be that students' perceptions of their school's inclusivity and racial diversity have implications for their sociopolitical development. To illustrate, a student who feels alienated and/or discriminated against at school may not perceive extracurricular activities or school-based programs as available to them (e.g., student clubs, extracurricular activities, leadership programs) even if she is eligible to participate in them. The opportunity for youth of color to succeed academically may be structured by the racial stratification of the school. For instance, in schools with academic tracking, students of color may perceive their opportunities to participate in certain classes or activities differently than their White peers.

Student voice climate. Another aspect of school climate that may inform youth's civic development is the school's support for student voice and leadership. Checkoway and Gutierrez (2006a) propose that youth participation is a process of engaging young people in decision-making activities of the institution affecting their lives. Student voice climate refers to youth's perceptions of their inclusion in the decision-making process at their school. Student voice in service-learning and school life has been related to greater civic engagement (Morgan & Streb, 2001). Moreover, youth participation in school policy making may also inform students' beliefs about the decision-making process of other civic institutions. In relation to perceived opportunity

structure, it makes sense to include school's support of student voice, because this aspect of school climate speaks directly to youth's perceptions of opportunities for civic engagement at school.

Societal involvement: Schools and Civic Engagement

Within the sociopolitical development theory, societal involvement is defined as a range of individual and collective activities and civic attitudes and beliefs aimed to change society (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Watts et al., 2011, 1999). Civic engagement may take place in various types of institutions such as schools, community-based organizations, religious organizations, and political institutions (Lerner, 2004). Camino and Zeldin (2002) suggest public policy deliberation, community coalition involvement, youth organizing and activism, youth involvement in organizational decision-making, and school-based service learning as pathways for youth participation in civil life. Civic engagement within these institutions may include: volunteer activities and service-learning, initiatives to organize action groups, participation in civil and extra-curricular groups, leadership in school board or city council, and other formal civic acts such as political engagement and voting (Youniss et al., 2002). Educational approaches for promoting youth's engagement in civil society for a diverse democracy are wide ranging, from participation in formal institutions to informal participation in civil activities that promote social change (Borden & Serido, 2009; Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Civic engagement has several developmental benefits for youth. For example, high school students involved in community-based activities demonstrate better school attendance, motivation for learning, grades, academic self-esteem and involvement in extra-curricular activities (Johnson, Beene, Mortimer, & Snyder 1998; Kleiner & Chapman, 1999; Shumer, 1994). Youth participation in local public policy decision-making is related to higher levels of

college attendance and service to their communities (Checkoway, 2005). Civic engagement has also been linked to increased confidence, connectedness, commitment to helping others, and acceptance of others (Yates & Youniss, 1996). Moreover, youth engagement in prosocial activities serves as a protective factor for risky behaviors (Eccles & Barber, 1999). These findings provide support for the notion that civic engagement contributes to youth's positive development.

Youth civic engagement also promotes a participatory and democratic society that benefits schools and communities. Social action approaches to youth civic engagement are based on the fundamental belief that youth are ultimately their own best advocates and are strategically positioned to assess their community needs and enact social change (Checkoway, 1998). Youth-led initiatives push for policy reform to improve the lives of others in their community (Checkoway, Allison, & Montoya, 2005; Ginwright, 2010a). Young people across the United States continue to fight for equality and challenge oppressive practices in education. For instance, young people organize and address broad systemic issues related to human rights and social justice, and everyday experiences in their schools and communities (Mediratta, Fruchter, & Lewis, 2002; Oakes, Rogers, & Lipton, 2006; Su, 2009). Youth civic engagement in community affairs is critical for sustained social change.

Schools are instrumental to the political socialization and civic participation of youth. Schools play a crucial role in the development of youth's civic knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Within schools, students may learn about the branches of government, how bills become laws, and parliamentary procedure. For example, schools may offer activities such as student government, whose members learn how to play politics, pledge allegiance, and show loyalty to the state. Moreover, in some schools and school districts community service may be a

graduation requirement. Often in schools and other formal institutions, civic engagement is constructed as behaving properly, obeying laws, and following expectations (Obradović & Masten, 2007).

Dissertation Aims

This dissertation research has two overarching aims. First, it seeks to investigate the relationship between racism awareness and civic engagement within the school context among a diverse group of students. Second, this research aims to explore how equity pedagogy promotes youth's awareness of racism and civic engagement. To this end, the dissertation research includes two related studies. The following section provides a brief outline of the research questions and hypotheses.

Study I

In study 1, I seek to answer the following guiding question: How do schools shape students' sociopolitical development? I use quantitative survey methods to understand the relationship among racism awareness, school-based youth agency, school climate (support for racial climate and support for student voice), and civic engagement. Integrating Watts and Flanagan's (2007) sociopolitical development model with principles of multicultural education, the conceptual model (Figure 2.2) suggested three hypotheses:

H1: Racism awareness is positively related to (a) civic accountability and (b) expectations for engagement.

H2: The relationship between racism awareness and (a) civic accountability and (b) expectations for engagement varies by level of school-based youth agency.

H3: The relationship between racism awareness and (a) civic accountability and (b) expectations for engagement varies by (c) level of perceived racial climate and perceived student (d) participation climate.

Study II

The aim of study II is to explore how equity pedagogy may promote high school students' sociopolitical learning. More specifically, this study aims to address three research questions: a) does participation in an IGD course increase students' awareness of racism, civic accountability, and expectations for engagement? b) how does IGD promote sociopolitical competencies and c) what are some critical issues in implementing IGD within schools? In this study, I explore the role of equity pedagogy in promoting sociopolitical learning using a mixed-methods case study methodology. First, I examine the effects of an IGD course on students' awareness of racism, civic orientation, and expectations for engagement using a quasi-experimental survey design. Given empirical evidence on the positive effects of IGD on racial consciousness and social action (Aldana et al., 2012; Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Nagda et al., 2009; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Spencer et al., 2008; Spencer & Nagda, 2002), I generated the following hypotheses:

H1: Students in the IGD group will report higher levels of racism awareness, from pre- to post-test, than students in the non-equivalent comparison group.

H2: Participation in the IGD course will increase racism awareness, civic orientation (a) and expectations for engagement (b).

Second, I explore the process of implementing IGD within a high school setting using interview data from three key informants. I also identify factors that facilitate or hinder the use of IGD with high school youth. Semi-structured interviews with teachers and a peer-facilitator

involved with the dialogue course will explore the process and outcomes related to conducting IGDs within school curriculum. The exploratory nature of this phase of the dissertation did not warrant hypotheses, but rather was informed by several assumptions. First, IGD pedagogy may promote greater awareness of intergroup relations and inequality. Although a major focus of the course is to discuss race and ethnicity, it may be that in discussion with peers from diverse backgrounds (gender, religion, socioeconomic class), students may learn and discuss issues related to multiple social identities. Second, there may be unique facilitation strategies that promote learning within the high school context. We know little about facilitation strategies for engaging high school aged youth in dialogues, but literature on multicultural education with children and youth suggests that one must consider developmental factors such as cognitive and emotional abilities when developing and implementing social justice education with younger students (Manning, 1999) . Finally, I assume that the school context may pose unique challenges to IGD educators. Although limited, the work on IGD in secondary education suggests that school structure and resources must be taken into consideration when implementing and evaluating dialogue efforts within high schools (Griffin et al., 2012; Nagda et al., 2006). Qualitative data analysis aims to provide greater understating of quantitative results and contribute to our knowledge of how to implement critical-dialogic curriculum with high school youth.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The dissertation employs multiple methodologies in two separate but related studies. The first aim of the dissertation was to examine how sociopolitical development is shaped by individual experiences of the school context. In seeking to understand youth's sociopolitical development within school context, the first study examined the relation between racism awareness and civic engagement, and test for the moderating effects of school climate and school-based youth agency. The second study aimed to explore the role of multicultural education—IGD pedagogy in particular—in promoting sociopolitical development by (a) investigating whether racism awareness and civic engagement changed over time for students enrolled in an IGD course; (b) explore sociopolitical learning through GD and (c) identify facilitators and challenges to implementing IGD in schools.

This chapter describes the dissertation research methodology. First, I provide brief description of my epistemological approach, some background on my engagement with Greenville youth prior to the dissertation, and tensions related to applied research. This is followed by a description of the research setting and its implications for research on sociopolitical development. Then, I give an overview of research design for each of the two studies. Detailed information about participants from survey data and semi-structured interviews are also discussed. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the community, school, and interview participants in this dissertation. The methods of data collection are organized around two research phases: self-administered surveys with high school students, and semi-structured

interviews with IGD educators. Finally, I provide a detailed description of the survey measures and interview protocol used to collect data. A more detailed description of data analysis for Study I and Study II can be found in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, respectively.

Research Epistemology and Practice Tensions

This dissertation used an interdisciplinary framework by integrating developmental and social work perspectives. As a developmental psychologist, I assume that the psychological trajectory of sociopolitical development may a) change over time, and b) be influenced by various individual (e.g., age, attitudes, race) and contextual factors such as school climate and educational interventions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Garcia Coll et al., 1996). As a social work scholar, working within a critical theory paradigm, I assume that my own values and attitudes related to race and ethnicity influence my understanding of the role of schools in fostering sociopolitical development (Morris, 2006).

As in all my interactions with others, my identities certainly played a role in how I was perceived school staff and participants, how we interacted with one another, what was said in my presence, as well as what was omitted from our conversations during the dissertation research (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Weis & Fine, 2000). As a fair-skinned Mexican American with racially ambiguous facial characteristic, I often get asked about my racial-ethnic background. This line of inquiry typically presents itself as a series of benign questions; “Where are you from? No really. Where are you *originally* from?” When I am not in the mood to disclose my racial-ethnic heritage, I continue to insist that I am from Los Angeles, California. Even in my hometown, which is largely populated by Mexicans and Mexican Americans, I have been prompted to clarify my racial-ethnic identity. Since moving to Michigan from Los Angeles, people have often questioned the origins of my racial-ethnic identity. Many have presumed that I

am Native American, White, Arab/American, Chaldean, or Asian American. Conducting research in an increasingly diverse school district with mostly women and adolescent girls, the racially ambiguous nature of my appearance allowed me to enter the research site with some level of anonymity. Gaining access to school grounds and building rapport with school staff came with relative ease. I cannot be certain that this is due to the ambiguous nature of my facial features, but I suspect that it did. I never perceived any racial-ethnic bias (intended or unintended) towards me during my school visits or interactions with individuals. In this way the intersectionality of my race-ethnicity and gender was an asset, particularly with interview participants.

My previous relationships with youth leaders at Hawkins High School that had been involved in the Michigan's Youth & Community program and my graduate student status came in handy in recruiting participants for this study. This was particularly true of survey participants who for the most part were unfamiliar with previous IGD efforts in the district or my work in the community. During my recruitment visits youth leaders, especially those enrolled in the class helped introduce me to their classmates. I am aware that without their "stamp of approval" many students would have opted not to take part of this study. Similarly, by affiliation to the University of Michigan often roused excitement among students, many of which would greet me with a "Go Blue!" as I introduced myself to the classroom.

My work as a social justice educator also came into play, mainly during my interactions with interview participants. The informal conversations I held with teachers and students before and/or after our interview suggests that they assumed held similar beliefs about race and education. They were not wrong in this assumption. I too valued the integration of critical multiculturalism within secondary education that pays explicit attention to issues of race and

ethnicity in schools. Their assumption was mainly supported by my previous involvement in the Michigan's Youth & Community program and my role as evaluator for the social justice education workshops offered to teachers and administrators in the school district.

I often struggled with balancing my role as researcher-evaluator and diversity education consultant. Overall, I tried not to intervene with the course curriculum. However, I did offer my perspectives on race relations and classroom dynamics, pedagogical approach to facilitating taboo conversation, and dealing with intergroup conflict in the classroom. I also shared educational resources (i.e., websites, textbooks, articles) that may address some teaching concerns.

One of the greatest struggles for me, in this project, was finding the way to frame what I have learned from my work in the Greenville School District. I admire the proactive approach the school district has taken in offering critical multicultural education to their students, when we have witnessed the persecution of similar pedagogical approaches in high schools that offer ethnic studies in school districts that predominantly serve students of color (Cammarota & Aguilera, 2012; Lundholm, 2011). Nevertheless, I am also aware that those involved in this study represent a small minority of leaders within the district championing for social justice in their community, and that in general the district continues to experience growing pains related to increasing diversity in the community. To me, the tensions related to growing diversity in the school district, and community at large, underscores the need for school context and educational curriculum that helps students learn to communicate and build relationships across difference. I applaud the school district for taking leadership in pursuing social justice curriculum in their schools. Therefore, I worry that my relationships with teachers, faculty, and students have

moderated my ability to critique, where necessary, the school district's efforts to implement the IGD course, promote positive intergroup relations, and build youth leadership.

Much of my involvement with the Greenville School District reflects the principles outlined by Morris (2006) suggesting that “while engaging in review of the literature... the critical theory researcher must also engage the individual, families, groups, organizations, or communities that are the focus of the study in the development of an ideological position” (p. 141). Consequently, and in collaboration with the Director of Instructional Equity and other administrative staff, I developed a course evaluation plan to assess the districts efforts to promote positive intergroup relations and student leadership via the IGD course. Part of the dissertation's aim is to meet these evaluation goals.

The Research Setting

The current study took place in a growing suburb, approximately 30 miles Northwest of the city of Detroit, which is experiencing steady demographic change. Metropolitan Detroit is one of the most segregated areas in the country (Logan, 2013). Despite persistent residential segregation, suburban pockets such as Greenville are beginning to see demographic shifts that demonstrate how the community is increasingly becoming younger and more racially diverse. The suburb is within one of the wealthiest counties in the country, and although it is still a predominately White and affluent community, it has seen a steady increase in racial and ethnic minorities. In fact, the U.S. Census data from 2008 and 2012 shows a decrease in the percentage of Whites from 87% to 76% respectively (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012a). Moreover, U.S. Census estimates, from the American Community Survey, suggest that there are racial-ethnic group differences in the distribution of socioeconomic class across groups. Among the three major racial-ethnic groups in Greenville, the median household income with a householder who is

Asian alone (\$83,538) was the highest. This is followed by the median household income with a householder that is White alone (\$66,690). The median household income with a householder that is African American alone (\$57,880) was the lowest across these three groups.

I was first introduced to the city of Greenville in 2008 through the eyes of its high schools students, during my MSW internship with the Michigan's Youth & Community program. In addition to the familiarity that my social identity afforded me with participants, my previous social work practice with Greenville youth leaders, graduate student status at the university of Michigan, and experience as a social justice educator also helped establish rapport with participants. From 2008-2009 I served as an intern for the Michigan's Youth & Community Program, which aimed to promote young people's participation in policy advocacy. On any given year the youth policy leaders team that I facilitated consisted of 8-15 high-school aged youth from the city and suburbs in Metropolitan Detroit. Participants in the policy leaders team were alums of a summer dialogue program that had opted to continue working on community and policy issues that challenged segregation in the metropolitan region.

The youth policy leadership team in 2008 included one White teenage girl from Greenville named Elsa. In 2009 three South Asian teenage girls from Greenville joined the team; Sasha, Maya, and Lisa. While the girls worked with youth from across metropolitan Detroit to investigate the deleterious effects of racial and socioeconomic segregation on school inequality, they also worked together to advance diversity and youth participation in their own community. During that time, Elsa organized a group of students at her high school to advocate for and develop an IGD program that would eventually become the dialogue course being studied in this dissertation. More on the development of the course is provided in Chapter Five.

In 2010, I conducted a pilot study of all policy youth leaders that aimed to explore student perspectives on school climate and current multicultural efforts being employed in schools across the Metropolitan Detroit region. The pilot study included interviews from five youth that were students in the Greenville School District at the time. Through my facilitation of the youth policy leadership team, and interviews from the pilot study, I learned about the growing diversity in Greenville. I also learned about the school district's efforts to reduce the educational achievement gap between Black high school students and their White and Asian American students.

Interviews from the pilot study suggest that Greenville youth are aware of these demographic shifts. During informal conversations with youth leaders they would attribute the community's increasing diversity to upwardly mobile families of color moving in from surrounding cities, such as Detroit and Southfield, into their school district in search of better career opportunities, neighborhoods, and schools. In one conversation with Sasha, a South Asian youth leader from Greenville, about the causes of school diversity she use the term "renters" when referring to families who had recently moved into the community in order to attend the Greenville School district. Her observations about the increase in renter-occupied housing was confirmed by Census data, which show a 5% increase in renter-occupied housing units from 2008-2012 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012a). The American Community Survey (2010-2012) 3-year estimates suggest that approximately 12% of the population that lived in renter-occupied homes had relocated in the past year from another county. A closer look at the geographic mobility of residents by educational attainment shown that persons in renter-occupied homes that relocated in the past from another county were approximately evenly distributed among individuals with a high school degree (25%), some college or associates degree (23%), bachelor's degree (26%),

and graduate or professional degree (21%). Individuals with less than a high school degree made up approximately 5% of the residents that relocated into renter occupied properties from 2010-2012 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2012a). More details on the growing socioeconomic and racial-ethnic diversity of the in Greenville that corroborate these students' observations are discussed in the upcoming section on the research setting.

In this pilot study, Greenville youth leaders also identified various issues related to race and ethnicity at their schools. They spoke candidly about school culture. Primarily, they expressed being proud of the student body diversity, but also indicated that they would like to see more integration and less racial segregation. Greenville youth also perceive the school staff to be less diverse than the student body. In regards to the schools multicultural education efforts, Greenville youth leaders expressed that exposure to multicultural curriculum increased students' knowledge of other cultures. They believed that their peers appreciated being able to discuss issues of race and diversity in class. More importantly, in helping me inform the conceptualization of the dissertation study, Greenville youth leaders identified two areas for school improvement—assessing the school's racial climate and increased integration of critical pedagogy in school curriculum.

Research was conducted in collaboration with one of the most acclaimed public school districts in the Metropolitan Detroit area. Most participants in this study are high school students and educators from one of the three high schools, Hawkins High School (Hawkins High), in the school district. Hawkins High was opened in 1970. The school was completed with the memories of student riots taking place across the nation during the late 1960's, and thus was built to be able to withstand a major student riot. To illustrate, the only windows that were large are on the third floor and were designed with a slant so that rocks thrown from the ground would have a lesser

chance of breaking the windows. The doors on the main floor were designed to lock from the inside. The 3rd floor—which housed the administration offices—is only accessible by stairwells that could be sealed off and a door to the outside that is only reachable by a "bridge". The school has had some structural changes because of the needs of growing student body and the lack of need for certain security measures since the risk of student riot is practically non-existent. The most obvious change reflecting this lessened need for security is the larger windows on the second floor that were part of a major renovation in recent years.

Hawkins High's mission is "to develop students to be caring and engaged learners who make informed decisions as they become internationally minded in their stewardship of the world and its resources." During the 2011-2012 school year, Hawkins High had approximately 1274 students enrolled. The school consists of a predominantly White student body with approximately 54% students of European American decent. African Americans (37%) represent the largest racial minority groups. Asian American, Native American, Latino and Mixed-Race students make up the remaining 9% of the student body. However, South Asian students are a rapidly growing community at Hawkins. At Hawkins High 35.5% of students are identified as economically disadvantaged (www.mischooldata.org, n.d.). Due to its recent launch of the international baccalaureate (IB) program, the school has seen an influx of younger, enthusiastic teachers as well as newer and more comprehensive curricula. Hawkins routinely sends a number of students to the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and a smaller number to Ivy League universities.

I entered the Greenville School District in March of 2011, with two colleagues affiliated with the University of Michigan to meet with district administrators. We were there to brainstorm a series of social justice education workshops for teachers across the county. The

superintendent was interested in broadening the Greenville School District's partnership with the University of Michigan to develop teacher diversity training. The meeting was a response to students' feedback and advocacy for more teachers training on issues of race and ethnicity. This meeting took place three years after the first implementation of a pilot 8-week dialogue program developed by Elsa. The pilot program was offered after-school to any high school student in the district. In the 2009-2010 school years, the Greenville School District agreed to officially offer the dialogues regularly as part of their elective course offerings.

The social change taking place in this school district and the broader socioeconomic inequality faced at the metropolitan level provides a fruitful context to examine how much youth, from diverse backgrounds, are aware of racial inequality and how this awareness may be used to promote sociopolitical development. Literature also demonstrates concern for the civic engagement achievement gap between White youth and underrepresented minorities (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2007; Sherrod, 2003). While informative, and essential to discourse on sociopolitical development for a diverse democracy, this literature often compares racial ethnic groups that do not share the same socioeconomic background, neighborhood context, or educational resources. This study will provide some insight into the sociopolitical development of diverse youth living and learning in a shared context. Moreover, by considering school-specific attitudes, contextual factors, and processes, this study will expand the current literature to better understand the role of schools in promoting racism awareness and civic engagement.

Overview of Research Design

Multiple methods were used in two separate but related studies to address two overarching aims; (1) the relation between racism awareness, school climate, agency, and civic engagement (2) to assess the process and effects of the IGD course on students' sociopolitical

learning. In the first study, I used cross-sectional analysis with pre-test data from self-reported surveys completed by high school students. Two regressions are conducted to examine school-related predictors of civic accountability and expectations for engagement. A more detailed description of the data analysis plan is included in Chapter Four.

In the second study, a quasi-experimental design was used first to assess the effects of the IGD course on sociopolitical development. In this design there was one curricular intervention group (IGD students) and one non-equivalent control group. Participants in the IGD course were enrolled in a 12-week dialogue elective course being offered either in the fall, winter, or spring trimester. Participants in the non-equivalent control group include students in the teachers' Spanish Elective courses. Obtaining data from students who were instructed by the same teacher in different subjects helped: (a) minimize intrusion to school instruction; (b) minimize teacher effects; and (c) control for academic subject effects. The methodological advantage of a quasi-experimental design was that it permits more accurate assessment of changes due to curriculum exposure (i.e., IGD participation) rather than changes due to developmental maturity. That is, pre- and post-test data without a control group cannot fully distinguish between changes in racial consciousness and civic orientation due to program effects and psychological maturity.

The second study also includes semi-structured interviews with teachers and a peer-facilitator to gain insights into the process and outcomes related to the implementation of the IGD curriculum. To collect qualitative data, I used an action research approach to illustrating the achievements and challenges experiences by the school district in adapting intergroup pedagogy for use in secondary education (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003; Nolen & Putten, 2007). Qualitative data include field notes, participant observation, and the semi-structured

interviews. Chapter Five provides a detailed discussion of the course intervention and data analysis related to the second study.

