Examining the Impacts of Youth Dialogue: Anti-racist Behavior, Social Responsibility, and Civic Habitus

by

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DEDICATION

To the youth activists who are ensuring that the arc of the moral universe does, indeed, bend toward justice.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION……………………………………………………………….………………………ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS…………………………………………………………………………iii

LIST OF TABLES……………………………………………………….………...………..ix

LIST OF FIGURES………………………………………………………..……….……….x

ABSTRACT…………………………………………………………….....…..…………….xi

CHAPTER

I. Introduction………………………………………………………………..………………1

II. Connecting the Dots of Youth Dialogue: How Young People Bridge Knowledge with Action……………………………………………………….22

III. The Potential of Youth Dialogue: Promoting Civic Identity, Social Responsibility, & Anti-Racist Behavior………………..………………..54

IV. Towards a Civic Habitus: Imagining Civic Engagement Drive in Youth………..…….82

V. Conclusion……………………………………………………………………….....108

APPENDIX…...………………………………………………………………………….118

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Four Stage Model of IGD, with Sample Activities…………………………………...48

Table 2.2 Participant Demographic Information………………………………………………...49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Mean scores of CoBRAS at Time 1 and Time 2, by racial/ethnic group……..………………………...…………………………..50

Figure 2.2 Conceptual model: moderated moderation…………………………………………...51

Figure 2.3 Percentage of participant agreement with dialogic skill development……………………………………………………………….52

Figure 2.4 Percentage of participants who self-identified dialogic skill development……………………………………………………………53

Figure 3.1 Mean scores of ARAS at Time 1 and Time 2, by racial/ethnic group…………………………………………………………...76

Figure 3.2 Mean counts of "helping behaviors" at Time 1 and Time 2, by racial/ethnic group…………………...…………………………...77

Figure 3.3 Mean counts of "community behaviors" at Time 1 and Time 2, by racial/ethnic group…………………...…………………………..78

Figure 3.4 Mean counts of "political behaviors" at Time 1 and Time 2, by racial/ethnic group…………………...…………………………...79

Figure 3.5 Number of SYD participants by YII "type," pre-SYD and post-SYD………………………………………………………...80

Figure 3.6 Mean scores of YSRS at Time 1 and Time 2, by racial/ethnic group…………………………………………………………..81

ABSTRACT

Intergroup dialogue is a critical pedagogy that helps individuals learn about systems of oppression and work collaboratively with others to challenge those systems. While much research exists documenting the impact that intergroup dialogue has on college aged students, less is known about how intergroup dialogue impacts adolescents. Additionally, while research on intergroup dialogue demonstrates changes in anticipated behaviors, less is known about how intergroup dialogue impacts actual behaviors. This case study explores the ways in which one particular youth dialogue program influences adolescents' behavior, sense of responsibility, and long-term activism, with a specific focus on civic behaviors, attitudes, and identity. This mixed method dissertation utilizes pre- and post-tests as well as in-depth interviews to demonstrate the following: 1) youth dialogue strengthens adolescents' cognitive understanding of structural inequality, and supports the development of skills that young people can use to work towards change; 2) youth dialogue increases rates of anti-racist and activist behaviors, and increases adolescents' sense of social responsibility; and 3) participants who continued their engagement through a structured fellowship program following the youth dialogue program differed in many ways from participants who did not apply for the structured program, suggesting that socialization, curriculum, and leadership influence who can envision themselves as a young civic leader and how young people engage civically. Implications regarding the potential for youth dialogue to promote long-term civic engagement are discussed, as well as critical questions for researchers and practitioners to consider in an ever-developing field.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

"You can never stop and as older people, we have to learn how to take leadership from the youth and I guess I would say that this is what I'm attempting to do right now."
-Angela Davis

This three-paper dissertation arose organically from my practice experience with the Summer Youth Dialogues Program on Race & Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit (SYD), and more broadly from my experience with Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) as a social justice pedagogy. Through my involvement with the Dialogue community, I saw firsthand how powerfully transformative participating in an IGD could be. I had participated in an IGD course myself in college and noticed how difficult it was for me and my peers to challenge ourselves, and to unlearn the socialization that had been engrained within us for so long. But I also saw the value of the difficult process: IGD was how I learned to work across difference, temper my frustrations, and feel a sense of personal efficacy. It is where I learned that I had an important story to tell, that I belonged in college, and that diverse people could serve as allies. I had always wished that I could have had a similar experience in high school. My introduction to SYD while in graduate school gave my time at Michigan purpose and provided me with a dissertation topic that constantly filled me with hope for the future. My time working with SYD has shown me that high school students are more than capable of grappling, both cognitively and emotionally, with complex societal issues like racism and oppression; they are more than willing to challenge themselves and others and do the hard work of unlearning oppressive aspects of their socialization; they are interested in participating in the process of solving tough problem and

strengthening their communities, and hungry for more opportunities to be involved; and they often have creative and ambitious solutions that might not occur to adults.

This dissertation is my small contribution to developing our knowledge of the potential impact of youth dialogue. The vast majority of research on IGD has focused on college aged students; while this is important, and should continue, I believe that opportunities to practice the skills needed to create a more just and diverse democracy are necessary *before* individuals reach college. It is important to note that not all individuals attend college, so finding ways to extend IGD beyond spaces of higher education is important for the sake of inclusivity, equity, and justice. Robust research was one factor that fueled the growth of IGD in spaces of higher education; if we are to hope for the same support for youth dialogue, we must produce evidence that demonstrates its undeniable value. Though these three papers stand alone as individual manuscripts, they work in tandem to tell a story about the potential for youth dialogue to support young people as they work collaboratively across difference and effectively for change.