Participants

Survey

Two hundred and thirty eight students from a high school in Southeast Michigan, enrolled in either a dialogue course or Spanish elective course taught by the same teachers, were invited to participate in this study. The original study sample includes 57% (N=135) of students invited to participate in the study. At pre-test 59 participants (44%) served as a non-equivalent control group. The remaining 76 (56%) participants were students enrolled in the IGD course. Table 3.1 shows demographic characteristics for all participants, along with differences between the IGD participants and non-equivalent control group. In general, most students were in the 9th grade (52%, $n = 70$), this was particularly true for students enrolled in the IGD since one of the IGD course listings were a requirement for incoming freshman in the International Baccalaureate program. Most of the participants were between the ages of 14 and 17 (88%, $M = 14.98$ years). The sample included more adolescent girls (71%, $n = 96$) than adolescent boys (28%, $n = 38$). Participants' parents or guardians had achieved varying levels of education, ranging from high school to a graduate/professional degree, with a median parent/guardian educational attainment of a bachelor's degree. The sample included participants from several racial-ethnic groups; White/European American (48%, $n = 65$), Black/African American (19%, $n = 26$), Asian American (15%, $n = 20$), Mixed/Multiracial (12%, $n = 16$), and Arab/Middle-Eastern American (4%, $n = 5$), with three participants not reporting their racial-ethnic identity.

Approximately 52% of participants completed the post-test survey. See Table 3.2 for baseline differences between participants lost at post-test and the remaining participants.

Independent sample t-test at pre-test suggests that there were no statistically significant differences between and the remaining participants, except for perceptions of racial climate. Participants lost to post-test ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .47$) racial climate scores were significantly different from participants that remained in the study ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .43$); $t(132) = -2.58$, $p < .01$.

Interviews

The interview sample consisted of three key informants, whose interviews were coded and analyzed for the second study. I interviewed the two high school teachers responsible for instructing the dialogue course: Mrs. Flores and Mrs. Rose. I also interviewed the one high school student that served as peer-facilitator (Becca). Mrs. Flores, a 35-year-old woman of multiracial background (White and Mexican), identifies as a Chicana/Latina. Mrs. Flores grew up in the school district and continues to live there with her two children. Mrs. Flores had no formal training in IGD pedagogy, but had various training and professional development experiences that focused on issues of diversity and social justice. I initially corresponded with Mrs. Flores prior to visiting her class in the fall for purposes of recruiting students to participate in the study. Mrs. Rose, a 29-year-old White female, grew up in rural town in Northern Michigan. In the summer of 2011, Mrs. Rose attended the National Intergroup Dialogue Institute, hosted by the University of Michigan's Program on Intergroup Relations, where she learned IGD philosophy and techniques for the purpose of teaching the IGD course at Greenville. I co-facilitated the "Training and Supporting Facilitators of IGD" at this institute, where I made initial contact with Mrs. Rose. I briefly introduced myself and let her know that I would be in contact with her soon regarding the evaluation of the IGD course she would be teaching in the fall. Both

teachers were identified and invited to teach the IGD course by school administrators due to their previous involvement in various multicultural activities at their school.

During data collection, Becca was the only peer-facilitator. She had previous experience as a facilitator and was alum of the Greenville IGD class. The previous academic year had involved three peer-facilitators: Becca (White), Maya (South Asian), and Lisa (African American). Once Maya and Lisa graduated from high school, Becca was the only trained high school student available to help co-facilitate the dialogue class. I first met Becca, athletic young woman in her senior year of high school, in the summer of 2010 when she and Maya—the other youth leader in charge of the IGD program at the time—were drafting an evaluation report of the IGD course for the Youth & Community program. I helped them organize the report and provided written feedback during the revision process. Becca was the peer-facilitator in the IGD course taught by Mrs. Flores.

In also interviewed Elsa, alum of Hawkins High at the time of data collection. Elsa was the primary person responsible for the development and implementation of the pilot dialogue program in 2008. She had been heavily involved in the lobbying and implementation of the class. She had developed the course curriculum with the help of graduate students and staff at the University of Michigan, and then worked with Greenville school administrators to ensure the course was offered to a broad range of students. During the time of data collection, Elsa was beginning a doctoral programming in education, with a focus on multicultural learning. Interview data from Elsa's interview was used to corroborate archival data and were not included in the final analysis of data.

Methods of Data Collection

Phase I: Survey

In accordance with the school district's research and evaluation policies, parents were asked to call or email me to opt their children out of the study instead of giving written consent. Therefore, prior to my recruitment visit to each class, an electronic opt-out letter was sent via email to parents of students invited to participate in the study by the students' teachers (see Appendix A). The letter notified parents of the recruitment visits, survey dates, gave a brief description of study, and provided my contact information. In addition, a hard copy of the parent opt out letter was also sent home with students on the day of recruitment, and were also posted at the administrative office for parents to review.

During my recruitment visit to each classroom, I gave a brief description of the study, discussed participants' rights, invited students to participate, and distributed assent forms (see Appendix B). I obtained written assent from adolescent participants at that time. Their assent gave me permission to contact them at the email address provided with instructions for taking the survey and a link to the study. Once parent consent and participant assent was determined a link of the survey was sent to participants via email. The survey was made available through Qualtrics for one week after a link was sent to participant's email. As they study was voluntary for all participants could opt out of the study at any time.

Data was collected during the 2011-2012 academic year. The online survey was administered via Qualtrics, an online survey software program, to students enrolled in the dialogues course and the non-equivalent control group. Originally, the survey was in paper/pencil format. However, at the teachers' request, I modified the survey into an online format in order to minimize class disruption. Survey participants received either \$5 in cash or

visa-credit card for each survey completed. The survey took approximately 30 minutes to complete. Participants were asked to complete a series of three surveys (i.e., pre-, post-test, and follow-up survey) containing various psychological constructs throughout the academic year. Therefore, the surveys were administered twice during each trimester once at the beginning of the term (pre-test), then again at the end of the term (post-test), and finally three months after the course had ended (follow-up). Less than 5% of the sample responded to the follow-up survey. Therefore, this wave of data collection was excluded from analysis.

Phase II: Interviews

Interviews with three key informants were selected as the primary data collection method for the qualitative phase of the second study. Using critical theory methodology (Morris, 2006), the recruitment and selection of key informants for the interviews were guided by interest, commitment, and potential for empowerment of the participants, not by a standard procedure of random sampling. I contacted interviewees via email to invite them to be part of this study. I sent individual emails to prospective respondents, describing the purpose of the study, inviting their participation, and requesting a convenient time for a telephone or face-to-face interview (see Appendix C). Prior to the interview, the interviewee was asked to review and sign a university consent form required to participate in this study (Appendix D). Having prior interactions with each of the interview participants facilitated the recruitment process for this phase of the study.

Table .3.1*Demographic Characteristics for High School Sample*

Demographic	IGD Students (N=76)		Control Group (N=59)	
	N	%	N	%
Age (M/SD)	14.49± 1.25		15.67±1.28	
Grade-level				
9th	60	79	9	15
10th	3	4	19	33
11th	3	4	14	24
12th	10	13	16	28
Gender				
Female	55	72	41	70
Male	21	23	16	28
Race-Ethnicity				
African American/Black	17	23	9	16
Asian American	18	24	2	3
European American/White	31	42	34	60
Other	8	11	12	21
Parent Education				
High School	2	3	4	7
Some College	30	43	23	40
Bachelor's Degree	26	37	16	28
Graduate/Professional	12	17	14	25

Note. IGD (IGD) students represent the intervention group.

Table 3.2*Baseline Characteristics of Participants*

Baseline Variable	Participants lost to post-test		Remaining participants	
	IGD(n=36)	Control (n=29)	IGD (n=40)	Control (n=30)
Mean Age	14.36	15.79	14.52	15.16
Grade-level				
9th	30 (83.3)	3 (10.3)	30 (75.0)	6 (20.0)
10th	1 (2.8)	8 (27.6)	2 (5.0)	11 (37.7)
11th	2 (5.6)	8 (27.6)	1 (2.5)	6 (20.0)
12th	3 (8.3)	10 (34.5)	7 (17.5)	6 (20.0)
Gender				
Female	21 (58.3)	18 (62.1)	34 (85.0)	23 (76.7)
Male	15 (41.7)	10 (34.5)	6 (15.0)	7 (23.3)
Race-Ethnicity				
African American/Black	10 (27.8)	3 (10.3)	7 (17.5)	6 (20.0)
Asian American	8 (22.2)	0 (00.0)	10 (25.0)	2 (6.7)
European American/White	10 (27.8)	19 (65.5)	21 (52.5)	15 (50.0)
Other	8 (22.2)	6 (20.6)	2 (5.0)	6 (20.0)
Parent Education				
High School	2 (5.6)	4 (13.7)	2 (5.0)	2 (6.6)
Some College	16 (54.4)	12 (41.7)	12 (30.0)	9 (30.0)
Bachelor's Degree	12 (33.4)	5 (17.2)	14 (35.0)	11 (36.7)
Graduate/Professional	5 (13.9)	8 (27.6)	7 (17.5)	6 (20.0)

Note. Values are number of participants with percentages presented in parentheses.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with an alumnus involved in the planning and development of the high school course (Elsa), two teachers (Mrs. Flores and Mrs. Rose), and one peer-facilitator (Becca). Three out of the four interviews were conducted face-to face, either at the participants' home or my office. I conducted a phone interview with Elsa, since she was attending school out of state. She returned an electronic copy of the consent form via email before our phone interview. Interview participants did not receive compensation for their participation. The interviews took approximately 45-60 minutes to complete, were digitally recorded, and later transcribed.

Survey Measures

Survey participants completed an online survey that consisted of various measures that assessed understanding of race and racism, school climate, and civic engagement (Appendix E). Participants were also asked to complete various demographic questions. The same survey was administered at each wave of the data collection.

Demographic Variables

Parents' highest education attainment level served as a proxy for socioeconomic status (SES). Socioeconomic status was used as a control variable for all quantitative analysis. A composite parental education score was computed for each participant by averaging each their responses regarding his/her parents' education levels. For students who provide a response for only one parent, this score was used in place of a two-parent average. Grade level was recoded into a dummy variable consisting of 9-10th graders and 11-12th graders to make distinctions between younger and older students. Grade-level was used as a control for expectations for engagement, given the bivariate relationship found during preliminary data analysis. For racial-ethnic identity, students reported their racial-ethnic identity on an open-ended item. Prior to data analysis, participants' written responses were recoded into five pan-ethnic/racial categories (white/European American, black/African American, Asian American, Mixed/Multiracial, Arab/Middle Eastern American). For preliminary analyses the racial-ethnic identity variable was recoded into a dichotomous variable with two categories: White and Student of Color. Gender, age, and racial-ethnic identity were not included in the final model, since no bivariate relationships between demographic characteristics and the outcome variables were found.

IGD Participation

Participants reported whether or not they were in the intervention group on two items. The first question was a yes or no question that asked if they had been enrolled in the dialogue course. The second item asked participants to report which trimester they were enrolled in dialogue course. Responses to both questions were recoded as a new variable that indicated whether a participant has been exposed to the IGD course prior to completing the pre-test survey.

Racism Awareness

An adapted version of the Empathetic Awareness subscale, from the Ethnocultural Empathy measure (Wang et al., 2003), was used to assess *racism awareness*. The original scale, which includes 4-items on a 6-point Likert scale, measures understanding or knowledge of the experience with racism and discrimination faced by people of racial-ethnic groups different from one's own. An example of empathetic awareness is, "I recognize that the media often portrays people based on racial or ethnic stereotypes. Wang and colleagues (2003) report adequate levels of reliability (typically .74) for the Empathetic Awareness subscale, which was validated with an ethnically and racially diverse sample of college-aged adults.

The adapted version used 3-item measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree), removing the "I can see how other racial or ethnic groups are systematically oppressed in our society" to improve the internal reliability of this scale. Theoretically, this was consistent with my previous social work practice with adolescent demonstrating that many are not familiar or understand social justice concepts, such as "privilege" and "oppression." I opted to use a 5-point scale to allow participants to indicate a "Neither Agree nor Disagree" response and be more selective in their response (Adelson & McCoach, 2010; Cronbach, 1950). The Chrobachs alpha at pre-test suggest adequate reliability, $\alpha = .72$.

However, the subscale's reliability was questionable at post-test, $\alpha = .65$. A mean scores was computed to create continuous variable.

Perceived Opportunity Structure: School Climate Measures

To measure students' perceptions of opportunity structures in their school, I asked participants to report on their school climate with two subscales from the Inventory of School Climate—Student measure (Brand et al., 2003). The first subscale, “school support for cultural pluralism” was used as a measure of perceived *school racial climate*. The second subscale, “student input in decision-making” measured participants' perceptions of *student voice climate*. Validation of this scale demonstrates adequate levels of reliability (typically .70 or above) for the various subscales within the measure, which has been validated with an ethnically and racially diverse sample of adolescents (Brand et al., 2003).

Racial climate. School support for cultural pluralism was used to assess participants' perceptions of their school's racial climate. Participants indicate on a 4-point scale (1 = never to 4= Often) how often their teachers, counselors and other school staff encourage intergroup contact, racial equality, and multicultural learning (e.g., Students of many different races and cultures are chosen to participate in important school activities). The subscale consisted of six items and demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .70$, $\alpha = .68$) at pre- and post-test respectively.

Student voice climate. School support for student input in decision-making, was used to measure student's perceptions of student voice climate. To be more specific, this subscale measures how often students perceive having the opportunity to help decide school rules, classroom learning and time management with 5 items on a 4-point scale (1 = never to 4= Often). For example, “students get to help decide some of the school rules in this school.” The scale demonstrated good reliability at pre- ($\alpha = .76$) and post-test ($\alpha = .79$) Mean scores for both the

school racial and student voice climate subscales were computed.

School-based Youth Agency

I developed a 7-item measure, the *school-based youth agency* scale to assess how capable students feel in various school-related scenarios. Participants reported on a 4-point scale (1=very untrue for me to 4= very true for me) how capable they felt in voicing concerns about unfair grades, challenging unfair school policies, talking to teachers and staff, contributing positively to their school, and advocating for themselves. For example, “ I feel comfortable challenging unfair school rules. Exploratory factor analysis demonstrates that 5 items loaded onto one component. Reliability of psychometrics test suggested that reverse coding negatively worded items (e.g., “I feel anxious about joining extracurricular activities...because I may not be accepted”) did not increase the reliability of the scale. Consequently, two negatively worded items were removed from final analysis. Despite adjustments made to the scale, the reliability was not consistent from pre- to post-test, $\alpha = .56$, $\alpha = .70$. A mean score was generated to create a continuous variable.

Civic Engagement

Two subscales, *civic accountability* and *expectations for engagement*, were used to measure participants’ civic engagement. Both scales were adopted from the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) working paper no. 55, (Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Stout, 2007). Both scales borrow items from the California Civic Index (Kahne, Middaugh, & Schutjer-Mance, 2005), which is an extensive scale that measures various aspects of civic engagement. The authors report adequate reliability for both scales (above $\alpha = .69$) across time-points and with diverse sample of youth.

Civic accountability. The civic accountability scale included a 4-items on a 5-point scale (1= Strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). Participants reported how much they agree with various civic orientation attitudes and beliefs. An example of civic accountability includes, “If you love America, you should notice its problems and work to correct them.” Mean scores were calculated prior to inclusion in statistical models. Internal reliability remained good at both pre- and post-test, $\alpha = .74$ and $.82$

Expectations for engagement. The expectations for engagement scale included a 3-items on a 5-point scale (1= Not at all likely and 5 = Extremely Likely). Participants reported on the probability they would engage in civic activities around community issues. An example of civic accountability includes, after high school I expect to “Work with a group to solve a problem in the community where you live.” Internal reliability remained good at both pre- and post-test, $\alpha = .75$, $\alpha = .66$, respectively. A mean score was created for this sub-scale as well.

Interview Guide

The qualitative portion of this study consists mainly of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with individuals identified by school administration as being an integral part of the development and implementation of the IGD course. The study aims and research questions were used as a conceptual framework to develop the interview questions. The main concepts included in the interview guide include: (a) general orientation to social justice education and student leadership, (b) IGD planning and implementation (facilitators and challenges), and (c) recommendations for future course offerings. Advisors and doctoral colleagues were then asked to review and provide feedback. The final semi-structured interview schedule is included as Appendix F.

The interviews included the same set of predetermined guiding questions, but I was free to ask follow-up questions or probe for more concrete examples. Interviewees were encouraged to share any additional information that was relevant part of the experience for them. The interview guide asked participants to describe their involvement in the IGD course, general impressions of the course, obstacle and benefits related to implementation of IGD pedagogy to high school curriculum, and recommendations for course improvement. A particular strength of interviews in action research is the ability to tap into program management and strategy development, needs assessment, participatory planning and evaluation of intervention (Lichtman, 2012; Nolen & Putten, 2007; Sagor, 2000). Since the dissertation also served as an evolution of the IGD course for the school district, the interviews provided direct recommendations for best-practice. Interview data was triangulated with field notes and participant-observations.

Chapter 4

Study I: Sociopolitical Development in Schools

The first aim of the dissertation is to investigate youth's sociopolitical development in a racially integrated school setting. Accordingly, this chapter presents the data analysis for the first study of the dissertation research, which examined the relationship between civic engagement and racism awareness and explored how this relationship is affected by individual's experiences of the school context. Sociopolitical development, the process of growth in a young person's knowledge, analytical skills, emotional capacity for action in political and social systems (Watts et al., 1999), has largely been studied within communities of color. Research on the development of young marginalized youth has provided a wealth of knowledge on the role of critical consciousness for empowering young people to take action (Diemer et al., 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, 2007). Civic engagement literature has also provided substantial information on the role of schools in promoting students civic commitments, political knowledge, and participatory behaviors among youth from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008; Torney-Purta, 2002b). Less is known about the role of schools—particularly racially and ethnically integrated schools—in developing the critical consciousness, agency, and civic engagement of youth from diverse racial backgrounds.

To address this gap in the literature, this study used cross-sectional analysis of pre-test data to examine whether racism awareness was positively related to civic accountability and expectations for engagement, taking into consideration school-related factors, such as agency

and school climate. I examined whether the relationship between racism awareness and civic engagement varies by level of school-based youth agency, perceptions of school racial climate, and perceptions of student voice climate. First, this chapter describes the data analysis plan. Next, results examine the sociopolitical model proposed across two civic engagement domains: civic orientation and expectations for engagement. Finally, the chapter concludes with interpretation of the findings linking it to civic engagement, sociopolitical development, and multicultural education.

Data Analysis Plan

A cross-sectional analysis approach was used to examine a model of sociopolitical development (Watts & Flanagan, 2007) taking into account various school factors. Two multiple linear regressions were conducted on pre-test data from self-reports of high school students to examine the relation among variables of interest. Regression models included the following predictor variables: racism awareness, perceived school climate measures (i.e., racial climate and student voice), and school-based youth agency. Civic accountability served as the outcome variable in the first regression model. Expectations for engagement served as the outcome variable in the second regression. Parent education was used as a control variable, since it was correlated with expectations for engagement, and has been linked to other civic engagement outcomes in previous research. Student grade-level was also used as an additional control in the second regression, since preliminary analysis established a relationship between grade-level and expectations for engagement (see Table 4.1). None of the other demographic characteristics were significantly related to any of the variables of interest (see Table 4.2), and therefore were not included as control variables. Initial analyses included interaction terms to test the moderating effects of school-based agency and perceived school climate on the association

between racism awareness and civic engagement outcomes (civic accountability and expectations for engagement). That is, three interaction terms were included in each of the two regression models: a) racism awareness by school-based agency awareness, b) racism awareness by student voice climate, and c) racism awareness by school racial climate. None of the interaction terms were statistically significant and were removed from subsequent analyses.

Table 4.1

One-way Analysis of Variance of Racial-Ethnic Groups and Grade-Level

Dependent Variable	Race-Ethnicity			Grade-level		
	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Racism awareness	(1, 124)	2.81	0.10	(1, 127)	0.86	0.35
School-based youth agency	(1, 129)	0.01	0.91	(1, 132)	0.37	0.54
Racial climate	(1, 127)	0.94	0.33	(1, 130)	0.3	0.20
Student voice climate	(1, 127)	0.92	0.34	(1, 130)	0.33	0.90
Civic accountability	(1, 125)	2.07	0.15	(1, 128)	0.00	0.99
Expectations for engagement	(1, 125)	0.97	0.327	(1, 128)	0.39	0.03*

Note. For race-ethnicity, White adolescents were scored as 1 and adolescents of color were scored as 2. For grade-level 9th-10th graders were scored as 1 and 11th-12th graders were scores as 2. * $p < .05$.

Missing Data

To examine missing data, a missing data analysis was conducted in SPSS. Five participants had a substantial amount of missing responses on one or more outcome variable (i.e., civic accountability or expectations for engagement). It appeared that these individuals began the survey, but did not complete the survey in its entirety. As a result these cases were not included in the analysis. Pairwise deletion was performed, for all other cases in which participants had some missing data. With the use of $p < .001$ criterion for Mahalanobis distance, no outliers

among the cases were found. Likelihood Ratio Tests (LRT's) were used to fit three-level models to determine whether clustering by classroom was necessary. The LRT determined that a three-level model was not necessary.

Table 4.2

Correlations of Demographic Characteristics and Outcomes Of Interest

Outcome	Sex	Parent Education	Age
Racism awareness	.06	.01	.08
School agency	.10	-.05	-.02
Support for racial climate	.03	-.03	-.10
Support for student leadership	.02	.04	.17
Civic accountability	.17	.14	-.09
Expectations for engagement	.16	.20*	.08

Note. For sex, adolescent boys were scored as 1 and adolescent girls were scored as 2. Parent education was a mean score of parent(s) highest level of education. * $p < .05$.

Preliminary Analyses

To evaluate means, standard deviations, normality, and distribution of the main study variables preliminary analyses were conducted. Overall means for the variables of interests suggest that at pretest participants reported moderate scores for racism awareness ($M= 3.83$, $SD = .71$), and school-based youth agency ($M= 3.35$, $SD = .41$). In regards to school climate, participants reported moderate scores for perceived school support of racial climate ($M= 3.37$, $SD = .45$), and lower scores for perceived school support for student voice ($M= 2.43$, $SD = .63$). Civic outcomes also varied, with higher scores on civic accountability ($M= 3.83$, $SD = .62$) and moderate scores on expectations for engagement ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .54$). Independent sample t-tests indicate that there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores between IGD students and students in the non-equivalent control group at pre-test (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3*Means for Variables of Interests for Pre- and Post-test*

Variables	IGD Pre-test (n=75)	IGD Post-test (n=40)	Control Group Pre-test (n=55)	Control Group Post-test(n=28)	<i>Pre-test t(n=134)</i>	<i>Post-test t(n=69)</i>
Racism Awareness	3.93 (.76)	3.90 (.87)	3.83 (.71)	3.83(.62)	-0.75	-0.38
School-based Youth Agency	3.34 (.50)	3.41(.46)	3.35 (.41)	3.40(.37)	0.12	-0.04
Support for Racial Climate	3.50 (.40)	3.43(.44)	3.37 (.45)	3.31(.44)	-1.82	-1.11
Student voice Climate	2.44(.52)	2.50(.60)	2.43(.63)	2.46(.69)	0.51	-0.23
Civic Accountability	4.03 (.61)	4.04(.62)	3.83 (.62)	4.05(.56)	-1.61	-0.19
Expectations for Engagement	3.54 (.71)	3.66(.75)	3.50 (.64)	3.62(.77)	-0.28	-0.20

Note.

Results

Two standard multiple linear regressions were performed on pre-test data. The first regression examined the relationship between racism awareness, school-based youth agency, school climate measures school climate measures (racial climate and student voice) and civic accountability, controlling for parent education. The second regression examined the relation between racism awareness, school-based youth agency, and school climate measures as predictor variables and expectations for engagement as the dependent variable, controlling for parent education and student grade-level.

Civic accountability

Table 4.3 shows that overall model was significant, $F(5,121) = 8.47, p < .001$ explaining of 27% of the variance in civic accountability. Racism awareness was positively related to civic accountability ($\beta = .23, t = 2.84, p < .01$). School-based youth agency was also positively related to civic accountability ($\beta = .41, t = 3.43, p < .001$). Perceived school support for racial climate was

also positively related to civic accountability ($\beta = .33, t = 2.43, p < .05$). Perceived school support for student voice and parent education were not statistically related to civic accountability. The results show that students who were more aware of racism, who felt greater sense of agency in school-related scenarios, and that perceived more support for positive racial climate tended to have higher scores on civic accountability.

Table 4.4

Standard Multiple Regression for Civic Engagement Outcomes

Dependent Variable	Civic Accountability			Expectations for Engagement		
	β	SE	R^2	β	SE	R^2
			.27***			.20***
Racism Awareness	0.23**	0.08		-0.02	0.08	
School Agency	0.41**	0.12		0.45**	0.13	
Racial Climate	0.33*	0.14		0.17	0.15	
Student Voice Climate	-0.04	0.10		-0.14	0.11	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. All values represent raw unstandardized scores. Civic accountability was controlled for parent education. Expectations for engagement were controlled for and grade-level.

Expectations for Engagement

The model for expectations for engagement was also significant, $F(6,121) = 4.66, p < .01$. and explained about 20% of the variance. School-based youth agency was positively related to expectations for engagement ($\beta = .45, t = 3.48, p < .01$). However, racism awareness, school support for student voice and school support for racial climate were not related to expectations for engagement after graduating from high school. Parent education was positively related to expectations for engagement ($\beta = .26, t = 3.10, p < .01$). Student grade-level was also positively related to expectations for engagement ($\beta = .34, t = 2.78, p < .01$) Students who felt greater sense of agency in school-related scenarios, that had parents with higher education levels, and

were in higher grade levels were more likely to have higher scores on expectations for civic engagement.

Discussion

Scholarship on youth civic engagement has considered the role of schools in political socialization and civic development to gain a better understanding of how participatory citizenship is cultivated among adolescents (Cohen et al., 2009; Flanagan et al., 2007). Similarly, psychologists and education researchers have increasingly sought to integrate social justice perspectives into investigations of how systems of oppression and experiences of marginalization shape the sociopolitical competencies of historically underrepresented racial-ethnic groups in American democracy (e.g., Akom, Cammarota, & Ginwright, 2008; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Watts et al., 2011). In the first study, I brought together these two lines of research to examine the roles of school and race in shaping sociopolitical development among both youth of color and their White peers.

Findings partially support the theoretical relationships outlined by the sociopolitical development theory proposed by Watts and colleagues (1999, 2007). As expected, findings from this study demonstrate that greater awareness of racism was predictive of greater civic accountability. That is, students with greater awareness of racism were more likely to feel that it was their obligation as citizens to be actively involved community and social issues. This supports theoretical and empirical links between critical consciousness and motivation to take action (Cammarota & Romero, 2009; Freire, 1973; Ginwright & James, 2002; Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002; Watts et al., 2011). This is also congruent with scholarship on the positive relationship between critical consciousness and civic engagement (Diemer et al., 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998; Watts et al., 2011). It appears that raising young

people's awareness of racial inequality may be a productive approach to informing adolescents' attitudes regarding citizenship and social responsibility.

Surprisingly, racism awareness was not related to students' expectations to participate in civic activities after graduating from high school. The reason for this finding is unclear. While racism awareness appears to be related to civic attitudes about one's duty and responsibility, it may be that critical analysis or awareness of inequality are not directly related to one's intention to participate in the future. While previous literature has linked critical consciousness to civic engagement, most empirical evidence has come from qualitative accounts that have not distinguished civic attitudes from civic expectations (Diemer et al., 2009). Perhaps, the relationship between racism awareness and expectations for engagement is mediated rather than moderated by other sociopolitical factors (i.e., sense of agency or opportunity structures). More research is needed to better understand the role of racism awareness in fostering various aspects of civic engagement.

Schools have been shown to be important to the developmental process of sociopolitical competencies, such as civic knowledge and understanding of intergroup relations (Flanagan, Cumsille, et al., 2007; Torney-Purta, 2002b). While this study did not find moderating effects for perceived school climate, a significant main effect was found that suggests a positive relationship between school climate and civic engagement. Specifically, findings demonstrate students that reported more positive perceptions of school racial climate were more likely to report greater levels of civic accountability. This finding expands on previous work that demonstrates a positive relationship between a variety of civic engagement outcomes and perceptions of the classroom environment and school climate (Campbell, 2008; Flanagan, Cumsille, et al., 2007; Flanagan & Stout, 2010; Syvertsen, Flanagan, & Stout, 2009). In a study with adolescents of

color, perceived student race relations (e.g., interracial friendships, less intergroup conflict in school) was predictive of the self-definition component (agency) of sociopolitical development (Diemer et al., 2009). Diemer suggests that among poor adolescents of color, positive racial relations may facilitate positive racial attitudes that inform a healthy sense of self and agency.

While the finding provides support for previous work that links civic attitudes to students' general perceptions of school climate and teachers as fair and caring adults (Cohen et al., 2009; Flanagan et al., 2007; Torney-Purta, 2002b), it does not further our understanding of the casual nature of that relationship. Similar to most of the current research on school climate and civic engagement, the cross-sectional nature of the first study did not allow for assessment of any causal relationships between school racial climate and civic accountability. It may be that the relationship between racial climate and civic engagement is linear, with more positive perceptions of school climate predicting civic engagement. On the other hand, it is more likely that school climate and civic engagement have a reciprocal relationship. For instance, a recent study that regressed civic behaviors on perceptions of school climate found that personally responsible civic behaviors was positively related to students perceptions of student-teacher relationships, student relationships, fairness in school rules, and democratic climate (Geller, Voight, Wegman, & Nation, 2013). As this area of study continues to grow, future research with longitudinal data may help determine whether racial climate causes greater sense of civic accountability among students.

Unexpectedly, the dissertation did not show a statistically significant relationship between perceived student voice climate and civic engagement outcomes. Theoretically, we might expect such outcomes would be related to either their sense of civic responsibility or expectations for engagement. Youth participation in the decision-making process of the

institutions of which they are a part has been thought to promote greater civic participation among youth (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006). Scholarship on student voice—the many ways in which adolescents may participate in school decision-making—demonstrates that voicing concerns, collaborating with adults, and engaging in leadership positions prepares youth for future social responsibilities as adults (Connell, Gambone, & Smith, 2001; Mitra, 2008; Morgan & Streb, 2001).

Previous work has found a relationship between student voice and greater participation in school decision-making and leadership development (Mitra, 2008). It may be that this dimension of perceived climate is indirectly related to civic engagement; or perhaps its relationship is mediated by other sociopolitical factors. Another possibility is that perceived student voice climate is related to other aspects of civic engagement not measured in the current study, such as type of citizen or specific civic behaviors. Nevertheless, perceptions of school support for student voice in decision-making did not predict youth civic engagement attitudes. More research is needed to further understand the various ways students' opportunity for leadership in schools informs civic development.

The present findings did not support the hypothesized moderating effects of agency on the relationship between racism awareness and civic engagement as proposed by Watts and Flanagan (2007). Instead, school-based youth agency was directly related to both civic accountability and expectations for engagement in community issues. School-based youth agency was positively related to both civic accountability and expectations for engagement. Youth who perceived themselves to have greater sociopolitical control in school matters were more likely to expect themselves to engage in civic activities after graduating from high school. The current findings corroborates with other studies that demonstrate the essential role of agency

in motivating and instigating action (Brown, 2009; McIntyre, 2006; Noguera & Cannella, 2006). The current findings provide general support for previous scholarship that documents the cultivating role of agency in promoting civic engagement (Christens & Peterson, 2012; Itzhaky & York, 2000; Ozer & Schotland, 2011; Watts et al., 2003). Moreover, the current study expands on existing literature on youth agency by considering the contextual factors that may affect students' sense of agency within schools. The school-based youth agency scale begins to illustrate the utility of context specific measures of youth agency.

There are two possible reasons for the lack of moderating effects. One, the dissertation research operationalized agency differently than previous studies on sociopolitical development by focusing on participants' perceived self-efficacy and confidence in exerting control in school related scenarios. It may be that a more general sense of sociopolitical control (agency) may moderate one's civic actions, whereas school-based youth agency directly influences one's civic attitudes. Secondly, agency—particularly among adults—has also been considered a component of sociopolitical control rather than a moderating factor (Peterson et al., 2006; Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991). More recent work with adolescents has found that sociopolitical control mediates the effects of contextual factors on various youth development outcomes (Christens & Peterson, 2012). Diemer and colleagues (2009) found student race relations (e.g., intergroup conflict, friendship formation) predicted students' sociopolitical control. More research is needed to further clarify the role of school-based youth agency, and sociopolitical control in general, in promoting civic engagement.

In conclusion, the findings of the first study suggest that sociopolitical development in schools is related to youth's sense of agency within the school context and perceptions of racial climate. The cross-sectional nature of this study limits any causal explanations. Future work

should look at these factors longitudinally, and also examine the directionality of the relationship between racism awareness, agency, perceptions of school climate, and civic engagement. For example, it may be that youth who are more advanced in their sociopolitical development see their school differently than youth whose sociopolitical development is less advanced. In the first study, I aimed to integrate research on youth civic engagement with work on the sociopolitical empowerment of marginalized youth to examine the role of schools and race in shaping sociopolitical development among both youth of color and White youth. This work speaks directly to the need to more closely examine racially integrated spaces such as schools to better understand youth's awareness of racial inequality and civic attitudes. Moreover, this study has implications for multicultural social work practice, which will be addressed in the final chapter.

Chapter 5

Study II: Sociopolitical Learning through Intergroup Dialogues

This exploratory case study used a mixed-method, quasi-experimental design to investigate the role of IGD, as a form of equity pedagogy, in facilitating sociopolitical learning conceptually and pragmatically. Equity pedagogy involves teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse backgrounds gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage in a just and democratic society (Banks & Banks, 1995a). It has also been theorized that one needs to raise consciousness in order to motivate social action (Freire, 1973). To this end, IGD programs use a critical-dialogic approach that involves reflexive dialogue to give voice to people's lived experience that facilitates the critical analysis of systematic oppression. There is extensive empirical evidence on the positive effects of IGD pedagogy on adults and college students' social and political development (Gurin, Nagda, & Sorensen, 2011; Lopez & Zúñiga, 2010; Nagda, 2006; Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2011). There is also a growing body of work that shows that engaging adolescents in dialogues promotes critical consciousness and social action (Aldana et al., 2012; Boulden, 2007; Golobski Twomey, 2012; Griffin et al., 2012; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). Less is known about the effects and process of implementing equity pedagogy in secondary education.

In this chapter, I present information about the IGD course intervention, data analysis, and results of the second study of the dissertation research. This chapter will first describe the IGD course intervention. In the first phase of this study, survey methodology was used with data from high-school students enrolled in an IGD course and a non-equivalent control group. The

second phase of the study used data from semi-structured interviews with three key informants—two high school teachers and a peer facilitator—to expand on the quantitative analyses. Then I describe the quantitative and qualitative analyses. Quantitative results, from high-school student survey data are presented to assess the effects of IGD participation on youth’s racism awareness and civic engagement. The qualitative aspect of the study provides us with a detailed explanation of *how* multicultural education curriculum informs students’ sociopolitical development. In the qualitative findings we hear from IGD educators about their students’ learning and the factors that facilitated or hindered the dialogic process in their class. The chapter concludes with an integrative discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Course Intervention

This exploratory case study examines the role of equity pedagogy in promoting sociopolitical learning through the investigation of an IGD course, *Leadership: Dialogue for Diversity*, offered in a school district in South Michigan. The study took place during the 2011-2012 academic year. At this time the course was in its third pilot year. This IGD course is a multicultural education course created in cooperation with the Youth Dialogues Program of the Michigan Youth and Community Program and the Program on Intergroup Relations at the University of Michigan. With the assistance of university faculty and staff, the curriculum was developed by a collaborative group of Greenville High students and a University of Michigan Masters in Social Work student who had previously facilitated a community-based summer youth dialogue program. At its inception in 2009, the course was carried out as an after-school extracurricular activity offered to any student in one of the three high schools in the district. The aim of the IGD after-school program was to provide students across schools the opportunity to

talk about race and racism in their community, build relationships across schools, and motivate youth participation in community change.

Student response to the initial IGD program was extremely positive. As a result, in its second year the curriculum changed from an 8-week pilot program to a 12-week elective course offered district-wide. At this time, the district offered one elective course for the entire district. That is, students from the three high schools in the district would come together for one class period to engage in dialogues. The district plan was to have each school take turns hosting the course. The course is considered an elective class offered under the district's interdisciplinary and integrated courses of study. The district advertised the course as a one-term .5 credit class that would discuss controversial topics, bridge gaps in our community, provide leadership development, build communication skills, and create change. The dialogue course is focused on experiential learning that engages students in dialogues on social inequality as it relates to their social identity, their school and community, and broader policy implications. Parents are asked to sign a consent form prior to student enrollment to acknowledge the subject matter of the course.

By 2011 the district was offering two sections of the IGD course. Both of these course sections were held at Hawkins High School. Two language (Spanish) elective teachers at Hawkins High were asked to teach the IGD course during this study: Mrs. Flores taught the district-wide elective course, and Mrs. Rose taught the mandatory course offered within the IB program. Both teachers had an interest in multicultural education, training in cross-cultural communication, and a commitment to diversity learning. Differences in class dynamics between mandatory vs. elective course were not explored in this dissertation. Rather, interviews with IGD educators from both courses helped depict a general sense of the implementation process.

The first section was a continuation of the district-wide elective course offered to any 9th-12th grader interested in taking the class. Although participation in the district-wide course was voluntary, an application process for the class was utilized to ensure a balance number of youth from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds were enrolled. High school counselors encouraged students from various racial-ethnic backgrounds to apply for the course. This course was offered once in the academic year, and enrolled 28 students during the time of this study. Three of these students were from the other high schools in the district, and were bused in during the last school hour to attend the class at Hawkins High. The second section of this IGD course, which was mandatory for all 9th graders in the IB program, was offered four times throughout the academic year. In total, the mandatory course enrolled approximately 75 students.

The curriculum is a set program for 12 weeks that is divided into six conceptual units. Each class session was 50 minutes long. The first unit focuses on establishing ground rules for multicultural education. The focus of the second unit is the intersection of multiple social identities such a race, religion, sexual accountability, gender, etc. Unit three encourages students to think critically about their own school, and how the three schools can work together in a community. Unit four extends the focus from the schools by cultivating among the students a shared understanding of their community culture and the concepts of diversity and multiculturalism. In unit five and six, students were expected to integrate the concepts discussed in previous units and reflect on their role as racially conscious community members and student leaders. The structure of the course adapted key elements of IGD such as sustained face-to-face interactions, skilled facilitators, and integration of content and process (Schoem, 2003). As described in the youth-led evaluation, the course aims to prepare students to work together to achieve mutually held goals for the community (see Appendix G).

Analysis Plan

A mixed-methods approach was used to analyze data for this exploratory case–study. The first phase of the study used a quasi-experimental design to assess the quantitative effects of the course on students’ racism awareness and civic engagement. Pre- and post-test survey data from high school students in study I were used for the quantitative analyses. The second phase of the study used interview methodology with the teachers and peer-facilitator to explore students’ learning processes and facilitation issues faced during the implementation of the course. The following section describes both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis in greater detail.

HLM Analysis: Quantitative Effects

The first phase of this study expands on the analysis in Study I by looking at the effects of an IGD course using pre- and post-test data. Thus, preliminary analyses to establish normality and manage missing data were completed in Study I. Three, two-level Hierarchical Linear Models (HLM) were used to examine the effects of the IGD course on racism awareness, civic accountability, and expectations for engagement. The proportion of variance at level-3 (classroom) was not significantly different than zero for racism awareness, civic accountability, and expectations for engagement. Therefore, a two level model was selected for analysis. The two level HLM models allow for repeated measures (Level-1) to be nested within students (Level 2).

The first model examined if participation in the IGD course increased racism awareness. Similarly, the second and third model assessed if participation in the course increased civic accountability and expectations for engagement respectively. An interaction term between time and IGD enrollment was used to test whether participation in the IGD course changed outcomes over time. Two variables were included in the analysis to control for individual differences

among participants for each of the models: whether or not participants had taken the IGD course and parent education. In addition, student grade-level was included in the third model given that there were statistically significant differences in expectations for civic engagement mean between 9th-10th and 11th-12th graders (Table 4.1). Again, preliminary analyses indicated that there was no relationship between the outcomes of interest and demographic variables such as racial-ethnic group, gender, and age (4.2). Therefore, these other demographic variables were excluded from final analysis. The purpose behind the HLM analysis was to determine whether or not participation in the IGD course (treatment vs. control) had an effect on racism awareness and civic outcomes.

Framework Analysis: Qualitative Evaluation

Framework analysis (Furber, 2010; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009) was used as an overarching approach to interview analysis to explore how educators perceived the IGD facilitation experience and student's sociopolitical learning. A distinctive aspect of framework analysis approach—that made it particularly useful for this case study—is that facilitates the translation of qualitative findings into practical and policy recommendations (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). Moreover this approach allows themes to develop both from the research questions and from the narratives of research participants. Accordingly, data analysis was an iterative process of integrating prior concepts from the literature and the emerging data. The advantage of the framework approach was that it provided a clear series of steps, which could help manage the large amount and complex nature of qualitative data much more easily (Rabiee, 2004). In the following section, I describe how I engaged in the five analytic stages outlined in framework analysis: familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing/coding, charting, and interpretation.

In the familiarization stage, I began drafting observational notes immediately after semi-structured interviews and review of program materials. First, I reviewed the youth-led evaluation of the course completed in 2010 (see Appendix G) to gain a better understanding of how the course had changed over time. Familiarization with the data, also included listening to tapes, reading the interview transcripts in their entirety a couple of times, reading the observational notes taken during interviews, and reviewing summary notes written immediately after the interview. This initial review of the data provided a general sense of the course intervention, gave me a better sense of each interview as a whole, and helped generate major themes prior to coding of data.

An inductive thematic analysis approach was incorporated to generate a coding scheme and analyze transcribed interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Course evaluation materials that included both the youth-led evaluation report and the evaluation plan I submitted to the district, in conjunction with existing literature on IGD were consulted to generate a conceptual framework. For instance, the semi-structured interviews identified student-learning moments (i.e., learning about oneself, learning about stereotypes, learning to communicate across difference, and motivation to take action) that helped inform the themes generated for this study. Similarly, the course evaluation proposal and curriculum identified similar objectives. The initial conceptual framework identified three major themes: 1) dialogic content and instructional process, 2) experiential learning, and 3) democratic outcomes (Appendix H).

To index and code the interviews, I used an open coding strategy (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). First, I engaged in line-by-line coding to identify a priori themes and generate new categories. After all the interviews had been reviewed and initially coded, I revisited the thematic framework by jotting down ideas or concepts arising from the texts, drafting memos

about emerging themes, and connecting analytic categories in the data to existing literature. The final analytic categories are my articulation—in an attempt to incorporate course objectives, respondents’ experiences, and broader theoretical concepts—which includes: intergroup learning, dialogic facilitators, and perceptions of challenges. The intergroup learning codes depict descriptions or perceptions of student learning or outcomes as a result of participation in the IGD course. Codes identified under the dialogic facilitators describe a factor (e.g., process, aspect of curriculum, etc.) that assisted in facilitation of the IGD course. Finally, perceptions of challenges coded data that described obstacles faced during the facilitation of the IGD course. The coding scheme was revised to accommodate the new thematic framework (see Appendix G). Interviews were re-coded, using a paragraph-by-paragraph approach, to code specifically to the new coding scheme. Final coding of interviews involved assigning alphanumeric codes according to categories and themes related to the study’s thematic framework. A referential strategy was used to verify final codes (Constas, 1992). In other words, existing literature and theoretical arguments were consulted to find support for the categories used in the study. Deedose software, a mixed-method online platform aimed at integrating mixed-methods, was used to index and code data.

The fourth stage, charting, involved lifting excerpts from their original context and re-arranging them under the thematic framework. Comparisons of concepts and categories within and across respondents were considered. Many analytic categories were combined into one overarching finding. Results of the qualitative analysis are presented with exemplars that highlight the experience of the teachers and peer-facilitator involved in the IGD course. The interpretation of the qualitative data seeks to explore three main assumptions. First, equity pedagogy (i.e. IGD) fosters sociopolitical learning. Second, there are sociocultural factors that

facilitate the implementation of IGD in a high school setting. Third, there are contextual (school-based) factors that challenge the implementation of IGD in a high school setting. In addition, qualitative findings are used to better interpret quantitative findings by providing greater insight into the context and process of facilitating sociopolitical learning through equity pedagogy. My interpretations of these findings are informed by: a) the respondents' perceptions of the phenomena being studied, b) my participant-observations, and c) existing literature.