Introduction & Significance

Youth organizing and youth activism have been steadily increasing in recent years (Martin et al., 2007; Conner, 2011; Conner, Ober, & Brown, 2016). This rise in youth organizing, activism, engagement, and general participation is a timely one given that our country is at a crossroads. Wealth disparities, that are exacerbated by race and gender, are at an historical high; voter ideologies are more polarized than ever recorded; a record high 77% of Americans perceive the nation as “divided” (US Census Bureau, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2014; Gallup, 2016). Currently, these social divisions are being amplified by a global pandemic and nationwide protests over racism and police brutality (Pew, 2020).

However, history has demonstrated that during times of national division and political tension, young people have mobilized and sustained successful social movements. In 1903 more than 10,000 child workers under the age of 15 went on strike in Philadelphia to demand better pay and safer working conditions. The "March of the Mill Children" helped to expose the inhumanity of child exploitation and paved the road for what would eventually become the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. In 1951, Barbara Johns organized a walkout at her all-black Virginia high school to protest the inequities and racism present in the public education system. The NAACP ultimately took the 16-year-old's case to trial, which contributed to the Brown v. Board of Education argument in 1954. The Greensboro sit-ins of 1960 began with a group of four teenagers, quickly spread to over 50 cities, and led to the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Momentum from the sit-ins contributed to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. More recently, young people have organized around racial justice (the Black Lives Matter movement), immigration reform (the DACA & Dreamers movements), indigenous rights (the Standing Rock/No DAPL movement), and gun reform (the Never Again movement).

The rise in youth participation in society is being paralleled by a growing interest in youth participation in the academic realm: various forms of youth participation have gained traction as an area of practice (in fields like social work, education, and public health) as well as an area of research (many professional research associations such as the American Psychological Association, the Council on Social Work Education, and the American Education Research Association now include sub-track sections for Youth Participatory Action Research and Evaluation in their annual meetings). And for good reason. As scholars committed to addressing our world's most pressing social issues, we must be taking into consideration current context to

review the relevant work, ask the important questions, and gather the appropriate data to contribute to meaningful forward progress.

Concerning youth participation, we know, for example, that adolescence is an important period of identity exploration during which young people reflect upon the values and beliefs that will influence the trajectories their lives will follow (Erickson, 1968). We also know that during adolescence, young people are especially drawn to organized activities (and particularly prosocial and political organizations) that they can easily integrate with their personal and social identities (Martinez, Penaloza, & Valenzuela, 2012). Previous research tells us that there are important links between youth participation in organized activities early in life (for example, high school government or community service) and democratic behaviors later in life (for example, voter turnout and social activism) (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997).

So, as we are considering the deep levels of social division we are facing as a country, and the potential that young people hold to help bridge those divides, we must also consider what more we need to learn. What do we already know about the connections between participation in prosocial and political organizations early in life and democratic outcomes later in life? Are these connections demonstrative of immediate changes? Long-term, reflection-inducing change? Are these connections present for the majority of those who participate in early prosocial and political organizations?

My dissertation idea stems, in part, from a book titled *Freedom Summer* by Doug McAdam, a retrospective research project that examined the impact of the Mississippi Summer Project during which hundreds of northern college students volunteered to spend a summer in Mississippi while attempting to register Black voters, establish a new political party, and provide sociopolitical and historical education in newly-developed Freedom Schools. The book is unique

in that McAdam, in his struggle to secure a complete list of all Freedom Summer volunteers, discovered an empirical gold mine: rather than finding a list of all volunteers, McAdam was handed over every single submitted application to be a volunteer with Freedom Summer. That is, he learned the identities of everyone who applied to spend the summer in Mississippi – including those who ended up volunteering, those who were turned away, and so-called "no shows" (those who applied and were accepted, but did not show up to volunteer). His qualitative investigation of the long-term impacts of Freedom Summer therefore explored the experiences of these different groups, highlighting the similarities and nuanced differences between them. He found that those who participated in Freedom Summer were more politically active throughout the various movements of the 1960s than the "no-shows," and they remained more politically active at the time of publication. Further, participants were less likely to be married than the "no-shows," and had significantly lower incomes than the "no-shows" at the time of publication. McAdam's qualitative findings, drawn from interviews with participants and "no-shows," provided important context to these differences; participants and "no-shows" alike shared some of the influences of their behaviors. Parental influence was key, and ranged from support of youth activism, to paternalistic and gendered worry for daughters planning on going to the south, to racialized worry about the violence being reported. McAdam used Freedom Summer as a case study to further our understanding of how early structured experiences impact later civic life.

In my dissertation, I will examine the efficacy, longevity, and implications of a different structured organization: The Summer Youth Dialogues on Race & Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit (SYD). Using SYD as a case study, I first explore whether the program is effective in reaching its goals (relating to identity exploration, dialogic communication development, and content gains pertaining to issues of privilege and oppression). I then assess whether participants

experience significant changes in the types of civic and critical behaviors they engage in after completion of the program. And finally, I speak with those SYD participants who chose to continue their social justice work after the completion of the program, as well as those SYD participants who chose *not* to continue.

In my dissertation I hope to explore the following questions: Are programs like SYD effective? If so, in what ways? In particular, do programs like SYD promote youth participation (both immediately and long-term)? If so, for whom? And how do these programs impact those less likely to engage in youth participation? How can we use SYD as a case study to help us better understand a broader context – that is, a divided US, a lack of dialogue across difference, and a widespread perspective that young people are disengaged from democracy?

Background: Summer Youth Dialogues

My dissertation will use the Youth Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit program as a case study through which to examine various aspects of youth participation. As such, all three components of my dissertation will pertain to the program and require some background knowledge of the program and its structure. Below I will provide an overview of the program's history, recruitment process, structure, and demonstrated outcomes.