Results

The following sections present results from the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. First, I present the quasi-experimental results from survey data obtained from 135 high school students. Then, I discuss the key findings attained from three interviews with key informants. In the first phase of this study, I examined the effects of an IGD course on students' awareness of racism, civic accountability, and expectations for engagement using a quasi-experimental survey design. I hypothesized that at post-test IGD participants will report higher levels of a) racism awareness, b) civic accountability, and c) civic expectation than students in the non-equivalent control group. The second phase of the study examined more closely the process of sociopolitical learning, factors that helped facilitate the process, and perceived challenges to implementation of the curriculum within the IGD course.

Quantitative Findings

Three, two level, HLMs were used to determine the effects of the IGD course on student outcomes, controlling for parent education. The two level HLM models allow for repeated measures (Level-1) to be nested within students (Level 2), see Table 5.1. The first model indicates that participation in the IGD course did not predict changes in racism awareness from pre- to post-test, $\beta = .01$, $p = .96$. Similarly, the second model shows that participation in the

IGD course, was not predictive of changes in civic accountability from pre- to post-test, $\beta = .12$, $p = .34$. Yet, parent education level was positively related to civic accountability, $\beta = 1.98$, $p = .05$. The third HLM model also reports that participation in the IGD course did not predict changes in expectations for engagement from pre- to post-test, $\beta = .07$, $p = .67$. However, grade level $\beta = .28$, $p = .03$ was predictive of expectations for engagement.

Table 5.1

Hierarchical Linear Models for Racism Awareness and Civic Engagement

Predictors	Racism Awareness			Civic Accountability			Expectations for Engagement		
	<i>B(SE)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B(SE)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B(SE)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Time ^a	-.04(.15)	-0.22	0.83	.07 (.10)	0.77	0.34	.11 (.13)	0.89	0.37
IGD Enrollment ^b	.14 (.14)	1.01	0.31	.19 (.11)	1.08	0.07	-.02 (.14)	0.17	0.86
Time X IGD Enrollment	.01(.20)	0.05	0.96	.12 (.13)	0.95	0.34	.07 (.16)	0.43	0.67

Note. a, pretest used as reference time point. b, IGD students used as the reference group. Mean score composite * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Qualitative Findings

The second aim of this study was to explore the process of implementing IGDs within secondary education and the role of intergroup learning in promoting sociopolitical competencies. The findings highlight the experience of three key respondents that taught and facilitated the IGD course through the use of interview excerpts. Six major findings emerged from the qualitative data:

1. The course provided opportunities for intergroup learning that raised students' awareness of local intergroup dynamics across multiple social identities.

2. The course's race-based curriculum challenged students and teachers to step outside their comfort zones to engage in meaningful dialogues about race and racism.
3. The student-centered approach of IGD pedagogy is one of the primary factors that facilitated the successful implementation of the course.
4. Teachers indicated that self-disclosure was essential to facilitating the IGD course, but also posed risks and challenges to maintaining traditional teaching roles.
5. All three respondents expressed that the large number of students enrolled in their class made it challenging to establish group trust and participation.
6. Teachers cited students' maturity levels and lack of age-appropriate class materials as barriers to in-depth discussion.

Following is a discussion of the findings with details that support and explain each finding. The emphasis throughout is to highlight the voice of the key respondents (Denzin, 2001).

Consequently, illustrative quotations taken from interview transcripts provide insights into the role of intergroup facilitation. Where appropriate, participant-observation and archival data are interwoven with interview data to supplement the discussion. Interpretations of qualitative findings are predominantly expressed in the integrative discussion.

Finding 1: Intergroup learning. The primary finding of this study was that the course provided opportunities for intergroup learning that raised students' awareness of local intergroup dynamics across multiple social identities. Students shared personal stories related to identity and group dynamics, instances of perceived discrimination, and awareness of privilege in the community. There were two major themes regarding students' learning about local intergroup dynamics. First, students learned that instances of discrimination and inequality exist in their community. Second, students had the opportunity to explore issues related to multiple social identities.

As a result of the sociopolitical changes taking place at the metropolitan level, many suburban schools, like Hawkins High, have begun to see demographic changes with the relocation of African American families moving in from the city of Detroit and surrounding communities. Over the past decade, the Greenville Public School District has responded positively, for the most part, to the growing presence of African Americans in the community. The school district has focused on encouraging a welcoming and inclusive learning environment for all students. In addition, the district has assessed and made efforts to reduce the academic achievement gap between African American students and their White and Asian American peers. Moreover, the district has organized and provided continuing education training for teachers that focus on diversity training, multicultural education, and social justice. From pilot data anecdotes and local newspaper reports, it appears that racial tensions do exist in the school district and have been expressed through racial slurs and stereotypes, bullying and harassment of Black students, and intergroup conflict between White and Black students. Youth in the dialogue course were able to discuss the changing landscape of Hawkins High and connect it to their experience. As one example, Mrs. Rose recalled a discussion in which two of her dialogue students shared their thoughts on being labeled Black at their school in light of the changing student body.

One girl ... she has always lived in Greenville. She's grown up here. She doesn't know a lot about the city. She feels like--and a lot of the students in our school have moved in at some point from the city [of Detroit] and she started talking about how she feels like she's sort of placed in this group with other [Black] kids because they look similar but they really don't have anything in common or they don't have a lot in common ... there's another female student in that class who had moved in from Southfield and she was like, "Yeah, I know exactly what you mean, because where I went to school in Southfield it was like 98 percent Black and then I come here and there's people all different everything everywhere. It's just weird to me at first." And she's like "It does kind of seem like we're being placed in this [racial] group together... but it's not meaningful." (Mrs. Rose)

The increased presence of African American youth from the city at Hawkins High may have generated overgeneralizations and a stereotype about Black students. Some teachers and students have often assumed that Black students at Harrison all come from the city, have lived impoverished lives, and are uninterested in school. Some students of color and White youth were also aware that these stereotypes inform teacher expectations of Black students. In the dialogue course, some Black students expressed that racial stereotype in the school with regards to African Americans and education posed a challenge to students' identity development and academic engagement. Mrs. Rose provided an example of this, "a lot came up about students being called oreo and stuff like that." In her class, Black students expressed feeling conflicted about pursuing rigorous academic courses within the IB program because others did not perceive Black culture to value education. She went on to say, "for those student, who felt like their identity didn't encourage that, they were like what do I do?"

Mrs. Rose recalls another moment in one of her dialogues when a film on discrimination faced by Muslim Americans aroused an emotional response from a student, "she started crying at the end of the video and she couldn't talk for a while and the other kids in the class just went around her and were hugging her and just waiting for her to talk." While the student's emotional response grabbed her peer's attention, her personal story provided insight into microaggressions experienced by her in their community:

She's a really quiet kid, too, she hardly every shares things... So when she started talking about how ever since she was little ...this stuff has been happening to her, kids have been calling her names, and she's been in Greenville Public Schools since the beginning... Kids calling her names, excluding her, not realizing that she is Muslim because a lot of people assume that she's Indian because there's a big Indian population in our school... people saying things about Muslims or Arab-Americans in front of her and not realizing that she is [Muslim/Arab-American] ... And I think for those kids that were in that class and for her that's something they'll never forget. (Mrs. Rose)

The sharing of instances of discrimination within the school district made it impossible for students to dismiss intolerance as an issue that only happen outside of their community. As Mrs. Rose pointed out, “this isn’t as all of the kids go, ‘Oh that happened somewhere else’.” The emotional response by their peer enabled students not only to become aware of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in their community, but also build their capacity to be empathetic toward other social identity groups. “I feel like next time they hear it or see it they’re gonna think of her and that will matter.”(Mrs. Rose)

The dialogue course also prompted discussion about relative economic privilege held by members in their community. Mrs. Flores described in instance when a white male student, who had previously been homeless, pointed out that “he was shocked to see that people did not think that they were wealthy.” The class had engaged in an experiential activity that had individuals “cross the line” on the ground if they related to a series of statements related to social identity. In this case, the activity prompted students to step across the line if the statement “my family is wealthy” was applicable to them. However, Mrs. Flores noted that when this prompt came up, “nobody wanted to step over.” In debriefing the activity, she recalled how her student pushed his peers to think more critically about their wealth and privilege:

And he was like, “Are you guys crazy?” He was on free and reduced lunch ... and he said, “I was really surprised that people didn’t say that they thought they were wealthy.” And he said, “How many of you can buy whatever you want for lunch?” And of course everybody’s hands went up and he goes, “I cannot.” He goes, “You guys are wealthy and you just don’t see yourselves as wealthy.” And then one of the other girls she said something about “Well, wealthy is kind of a bad word. We don’t want to be rich. We don’t want to be wealthy.” So she goes “I guess maybe I should’ve stepped over there ‘cause you’re right, I can pretty much--my parents bought me a car. I’m going to the college of my choice.”

Mrs. Flores’ went on to state that she felt this was particularly a transformational moment for the male student, because “that one kid, that was so resistant before [to other activities], he actually kind of called people out on that one topic.”

In sum, the dialogue course promoted discussion about intergroup dynamics in the school district that highlighted instances of interpersonal discrimination, privilege, and inequality. Both teachers and the peer-facilitator made a connection between discussions of intergroup relations in their community and students perspective taking, Becca stated, “I think they come out with a greater perspective...helps to kind of lessen the stereotypes even about the other schools [in the district]”. The IGD course also provided students with the ability to practice perspective taking and intergroup empathy.

I think for them they could really--they really understood afterwards what it really means to put yourself in somebody else's shoes. And a big thing that we did with it was sort of defining the difference between sympathy and empathy just because you're trying to understand someone else's view doesn't mean that you're taking it or okaying it or whatever. (Mrs. Rose)

Additionally, the course facilitated exploration of multiple social identities. While the class was initially developed to focus on dialogues on race and ethnicity, both teachers made modifications to the curriculum to broaden the scope of the class to include multiple identities:

we did personality and we kind of included that as an identity ... and we did gender. We did race and ethnicity. We learned about all the identities and in the beginning when we first learned about them, I gave them the handout from U of M that has all the identities and then all the ways you could identify within that, different labels. And that was really interesting 'cause the students didn't know a lot of the labels so then we talked about what do the labels mean and we looked things up. (Mrs. Rose)

Modifications to the curriculum were in part a result of a youth-led course evaluation. In 2010, Becca—a junior at the time—co-authored an evaluation report that shared students' experience in the course and suggested various curricular changes. In our interview, Becca recalled the findings of this report:

One of the things in the evaluation from the first and second year ...were that we talked about race too much and that we didn't really acknowledge the other identities. And we also cut out some of the projects, which we felt were irrelevant.

Meaningful and sustained discussion about race can be very difficult to engage in, as expressed by Becca in her recounting of previous course evaluations. This finding may also help understand subsequent respondent perceptions regarding how students engaged with course content related to race and ethnicity.

Finding 2: Race-based curriculum. Interviews with the teachers and peer-facilitator suggested that course activities or discussion that related to race and ethnicity challenged the students to step outside of their comfort zone. Race-based curriculum appeared to be more difficult for students to engage in than other course topics. One of the major reasons for students discomfort with discussing race was simply hesitation to address the topic directly.

In anticipation of students' lack of racial knowledge, Mrs. Rose planned her curriculum so that students had several weeks doing team building activities, learning about concepts such as empathy, social identity, and various forms of communication (dialogue vs. debate or discussion). Mrs. Rose made changes to the race-based curriculum to accommodate the original dialogue curriculum for her 9th graders, "a lot of it was really just the order on which we did things... 'cause the district class really is dialoging about... mainly race and ethnicity and the interplay between the high schools...and our (IB) kids don't have that experience." Mrs. Rose recognized that for many of her students, who were all 9th graders, had less familiarity with racial dynamics within and across the various high schools in the school district. Therefore, she anticipated that her students would be unable to engage in a semester long dialogue on race and ethnicity. Moreover, she had them dialogue about culture, personality types, and gender prior to engaging in racial dialogues. She recalled and described the discomfort with which her students approached race-based curriculum:

It was interesting though 'cause when you asked them to do it with personality, when you asked them with gender they didn't blink. All of a sudden I'm like,

“Okay. Now I would like you to get into groups by race and ethnicity.” They were all kind of awkwardly standing in the middle like we don’t want to. (Mrs. Rose)

She went on to discuss how she used students’ hesitation as a learning moment by asking her students, “Did you notice how much longer it took you to do that?” She allowed her students to process how they had reacted to being asked to get into racial/ethnic groups. In debriefing this incident with students, they were able to explore why they had been hesitate and explained that previous discussions about segregation made them feel uncomfortable about their own self-segregating behaviors at school. Students shared with Mrs. Rose that “we just feel like we’re not supposed to do that [self-segregate] even though we do it all the time. But no one says that we’re doing it, no one points it out.”

Talking about race was not only a challenge for her students. Mrs. Rose also expressed having her own concerns about race-based dialogues:

But one thing that I thought was difficult for me and I don’t know if this was as difficult for the kids—and I didn’t ever find a way to truly ask them—is that...when we talked about race and ethnicity and we looked at events that had happened in our communities the majority of the stuff that we were finding and the majority of the stuff that we looked at had to do with Black, White issues. (Mrs. Rose)

One of her primary concerns was related to the dichotomy of race in multicultural curriculum. The focus on the White-Black dichotomy was problematic for a couple of reasons. First, her class included several Asian American, South Asian (Indian) American, and Arab American students who could not relate to the experience of Whites or Blacks in America. Second, the curriculum’s focus on the oppression of Black communities was difficult for Mrs. Rose to navigate without feeling like she was stereotyping the Black experience. She feared that students would assume that the curriculum on race and racism would be interpreted as, “We’re gonna spend these three weeks talking about what it’s like to be Black.” Finally, she was

concerned that discussing oppression and discrimination would negatively affect students' psychological wellbeing:

we're looking at all these issues... and the kids are bringing in all these issues and it has to do with that over and over again. And so that was one thing that for me was difficult ...especially with the history of the City of Detroit... the kids actually got really interested in it, which was great. But I started ... wonder if I were a Black student in the class if I'm starting to feel really bad and negative like, oh look, we're focusing on all these ways that people of my race have been treated and still are being treated for so long. And there wasn't a counter balance to that in any. (Mrs. Rose)

Despite her concern—about the possible distressing effects related to learning about oppression—Mrs. Rose acknowledge that, “I didn't get anything from any kids that, ‘I don't want to talk about this anymore because I feel like crap now.’ But I started kind of wondering.”

Resistance—an automatic reaction that allows people to shut down or avoid new information (Goodman, 2011)—to race-based curriculum was apparent from respondents' perceptions of some students' responses to activities. Goodman proposed that resistance to social justice education (particularly from white individuals) is not based on prejudice, but rather about individuals' openness to consider other perspectives. Examples of resistance include non-participation in an activity either through silence or “checking out.”

I cannot remember exactly what we did but nobody wanted to talk about it. And we tried to make it really fun and go outside and stuff too but it just felt so forced and so uncomfortable so we ended up--we switched it midway through the dialogue and talked about current events. (Becca)

...there was a couple of kids that hardly spoke the entire 12 weeks. You really had to push to get them to say something. (Mrs. Flores)

There was a kid that was a White, male student who was really sort of a good kid. I have him in Spanish. He would be involved in the Dialogues. He would definitely give it thought and things like that, but he was definitely one of those kids that was always in some ways that you could just kind of feel pushing back from it a little bit like why are we really doing this. (Mrs. Rose)

Another common example of resistance, provided by Mrs. Flores, is when students minimized the importance of an activity with negative comments such as, “This is stupid. This is ridiculous. Why are we doing it?” Both Mrs. Flores and Mrs. Rose experienced continued resistance from students, particularly students that were not intrinsically motivated to take the course. Mrs. Rose had a few who were not particularly interested in being engaged in IGDs:

Kids who would be at a point where they were just like “Why are we talking about this? If you want it to be different then just be different.” They were just kind of like pushing it away and I don’t feel like there was really--oh, one specific student, too, I remember that he would always no matter what I did when we were talking about what issues we were talking about that we would maybe hope would be different for him it was always just kind of like this is natural, that’s the way that-- it’s always gonna be this way, like it or not it’s just how life is.

While Mrs. Rose’s class was mandatory for 9th graders in the IB program, Mrs. Flores’ course was a voluntary elective course that was open to any students interested in taking a leadership elective course. She recalls how challenging it was to engage one particular student who was often upset about activities and contrary to others opinions without fully engaging in dialogues.

I was like, “Well, why don’t you try to explain your point of view, why don’t you try to instead of just attacking--” ‘cause he would also be very loud about it. And I’m like just “Why don’t you just calmly explain your point of view so we can have a discussion about it?” You have a valid point of view, let’s look at it. At one point then towards the end of the term he kind of just shut down and he just stopped talking all together. (Mrs. Flores)

Despite the voluntary nature of Mrs. Flores’ class, she felt that there were still some students that were not fully interested in taking the course. In some instances these students had been encouraged to take the course by their academic counselors. Consequently, in anticipation of the upcoming year Mrs. Flores discussed this matter with the school counselor to ensure that students were made aware of the course expectations prior to enrolling in the class.

Despite initial hesitation and resistance to engaging in race-based dialogues, the course did promote students critical analysis of systematic racial privilege and oppression. Both teachers and the peer-facilitator identified one activity, in particular, as prompting greater awareness:

I think the privilege walk was probably one of our best things that year, noticing the div--I mean, everybody kind of knew what was going on but realizing the difference and realizing how the activity kind of split them up and looking back on others and stuff like that. It was good conversation that came from that (Becca)

Is it the privilege walk where they step forward and then you step back and seeing the gap?... you have all the minorities back here and you have all the White people in the front, all the privileged people in the front. That...I thought that was powerful and when the kids came back and talked about it, it was. (Mrs. Flores)

As Mrs. Flores begins to describe, the objective of the privilege walk activity is to have students line up in the middle of the room, as facilitators reads a series of statements students take steps forward or backward depending on whether the prompt applies to them (Sassi & Thomas, 2008). The privilege walk activity typically ends with White male students at the front, and underrepresented racial-ethnic minority students at the back of the room.

The experiential component of the activity allows participants to physically see the equity gap between White students and students of color:

how when you're in the front you don't usually tend to look back and noticing that. And for the Black students in the class and they were only a couple really, they could see everything in front of them and it was like out of reach. So that--their talks about that was really important and how they applied it to their own lives. (Becca)

The debriefing of the activity provided time for deeper reflection and allowed students to make connections to their own upbringing and racial socialization. Thinking critically about one's identity and systems of privilege and oppression can be a difficult task, particularly for students who hold privileged identities. Nevertheless, activities like the privilege walk and the substantive discussion afterwards provided students with "aha" moments that helped them make

connections between curriculum and life experience. Mrs. Rose remembered an exchange between one of her White male students after the privilege walk activity:

we did the privilege walk and in the dialogue afterward...we were talking about it, but we weren't really--I didn't feel we were really getting out of it what I hoped we would and then all of a sudden he's like—while someone else is speaking—he's like, "Oh." And then he was like, "You know what? We're all facing forwards."... 'cause he was one of the ones that ended up at the front and he was like, "I didn't even know where anyone else was."

Mrs. Rose continued to describe the “aha” moment in which this student made a connection between that activity and his socialization around race and privilege.

He was like, "But I wasn't trying not to know." He's like, "I just didn't see 'cause I wasn't looking--" but he's like, "That's what we were told to do, look forward and try to get forward." And he's like, "We're not told to look back." And I was like, did a 14-year-old just say that? (Mrs. Rose)

For this student, the privilege walk allowed him to see how early racial socialization had taught him a colorblind approach to thinking about society. He and his classmates came to realize that learning not to see race contributed to lack of awareness about racial inequality. Mrs. Flores commented that this type of learning was particularly important for White students:

I think it's more important for the kids that are privileged, the non-minorities, the wealthy kids, to see--to understand it 'cause I don't think they get it that they are privileged, that just by the color of your skin you have privilege in this society. So those [types of] conversations I think came out and I think some of the kids were kind of like, "Geez, I never thought of that before or I didn't realize." (Mrs. Flores)

Another aspect of the curriculum that prompted more in-depth discussions on race and ethnicity was the discussion on stereotypes. The stereotype activity provided an opportunity for young people to critically discuss the ways race impacts perceptions about others in their schools. The stereotype activity instructed students to brainstorm and write stereotypes that they have learned or heard about the other racial group:

And then you had to write down all of the stereotypes and then we flipped it over and wrote down all the positive things. Some of the kids were like I cannot believe

people wrote that stuff down there, especially on the negative stereotype column.
(Mrs. Flores)

Once a list of stereotypes is generated students discuss the list and the negative effects of stereotypes. The activity prompted a dialogue about where stereotypes emerge, how they are perpetuated, and what one can do to “speak out” against stereotypes. Through the process of engaging with others in the stereotype activity, Mrs. Flores felt that students had an opportunity to directly challenge negative images and stereotypes held by others about their group.

And then there was actually a lot of discussion about some people kind of defended their ethnicity or their, what is the word I’m looking for, their ethnicity or their group they kind of like were defending it. Like, “Well, that’s not true. Who wrote that? That’s not okay.” (Mrs. Flores)

The class, and race-based discussions regarding stereotypes in particular, also enabled students to begin thinking critically about media and racial stereotypes:

The kids, too, pointed out that every Disney channel show--I don’t know ‘cause I don’t see it and I don’t even know the shows that they’re talking about, but they’re like every Disney channel show has no minority characters or it has them but they’re really super stereotyped like if they’re Hispanic they throw out a Spanish word every six seconds and if they’re Black they’re really trying to be ghetto but they’re joking about it and stuff like that (Mrs. Rose)

In sum, the race-based dialogue curriculum challenged students to address issues of race and ethnicity directly. The process of engaging students was not easy for teachers or the facilitator, as they had to manage the sequence of topics, group dynamics, and individual students who remained uninterested in the course. While some were resistant and/or hesitant to engage in such dialogues, most students did gain a greater understanding of White privilege, racial inequality, and the deleterious effects of racial stereotypes.

Finding 3: Student-centered instruction. A factor that facilitated the implementation of IGD, which was identified by both teachers and the peer-facilitator, was the student-centered design of IGD pedagogy. Student-centered instruction is a teaching strategy that fundamentally

breaks many of the traditional boundaries governing the manner in which students have—by and large—been conditioned and expected to learn. The traditional approach rests on a heavy instructor-dependent relationship, in which students are socialized to rely on teachers to plan lessons, facilitate activities, and share information.

I think it's immediately a lot more student centered so a lot of conversation and education right now in public education is about creating courses and lessons and environments that are a lot more student centered, and Dialogues is immediately—you see how you do it and it is student centered right from the beginning whereas in other classes even learning new techniques for doing that it's always problematic figuring out how to make it student centered and still make them learn (Mrs. Rose)

Unlike traditional teaching approaches, student-centered instruction calls for student voice and accountability. Instructors are still relied on, of course, but more as coaches working the sidelines. Students are encouraged to take leadership and actively participate in each other's learning through a variety of action-oriented instructional formats (Brown, 2008). The respondents identified two primary ways in which student-centered instruction was incorporated in the dialogue course: student engagement and peer-facilitation.

Student engagement. As one key aspect of student-centered instruction, that respondents expressed help facilitate the implementation of the course, was that students had to engage in experiential learning and leadership roles within the course. In accordance with student-centered instruction, the course curriculum included open-ended problem solving activities, role-playing and participation in simulated situations, collaborative team projects, and community engagement assignments. Moreover, unlike other courses the class curriculum and lesson plans were flexible and open to change according to students' interest or comments.

A lot of times what I would do instead was just to sort of bring up a concept and we would have somebody pull out their phone and look up this and somebody pull out their phone and look up that. "What did we find? What did we think about it?" Like the sympathy, empathy kind of thing, we looked up the definitions, ...

kind of trying to pull out what is the difference instead of having them read something about that (Mrs. Rose)

Another way that respondents felt they were able to provide a student-centered environment was by enabling students to take the lead in co-facilitating a discussion or taking initiative to engage others. Mrs. Flores remarks, “there was always a couple of kids who tried their best to involve others.”

Part of the course curriculum also involved final course project, in which students were asked to intergrade the skills learned in class to complete an individual or group projects. Many students created videos that aimed to raise awareness of issues related to racial stereotypes in the community or in the media. Some students focused on creating a proposal to improve the dialogue course that included activities, objectives, and action steps. Other students worked in groups to develop performance art or skits that highlighted cultural pride or challenged racial segregation.

I was so proud of them, so blown away by what they came up with...especially, too, for some kids that had seemed less excited about the content, about the class, about the process, that they came up with something meaningful. So to me, they must have taken something out of it. (Mrs. Rose)

Peer facilitation. Another aspect of IGD pedagogy that fostered student-centered instruction was the inclusion of a peer facilitator. Aligned with student-centered instruction, in IGD pedagogy young people are given the opportunity to be involved in lesson planning, lead activities, and facilitate debriefing session. During data collection for this study, only the district wide class for 9th -12th graders involved a peer facilitator.

I think it's only gotten better. I feel that the switch from having teachers facilitate to having students really helped because it's much more of a comfort level for the students to be speaking to other students and not having the questions posed by a teacher. (Becca)

Becca had facilitated the previous year with two other high school students and another teacher. During this study, Becca was paired up with Mrs. Flores, who was teaching the course for the first time, which gave Becca a greater sense of ownership and expertise. Becca shared, “I felt like I actually was the authority in the relationship, just because of the fact that I had taught the class before, so I was kind of teaching her the ropes.” Mrs. Flores agreed that having Becca peer-facilitate with her was essential to the process, “I think it’s great that there’s someone [a peer facilitator] up here for the kids to be able to relate to.” Having a peer co-facilitate the course provided students with several benefits. First, the peer facilitator helped students feel more comfortable with the process of engaging in dialogue with others. Second, the peer facilitator helped students better understand the aims of the course. This was particularly true for students that may have not wanted to be in the course, as Mrs. Flores expressed, “I thought Becca did a phenomenal job of facilitating ... trying to get everybody involved and trying to explain the whole reasons for why we were doing it, especially with that one kid I mentioned before.” Having a peer-facilitator also helped model dialogic behaviors and skills for other students.

A perceived challenge to peer-facilitation was establishing authority amongst peers. Mrs. Flores shared that, “seeing her [the peer-facilitator] as an authority figure was difficult for the kids and I see that being an issue next year as well.” The main concern, for Mrs. Flores was that older students might not perceive a younger student as an authority figure. She goes on to elaborate more on her concerns, “Becca ... had a presence about her. The facilitators for next year, I’m a little bit concerned that there might be some difficulties with that, the kids just not being respectful especially because one of them is a junior.” Becca had similar concerns about her ability to come across as an authority figure:

Having kids that were older than me and trying to like—not control them—but organize everything for them was a really weird position. And having friends in

the class also, trying to establish the role of facilitator from the beginning was really hard. (Becca)

A key aspect of the success of peer-facilitation with high school students was how well teachers' were able to step-back and let a student take ownership of the course. Teachers perceived their role was to manage the process, keep students on task, and encourage compliance with the multicultural communication guidelines.

I just tried to facilitate in the sense of "Well, this person wanted to say something." Or "Did you want to say something?" Or "Okay, let this person speak" kind of thing just to make sure that the conversation was going and that everybody had a chance to contribute (Mrs. Flores)

I tried not to listen too much because I felt like maybe--I just basically tried to see that they were on task. (Mrs. Rose)

While Mrs. Rose did not have any peer-facilitators during this study, her future plans were to have several peer-facilitators assist her with teaching the course in the future. For the following year, Mrs. Rose planned to recruit two or three students to peer-facilitate the course with her:

There are six sections and there are two or three facilitators for every section. When I did the training at U of M and they were telling us how it should be and I was sitting there going so they've chosen one teacher who's brand new to the school, a White female who's never taught the course before and I'm a facilitator. That doesn't sound at all like what it's supposed to be. So we're kind of moving towards that.

Mrs. Rose also thought that, "at this point it is new, this is an experiment for us," which allows her flexibility to play with the course curriculum and the role of peer-facilitators. Consequently, she anticipated giving her peer-facilitators the opportunity to make decisions regarding the process and content of the dialogue course. Mrs. Rose perceived her role as posing reflective questions to future peer-facilitators to help them and her better facilitate the class, such as "could you have done anything different?" In discussing the role of teachers in dialogue facilitation, Mrs. Flores expressed concerns about the ability of some teachers' to work with peer-facilitators

and allowing students to take the lead in their own learning. She expressed having doubts of some teachers being able to step-back or not come across as “a little preachy, soap boxy.”

Finding 4: Self-Disclosure as facilitator and drawback. Both teachers expressed that self-disclosure during teaching of the IGD was both an educational asset and risk. Even though teachers perceived their role as teachers to be less authoritarian than instructing traditional courses, teachers did see their role as essential to the process. For the teachers, self-disclosure played an important role in facilitating dialogues. What is more, students were eager to learn more about their teacher’s experiences growing up and opinion on hot topic issues.

But it was funny because the kids would sometimes be, “Well, what do you think Miss Flores. You’re an adult or you’ve been through this, what do you think?” So then I would throw in my two cents. But for the most part I tried not to--I tried to let the kids have their conversations. (Mrs. Flores)

In many ways self-disclosure from teachers helped break the ice during difficult conversations. Mrs. Rose discussed ways in which sharing personal information during a race-based dialogue helped minimize her students’ anxiety:

I pretty much used humor to do it so that they wouldn’t feel like this is awkward or uncomfortable. I just told them that and then also with--when we got to the point where it was the racial timeline I was really honest about mine and telling them different experiences that I had and I think that helped a lot because after that it felt like sort of the tension of we’re gonna talk about race went down.

The racial timeline activity instructed students to consider messages they had heard about their racial group or instances where they were made aware of their identity at various stages of their life. This task can be difficult for young students, particularly many White students who often feel their identity is racially neutral. Self-disclosure, on Mrs. Rose’s behalf modeled for many of her students what critical thinking of one’s racial socialization might look like:

... there was a lot of me talking about issues with me growing up, my family, things like that. And acknowledging, too, a big part of the fact that when you are White if people don’t know you even if they’ve never met you before and you’re in a group of White people, people will say things in front of you that they would

never say in a mixed group that... I bet you would be very hard pressed to find a White person who's not. And so to kind of admit that in front of the kids they were like "Oh!" ...And then a lot of kids started saying ... that "this is in my family, too. They say x about y".

In Mrs. Flores case, self-disclosure was able to provide students with a different life-experience than their own that broaden their perspectives on issues of race and ethnicity. She explained how self-disclosure allowed students to gain a multidimensional perspective of her life and learn more about her experiences as a Latina:

...I shared a lot with the kids so I think they were kind of surprised to hear some of my stories, some of my life experiences. And I think they were kind of surprised A, that I shared it with them and B that I actually experienced them because they look at me and they think, oh, you're just a teacher and you have this pretty little life. (Mrs. Flores)

While the students benefitted from teachers' self-disclosure, both teachers felt that sharing too much could have some negative consequences. One concern shared by both teachers was contradicting parents' beliefs and overstepping their boundaries as high school educators.

I feel, too, a lot of the kids mirror what they hear at home at this age. And so for me I was trying to imagine what if that were my kid in that class and their teacher was kind of trying to undo what I had done, how would I feel about that. And I think that I would not be okay with that because at that point I would feel it's politically. It's not impartial. And that's really the issue because it really shouldn't be impartial but at the same time that's not my role. (Mrs. Rose)

Mrs. Rose expressed hesitation in imposing her sociopolitical views on students:

I have very strong views about a lot of the issues that we're talking about. But at the same time I don't really think it's ever--I wouldn't say censoring about being honest about those views but censoring as far as trying to be really aware of--that this class isn't like, "I'm gonna tell you how to think about the world." Because I don't know all the answers and what I think might be--I just don't think that that's right. So even when I don't agree with things I feel like as the teacher in a public school I have to be more equitable in order to say "It's okay for you to think that and feel that but tell me why." Even though I don't think sometimes that it is okay. So I guess that is a form of censorship (Mrs. Rose)

Mrs. Flores described similar concerns discussing sensitive topics with students, "I've always been a little bit afraid of oh, I cannot talk about that in school." She also described an

instance where she had been confronted by a parent for showing a movie in her Spanish-language course. This particular instance made her hesitant to fully share her experiences or sociopolitical views with high school students:

... if I'm getting attacked for showing a movie that you signed a waiver for, am I gonna get attacked for telling somebody homosexuality isn't bad, that you need to respect that people have--that they're an individual? So there's a little bit of leering with teaching. I'm sure at the University you're not going to have parents calling, but at the high school and especially with younger kids. (Mrs. Flores)

Nevertheless, in her new role as a dialogue teacher, Mrs. Flores felt that she had more freedom to speak on sensitive issues:

And there's still a little bit of that because I fear for parents getting upset, "Well, you cannot talk about homosexuality. You cannot talk about racism. Or you cannot talk about whatever." Religion in particular, religion and sexuality are the two issues where I feel like I have to tap dance around because parents--I don't want parents coming in to my principal and saying, "Well, Miss Flores said that you need to respect everybody's choices." There's a little bit of that going on and I guess after teaching this course I kind of feel like well, maybe it's okay to push that a little bit.

Findings 5: Challenges with large class size. Another major challenge to implementing IGDs in schools was that a larger class size made it more difficult to facilitate a genuine dialogue. IGD pedagogy, suggests that a dialogue group consists of 10-12 people from two or more social identity groups (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001). Often, IGD groups include a balanced number of privileged and marginalized participants. A small group promotes greater connection and participation among participants. Smaller groups also help facilitators manage the process more effectively. At Hawkins, as in most public schools, class enrolment that low would be nearly impossible to offer due to administrative policies and practices. On this note, Mrs. Flores remarked, "I don't know that most administrators aren't gonna run a 20 kid class." As a consequence, each of the dialogue courses had approximately 25-32 students per class. A common strategy in the dialogue course was to break students into occasional small group

discussion. Mrs. Flores shared, “there were occasions when we did small groups, four or five, ...but the majority of the time was one large group.”

The large class size, affected the IGD process in several ways. First, the larger number of students engaged in discussions about sensitive topics made it difficult to build a sense of community and trust among participants. Mrs. Rose contemplated how she would have felt having to share very personal experiences or opinions on taboo topics, “I always felt like with 30, 32 I just felt like it wasn’t really authentic, because I don’t think I would’ve been honest in front of my classmates of 32 people.” Similarly, Mrs. Flores suggested that, “...when you have 27 kids there’s a lot more suspicions going on. You don’t get to know the kids that well. If there were 20, or 16, 15 ...you probably would feel closer and more trusting.” Moreover, Mrs. Flores felt that while some students were able to open up to the process and share with others, that the class as a whole never reached a level of trust or community that would foster deeper dialogue. In her reflection, Mrs. Flores compared her IGD teaching experience with her participation in another dialogic program:

They just did not seem to really--some of them were really open and trusting, but collectively the entire class never seemed to get to that level of trust. It was kind of like I don’t know you and I’m not going to become vulnerable and cry in front of you kind of thing. And for whatever reason in Communication Camp, and I don’t know if it was because it was all Harrison students, but those kids seemed to be able to, well also you’re together 24/7, but those kids really seemed to be able to--after one or two sessions of the dialogues they really seemed to be able to trust each other almost completely. So I would say there was still--you could see the walls up in some of the kids. There was a couple of kids that kind of let it all hang out, but there just didn’t seem to be that complete, total trust.

Becca also expressed that the large number of students involved in the course made it difficult to promote a trusting learning community. In considering future changes to the course, she suggested fewer students per dialogues. In comparing her current facilitation experience the previous year, she noted that in this class participants were more likely to connect with each

other due to the larger class size. As a result, Becca felt that “the class that had 18 students became a lot closer than the class that had 26.”

A second challenge facilitating the IGD course with such a large number of enrolled students was encouraging participation from individuals. Mrs. Flores noted that with a larger class, “there were a couple of kids that hardly spoke the entire 12 weeks. During large group discussion, the teachers and facilitators had to be mindful of individual students’ participation and particularly encourage students that were quiet to participate. Moreover, with only one or two facilitators it was difficult to break the class into smaller discussion groups. Consequently, Becca recalled, “sometimes I felt like students weren’t being heard.”

To address unbalanced participation by IGD participants due to large class size, Mrs. Rose planned to train several facilitators to help her co-facilitate her course the following year. Having peer-facilitators would enable her to break the class into smaller sections. Another practical issues related to class size was that there was simply not enough space in the classroom for certain activities:

I wish we had more room sometimes for--we would go in the back hall. That’s a pretty wide back hall, back there, so we would use that area. My classroom’s big enough but 27 was too many kids for sure. (Mrs. Flores)

Finding 6: Limitations of student maturity level. Teachers also spoke of the ways in which their students’ maturity level posed a challenge to implementing IGD in a high school setting. Early in our interview, Mrs. Rose commented on how students’ age was perceived as a challenge at a national training institute for educators interested in creating IGD programs. Most of the attendees were faculty, staff, or directors in institutions of higher education seeking to learn more about developing and facilitation IGD with college students. In sharing her district’s intent to offer an dialogue course during a small group discussion, Mrs. Rose recalled, “...well, a

couple of them actually said, I don't really think you could do this with 14-year-olds." And it was kind of interesting to say, "Well, we're gonna try." The assumption in these remarks to Mrs. Rose was that at such a young age students would be too immature to be interested or pay attention during dialogues. Mrs. Rose went on to say:

"it was not like that at all and I didn't think it would be, but there is that element of just they're in school together all day long. They are really immature at that point and how does that play out as far as the confidentiality aspect of how much are they really going to share when they go next hour into math and sit next to that person."

Mrs. Rose, did not perceive her students age as an obstacle to engaging them in the curriculum. In fact, most students were eager to be involved and enjoyed the learning process. Students' maturity level became a problem when considering issues of confidentiality. That is, unlike community-based or university-based dialogues where participants are less likely to see each other outside of the dialogue, high school students often shared the same course schedule or saw each other throughout the day in the halls, cafeteria, or sport's field. This continued exposure to one another, may have made it more difficult for individuals of such a young age to discern what could be shared in the dialogue course.

Another challenge in facilitating dialogue as a result of students' maturity level was a lack of base knowledge or personal experiences. The successful facilitation of dialogues involved creating a space where individuals could share their own knowledge on a particular topic. The sharing of multiple perspectives may help surface intergroup conflict, tension, and promotes a deeper understating of an issue at an individual and collective level. In facilitating IGD with younger students one must consider the degree to which they have been exposed to life-experiences that inform their attitudes and opinions on sociopolitical issues. For instance, Mrs. Rose expressed having difficulty starting a dialogue given how little students knew about affirmative action:

Most of the students, no matter what their race, had no idea what affirmative action was, didn't know what it was. I was shocked. I was at U of M during the trial--that's when I went to school there so I was like, "How can you not know what this is?" And they're like, "I don't know." So that makes dialoguing about it a little different.

In this case, she had to provide background information on the topic before the class could begin to discuss their opinions. Given that students had no previous knowledge or life experience that could inform their ideas about affirmative action, this lesson plan did not incorporate a key aspect of IGD; balancing process and content (Beale & Schoem, 2001). In considering students' maturity level and life experience, Mrs. Flores stated, "that's why I prefer I think the Dialogues class. I know [Mrs. Rose] has altered the curriculum for the freshmen, but I think it's better for 11th and 12th graders because they do have a little bit more maturity and life experience by then." Mrs. Flores shares that in her class of 9th-12th grades, she had a couple of sophomores whom she believed lacked life experience and maturity to engage in dialogue with her other students. "...when you're 15 years old you don't really have a huge life." For Mrs. Flores, part of the challenge was engaging younger students in deeper and more critical dialogic exchange between students. That is, to move the discussion from a superficial interchange of ideas to a more meaningful exchange of life experiences:

... the only thing that was more difficult for me ...I wanted to go deeper in with these conversations and sometimes they ended up staying pretty surface level. But I think you're dealing with high schoolers and the maturity level ... I wanted to always kind of delve deeper or get people to push further, kind of push through their boundaries and most of the time they just kind of ended up being pretty surface. (Mrs. Flores)

Despite the challenges to facilitating dialogues with younger students, both teachers expressed the value of engaging young people in IGD. Mrs. Rose vividly remembered rushing into a colleague's office to share, "This is the best thing I've ever done as a teacher". The main issue was that there weren't enough educational materials aimed at engaging youth in

meaningful discussions about social justice issues. To accommodate students' reading level and maturity, teachers sought out additional readings to help clarify some of the main theories and concepts introduced in the dialogue course such as empathy, social identity, and socialization. Despite her efforts to find readings her students could relate to, Mrs. Rose expressed frustration with diversity learning materials available to her:

... and everything I would find would be either so long or so academic that it just felt like--even if they could understand it maybe they're gonna check out or choose not to read it or whatever. Not all of them would do that, but some of them definitely would and so that was an issue. (Mrs. Rose)

For these teachers, the issue wasn't necessarily that IGD with younger students was impossible, but rather developmental considerations needed to be kept in mind in developing IGD programs and training teachers to facilitate such courses.

I would say things that we would need for our training to be a little different, acknowledgement of or maybe discussion of or some lessons around the developmental level of students at different ages and how--I'm sure there must be research out there of at a certain developmental level what's more appropriate or how might they get more out of it depending on where they are mentally and that wasn't really there for obvious reasons. But I think that would help and I feel like that might be out there somewhere, people who could think about the kids are here developmentally. (Mrs. Rose)

Discussion

This chapter sought to investigate the role of equity pedagogy in facilitating sociopolitical learning. In the first phase of this study, survey mythology was used with data from high school students in order to examine the effects of participation in an IGD on course on students' racism awareness, civic accountability, and expectations for engagement. The second phase of the study used data from semi-structured interviews with two high school teachers and a peer-facilitator to describe and explore how equity pedagogy may inform students' sociopolitical learning. The following discussion provides an integrative interpretation of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses to draw conclusions on: a) the effects of the IGD course on students'

sociopolitical development, b) factors that facilitated sociopolitical learning, c) and challenges faced implementing the IGD course in a school-setting.

Sociopolitical Learning

Theoretically, IGD is an educational approach that aims to address the workings of a diverse democracy (Checkoway & Aldana, 2013; Gurin et al., 2011; Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). At the university level, IGDs have been shown to promote young people's critical analysis of social issues, build alliances, and motivate social action (Nagda, 2006). IGD practice with youth has also been demonstrated to be an effective approach to raising consciousness and building youth's capacity to participate in social change (Boulden, 2007; Checkoway, 2009b; Wayne, 2008). To increase participants' knowledge of social systems, IGD engages youth in experiential activities and structured discussions that interrogate privilege and oppression with peers from varying social backgrounds. For example, a case study of Anytown—a community-based program for high-school aged youth that uses dialogic methods to train young community leaders—demonstrated that the use of dialogic methods increased participants' understanding and knowledge of various racial and ethnic groups (e.g., White, Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American), and increased awareness of how oppression and privilege influence their community (Boulden, 2007; Matsudaira & Jefferson, 2006). Given the extant literature, I expected that participating in the IGD course would foster students' sociopolitical development (awareness and civic engagement).

Surprisingly, the results did not support my hypotheses that students' racism awareness, civic accountability, or expectations for engagement would increase after participation in an IGD course. Instead, the quantitative results show that there was no statistical difference between students in the IGD course and students in the quasi-experimental group. These findings suggest

that participation in the IGD course did not have an effect on students' sociopolitical development. There are several possible reasons for the lack of intervention effects. First, it may be that a single IGD course will not enhance students' understanding of racism or motivate them to take action. This is consistent with a national study that demonstrated that a single civics course had no effect on civic knowledge or engagement (Langton & Jennings, 1968). It may be that a sequential course that engages students for longer periods of time proves more beneficial.

A second possible reason for the non-significant quantitative findings may be that changes to the curriculum may have compromised the critical-dialogic approach outlined by IGD pedagogy. Modifications to the original curriculum and large class size may have limited opportunities for genuine intergroup dialogues on race and racism. Although both sections of the dialogue course had some elements of equity pedagogy, structural and curricular adaptations made to accommodate the high school setting lowered the potential for an authentic dialogue experience. For instance, the larger number of students enrolled challenged the development of group norms and trust that are essential to the dialogue process (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001). These differences in approach, however, in no way reflect the quality and/or value of the course. Interviews with IGD educators suggest that the course did promote greater awareness of privilege, stereotypes, and inequality across multiple social identities. The adaptation of IGD processes and exercises was necessary to create a space where students could engage in controversial conversations with one another.