History. The Youth Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit, commonly referred to as "Summer Youth Dialogues" (SYD), was launched nearly 15 years ago as a collaborative effort between the Skillman Foundation (a Detroit-based charitable foundation focused on improving the lives of children in Detroit and increasing opportunities for their equitable civic action) and the University of Michigan (in particular, Michigan's Program on Intergroup Relations and Michigan's School of Social Work). The Skillman foundation wanted to draw upon the University's rich history with IGD: students had been enrolling in and peer

facilitating IGD courses for over a decade; a strong body of empirical literature about IGD was coming out of the University; and the University was motivated to develop more community-based curricular initiatives. Thus, the Summer Youth Dialogues program was born.

Recruitment & Participation. The success of the SYD program requires the participation of several racially or ethnically homogenous groups from the Metro Detroit region. Over the years the program has developed a number of community partners in the Metro Detroit region to aid in this complicated recruitment process. Partners include community organizations as well as public, private, and charter schools. Each year, the SYD program works with these community partners to identify a group of students to participate in SYD. Each summer, between eight and twelve groups are invited to participate, allowing for four to six intergroup dialogue pairings. Students at the University of Michigan are invited to apply to be "near peer" facilitators – attempting to replicate as closely as possible the peer facilitation pedagogical feature of IGD courses.

Structure. Over the years, the structure of the SYD program has varied, but each variation of the program has included the following core components:

1. Intragroup Work. Intragroup sessions provide students with an opportunity to learn the basics of IGD in comfortable settings comprised of students who share a focal identity. These intragroup sessions are important, because they often serve as the first opportunity students have not only to think about these sorts of concepts, but also to share them with other people – many of whom they don't know well.

2. Intergroup Work. Once students have been introduced to the basics of IGD, they are introduced to their intergroup partners (a group of a different race or ethnicity than their own group). Together, they participate in activities and simulation games that help them examine,

identify, and grapple with the ways privilege and oppression are interwoven in their own lives, oftentimes in very different ways.

3. Community Action Projects. After a series of intergroup dialogue sessions, each paired intergroup is asked to identify a social problem they see facing the metro Detroit area and develop a collaborative action project to directly address the problem. Facilitators and program staff support students throughout this process.

4. Residential Retreat. A central component of the program involves a multi-day/night retreat at the University of Michigan campus. During the retreat, students stay in dorms with a roommate of a different race or ethnicity, eat at campus dining halls, go on a campus tour, attend a presentation at the admissions office, and continue their intergroup work. For many participants, this is the first time they are away from home overnight, their first time on a college campus, and their first time sharing a personal space with someone of a different race or ethnicity – these social components of the retreat prove to be as important as the cognitive and content-based components.

SYD is based largely on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of intergroup dialogue, adapted for adolescents, and guides participants through the same "four-stage model" of IGD: group formation (where IGD pairings participate in bonding activities and exercises), exploration of differences and commonalities (through intra- and intergroup dialogue activities), discussion of controversial issues (through dialogues on "hot topics"), and action planning (through community action projects) (Zúñiga et al., 2007; Checkoway, 2009; Fisher, 2007). The SYD structure attempts to incorporate both the pedagogical and curricular aspects highlighted in IGD research (Gurin, Nagda, Zúñiga, 2013).

Outcomes. A series of evaluations have been conducted to assess the outcomes of the SYD program (Checkoway, 2009; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). These evaluations have incorporated empowerment perspectives into their approaches, utilizing youth participatory action research and evaluation methodologies by including young people in the development, implementation, and analyses of the evaluation (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2003). Statistical analyses of pre- and post-test evaluations identified a range of attitude changes: increases in understanding about participants' own racial and ethnic identities; increases in understanding about other groups, cultures, and histories; decreases in color-blind racism; increases in awareness of racial privilege; and an increase in anticipated action to address issues of racial inequality (Checkoway, 2009). Qualitative analysis of journals, interviews, and focus groups additionally revealed that the SYD program helped young people develop a series of important skills, including communication skills to talk about race, skills to manage the discomfort of grappling with issues of privilege and oppression, and leadership skills (Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013).

Key Questions & Approaches

Study 1. *Key Questions:* Does youth dialogue increase youths' cognitive understanding of structural inequality? What skills do young people who participate in youth dialogue develop? Do the skills developed through youth dialogue enable young people to bridge cognitive gains related to structural inequality with critical action?

Approach: Study 1 is part of SYD's annual program evaluation and seeks to understand if SYD is achieving its programmatic goals. To date, little research has been published on the demonstrated impacts of the SYD program. Specifically, study 1 is a case study that examines whether a structured youth dialogue program can produce meaningful effects in terms of content

gains and skill development, and whether young people are able to connect content gains with developed skills for the sake of promoting change. The program seeks to help young people better understand concepts of privilege and oppression, specifically as they relate to how race operates within society. This will be quantitatively operationalized using the Color-Blind Racism Scale (CoBRAS, see below). The program also seeks to help young people develop the skills necessary to enhance dialogue and increase critical action regarding injustice and racism within their communities. This will be quantitatively operationalized through a series of questions regarding their skill development (see measures, below) as well as qualitatively operationalized through open-ended questions about their self-identified growth throughout the program. Qualitative data will also provide insight into how, if at all, young people are connecting their learning to the skills they are developing. Preliminary analysis will examine paired t-test change scores, with follow-up analyses if significant effects are demonstrated.

<u>Study 2.</u> *Key Questions:* Does participation in SYD impact young people's actual engagement in civic activities? Does participation in SYD influence young people's sense of responsibility for civic actions? If so, do these outcomes differ across racial groups?

Approach: Study 2 expands upon the intended programmatic impacts of the SYD program explored in Study 1, and explores other impacts (less directly built into the curriculum) relating to various forms of youth engagement. Study 2 is a case study examining the nuanced and indirect impacts of a structured youth dialogue program on youth civic identity and social action. These impacts will be analyzed through a series of change scores, assessing where participants begin (before SYD) and end (after SYD). Identity related changes will be operationalized through the youth social responsibility scale (YSR, see below), and behavior related changes will be operationalized through the Anti-Racist Action Scale (see measures,

below) and the youth inventory for involvement (YII, see below). Changes will also be qualitatively analyzed through a series of open-ended self-reflective questions answered by participants at the end of the SYD program. Preliminary analysis will examine paired t-test change scores, with follow-up analyses if significant effects are demonstrated.

Study 3. *Key Questions:* What distinguishes youth who remain involved in social justice work after an intensive youth dialogue experience from those who do not remain involved? How do these different groups see themselves fitting into larger civic society? Are there similarities in the ways these two groups view their role in civic society? Differences? How might the seemingly "disengaged" become engaged – or are they currently engaged in ways we might not be considering?

Approach: Study 3 is a qualitative examination of the longer-term impacts of the program on both participants who have continued to stay involved in structured social justice work after SYD as well as participants who chose not to continue engaging in structured social justice work after SYD. A sample of youth who were selected to be in a fellowship program following SYD, as well as a sample of youth who participated in SYD but did not apply for the continuing fellowship, were interviewed to better understand their experiences with the program, their rationales for either continuing and not continuing, and their continued involvement with civic society.

Methods

All participants for studies 1, 2, and 3 were participants in the 2018 SYD program. These participants were recruited for the program by adult allies who work with SYD leadership (therefore, I had no part in the recruitment of program participants, but drew my sample from this pre-selected population). I worked alongside program leadership to develop an evaluation

survey that would both evaluate the program for future program development as well as provide me with valuable data for my dissertation. The evaluation survey will be used for studies 1 and 2 of this dissertation proposal, and was submitted to the University's Institutional Review Board and ultimately approved, including appropriate measures to safeguard the interests of minors. Study 3 is a qualitative investigation involving in-depth interviews with SYD 2018 participants approximately one year after their completion of the program.

Studies 1 & 2: Quantitative Methods

Quantitative Recruitment. On the first day of the program, I was given time to speak to participants in the program as well as their parents/guardians. I took this time to introduce myself, describe my own involvement in and commitment to the program, and share a little bit about why evaluation of and research on programs like SYD and the young people who participate in programs like SYD are so important. I stated that each participant would receive a parental/guardian consent form as well as a youth assent form to demonstrate and document their willingness to participate in such evaluation and research; they were guaranteed that their information would not be utilized without their consent, and any information collected with consent would be kept anonymous and protected. I shared my contact information in case any participants or parents/guardians had any questions or concerns.

Quantitative Procedure. On the second day of the program, I re-introduced myself to participants and reminded them of who I was and what my role was in the program. I prefaced the evaluation by reassuring participants of their anonymity, and encouraged them to answer as honestly as possible. I also shared that they could feel free to raise their hands and ask me questions at any point throughout the evaluation if they were confused by a question, or could simply choose to not answer a question if they preferred. I then provided each participant with

the youth assent forms, the parental/guardian consent forms, and the evaluation and pre-survey. I collected youth assent forms and evaluation surveys immediately after completion, and sent numerous reminders to return the signed parental/guardian consent forms during subsequent program days. Of the 69 participants who provided evaluation data, 67 provided both youth assent and parental consent. The data from the remaining two surveys were discarded, as parental consent was not attained.

On the final day of the program, all participants completed the post- evaluation and survey. Surveys were matched within subjects, and non-matched surveys were discarded (as they did not provide initial parental consent forms). Quantitative data collection concluded with 65 matched pre- and post-surveys (out of a total population of 70 participants).

Quantitative Measures. A series of demographic and psychological measures were collected throughout the survey. Demographic information included age, grade, gender, city, zip code, birthplace (of self, parent/guardian #1, and parent/guardian #2), race or ethnicity, and highest education level (of parent/guardian #1 and parent/guardian #2).

Anti-Racist Action Scale (ARAS). The first psychological measure utilized in the survey was a youth-developed anti-racist action scale. The scale was developed by a cohort of past SYD participants, validated by a graduate student at the University of Michigan, and has since been validated with a nationally representative sample (Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019). The scale consists of 21 items that are answered by checking either "yes" or "no." Items include statements such as, "In the last two months, I have challenged or checked a friend who used a racial slur or made a racial joke," and, "In the last two months I have organized my own action project on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation."

Color-Blind Racism Scale (CoBRAS). The next psychological measure utilized in the survey was the Color-Blind Racism Scale, constructed and validated by Neville and colleagues (2000). This scale measures the cognitive aspects of color-blind racial attitudes. The measure consists of 20 items scored on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Items on this scale include statements such as, "White people in the US have an easier time because of the color of their skin," and, "Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich."

Youth Inventory of Involvement (YII). This scale was devised to assess the types and amounts of social engagement that participants engaged in. The scale, developed by Pancer and colleagues (2007) consists of 20 actions scored on a five-point Likert-type scale to determine how often participants have engaged in each action over the past year (1 = never to 5 = a lot). Items include statements such as, "In the past year, how often have you attended a demonstration," and "In the past year, how often have you taken care of other families' children (without being paid)."

A factor analysis identified four subscales, each of which represents a different form of youth involvement: political activities, community activities, passive involvements, and helping activities (Pancer et al., 2007). Further, a cluster analysis of these activities identified four distinct "types" of adolescents: Activists (who reported high levels in a wide range of political and community activities), Helpers (who engaged in high levels of helping individuals in their communities but not in political activities), Responders (who responded to but did not initiate helping or political activities), and the Uninvolved (who did not report high levels of any form of engagement).