An additional key learning aspect of IGD pedagogy that may have been more difficult to maintain in the dialogue course studied was the balance of process and content (Beale & Schoem, 2001). Content is used to provide information that contextualizes participants' experiences, provides baseline knowledge on social issues, and addresses misinformation. The process of

dialogue invites people to share their own knowledge and experiences related to the topic, bringing to life theories and concepts. As such, what sets IGD pedagogy apart from other learning formats (e.g., lecture, presentation) is bringing together individuals with varied levels of personal experiences and positionalities (either as a target, bystander, or agent) to address social issues in ways that promote greater understanding of systems of privilege and oppression (Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Schoem, 2003). For instance, the qualitative findings suggest that many students lacked knowledge of racial issues (i.e., affirmative action), which limited their ability to fully engage in the dialogue process. Instead, the teacher had to provide much more content and information on the topic to generate discussion. Qualitative findings also suggest that students expressed more resistance towards the race-based curriculum. It may be that the proximity in age, geopolitical location, and lack of intergroup experiences limited these high school students' abilities to unpack personal experiences and connect them to broader societal issues.

Another reason for the non-significant effects of the dialogue course may be that the measures used did not capture the sociopolitical competencies gained from participation in the dialogue course. Perhaps using a broader measure of social analysis/worldview may have yielded different results. Previous work on youth's sociopolitical development has relied on measures that tap into students' beliefs about a just world (e.g., Diemer et al., 2008, 2009). It is possible that students in the current research study gained more general understanding of inequality, given that the course touched on various social identity issues. Qualitative data also suggest that students may have gained greater understanding of stereotypes and helped students build intergroup empathy. Future research may benefit from including measurements related to these two concepts.

Finally, the methods used to examine the impacts of the course may help explain the non-significant effects. Most studies that have investigated the effects of IGD programming on adolescents' social development have relied on action research or case study methodology. This body of work has provided an abundance of information on the relationship between equity pedagogy, critical consciousness, and social action. This line of research has also provided a rich description of various critical-dialogic programs and the observed benefits of participation (Griffin et al., 2012; Laman, Jewett, Jennings, Wilson, & Souto-Manning, 2012; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). However, these methods have provided little empirical evidence regarding the causal effects of IGD participation. To address this gap, the first phase of Study II used a quasi-experimental design that incorporated a non-equivalent control group. Although a similar approach has been used with large college samples (Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009), fewer studies with adolescents have examined the effects of an IGD course with an experimental design. While the use of a quasi-experimental design was a novel approach, attrition rates and small sample size across the intervention and control group resulted in a more conservative analysis of quantitative data, which may have made it more difficult to find changes in outcome variables.

Qualitative indicators of sociopolitical learning. Despite the null statistical results, the qualitative findings suggest that the course did promote students' sociopolitical learning in several ways. First, students gained new perspective on the sociopolitical landscape in their community. In discussions with one another, students learned that instances of discrimination and inequality were evident in their community. More importantly, they learned about the role of social identity and power. Through activities such as the privilege walk and cross the line, students began to make connections between society and their place in it. Many students gained

insight into their privilege, while others obtained greater understanding of their oppression in relation to others. The qualitative findings are consistent with previous research that demonstrates that student interaction with racially diverse peers is associated with increased knowledge of privilege and oppression, more awareness of local intergroup dynamics, and commitment to promoting social justice understanding (Gurin, Dey, Gurin, & Hurtado, 2004; Gurin et al., 2002; Nagda et al., 2004). It appears that the course did provide an initial space for students to engage in deliberative democratic practices that address issues of diversity directly.

Race-based curriculum helped students think about racial inequality more critically and facilitated aha-moments in which students made connection to their racial socialization and identity development. The course also facilitated learning about multiple social identities and intergroup dynamics within the community. The qualitative findings support previous research that demonstrates that IGD with adolescents provides opportunities for adolescents to explore issues of race and inequality (Aldana et al., 2012; Boulden, 2007; Nagda et al., 2006; Spencer et al., 2008). For instance, an empirical study of a metropolitan-wide summer dialogue program shows that dialogues increased exploration of one's racial-ethnic identity and awareness of interpersonal and institutional discrimination among high school students (Aldana et al., 2012). Moreover, qualitative findings also support existing evidence that depict dialogues as an opportunity for youth to examine their privileged identities and local intergroup relations (Griffin et al., 2012; Nagda et al., 2006; Spencer et al., 2008). Together, these findings suggest that IGD can successfully engage adolescents in discussions with one another that facilitate self-reflection about social identity and inequality. In sum, the course experience appears to have offered students a survey course that covered a breadth of social justice issues.

Facilitators of Intergroup Learning

The course also promoted sociopolitical learning through the use of student-centered instruction. In line with student-centered educational perspectives, IGD pedagogy assumed that students have the potential to co-create knowledge through facilitated activities that encouraged self-disclosure and story-telling (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001). Students are therefore encouraged to see themselves as experts in their own communities who provided perspectives different from those of adults. The participatory nature of IGD course enabled teachers to give their students, including the peer-facilitator, greater responsibility in leading the course. This is in line with previous literature that demonstrates that student-centered instruction, with an emphasis on group collaboration, gives voice to students' perspectives and builds their leadership capacity (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006; Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2001; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Singh, 2001). Students were encouraged to engage with one another and challenge each other to see issues from multiple perspectives.

Banks (2007) suggests that peer learning must be attuned to status differences among students to avoid marginalization of low-status groups. To cultivate equal status in critical-dialogic learning, IGD pedagogy recommends the use of multipartiality when facilitating dialogues. Multipartiality is a facilitation practice that aims to balance social power within intergroup interactions (Parker et al., 2006; Rifkin, Millen, & Cobb, 1991). For instance, during course discussions, teachers and the peer-facilitator encouraged equal participation among participants, and made sure that equal attention is given to the multiple identities and experiences of all participants. In order to promote intergroup learning through student-centered instruction, teachers and peer-facilitators must be multipartial and attend to group dynamics to make sure all youth have equal opportunities for class leadership and engagement.

Findings from the qualitative data analysis in study two support the assumption that competencies in equity pedagogy may be learned through formal instruction, reflection on life experiences, and opportunities to collaborate with students from diverse populations. The purpose of equity pedagogy is to help students become reflective and active citizens of a democratic society. Equity pedagogy involved students in the process of knowledge construction by challenging the idea of instruction as the transmission of facts, and students as passive recipients. The student-centered approach identified by key respondents in the second study, demonstrates the usefulness of altering the power relation between teachers and students. For instance, the student-centered approach used by IGD facilitates the creation of a learning environment that enables students to acquire, interrogate, and produce knowledge individually and collectively that may inform their worldviews and social analysis.

The course also provided multiple experiential and simulated activities that helped students build cross-cultural communication skills, decision-making, and group collaboration (Ball, 2000; Sassi & Thomas, 2008; Slavin, 1995). Moreover, the final project asked the students to think critically about a topic covered in the course and develops a plan to address it. For many students, this project was an opportunity to create a video to raise awareness and give voice to the experience of marginalized youth in the community. For others, it became a chance to envision practical or educational approaches to raising awareness on social issues that mattered to youth at Hawkins. Engaging high school students in equity pedagogy through IGD appears to have benefits for sociopolitical learning.

The role of teachers, in student-centered instruction, was perceived to serve two purposes: 1) to provide students with additional perspectives through self-disclosure, and 2) help manage the flow of activities and student voice. Through self-disclosure teachers helped model for

students what it looks like to share personal experiences. Self-disclosure among participants and educators is an important facet of social justice education, which fosters a mutual learning environment (Bell & Griffin, 2007). As students learned more about their teachers they also gain new perspectives on the issue being discussed. One challenge for teachers was meeting the social justice aims of the course without overstepping boundaries related to their role as teachers within a public school system. The risks associated with self-disclosure in teaching are indeed related to fears of departing from traditional teaching roles, and may even conflict with institutional norms and expectations (Bell, Washington, Weinstein, & Love, 1997). In sum, interview findings suggest that student-centered instruction and self-disclosure from teachers was helpful in promoting intergroup discussions.

Challenges in Implementing Dialogues

Qualitative findings also provide further explanations for the lack of quantitative results. Mainly, interviews with the key informants suggest that there were two primary challenges to implementing the dialogue course: large class size and student maturity level. These concerns corroborate with IGD design considerations that suggest that small group formations are ideal. In regard to the large number of students enrolled dialogue course, teachers and the facilitator expressed concerns regarding the capacity to build a trusting community and participatory process with such a large group. This supports previous work on the role of trust and the facilitation of meaningful dialogues (Alison Cook-Sather, 2002). It is unlikely that class-size will be modified for the purpose of implementing critical-dialogic pedagogy in secondary education. However, IGD pedagogy may be modified in small ways to accommodate a larger number of students per class. For instance, teachers may opt to split students to create two to four smaller groups within the class. For this to work, more peer-facilitators (or teacher's assistants) would be

necessary to help facilitate discussions in smaller groups. Both teachers at Hawkins High planned on recruiting and training more peer-facilitators in order to split students into smaller groups.

Student maturity level appears to have implications for confidentiality, depth of dialogues, and educational materials necessary. Mrs. Rose expressed concerns related to how apt students were in maintaining confidentiality when school culture promoted several opportunities to discuss what was going on in her dialogue class. Mrs. Flores was more concerned with the degree to which she could push younger students to participate in in-depth discussion about a taboo topic, if younger students had fewer life experiences to draw from. It may be that it is more difficult for adolescents to integrate abstract concepts to their lived experience. For example, after participating in an intergroup dialogue program, adolescents reported less blindness to blatant racial issues than racial privilege or institutional discrimination (Aldana et al., 2012). These findings suggest that adolescents are more aware of certain forms of racism than others. In a qualitative study of Afghan and Iranian immigrant youth in Canada, adolescents were able to describe instances of discrimination without attributing these experiences to ethnic-racial prejudice (Khanlou, Koh, & Mill, 2008). It may be that adolescents' level of cognitive maturity limits their ability to link concrete personal experiences (e.g., daily microaggression) to more abstract concepts, such as institutional discrimination, structural racism, and xenophobia.

Finally, another challenge posed by student's maturity level was the lack of developmentally appropriate course materials. Indeed, many teachers often feel unprepared and unsupported in their efforts to integrate more social justice education curriculum into their teaching (Bell et al., 1997). This finding also supports results from previous work that demonstrates that teachers often feel unprepared and unsupported when engaging in social

justice education (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Howard, 2006). More scholarship on the practice of implementing IGD with high school students is needed in order to develop more developmentally appropriate curriculum. In sum, the current findings provide mixed support for the growing empirical evidence on the use of equity pedagogy with adolescents. Qualitative findings suggest that the course provided a breadth of knowledge on multiple social issues rather than a depth of understanding on race and racism. This was in part due to early changes made to the original curriculum, which focused solely on race and racial discrimination, to include discussions on multiple identities. Additionally, it illustrates the need for future research that looks more closely at the facilitation and curricular implementation IGD pedagogy within high school curriculum.

The continued efforts to offer the dialogue course at Hawkins are not surprising, as these types of opportunities are more likely to occur in school settings where there is strong administrative and community support for diversity programs (Nagda et al., 2006). Moreover, the role of youth leadership in developing and piloting the course also encouraged the school district's support and allocation of resources. Even though empirical evidence of IGD in school settings is limited, and was not fully-supported by the second study, previous research on youth IGDs underscore the significant contributions of purposeful dialogue to youths' psychological and social development (Aldana et al., 2012; Boulden, 2007; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Spencer et al., 2008; Wayne, 2008). There is a growing body of work that has provided initial support for the use of IGDs with youth. However, very few of these studies document the effects of IGD participation using experimental designs. While the second study of the dissertation aimed to address this gap, its findings were inconclusive.

Chapter 6

General Discussion

This dissertation set out to examine sociopolitical development in schools with an emphasis on the role of multicultural education and intergroup relations among a diverse group of adolescents. As such, the primary goal of the first study in this dissertation was to expand our current understanding of youth's sociopolitical development by identifying the mechanisms that support or hinder youth's civic engagement in a racially integrated school setting. The second study of the dissertation aimed to explore how equity pedagogy, through a high school IGD course, promoted students' sociopolitical learning. The second study also addressed key issues in implementing IGD's in secondary education. This chapter closes the dissertation by providing an integrative discussion of findings from both studies. First, I provide an overview of the findings to briefly review and interpret study results as they relate to a) the literature on sociopolitical development, and b) IGD pedagogy in secondary education. The overview of findings is followed by a discussion of the research limitations and future directions for research. Finally, I discuss the lessons learned from this dissertation and outline implications for multicultural education and social work practice.

Overview of Findings

There is a renewed interest in studying the role of schools in fostering youth's civic development. In recent years we have come to learn more about how schools provide students with opportunities to acquire civic knowledge and/or become engaged in activities that promote service and civic action (Levine, 2006; McIntosh & Muñoz, 2009; Niemi & Junn, 1993; Torney-

Purta, 2002b). There is also a growing body of literature on critical multicultural education and its effects on racial consciousness and democratic outcomes (Berger et al., 2005; Kumagai & Lypson, 2009; Pitner & Sakamoto, 2005). This dissertation sought to expand on and integrate these two areas of research by examining predictors of students' civic engagement using a model of sociopolitical development (Watts & Flanagan, 2007) that attends to both individual (e.g., racism awareness, sense of agency) and school-related factors (e.g., perceived racial climate, IGD participation). I also examined the process of fostering sociopolitical learning in schools through the facilitation of an IGD high school course. Findings from two related studies highlight the significance of understanding how youth's sociopolitical development is influenced by the school context, with emphasis on intergroup dynamics that build adolescents' capacity to be civically engaged in a diverse democracy.

Education for Sociopolitical Development

In chapter four, I examined how sociopolitical factors such as racism awareness, school-based youth agency, and school climate related to civic accountability and expectations for engagement among adolescents from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds. Youths' sociopolitical development has been theorized to include building young people's sense of agency (ability to voice concerns that yield social power) and providing both formal and informal opportunity structures that make engagement in community action accessible for diverse groups. This in turn is expected to moderate the relationship between social analysis (e.g., racial-ethnic consciousness) and societal involvement (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts et al., 2006). The findings partially supported this approach to civic empowerment within school contexts. The findings show that students who were more aware of racism, who felt greater sense of agency in school-related scenarios, and who perceived more support for positive racial climate tended to have higher

scores on civic accountability. Meanwhile students' sense of agency in school-related scenarios, higher levels of parental education attainment, and enrollment in higher grade-levels (i.e., 11th-12th grade) was predictive of higher scores on expectations for engagement in civic activities after graduating from high school. It may be that one's attitudes and feelings about civic obligations are more likely to be influenced by one's critical awareness and knowledge of racism than one's behavioral intention to participate in civic activities in the future.

The dissertation contributes to our understanding of sociopolitical development theory in several ways. First, the dissertation used quantitative methods to empirically examine the sociopolitical model proposed by Watts and Flanagan (2007). Most studies of sociopolitical development among adolescents have been qualitative evaluations of intervention aimed at promoting positive youth development, and have rarely quantitatively operationalized or tested a model of sociopolitical development (Diemer et al., 2009). To address this gap in the literature, the dissertation examined empirically the relationship between racism awareness and civic engagement. This dissertation was able to discern differences between two civic dimensions (i.e., attitudes vs. expectations), by including closely related but conceptually different civic engagement outcomes. Together with the findings regarding civic accountability, these findings suggest divergent relationships between racial consciousness and various dimensions of civic engagement. More research is needed to examine the contribution of critical consciousness to various dimensions of civic engagement.

Second, the dissertation broadens our understanding of school-related features that promote sociopolitical development. Although there is a growing interest in the sociopolitical development of young people—particularly youth of color (Ginwright & James, 2002; Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts et al., 1999), less attention has been paid to the role of race within

contextual factors that facilitate sociopolitical development. This dissertation sought to address this gap by examining intergroup dynamics in one essential developmental context of adolescence—schools—and the potential influence of intergroup relations on sociopolitical development. School racial climate appears to also play an important role in developing civic accountability among youth. This finding validates empirical evidence on the democratic benefits of diversity among college students (Gurin et al., 2004).

Finally, this dissertation also expands the discourse on sociopolitical development to include ethnically and racially diverse youth in a suburban community. Much of the scholarship on youth critical consciousness and sociopolitical action has been focused on the experience of urban youth of color (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2006; Diemer, 2009; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Kincheloe & Hayes, 2007; Kirshner, Strobel, & Fernández, 2003), providing less insight into the development of youth of color living in suburban context. Even less is known about the sociopolitical development of White youth. This study contributes to sociopolitical literature by examining components of sociopolitical development among a diverse group of adolescents in a racially integrated school. Racial group differences were explored in the preliminary data analysis but did not yield any statistically distinguishable scores on predictor or outcome variables. This provides initial evidence that sociopolitical development may function similarly for both youth of color and their White peers in racially integrated communities. This study underscores the need for further research within racially integrated suburban communities, as they provide a fruitful context for examining the role of intergroup relations in developing adolescents' sociopolitical competencies.

The Role of Intergroup Dialogues

In Chapter Five, the dissertation examined the role of equity pedagogy in fostering sociopolitical development. In the first phase of the study, data from self-reported pre- and post-test survey responses were used to assess whether participation in an IGD high school course increased students' racism awareness, civic accountability, and expectations for engagement. The second phase of the study included qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews from educators involved in the facilitation of the dialogue course to provide an exploratory analysis of the process of facilitating IGD pedagogy in secondary education. The dissertation sought to expand current scholarship on IGD pedagogy to include the role of secondary education and issues unique to this educational context.

Educational approaches using critical-dialogic pedagogy are typically found within universities (Nagda & Gurin, 2007), providing little insight into the effects of IGD among high school students. Nevertheless, the use of IGD with high school youth is slowly increasing. Studies of IGD with high school students tend to focus on community-based or after-school programs that encourage adolescents to resolve intergroup conflict peacefully and collaborate together to promote racial justice (Boulden, 2007; Checkoway, 2009b; Griffin et al., 2012; Spencer et al., 2008; Wayne, 2008). This growing body of research demonstrates that IGD is also effective in raising consciousness, building communication skills, and motivating civic engagement among high school aged youth (Aldana et al., 2012; Griffin et al., 2012; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Spencer et al., 2008; Twomey & Ann, 2012). While empirical evidence of IGD in school settings is limited, school-based programs are effective in promoting adolescents' awareness about race and ethnicity.

Studies of school-based IGD pedagogy suggest that they are beneficial and produce positive outcomes. In a mixed method study with 11th graders who participated in a school-based intergroup dialogue and conflict resolution intervention, Spencer and colleagues (2008) discovered that after completing the program students reported increased awareness of their racial identity and consciousness of intergroup relations in their school. An additional example is the Mix-it Up campaign, a national initiative to promote diversity in public schools (Nagda, McCoy, & Barrett, 2006). Nagda and colleagues (2006) report that local school-based programs increased knowledge of social boundaries and social climate within the participating school. In addition, students reported increased ability to build relationships with peers and greater understanding of their personal roles in breaking down social boundaries.

Implementation of IGD in high school settings may range from extracurricular programs (e.g., diversity club) to special dialogue sessions integrated into existing courses. This dissertation is one of the first studies, to my knowledge, to examine an IGD course that is offered as part of the school's curriculum rather than an after-school program or a lesson plan within an existing course. Qualitative findings suggest that the course initiated learning about social identity and encouraged meaningful discussions about race and racism. As we move towards the development of critical-dialogic pedagogy for high school students, future research needs to systematically identify and evaluate how differences in implementation and educational settings influence the effectiveness of IGD pedagogy.

Unlike universities or community-based programs, secondary schools may have curricular and organizational requirements that make the implementation of IGD particularly challenging. Qualitative findings from study two suggest that class size and student maturity pose unique challenges in facilitating the IGD course. More specifically, interviews with IGD

educators suggest that large classroom size and student's maturity level were issues that made it difficult to implement IGD pedagogy. As the school moves forward with the dialogue course it hopes to increase youth leadership in facilitating the course. The addition of more peer-facilitators may help address issues of class size. More facilitators will allow educators to break classroom into various configurations that include large group discussions along with small group debriefing and didactic sharing. Previous research on after-school IGD programs also provides some insight into implementation issues within secondary schools (Griffin et al., 2012; Nagda et al., 2006; Spencer et al., 2008). For example, a case study of an 8-year program that runs after school for 20 weeks (Nov-June), suggests that implementation of the program is difficult given limited resources in some of the schools for extra-curricular activities and competition for students' time with other afterschool activities, such as sports, students clubs, and part-time work (Griffin et al., 2012).

Given the novelty of IGD in K-12 education, the facilitation of dialogues has been approached in a variety of ways. To illustrate in a mixed-methods study of a Mix it Up campaign, surveys with educators show that the quality of facilitation was inconsistent across schools (Nagda et al., 2006). Nagda and colleagues (2006) found that in some schools adults facilitated the dialogues (e.g., teachers, school counselors, community members), in other schools students who were previously trained in dialogue either facilitated dialogues or co-facilitation with an adult. Similarly, the dissertation study demonstrates that Hawkins High used various facilitation configurations to meet the needs of its course offering. One class was co-facilitated between a teacher and a high school student, while one teacher facilitated the other course. Moreover, the level of IGD facilitation training varied across the three key respondents. The success of an IGD course heavily relies on the training of facilitators who can assess students' resistance to

curriculum, group dynamics in the class that affect multipartiality, and effectively balance the content and process of social justice education.

A factor that facilitated the implementation of the IGD course was its student-centered approach to instruction. The student-centered approach, identified by key respondents in the second study, demonstrates the usefulness of altering the power relation between teachers and students. Instead of memorization, students learned to generate knowledge and create new understanding (Banks, 1993a; Tunstall, 2011). The student-centered approach used by IGD facilitates the creation of a learning environment that enables students to acquire, interrogate, and informs their worldviews and social analysis. In particular, having a peer-facilitator appears to be a crucial component to teaching IGD within a classroom setting. Peer-facilitators provide students with a role model that can help ease discomfort, clarify concepts, and challenge deeper conversation. This supports previous work demonstrating that learning from and with others improves intergroup relations and increases students' awareness (Nagda et al., 2004; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Slavin & Cooper, 1999). The student-centered approach embedded in IGD pedagogy creates an educational environment that allows students to learn from each other.