Youth Social Responsibility Scale (YSR). The final measure utilized in the survey was the Youth Social Responsibility Scale. This scale assesses adolescents' commitment to societal involvement (Pancer et al., 2000). The 14-item scale asks participants to indicate on a five point Likert-type scale the degree to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements, including "Political matters aren't relevant to people who are below the voting age," and, "There is a lot that young people can do to make their community a better place to live" (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Other evaluative measures. The post-evaluation survey consisted of repeated psychological measures, as well as a number of program-specific questions. Some questions pertained to program goals (for example, "In my intergroup dialogue, we experienced conflict as a part of the learning process"). Other questions were specific to particular activities (for example, "The retreat helped me become more confident in my ability to speak up about social issues, inequality, and oppression."). Other questions asked participants to rank aspects of the program from "the best part of the program" to "I didn't like this part of the program." And finally, the survey concluded with a series of open-ended questions where students could elaborate on their experience. Questions included, "What, if anything, have you learned as a result of participating in the dialogue program?" and, "How, if at all, has the dialogue program impacted you personally?" The survey concluded be asking, "If you had to describe the program in one word, what would it be and why?"

Study 3: Qualitative Methods

Qualitative Recruitment. One half of participants were recruited from a specific fellowship program for SYD participants who want to continue their social justice work after the completion of SYD. Each year, after SYD has concluded, the University of Michigan offers a

Youth Fellowship Program that supports SYD participants who wish to continue meeting with their SYD peers and working on action projects in their communities. There were 13 Youth Fellows from the 2018 SYD cohort. Each Youth Fellow was contacted about participating in an interview project to better understand the impact of the SYD program and their ongoing involvement. Likewise, 13 participants who chose *not* to continue were contacted and recruited, for a total of 26 interviewees. Participants were matched by race/ethnicity, gender, and community. All participants were compensated with $20 for their time.

Qualitative Procedure. For those participants who preferred in-person interviews, I worked to reserve rooms and schedule interviews at convenient public spaces (such as libraries, community centers, etc.). For those who preferred remote interviews, I used BlueJeans (for video interviews) or telephone (for audio interviews). Participation required informed consent but not parental consent, as all participants were 18 at the time of the interviews. Interview questions included:

- Are there parts of the summer youth dialogue program that you still think about today? If so, have these things impacted your behavior at all?
- What made you apply for the social justice fellowship program? (Or, for group 2, I'm wondering if you heard about the social justice fellowship program offered to SYD participants. Did you consider applying? Why not?
- Do you keep in touch with anyone from the youth dialogues program? If so, are these people from your community/school, or from somewhere else? If somewhere else, do you see them frequently? If so, what sorts of activities do you do together?
- Did you talk to your parents about the youth dialogues program? If so, what sorts of conversations did you have about it?

Interviews were audio recorded using two devices for a backup, transcribed, and thematically open-coded.

Scholarship of Engagement

It is important to acknowledge and reflect upon my complex relationship to SYD. Throughout my time in graduate school, I have been a near peer facilitator for the program, I have conducted multiple evaluations of the program, and I served as the program coordinator. I have written letters of recommendations for both SYD participants and SYD facilitators, and keep in close contact with members of the SYD community. Across these various roles and relationships, I came to understand the program in a way that I might not had I more limited involvement with the program. And so, I approach this scholarly inquiry into youth dialogue from an engaged perspective. Guided by Ernest Boyer's conceptualization of the scholarship of engagement, which he describes as, "connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethnic problems to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities" (Boyer, 1991), I consider my service to the program as a form of scholarship that has resulted in a transformative knowledge base that helped me imagine this dissertation. I view this as a strength to my dissertation, and an added level of authenticity and validity to botht he questions posed and the conclusions drawn.

Aims of dissertation studies

In these three papers, I seek to provide an empirical investigation into the potential that intergroup dialogue has to promote civic engagement in young people, across groups, and over time. These studies contribute to multiple gaps in the literature – in empirical work on youth dialogue; in research on actual, rather than anticipated, behavioral changes; in connections between youth dialogue and civic engagement; in the long-term effects of civic engagement in

young people – during a time when youth engagement is on the rise. Taken together, this dissertation extends the research on youth dialogue past short-term programmatic evaluations, and raises questions for the field about how to challenge our own assumptions about youth civic engagement and engage in praxis with regards to our practices to promote more inclusive, just, and anti-racist generation of civic actors.

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CHAPTER II

Connecting the Dots of Youth Dialogue: How Young People Bridge Knowledge with Action

INTRODUCTION

Youth organizing and youth activism have been steadily increasing in recent years (Martin et al., 2007; Conner, 2011; Conner, Ober, & Brown, 2016). This trend has been matched by parallel attention given to youth activists in the media and in the academy. Youth activists have taken center stage on the covers of prominent magazines like Time and National Geographic, and academic conferences are beginning to include cluster areas and submission topics specific to youth participatory action research and evaluation. More and more, scholars are examining how young people are coming to their engagement and practitioners are working to provide the best support for young people as they work towards their change goals. Additionally, scholars of youth studies have called upon the field to devote more attention to the ways in which social and political contexts, and in particular racial identity, influence youth organizing and activism (Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012). Until recently, research on youth organizing and activism has focused largely on white and middle-class young people (Zaff et al., 2011).

Though we are still learning about how young people become engaged, the cognitive implications of youth engagement, how young people are best supported as they become increasingly active, and the long-term outcomes associated with youth participation, there is much that we do know.

Adolescence as a key developmental period for racial awareness

First, we know that adolescence is a critical period for identity development, including racial identity development (Phinney, 1992; Sellers et al., 2006; Umana-Taylor, et al., 2014). Erikson (1968) placed the adolescent in the fifth stage of development, confronting questions about one's identities and social roles. The existential crisis during this period, identity vs. role confusion, involves establishing who one is and what one can become as they transition into adulthood. The psychosocial moratorium Erikson associated with this stage offers young people new and different opportunities to reflect broadly on who they are and who they want to be before achieving an identity (Erikson, 1968). Some of the developmental processes adolescents begin include racial identity development and critical consciousness development.

These developmental crises may emerge during adolescence because adolescents have begun to develop greater sociocognitive skills (such as perspective taking) than they had in childhood, enabling them to think more abstractly about and grapple with complex issues like race, racism, and oppression (Brown & Bigler, 2005; Quintana, 2008; Umana-Taylor et al., 2014). During this period, increased cognitive capacity coincides with an increase in identity-salient experiences. It is during adolescence, for example, that young people begin to recognize racialized experiences in their schools, such as achievement gaps in graduation rates and tracking into (and out of) advanced placement courses (Bañales et al., 2019). In addition to the salience of direct experiences with racism and discrimination, adolescents are learning about racism through witnessing discrimination experienced by others (Hope, Skoog, & Jagers, 2015). In recent years, high profile instances of racism have dominated news and social media, increasing the number of conversations that young people are having about racism and expanding their awareness of racism (Garza, 2016).

As adolescents are exploring the ways in which race and racism are present in their lives, they are being socialized via messages they receive from their family, peers, school, the media, and social institutions such as laws and policies. Much of current socialization comes in the form of "color-blindness," an attitude or perspective that minimizes the existence an impact of race and racism. Some early psychological research supported, the idea that we should be color-blind, as even simple categorization into "us" and "them" can lead to negative intergroup outcomes such as in-group bias, stereotyping, and seeing the out-group as homogenous (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1981). In fact, the idea that we should judge others as individuals rather than by the "color of their skin" is a historical value often linked to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The election of President Barak Obama seems to have reinforced the belief (among some) that although race was a problem in the past, we are now "post-racial" and ought to see people as individuals instead of as members of racial groups.

Taking a strong and empirically driven stance, the American Psychological Association declared, "we cannot be, nor should we be, color-blind" (APA, 1997 p. 3). Citing years of research (in particular, the work of Plant & Devine, 1998) they concluded that though people may make conscious efforts to behave in egalitarian ways, we still maintain biased beliefs, and thus, "to get beyond racism and other similar forms of prejudice, we must first take the differences between people into account" (p. 2).

More recent research demonstrates that color-blind attitudes promote a new form of racism, one that reestablishes white supremacy in a post-Civil Rights Era. This new form of racism is referred to as "Color-Blind Racism" (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). It is characterized by four frames (schemas) that individuals use to interpret information: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and the minimization of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). "Abstract liberalism"

explains the tendency of whites to extend the principles of liberalism to racial matters in an abstract manner. For example, individuals may support the liberal idea of "equal opportunity" for racial groups but resist policies that attempt to generate equality, including affirmative action. "Naturalization" refers to the tendency to explain racial phenomena and social outcomes by suggesting they are simply natural occurrences. For example, someone might explain racial segregation by simplistically suggesting, "that's just the way things are," rather than thinking critically about long-standing educational and occupational barriers that members of racial groups encounter. "Cultural racism" is a frame that uses customs, values, and traditions as arguments to explain the disadvantaged standings of minorities in society. Deficit models and stereotyping can lead people to conclude that, "Mexicans do not care about education," or, "Blacks are just lazier than others." Lastly, the "minimization of racism" is a frame that suggests racism is a thing of the past; while some discrimination may persist today, things are nowhere near as bad as they used to be pre-Civil Rights. Applying this frame allows blame to be put directly on minorities for their lower social standing in society, suggesting, "sure, there is discrimination, but there are plenty of jobs out there for those who work for them."

Though significant research exists that explores the impact of color-blindness in college students and adults (Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2001; Chesler, Peet, & Sevig, 2003; Neville et al., 2013; Duterville, 2017), less exists exploring how adolescents experience, endorse, or challenge color-blind ideologies. A small body of research (Pincock, 2008; Aldana et al, 2012; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Bañales, 2020) has begun to fill this empirical gap.

Critical Consciousness: Connecting Awareness with Action

Some studies suggest that a stronger racial identity and a deeper awareness of racism during adolescence may lead to increases in the actions that young people take to counteract

systems of oppression (Anyiwo, et al. 2018; Bañales, 2020). This process can be conceptualized as youth critical consciousness. Critical consciousness can be traced back to Paulo Freire and his conceptualization of *conscientização,* the process through which individuals learn how to identify oppression, and then use their knowledge to take action to work towards liberation (Freire, 1970). As members of oppressed groups come together, learn together by sharing and reflecting upon their experiences, and work together towards change, communities can create social change. Critical consciousness depends upon three core components: critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action (Freire, 1970; Christens, Winn, & Duke, 2017).

Critical consciousness is associated with important outcomes like school engagement, student achievement, career expectancy, and occupational attainment (Ramos-Zayas, 2003; Luginbuhl, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016; O'Connor, 1997). More recently, we have learned that *critical action* in particular is a vital subcomponent of critical consciousness that promotes these important life outcomes (Rapa, Diemer, & Bañales, 2018).

It is difficult to measure critical consciousness and critical action, especially in ways that demonstrate a conscious link between reflection, awareness, and action. Most of the literature that explores critical consciousness and critical action in young people involve youth of color, who engage in higher rates of alternative forms of civic engagement because of historical and political disenfranchisement (Diemer & Li, 2011; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Of the research that does exist, we know that early opportunities to critically reflect on sociopolitical conditions leads to increased rates of critical action in young black adolescents (Hope & Bañales, 2018; Anyiwo, et al., 2018). We also know that structured programs and institutions (like schools or youth programs) can influence perceptions of critical consciousness and predict engagement in anti-racist action (Gutierrez & Ortega, 1991; Gutierrez, 1994; Bañales et al., 2019).