Implementation of intergroup dialogue with various racial and ethnic groups can be more challenging in highly segregated communities, because recruiting students from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds to participate may be more difficult in schools that are not racially or ethnically diverse. The racially and ethnically segregated nature of American cities and neighborhoods has theoretical and practical implications for multicultural education with youth in K-12. Despite the increase of students of color in public schools, students of color are increasingly attending schools that are more and more segregated (Orfield & Lee, 2005). Another option for highly segregated schools it to provide dialogues that focus on other social

identities. For instance, a school with a predominantly Latino student body may opt to conduct intergroup dialogues on gender that help youth explore issues related to sexism, patriarchy, and gendered norms. Alternatively, the school in the scenario above could opt to facilitate topic-based dialogues. For example, Latino students could be engaged in dialogues related to immigration by bringing together students of different generational status (i.e., 1st generation and 2nd generation) to discuss differences and commonalities across citizenship status. School partnerships across communities may be one alternative to implementing IGD dialogues in highly segregated schools.

As discussed earlier, most research on IGD programming and other forms of diversity learning, has focused on college students (Dessel et al., 2006; Stephan & Vogt, 2004; Zúñiga et al., 2007). The current findings suggest that IGD curriculum developed with college-students in mind should not be widely adopted for use in secondary education without evaluation and modification for use with younger students. As an initial step in assessing the implementation of IGD high school course, this dissertation used qualitative methods to explore the facilitation process of facilitating the IGD course. Given the exploratory nature of the second study, it was important to consider multiple methods for data collection and analysis that would allow for an in-depth examination of adolescents' sociopolitical development (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Then, interviews with key informants allowed for further exploration of the process of facilitating IGD with high school students.

In general, it appears that dialogues may involve students in open and participatory discussions to gain greater awareness of their social identity, school climate, and improve skills for communicating across difference. Incorporating dialogue into high school curriculum has the potential to transform young people who may never attend a four-year university, join a

community organization, participate in a summer program, or partake in an afterschool program. Thus, future research on equity pedagogy and IGD instruction should attend to developmental needs of younger participants.

Applying Findings to Improve Practice

Many psychosocial and cognitive characteristics of adolescence suggest that this developmental phase is optimal for advancing the multicultural and sociopolitical competencies of young people (Manning, 1999). Empirical evidence demonstrates that adolescents are indeed thinking about and actively exploring their identity. In a study with African American and White eighth graders, Phinney and Tarver (1988) found that among 48 participants, more than a third had thought about the effects of ethnicity on their future, had discussed these issues with their family and friends, and were attempting to learn more about their culture. Similar findings have been found among Latina/o Americans and Asian American youth (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Phinney, 1992; Roberts et al., 1999). These studies also suggest that White adolescents in integrated schools are thinking about race and ethnicity, but there is more active search for identity by students of color.

The developmental need to explore the meaning of one's identity with others who are engaged in a similar process manifests itself informally in school corridors and cafeterias across the country (Tatum, 1997). Moreover, adolescence is characterized by dramatic changes in identity, self-consciousness, and perspective taking abilities that may facilitate intergroup relationships building (Erickson, 1968; Marcia, 1980; Quintana, Castañeda-English, & Ybarra, 1999). Adolescent's exposure to prejudice reduction interventions demonstrate that their ethnic-racial attitudes, intergroup biases, and associated behaviors are likely to change for the better (Aboud & Levy, 2000; Doyle & Aboud, 1995). On the other hand, the racial biases of adults are

more difficult to change (Stangor & Schaller, 2000). Thus empirical evidence and theoretical assumptions suggest that developing multicultural competencies among adolescents may yield positive and lasting results. The developmental need for students to explore their racial-ethnic identity, and its influence on intergroup dynamics, suggests the need for schools to effectively prepare students for participation in a diverse democratic society.

Broadly speaking, the dissertation research suggests that in order for schools to prepare their students for engagement in a diverse democracy, the schools themselves must become democratic institutions that model appreciation of ethnic diversity, foster racial consciousness, encourage youth agency, and engage in deliberative democracy. The studies presented in this dissertation provide information about the ways in which schools inform the civic attitudes of young people relating to race and diversity. The dissertation also identified factors that facilitate or hinder students' sociopolitical learning through equity pedagogy. All together, these findings have implications for multicultural practice in schools that empowers youth to be more racially conscious and civically engaged. There are several practical lessons to be learned from this dissertation. Therefore, the following section provides a more detailed discussion of the implications for multicultural education and social work practice.

Implications for Multicultural Education

Banks (1994) proposes that in addition to curriculum and instruction, the school environment is also accountable for promoting equal status among the different groups of students, in order to maintain an empowering school culture. In schools, policies and practices surrounding issues of school discipline such as academic tracking (Oakes et al., 2006), and assignment to specific programs like special-education are all deeply shaped by histories of racism in educational practices (Banks & Banks, 2009; Zirkel, 2005)(Banks & Banks, 2004). It

may be that the physical distance between racial and ethnic groups perpetuated through lunchroom segregation and racial tracking may implicitly reinforce promotion of mistrust in multiethnic schools. Within multiethnic schools, social hierarchies among students created by “ability-based” tracking and peers norms around lunchroom segregation prevent students from seeing each other as equals. Conversely, schools that have implemented de-tracking efforts to provide an empowering school environment, demonstrate that this type of reform can create heterogeneous classrooms, improve intergroup relations, promote cross-race friendships, and improve teacher-student relations (Zirkel, 2008a).

Findings from the first study support the notion that an empowering school climate is beneficial for students. In the first study, I found that students who perceived their school to be more supportive of cultural pluralism also reported higher levels of civic accountability. For instance, perceptions of intergroup relations, racial-ethnic composition of an institution, and the inclusivity of an institution may inform individuals’ perceptions about what forms of political participation are available for certain groups. Sanchez-Jankowski (2002) suggests that the history of one’s ethnic group (e.g., exclusion, inclusion, privilege) affects how civic knowledge is transferred, the development of civic attitudes, and subsequent political participation. That is, knowledge of how one’s ethnic-racial group has been historically treated within American democracy informs an individual’s perceptions about what forms of political and civic activities (e.g. voting, protest, boycott) are available to people of certain groups. In a similar fashion, it may be that a school’s racial climate informs youth’s understanding regarding the inclusivity of other democratic institutions, which in turn may influence their attitudes regarding their role in civil society. Non-significant racial group differences also suggest that positive school racial

climate is an important factor in developing sociopolitical beliefs of all students, regardless of their racial-ethnic background.

Although campus diversity can foster positive student outcomes, ethnic and racial understanding does not necessarily develop resulting from mere intergroup contact, but rather from meaningful discourse on race (Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, Gurin-Sands, & Osuna, 2009; Nagda & Zúñiga, 2003). Equity pedagogy in secondary education, particularly in the form of intergroup dialogues, is a promising educational approach for fostering positive racial-ethnic relations on school grounds. For instance, youth IGD programs used as a conflict-resolution school intervention were found to reduce intergroup tension, acts of prejudice, and stereotyping by engaging youth from different racial and ethnic groups in direct discussions about race relations (Spencer et al., 2008). More importantly, the purpose of equity pedagogy is to help students become reflective and active citizens of a democratic society. Thus, the aim of equity should be to attain a balance between education for unity and education that recognizes, challenges, and helps resolve inequality manifested in forms of racism, sexism, and classism.

Banks (2007) also proposes that citizen education must help all students (including White youth) gain the capacity to think critically about inequality and transform society. Again, IGD pedagogy aligns with these educational goals to help students develop multicultural literacy and cross-cultural competencies. Much of the work of IGD facilitation involves helping young people work through power dynamics across differences to build collective consciousness and coalitions for change (Dessel et al., 2006; Zúñiga et al., 2002). Surprisingly, quantitative findings did not support existing research on the positive effects of IGD participation on students' critical awareness or democratic outcomes (Schoem, 2003). Therefore, I was unable to assert that participation in the dialogue course fostered students' sociopolitical development. However,

qualitative research suggests that the dialogue course did promote sociopolitical learning about local intergroup dynamics, multiple social identities, race and stereotypes. The course also helped students acknowledge and examine privilege and oppression. To increase participants' knowledge of social systems, the IGD course studied in this dissertation engaged youth in experiential activities and structured discussions that interrogate privilege and oppression with peers from varying social backgrounds. Part of the dialogue process involved helping students come to connect their personal experience as a member of social identity group (e.g., ethnic-racial identity) to an understanding of how that membership related to microaggressions or instances of privilege experienced in their community. These findings uphold the learning outcomes of equity pedagogy proposed by Banks (2007).

Implications for Social Work Practice

School social workers are expected to provide evidence-based education, behavior, and mental health services; promote a school climate and culture conducive to student learning and teaching excellence; and maximize access to school-based and community-based resources (Frey et al., 2013). An overarching aim of school social work practice is to link the home, school, and community in providing direct as well as indirect services to students, families, and school personnel to promote students' academic and social development. However, the historical emphasis of school social work practice on addressing students' attitudes and behaviors rather than attempting to modify problematic patterns within school operations or policies (Allen-Meares, 2004; Costin, 1969a, 1969b; Meares, 1977) has limited school social workers' participation in the decision-making processes of general educational practices, school-wide policies, and/or curricular programs that affect students (Allen-Meares, 1994; Dupper, 2002). Consequently, school social workers are often narrowly incorporated into the schools they serve.

A decade ago, Allen-Meares (2004) challenged school social workers to become more active in school leadership activities to promote the expansion of social welfare services and educational opportunities for all students. Analogously, Spencer (1998) presented challenges and strategies for implementing antiracist policies and programs to improve the lives of school children. The continued lack of literature on these areas of social work practice suggests an unanswered call to action. This dissertation seeks to revisit the call for anti-racist leadership in schools that furthers empowering school social work practice (Kurtz, 1997; LaFrance, 1994; To, 2007).

The dissertation findings suggest increasing opportunities for school social work practice that can both enhance school leadership and have positive impacts on students. For instance, the first study suggests that perceptions of their school's racial climate are key to the development of students' positive civic attitudes, regardless of their racial-ethnic identity. There are several other ways in which social workers can help promote an empowering school culture that challenges racism at various levels of intervention (Spencer, 1998). For example, social work practice at the mezzo level may involve organizing and facilitating equity pedagogy (e.g.) training for teachers and administrators. At a macro level, social workers can develop policy statements that articulate social conditions that perpetuate systems of oppression and limit students' opportunities for intergroup engagement (e.g., tracking, self-segregation), and help school districts identify anti-racist materials and evidence-based practices (e.g., dialogues). School social workers may also seek partnerships with local community organizations to develop extra-curricular programs that aim to improve intergroup relations outside of school grounds.

The findings also highlight the significant role of school-based youth agency in fostering civic engagement. Group settings in schools provide an ideal setting for social workers to

facilitate empowerment in social work practice(Gutiérrez, DeLois, & GlenMaye, 1995; Gutiérrez et al., 1998; Parsons, Gutiérrez, & Cox, 1998). For instance, small group meetings may include action research projects, leadership training, strategic analysis of community assets, and action planning that leads to greater student voice in their school and surrounding neighborhood. Moreover, in small student groups social workers may integrate multicultural organizing principles that involves guidance on how to attend to issues of power, privilege, and oppression within and across groups when engaging in social action and coalition building to inform their practice (Gutiérrez, Lewis, Nagda, Wernick, & Shore, 2005). Thus, school social workers may be able to provide a variety of extra-curricular activities and programs that help youth assess their schools and gain confidence to voice their concerns to school faculty and staff. The aim of such programming would be to provide opportunities for students to build their sense of sociopolitical control, and to increase student voice in the school's decision-making process and educational reform efforts.

Social work scholars are uniquely positioned to continue the pedagogy development and evaluation that is needed to build evidence-based practice guidelines for IGD implementation in public schools. Although the role of social workers was not systematically studied in this dissertation, social workers were involved in various aspects of the development of the IGD course. For instance, the district superintendent is a social worker who has demonstrated strong commitment to multicultural education and social justice. Students that developed the course curriculum received assistance and guidance from social workers. Early in the development of the course, masters of social work students were involved in training high school students and teachers as IGD facilitators. Efforts to develop the course are consistent with theoretical and

practical applications of social justice work through IGD pedagogy and social work practice (Dessel et al., 2006).

The success of IGDs also depends on the availability and participation of people from diverse backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, racial segregation may pose a challenge to practitioners interested in facilitating race-based IGDs in schools in highly segregated communities. School social workers occupy a strategic position for exercising professional leadership within the school and its neighborhoods (Costin, 1969a). This unique position can be used to facilitate communication between school personnel and community agencies that can foster school-community partnerships. In racially segregated schools, which are most often found in underserved communities of color, school social workers should take the lead in building relationships across communities to facilitate communication between schools that may be interested in joint dialogue programs. As practitioners, social workers need to develop more spaces either within schools or in the community for young people to critically examine and learn how to work together toward racial justice.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations in this dissertation research that need to be considered in designing future research. For instance, the cross-sectional approach used in the first study does not allow for causal inferences regarding the relationship between racism awareness and civic accountability. It may be that the relationship between perceived racial climate and civic accountability is linear, in which more positive perceptions of school racial climate predict greater levels of civic accountability. Alternatively, it may be a bidirectional relationship in which perceived racial climate and civic attitudes mutually influence one another. Previous studies indicate that participation in activities that foster civic engagement, such as volunteering

and youth leadership, are associated with school connectedness and engagement (Geller et al., 2013; Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007; Whitlock, 2006). Generally, previous work has found that civic behavior is associated with more positive perceptions of school climate. Given the preliminary nature of studying sociopolitical development in relation to racial climate—among both marginalized youth of color and White youth—it was essential to empirically establish a theoretically proposed relationship between consciousness and civic engagement. Future work should investigate the relationship among racism awareness and civic engagement outcomes longitudinally in order to determine casual pathways. Moreover, longitudinal analysis that includes multiple dimensions of civic engagement (e.g., attitudes, behaviors) may provide greater clarity on the role of critical consciousness in developing sociopolitical action.

While the current study expands on the limited empirical knowledge on youth agency by considering the contextual factors in schools that may affect students' sense of sociopolitical control at school, the dissertation was limited in examining aspects of school-based youth agency represented in the items included in this data set. Items included various situations in which students may need to assert their voice in school-related scenarios. Other forms of school-based youth agency not measured in this dissertation—such as perceived efficacy in organizing a project or experience leading a school group/club—may also impact sociopolitical development. Including items that tap into student's sense of agency in leadership roles or during collaborative projects with teachers and peers would better incorporate literature on student voice in school change (Mitra, 2008; Morgan & Streb, 2001; Rust, Peterman, & Storz, 2008).

A logical next step would be to conduct qualitative research (such as interviews and participant-observation) that capture the range of ways in which high school students enact their agency within school contexts. Thus, research might examine more closely formal and informal

ways in which schools are an organizational setting that can provide opportunities for student voice and governance that fosters youth's sense of agency within the school context.

Moreover, the scale developed in this dissertation was not always sufficiently reliable, which further suggests that the school-based youth agency scale needs refinement. The measure originally consisted of six items, two of which were dropped due to exploratory factor analysis and tests of reliability. Future research might seek to develop a measure that includes several more items with a broader range of prompts. Including more items would increase variability and improve reliability (Björklund, 2002). Further, the dissertation measured perceived agency and not behavioral indicators of agency. Future research may seek to examine behavioral evidence of students expressing control of their schooling. Given the potential utility of examining youth agency within the school context, future research should seek to further develop and validate a measure of school-based youth agency with a larger representative sample.

Measures used also posed limitations to the quantitative analyses in the second study. It may be that the measures used to examine racism awareness, civic accountability, and expectations for behavior are not sensitive to educational interventions. Given that none of the outcomes of interest changed over time, it may be that these attitudes and civic intentions are stable characteristics, making it difficult to assess quantitative change in a short period of time. All outcome measures used have been validated with cross-sectional data. It may be the case that the measures used to operationalize racism awareness, civic accountability, and expectations for engagement are not the best measurement option in assessing dialogic intervention effects on sociopolitical development. Previous dialogue research with high school aged youth has focused on similar but empirically different concepts such as racial identity exploration, colorblind

ideology endorsement, and engagement in social action behaviors (Aldana et al., 2012; Spencer et al., 2008).

Relatedly, it may be possible that changes in racism awareness and civic engagement outcomes may not be apparent immediately after the course intervention. It may be that there is a delayed increase in attitude change resulting from participation in the dialogue course, which manifests several months after participation in the course (Cook, Gruder, Hennigan, & Flay, 1979; Gruder et al., 1978). Previous research with college-aged youth suggests that participation in IGD courses does have a lasting effect. For example, a longitudinal study that looked at outcomes three years post-participation found that participants reported greater support for multicultural and affirmative action policies than did non-participants (Gurin et al., 2004). Longitudinal data may assist in determining whether a sleeper effect is present among students that participated in IGD course. Future studies may benefit from gathering follow-up data several months or year(s) after participation in the course.

Another possible reason for the lack of significant intervention effects may be issues inherent in action research. However, steps to attend to the complexity of action research were taken. To move beyond the common pre- and post-test design in youth IGD research, I employed a quasi-experimental design. That is, the intervention sample consisted of high school students enrolled in an IGD course., whereas the non-equivalent control group consisted of youth who were enrolled in either of the dialogue teacher's non-dialogue courses (e.g., Spanish Elective). While this research design allowed me to control for teacher effects, it may have made it more difficult to find small effects. On a similar note, the data are from a relatively small convenience sample, and the number of participants within the quasi-experimental grouping was even smaller due to attrition, which may have minimized our power to detect statistical differences among

groups. Attrition may be partially attributed to the survey format. That is the survey was distributed online—to accommodate teacher’s preferences—making it more difficult to get students to complete the survey, particularly after the end of the trimester (post-test). To address issues related to attrition in action research, future research may benefit from paper and pencil format rather than an online survey.

Another strategy to attend to complications in action research was to employ mixed-methods. The dissertation sought to obtain qualitative data on the facilitation of the IGD course to obtain contextual and procedural information that might help explain quantitative results. Qualitative findings suggest ways in which teachers modified the curriculum that may have impacted the effectiveness of teachers and peer-facilitators in engaging students in a critical-dialogic process. Unfortunately, I did not have means to evaluate adherence to curriculum on a day-by-day basis. Nor did I assess issues relates to class attendance or student interactions that may have affected the implementation of the IGD course.

Future IGD intervention research should attend to issues related to implementation by systematically observing and recording factors that may limit effectiveness. For instance, in-class observation or daily facilitator memos that may include changes to curricula, class dynamics, and personal reflections may be more informative than interviews. Moreover, rather than using IGD facilitator perceptions of student outcomes and the course experience, future research may also use interview data from students’ perspectives on their learning outcomes and expectations for future civic engagement.

As mentioned previously, the sample size for both studies was relatively small. Replication with a larger sample size that includes a school-wide sample may yield different results. Moreover, generalization of these findings beyond adolescents in a racially integrated

suburb of the Midwest should be exercised with caution. Nevertheless, this dissertation research speaks directly to the need to examine the role of race and intergroup relations among youth of diverse backgrounds. Although the suburban context in which this dissertation research took place provides a fruitful environment to explore intergroup relations and civic engagement, more work needs to be done to expand the applicability of these findings to other populations based on geography, racial segregation levels, and intergroup relations.

There are a couple of limitations to interviewing, as they pertain to this study. First, not all participants are equally articulated perceptive of the phenomena being studied. Second, interviews are not socially neutral research tools. Instead, interviews are a result of interaction between the interviewer and interviewee and the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2012; Qu & Dumay, 2011; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Seidman, 2012). Nevertheless, findings from qualitative research on school diversity and intergroup relations suggest that youth in racially and socioeconomically integrated school settings—which emphasized analysis of social inequality expressed—desire to become actively involved in social change. This stands in contrast both to students in predominantly White socioeconomically affluent schools, who demonstrated complacent attitudes toward formal civic participation, and to students of color in underserved schools, who held both strong civic commitments and disempowered views of American ideals and civil society (Rubin, 2007). Future research may seek to examine the relationship between school racial climate and civic engagement across multiple school settings (e.g., racially homogeneous vs. racially integrated) and with a more nationally representative sample.

Conclusion

Youth are increasingly engaged in school situations that highlight issues of race and ethnicity, such as intergroup conflict, lunchroom segregation, and race-based social exclusion

from peers inside and outside the classroom (Tatum, 1997). In a diverse democratic society, adolescents can benefit from having greater understanding of racism and other systems of oppression, along with the civic capacity to try and address community issues. This dissertation presents findings that provide insights into the ways in which school racial climate and school-based youth agency are linked to civic attitudes and expectations. The dissertation also brought the discussion of IGD pedagogy, which has primarily been focused on higher education or community-based programs, to the secondary education level. The dissertation provides exploratory findings of the process of engaging youth in IGDs at school, which may promote critical analysis of community issues and greater understanding of racial privilege and oppression. A mixed-method approach was particularly useful in gaining greater insight into key issues related to the implementation of IGD in secondary education. The quantitative and qualitative approaches strengthened each other to provide a better understanding of sociopolitical learning that takes place as one participates in a dialogue course.

As discussed throughout the dissertation, the concepts of multicultural education and youth sociopolitical development must be tied to social identity development, critical analysis of systems of power, and capacity building for collective action. Adolescents are often at a stage of development in which they are seeking opportunities to explore their identities, engage with questions about social justice, and have experiences that enable them to create change. Over and over again, multicultural education theory and empirical evidence demonstrate that issues of race and ethnicity need to be explicitly addressed for effective practice. In an increasingly diverse society, the emphasis of future research and practice must be on strengthening multicultural participation and engaging diverse peoples in working together toward social change.

Appendix A. Parent Opt-out Letter



To: Parents/Guardians

Grades: **Nine, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve**

Activity: **Farmington Public Schools / Youth and Multicultural Education Study for Secondary Students**

Principal Investigator: Adriana Aldana, M.S.W., School of Social Work and Department of Psychology, University of Michigan

Faculty Advisors: Barry Checkoway, Ph.D., School of Social Work, University of Michigan
Stephanie Rowley, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Michigan

Summary: The overall purpose of this anonymous study is to learn about adolescent's perceived experiences with multiculturalism in schools.

Opt-Out: *A copy of the study materials is available in the school office for you to review. Please contact the principle investigator [Adriana Aldana, MSW] at [818-207-2282 cell or aldana@umich.edu] no later than December 12 th if you do not want your child to participate in this study.*

Dear Parent,

I am writing to invite your child to be part of a study that will explore adolescents' experiences with multiculturalism in their school. If you agree, your child may complete a series of anonymous on-line survey and may opt to participate in a one-on-one interview examining multiculturalism in school culture in more depth.