Less research examines what exactly is necessary for critically conscious young people to feel confident and able to engage in critical action. What skills are necessary to engage in youth critical action, and how can we support young people in the development of those skills?

To examine this question, we use the Summer Youth Dialogues Program on Race & Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit (SYD) as a case study. Youth dialogue is one form of youth programming that facilitates critical reflection, critical action, and skill development in young people during this pivotal developmental period. Through SYD, we can explore whether and how young people are developing a critical awareness of institutional racism, and whether and how these youth are being prepared and supported to engage in critical action to address institutional racism.

Youth Dialogue as a Bridge Between Awareness and Action

Intergroup dialogue is an educational approach that emphasizes learning and communicating about and across social identities, with a focus on collaborative action. Intergroup dialogue involves structured, sustained, and facilitated discussions that guide participants of different social identities through activities that enable them to reflect upon their own identities and experiences, understand concepts related to privilege and oppression, and work collaboratively with others to work towards change. In short, intergroup dialogue facilitates critical consciousness and helps participants develop the tools necessary to work effectively with others to combat oppression (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013).

Significant research has been conducted on intergroup dialogue, and we now know that participation in an intergroup dialogue course leads to increases intergroup outcomes (like intergroup understanding, intergroup relationships, and intergroup collaboration) as well as increases in cognitive outcomes (like a deeper understanding of structural inequality) (Gurin,

Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). For a more thorough exploration of the outcomes of intergroup dialogue, see *Dialogue Across Difference: Practice, Theory, & Research on Intergroup Dialogue* (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013).

The bulk of research on intergroup dialogue examines the effects of dialogue on college students. Less research exists on the impact that intergroup dialogue might have on younger high-school aged participants. The small body of research that does exist, however, provides promising evidence that when young people participate in structured dialogue, they become more aware of oppression, they develop less colorblind racial attitudes, they increase their cognitive understanding of structural inequality, they develop a range of skills, and they are more likely to anticipate acting upon their newfound knowledge to combat oppression (Checkoway, 2009; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Spencer et al., 2008; Garvin & Bargal, 2008; Pincock, 2008).

This study will focus on the Summer Youth Dialogues on Race & Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit (SYD), a 15 year old program that brings together youth of different racial and ethnic backgrounds from across the metropolitan Detroit region (one of the most segregated metropolitan areas in the United States) to engage in intergroup dialogue. The goals of SYD are to help young people develop an understanding of their own and others' racial identities, to teach participants about the historical and contemporary issues of race and racism in Detroit, and to provide young people with the tools necessary to work collaboratively to address issues of racism and inequality in their communities.

SYD is based largely on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of intergroup dialogue, adapted for adolescents, and guides participants through the same "four-stage model" of IGD (Zúñiga et al., 2007):

1. Group Beginnings. During this stage, participants meet their facilitators and intergroup partners, and engage in activities that promote trust and openness. Group norms and ground rules are developed to ensure respectful engagement and mutual participation and vulnerability. Participants learn about the basics of dialogue, and are introduced to key concepts and communication skills that will be necessary for the following stages.
2. Exploring Differences and Commonalities of Experiences. During this stage, participants reflect upon their personal and social identities, and the ways in which these identities have shaped their lives. They develop and share a "testimonial," which details key aspects of their racial socialization. Facilitators guide conversations about the themes – similarities and differences – in the experiences of different participants, and highlight ways that structures and institutions (as well as individuals) promote inequality.
3. Exploring and Dialoguing About "Hot Topics." During this stage, participants are challenged to apply their newfound knowledge and honed communication skills in difficult conversations about controversial topics about racism and inequality. They are also encouraged to consider ways of breaking out of these oppressive systems.
4. Action Planning and Collaboration. During this stage, participants are challenged to bridge their learning with action by collaborating with their peers to address some form of inequality. Participants are given time and support to plan an intergroup collaborative project.

Key differences between the SYD and IGD models include age of participants, relative age of facilitators (SYD utilizes "near peer facilitation" where college aged students facilitate high

school aged participants, whereas IGD courses use "peer facilitation," where college aged students facilitate college aged participants), curricular changes to meet adolescent learning preferences (fewer and different age-appropriate readings, activities or videos in lieu of some readings, adapted activities, etc.), and time span (IGD courses meet for three hours once a week over the course of a semester, while SYD meets for entire days over throughout the summer with a residential retreat. For a more in-depth description of SYD, see Fisher & Checkoway (2011). For a list of SYD activities that coincide with each stage, see Table 2.1. For details on the activities used in SYD, see Appendix A.

The Present Study

Though more and more research on youth dialogue is being produced, this research uses a range of different measures and methods, making it difficult to draw meaningful generalizations. In particular, it has been difficult to evaluate the connections between cognitive gains and action as a result of participating in youth dialogue. In this study, we draw upon measures and methods that have been used for years to evaluate SYD, including the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) and a program-developed measure of skill development. Using CoBRAS as a proxy for cognitive understanding of structural inequality, we can examine the relationship between the two to better understand whether programs like SYD have the potential to foster the skill development necessary to bridge cognitive gains with action.

This study will examine the following specific questions:

1. **Does youth dialogue increase youths' cognitive understanding of structural inequality?**
2. **What skills do young people who participate in youth dialogue develop?**

3. **Do the skills developed through youth dialogue enable young people to bridge cognitive gains related to structural inequality with critical action?**

These questions will contribute to a growing body of research that fills gaps in our knowledge of youth dialogue, and help us to better understand the role that youth dialogue plays in helping young people understand social justice and building a vehicle for community change.