The same on-line survey will be administered three times throughout the academic year. First, the survey will be administered at the beginning of the school year (September); again at the end of the fall term (December); and finally at the end of the school year (June). The survey will take approximately 45-50min to complete and may be done at your child's leisure. Your child may access the survey remotely from a home computer, school computer lab, or public library computer. If you and your child agree to participate, I will contact your child via email with instruction and a link to the survey. In addition, if your child opts to complete a one-on-one interview later in the academic year, I will meet with your child in a location and a time that is convenient for your family. The interview will take between 45-60 minutes. I would like to audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately, but your child can still be part of the study if you don't want him/her to be interviewed (with or without audiotape).

Benefits

While your child may not receive a direct benefit from participating, I hope that this study will result in better multicultural education for other students.

Compensation

Your child will receive a \$5 gift card for each survey. If your child chooses to participate in the interview they will receive a \$10 gift card for the interview. If your child chooses to withdraw from any part of the study early, they will still receive the corresponding compensation for their participation. Compensation for surveys will be given at school a few days after participation. Compensation for interviews will be given immediately after participation.

Risks and discomforts

Answering questions about multicultural issues may be uncomfortable and/or difficult. Your child can choose to skip a question or may withdraw from the study at any time.

Confidentiality

Survey data will be collected electronically and stored in computer files that are password protected and hard copies are stored in locked cabinets. To keep your child's information safe, your child's name and other identifiers are stored separately from their research data in encrypted and password protected computer files. The audiotape of your child's interview will be placed in a locked file cabinet until a written word-for-word copy of the discussion has been created. As soon as this process is complete, the tapes will be destroyed. I plan to keep this study data to use for future research about multicultural education and youth leadership. We plan to publish the results of this study, and will not include information that can identify your child, such as his/her name and the name of the school. No other persons, other than the study team, will be able to see survey and interview responses. You will not be able to see your child's responses to the survey or interview.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your child may also ask to be withdrawn from the study at any time. Even if you give your child permission to participate in this study, your child may still decide to not participate.

Contact information

If you have questions about this research, including questions about the scheduling of the interview or compensation for participating, you can contact Adriana Aldana, M.S.W., University of Michigan, School of Social Work and Department of Psychology, 2221 East Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, (818) 207-2282, aldana@umich.edu or my faculty advisors, Barry Checkoway at barrych@umich.edu; Stephanie Rowley at srowley@umich.edu If you have any questions about your child's rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences, (734) 936-0933, 540 E. Liberty St., Suite 202 Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Thank you,
Adriana Aldana, MSW
University of Michigan

Appendix B. Student Assent Form



Assent to Participate in a Research Study **Youth & Multicultural Education**

Principal Investigator: Adriana Aldana, M.S.W., School of Social Work and Department of Psychology, University of Michigan
Faculty Advisor: Barry Checkoway, Ph.D., School of Social Work, University of Michigan
Stephanie Rowley, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, University of Michigan

Overview and purpose

Learning about race and other multicultural issues can be challenging. We are asking you to be part of a research study that plans to identify ways to improve teenagers' experience with multiculturalism in school culture. The overall purpose of this anonymous study is to learn about teenagers' perceived experiences with multiculturalism in schools.

Description of your involvement

If you agree, you may complete an anonymous survey and may opt to participate in a one-on-one interview examining multiculturalism in school culture in more depth.

Survey administration will take approximately 45-50min and will take place during school hours. If you choose to complete a one-on-one interview, I will meet with you in a location of your choice and a time that is convenient for you and your family. The interview will take between 45-60 minutes. During the interview, you will talk to an interviewer about how experiences related to multiculturalism have affected you. I would like to audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately, but you can still be part of the study if you don't want to be interviewed with or without the audiotape.

Benefits

While you may not receive a direct benefit from participating, I hope that this study will result in better multicultural education for other students.

Risks and discomforts

Answering questions about your school experience and multicultural education may be uncomfortable. You can choose not to answer a question or you may stop the interview at any time. Just tell the interviewer you want to stop.

Confidentiality

We plan to publish the results of this study, and will include some information that can identify you, such as your first name and the name of the organization. No other personal information will be included. No other persons (e.g., parents, teachers), other than the study team, will be able to see your response to the survey and/or interview.

Risks and discomforts

Answering questions about multicultural issues may be uncomfortable and/or difficult. You can choose to skip a question or may withdraw from the study at any time.

Compensation

You will receive a \$5 gift card for each survey. If you choose to participate in the interview you will receive a \$10 gift card for the interview. If you chooses to withdraw from any part of the study early, you will still receive the corresponding compensation for their participation. Compensation for surveys will be given at school a few days after participation. Compensation for interviews will be given immediately after participation.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if your parents say you can participate in this study, you do not have to do so. Even if you say yes, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You may also choose to not answer a question for any reason.

Contact information

If you have questions about this research, including questions about the scheduling of the interview or compensation for participating, you can contact Adriana Aldana, M.S.W., University of Michigan, School of Social Work and Department of Psychology, 2221 East Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, (818) 207-2282, aldana@umich.edu or my faculty advisors, Barry Checkoway at barrych@umich.edu; Stephanie Rowley at srowley@umich.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences, (734) 936-0933, 540 E. Liberty St., Suite 202 Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, irbhsbs@umich.edu

Assent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the study. We will give you a copy of this document and will keep a copy in our study records. Be sure that we have answered your questions about the study and you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

I agree to be contacted for the one-on-one interview.

Signature

Date

I agree to have my interview audio taped.

Signature

Date

Contact information (please print)

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Appendix C. Email Recruitment Script

Study ID: HUM00037688 IRB: Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Date Approved:
8/17/2012

Greetings,

I hope this message finds you well! I am contacting you to invite you to be part of a research study entitled, "Multicultural Education and Youth Leadership." The study will explore the implementation of intergroup dialogues within secondary education. You have been selected to take part in this study, because you are a current teacher/facilitator or have been involved in the implementation of the intergroup dialogue course in the past. I plan to ask all staff and youth leaders involved, in the planning and implementation of the intergroup dialogue course, to participate in this research study.

If you agree to be part of this study, you will be asked to describe: 1) your involvement in the planning and implementation of this course, and 2) how this experience has affected you and students at your high school.

The interview will take between 30-60 minutes. I would like to audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately. However, you can still be part of the study if you choose not to be audio recorded. We can conduct the interview in your home or another location (e.g., public library, classroom) at a time that is most convenient for you.



Consent to Participate in a Research Study (18+ year olds)
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Principal Investigator: Adriana Aldana, M.S.W., School of Social Work and Department of Psychology, University of Michigan
Faculty Advisor: Barry Checkoaway, Ph.D., School of Social Work, University of Michigan and Director of the Youth & Community Program
Stephanie Rowley, Ph.D., Psychology Department, University of Michigan.

Overview and purpose

Teaching about race and other multicultural issues can be challenging. We are asking you to be part of a study that will explore the implantation of an intergroup dialogue within a high school setting. I contacted you because you are currently a teacher/facilitator or have been involved in the planning and implementation of the intergroup dialogue course in Farmington Hills. I plan to ask all staff and youth leaders involved to participate in this research study.

Description of your involvement

If you agree to be part of this study you will talk to an interviewer about your involvement in the planning and implementation of this course and how this experience has affected you.

There will be one interview session. The investigator will conduct the interview in your home or another location and time that is most convenient for you. The interview will take between 30-60 minutes. I would like to audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately, but you can still be part of the study if you don't want to be audio recorded.

Benefits

Participation in this study may not result in direct benefits to you. However, it may increase awareness of your understanding in and of multicultural education. Secondly, it may increase your ability to voice your opinion on this issue. We also hope that this study will result in better multicultural education for other students.

Risks and discomforts

Answering questions about your learning experiences of multicultural issues may be uncomfortable and/or difficult. You can choose not to answer a question or you may stop the interview at any time. Just tell the interviewer you want to stop.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participation in the interview.

Voluntary nature of the study

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Even if you agree to be part of the study, you may change your mind and stop the interview at any time.

Confidentiality

We plan to publish the results of this study, and will not include information that can identify you, such as your name and the name of the group you are a part of. To keep your information safe, the digital recording of your interview will be placed in the investigators computer under a password-protected file until a written word-for-word copy of the discussion has been created. As soon as this process is complete, the digital recordings will be destroyed. The investigator will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected. The investigator plans to keep this study data to use for future research about multicultural education and youth leadership.

Contact information

If you have questions about this research, including questions about the scheduling of the interview or compensation for participating, you can contact Adriana Aldana, M.S.W., University of Michigan, School of Social Work and Department of Psychology, 2221 East Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, (818) 207-2282, aldana@umich.edu. or my faculty advisors, Barry Checkoway, at barrych@umich.edu and Stephanie Rowley, at srowley@umich.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences, (734) 936-0933, 540 E. Liberty St., Suite 202 Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210, irbhsbs@umich.edu.

Thank you,
Adriana Aldana

Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in the study. We will give you a copy of this document and will keep a copy in our study records. Be sure that we have answered your questions about the study and you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

I agree to have my interview audio taped.

Signature

Date

Interview Instructions and Consent

We are asking for your voluntary participation in a research study that is focused on learning about teenagers' perceived experiences with multiculturalism in schools. This consent form will provide you a brief description of the study, to inform you that participation is anonymous and voluntary, explain the risks and benefits of participating and allow you to make an informed decision about your participation. From this study, we hope to learn about specific information regarding issues of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism in school culture. Your participation in this survey will take approximately 45 minutes. This includes the time to read this assent form. The data for this survey is being collected anonymously. Neither the researcher nor anyone else will be able to link your responses to you as an individual. In addition, participation in this study is completely voluntary. Even if your parents say you can participate in this study, you may choose not to do so. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time without penalty, however, please try to answer every question. You will receive a \$5 gift card for participating in this survey. While you may not receive a direct benefit from participating, I hope that this study will result in better multicultural education for other students. Answering questions about your school experience and multicultural education may be uncomfortable. Again, you do not have to answer any question that you are uncomfortable responding to with no penalty. We plan to publish the results of this study, and will not include information that can identify you, such as your first name and the name of your school. In addition, no other person(e.g., parents, teachers), other than the study team, will be able to see response to the survey. After giving assent, you will be asked a series of questions about your experience with multiculturalism in school. If you agree to participate in this survey, please click on the box below.

I agree to participate in this survey

I do NOT agree to participate in this survey (End of Survey)

IGD Intervention Items

1. Have you ever been enrolled in the "Leadership Dialogues on Diversity" class offered at school?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
2. Answer If Have you ever been enrolled in the "Leadership Dialogues ... Yes Is Selected
 - a. Which of the trimesters were you enrolled in the dialogue class?
 - b. 1st Trimester
 - c. 2nd Trimester
 - d. 3rd trimester

School-based Youth Agency Measure

When you think about yourself at school, how much do you relate to the following statements? Please rate how true each statement is for you.

1= Very untrue 2= A little bit untrue 3=A little bit true 4= Very True

1. I feel confident I can advocate for myself if I am graded unfairly.
2. I feel certain I will be listened to if I request to be placed in honors and AP courses.
3. I feel hopeless when I think about my academic performance.
4. I feel able to contribute positively to my school.
5. I feel comfortable challenging unfair school rules.
6. I feel anxious about joining extracurricular activities (sports, student clubs), because I may not be accepted.
7. I feel at ease when I talk with teachers and school staff during one-on-one meetings.

Racism Awareness: Adapted Ethnocultural Empathy Measure

Thinking about your daily interactions with people of diverse backgrounds, how would you describe your experience in general? Please indicate how much you agree with each statement below.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3= Neither Agree or Disagree 4= Agree 5= Strongly Disagree

1. I am aware of how society differentially treats racial or ethnic groups other than my own.
2. I recognize that the media often portrays people based on racial or ethnic stereotypes.
3. I am aware of institutional barriers (e.g., restricted opportunities for job promotion) that discriminate against racial or ethnic groups other than my own.

Perceived School Climate Measures

These next questions are related to your school. Please rate how indicative each statement is of your school.

1= Never 2= Hardly Ever 3= Sometimes 4= Often

Racial Climate: School Support for Cultural Pluralism Subscale

4. Your teachers show that they think it is important for students of different races and cultures at your school to get along with each other.
5. Students of many different races and cultures are chosen to participate in important school activities.
6. You get to do something, which helps you learn about students of different races and cultures at your school.
7. You work with students of different races and cultures in a school activity.

8. Your counselors show that they think it is important for students of different races and cultures to be involved in advanced placement (AP) and honors courses.
9. You get to interact socially with students of different races and cultures during school hours.

Student voice Climate: School Support for Student Decision-Making

10. In your school, students are given the chance to help make decisions.
11. Students in this school have a say in how things work.
12. Students get to help decide some of the rules in this school.
13. Teachers ask students what they want to learn about.
14. Students help decide how class time is spent.

Civic Engagement Measures: Adapted California Civic Index

The following questions ask about your opinion, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3= Neither Agree or Disagree 4= Agree 5= Strongly Disagree

Civic Accountability

1. If you love America, you should notice its problems and work to correct them.
2. I oppose some U.S. policies, because I care about my country and want to improve it.
3. Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility.
4. Being concerned about state and local issues is an important responsibility for everybody.
5. I think it is important to protest when something in society needs changing.
6. I think it's important to challenge inequalities in society.

Expectations for Engagement

When you think about your life after high school, how likely is it you would do each of the following?

1. Get involved in issues like health or safety that affect your community.
2. Work with a group to solve a problem in the community where you live.
3. Do volunteer work to help other people.

Demographics

Age: _____

Gender: _____

What grade are you in?

- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th

What city do you live in?

Which of the following best describes YOUR GRADES in school?

- Mostly A's
- Mostly B's
- Mostly C's
- Mostly D's
- Mostly F's

Were you born in the U.S.? Yes or No

If, you were not born in the U.S. where were you born?

Was your Mother born in the U.S.? Yes or No

If, your MOTHER was not born in the U.S. where was she born?

Was your Mother born in the U.S.? Yes or N?

If, your MOTHER was not born in the U.S. where was she born

What is the HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION of your Parent(s)/Guardian(s)?

Please CHECK ONE for each parent/guardian.

- a) Grade School (elementary)
- b) High School/GED
- c) Some College
- d) Associate's Degree
- e) Bachelor's Degree
- f) Graduate/professional School (e.g., MA, MD,JD, PhD)
- g) Other: _____

Appendix F. Key Respondent Interview Protocol

Introduction Script

(Instructions for interviewer: Make sure to have both consent forms before the interview begins)

Thanks again for meeting with me today. I know you have been doing a lot of work on diversity issues and multicultural education. I am very interested in learning more from you about your experience within schools, your community, and the intergroup dialogues course. This is also a study of student learning of race and diversity. In specific, I will ask you to tell me about what seem important for diversity leaning, what some of the greatest challenges, what things seem to work well, and what some sources of difficulty are.

Before we start, I want you to know that some of the questions may be difficult or seem obvious. There is no right or wrong answers. I am just interested in what students believe and what they care about. Nothing that you say will offend me, so please feel free to answer everything honestly. You have the right to skip any question without explanation or stop the interview at any time without penalty. Feel free to ask me for any clarifications.

Oral consent: Do you agree to be interviewed for this study? Do you agree to be recorded for this interview? (Audio record Record ID number and date)

(Ask the main/general questions. Only use sub-questions as probes whenever necessary).

Autobiography

First, I am going to ask you to tell me a little about yourself.

Demographics:

- Age, gender identification, occupation, role in dialogue class
- Where they lived growing up? Where they live now?

Racial-ethnic identity

1. What would you say your race/ethnicity is? (If participant needs help with this, give list of choices like: Black, Black American, African American, Latino, Chicana, Mexican American, White, European American, Caucasian, etc. Do not just use what you consider yourself or the participant to be.

If the interviewee list many ethnicities ask, which one stands out for you?

- i. How come?
 - ii. When is it most important?
 - iii. In what ways is it important for you to be _____?
2. What do you like about being _____? Can you give me an example of when you felt like that?
 3. What are some things that bother you about being _____? Can you give me an example of a time when you felt like that?
 4. Are there times when you are more aware of being _____ in school? Tell me about the last time you felt this way?

And now I am particularly interested in your leadership in issues of diversity and education.

Youth Multicultural Leadership

1. What type of diversity education leadership activities are you currently involved in?
2. How did you get involved in diversity education (e.g., dialogue class) at your school?
 - a. How did you first get involved? How long have you been involved?
 - b. What motivated you to do this type of work?
 - c. Were there any factors that helped you be more involved in diversity leadership?
 - d. Any factors that made it hard for you to be more involved in diversity leadership? Why?
3. How would you describe your involvement in the planning and implementation of the Intergroup Dialogue course?
 - a. What worked well? Can you give me an example?
 - b. What didn't work? Can you share a specific story?
 - c. What would you do differently?
 - d. How was this experience different from your experience in other activities/ responsibilities (e.g., teaching, non-dialogue related work) you are also involved in?
4. What dialogue experience or activity most stood out for you this year?
 - a. Why did this experience/activity stand out to you?
 - b. What were you thinking during this experience?
 - c. What did you learn from this experience?
5. How has your involvement in the dialogue class changed you?
 - a. Have your thoughts on race and ethnicity changed? Can you give me an example?
 - b. Has your teaching/facilitation of groups changed due to your involvement in intergroup dialogues? Can you give me an example?
 - c. Has your relationship with peer changed? Can you give me an example?
 - d. How does your work impact others?
6. How does your diversity work impact your students (both dialogue and other courses)? Can you provide an example?
 - a. Does your diversity work impact other students not enrolled in one of your classes? How?
7. How does your work impact other teachers and staff in your school? Can you provide an example?
8. How does your diversity work impact others community members?
9. Any final thoughts, anything I may have

End of Interview

Checklist for Fieldnotes

- Interview time and location
- Description of the neighborhood
- Description of participants home (if applicable)
- Participants dress, demeanor, mood, temperament
- Any recurring themes that stand out during interview
- Changing tone or mood during certain parts or sections
- Note any interruptions or distractions that may have happened
- Particularly difficult parts

Appendix G. Youth-Led Evaluation Document Summary

Name or Type of Document: Evaluation of the 2010-2011 Class

Date received: 8/13/11

Date of Document:

6/15/11

Event or contact with which document is associated: Youth Evaluation Team

Description: This is an 8-page word document file that was shared with me electronically by the youth evaluation team. I consulted with the evaluation team over the summer, mainly to help them stay on task, organize content, and provide feedback. The report was co-authored by two students who were involved in the planning, implementation, and facilitation of the course in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Purpose of Document: The purpose of the document was to provide overview of curriculum and assess its strength and weaknesses.

Brief summary of content

- Provides information of the class-set up; with details about peer-facilitators, the school district, and course description in student handbook.
- Describes the dialogue class process: with examples from specific moments that worked or did not work.
- Describes group configurations used: small group and larger group discussions
- Includes issues faced by facilitators with the teacher, other students, and among themselves.
- Outlines suggested “improvements for next year”
 - Weekly meetings between teacher and peer-facilitator(s)
 - Adaptations for 9th graders in the IB program that consider less experience with high school group dynamics, more emphasis on community service/ action.
 - Earlier recruitment
 - Teacher and peer-facilitator training in the summer
 - More focus on social action project rather than showcase
 - Less race (students felt that it was too repetitive), more inclusion of various social identities
- Curriculum is outlined
 - Unit 1: Introduction to topics
 - Unit 2: Diversity and the individual (social identities)
 - Unit 3: Diversity in school (school intergroup dynamics)
 - Unit 4: Diversity in the community (broader social/institutional issues)
 - Unit 5: Diversity of nation (the role of individuals in creating social change)
 - Unit 6: Conclusion (final projects)

Questions/Issues to consider: Which recommendations were implemented? Did they improve the course? How has the curriculum changed since this evaluation?

Appendix H. Initial Thematic Framework and Codes

Theme	Initial Code	Descriptor	Examples
<i>Facilitation Role</i>		<i>Describes roles/responsibilities in the IGD course</i>	
	Planning	Describes what was done in preparation of the dialogue	Curriculum development, training
	Facilitation	Described methods/approach to facilitation of IGD dialogues within the course.	Pair-share, small group discussion, intra vs. intergroup dialogue
<i>Dialogue Experience</i>		<i>Describes the IGD process</i>	
	Activity	Describes activities that worked well or prompted in-depth discussion	Privilege walk, Stereotype activity, cross the line, identity wheel
	Students response	Describes instances or examples of how responded to activities, learning process or class	Emotional (angry, joy, frustration), cognitive (confusion, dissonance), resistance
	Aha-moment	Describes instances where students had a moment of revelation due to course engagement	A student demonstrates sudden understanding of activity or concept.
<i>Intervention Impact</i>		<i>Describes how IGD impacts others</i>	
	IGD students	Describes how the IG course influenced students' sociopolitical learning (critical analysis/civic engagement).	Racism awareness, exploration of privilege and oppression, exploration of social identity and socialization.

Appendix I. Final Coding Scheme

Code Name	Alphanumeric Code	Category	Descriptor
<i>IGD Learning</i>		<i>Outcome Code</i>	
	IGD1	Activities	Describes or mentions specific activities as promoting learning or sociopolitical outcome (critical analysis/civic engagement)
	IGD2	Exploring multiple identities	Describes students' learning/discussing issues about social identities other than race.
	IGD3	Local dynamics	Describes students' learning/discussing issues in the community (e.g., discrimination, inequality, segregation)
	IGD4	Race-based curriculum	Describes activities or discussions that engaged students in learning about race/ethnicity and racism.
<i>Perceptions of Facilitators</i>		<i>Process Code</i>	
	FAC1	Self-disclosure	Describes examples/instances of self-disclosure during the facilitation of IGD course (e.g., sharing personal information).
	FAC2	Student-centered instruction	Describes examples or instances where students engaged in student-centered instruction (e.g., open-ended problem solving, team projects, role-playing, simulated activities, and community engagement assignments).
<i>Perceptions of Challenges</i>		<i>Process Code</i>	
	CHALL1	Large classroom	Describes and/or mentions large student enrollment as a challenges to implementation.
	CHALL2	Resistance	Describes examples/instances where a students expresses resistance to learning or class (e.g., checking out, expressing dislike, overly criticize activities).
	CHALL3	Teaching role	Describes and/or provides examples of how the role as a teacher as a factor that makes it challenging to facilitate IGD course.
	CHALL4	Maturity level	Describes and/or provides examples of student maturity-level as a factor that makes it challenging to facilitate IGD course.

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