METHOD

Procedures

Partnering with program leadership and utilizing an action research approach, a survey was developed to examine the impact of SYD on participants' knowledge about social justice concepts and participants' development of skills to create change. In particular, the survey sought to identify changes in participants' understanding about structural racism (along constructs including racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant interpersonal racism) and whether participants were developing the skills necessary to create change in their communities regarding structural racism. To measure changes in conceptual understanding of structural racism, the survey included the Color-Blind Racism Scale (CoBRAS; Neville, et al., 2000). To examine skill development, we utilized a number of closed-ended items from past evaluations, in addition to open-ended items exploring skill development and personal growth. Surveys were distributed at the beginning and end of the program, spanning approximately three months.

Participants were recruited through two community-based agencies and six schools/school districts across the metropolitan Detroit region. Of the eight participating groups, half were located in neighborhoods within the city of Detroit and half were located in suburbs outside of the city. On the first day of the program, participants and their parents/guardians were

given an overview of the program as well as the evaluation survey and goals. Participation was voluntary. Parental/guardian consent forms and participant assent forms were collected prior to completion of both the pre- and post-test surveys. Out of the 72 program participants, 65 completed both pre- and post-surveys and provided the required consent and assent forms, and were thus included in analysis. The remaining seven participants were excluded from analysis.

Sample

The 65 participants in this study ranged from 14-17 years of age, with a mean age of 16. Participants included girls (64%), boys (33%), and nonbinary students (3%). The majority (80%) were born in the United States, and 52% were children of immigrants. Participants' parents or guardians had achieved varying degrees of education, ranging from no more than grade school to graduate/professional degrees, with a median parent/guardian educational attainment level of a bachelor's degree. The sample included participants from several ethnic-racial backgrounds: white/European American (26.2%), South Asian (21.5%), Latinx (20.0%), Arab American/Middle Eastern/North African (16.9%), and Black/African American (15.4%). See Table 2.2 for detailed reporting of participant demographics.

Measures

Demographic Variables

A number of demographic variables were included in the survey to serve as independent variables for later analysis. Race, ethnicity, nativity, parent/guardian immigrant status, and parental/guardian education level were all variables included in the survey. Race, ethnicity, and nativity have been demonstrated to influence awareness of racism, both in previous literature and specifically with regard to SYD (Rumbaut, 1994; Aldana et al., 2012). Participants self-reported their racial or ethnic background via an open-ended item. Participants submitted more than 25

different labels to describe their racial and ethnic backgrounds, which were coded into five overarching racial categories reported in our sample information. Nativity and parental/guardian immigrant status were both measured via dichotomous items in which the participant indicated whether they/their parents or guardians were born in the United States. Parental education was reported via a single item that asked participants to indicate their parent/guardian's education level from seven options (ranging from grade school to graduate/professional school).

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes

A 20-point Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) was used to measure cognitive aspects of color-blind racial attitudes (Neville, et al., 2000), $\alpha = .79$ (pre) and $\alpha = .82$ (post). This scale measures participant endorsement of various "colorblind" perspectives (i.e., the degree to which individuals diminish or downplay the prevalence and severity of racism), with subscales that focus on issues of racial privilege, institutional discrimination, and blatant racial issues. The racial privilege subscale (pre-test $\alpha = .69$, post-test $\alpha = .79$) measured participants' awareness of how White privilege influences success and oppression in society (e.g., "Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not"). The institutional discrimination subscale (pre-test $\alpha = .75$, post-test $\alpha = .80$) measured participants' awareness of the ways in which social institutions perpetuate racial disparities (e.g., "English should be the only official language in the US"). And finally, the blatant racial issues subscale (pre-test $\alpha = 80$, post-test $\alpha = 87$) measured awareness of general and pervasive racism (e.g., "Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today"). Items were workshopped with former SYD participants, to ensure that language was age-appropriate and accessible for an adolescent population.

Skill-Development

Skill development was measured through closed and open-ended survey items. A series of 10 Likert-type items asked participants to rate the degree to which they agreed with statements about their learning and capacity-building over the course of SYD ("Through the dialogue program, I developed community organizing skills"). Additionally, students were asked a series of open-ended items about their learning and skill-building. These items were coded and themed.

RESULTS

Colorblind-Racial Attitudes

A repeated-measure ANOVA was utilized to assess changes in color-blind racial attitudes over the course of the youth dialogue program, as well as to identify the presence of any group differences. Time (pre- and post-test scores) represented the within subjects variable, while race, gender, nativity, and parent/guardian immigrant status represented the between-subjects variables. Data demonstrated a main effect of time on colorblind racial attitudes, Wilks' Lambda = 0.191, $F(1, 64) = 272$, $p < .001$, indicating that across all groups, participants endorsed colorblind racial ideologies less after participating in SYD than they did at the beginning of the program. These results held for all three subscales of CoBRAS: racial privilege [$F(1, 64) = 251$, $p < .05$], institutional discrimination [$F(1, 64) = 230$, $p < .001$], and blatant racism issues [$F(1, 64) = 244$, $p < .001$]. CoBRAS served as a proxy for cognitive understanding of structural inequality, and so these results demonstrate that participating in SYD helps participants of all groups better understand the systemic nature of racism. There were no significant interaction effects of time and gender, nativity, or parent/guardian immigration status. However, the interaction between time and race approached significance, Wilks' Lambda = 0.857, $F(4, 60) = 2.5$, $p = 0.052$, with Black participants beginning and ending the program endorsing the lowest

levels of color blind racial attitudes and white students demonstrating the largest change. See Figure 1.1.

Moderation Analysis

When examining the CoBRAS subscales, there were significant interactions between time and race for the institutional discrimination subscale, Wilks' Lambda = .813, $F(4, 60) = 3.45$, $p < .05$. A deeper analysis of the data demonstrated that there were differences between the responses of children of immigrants and the responses of children of US citizens, but only for South Asian children of immigrants (and not Latinx or MENA children of immigrants, the other two racial/ethnic groups of participants that reported high numbers of immigrant parents). South Asian children of immigrants endorsed color blind racial attitudes at higher rates than their peers, even after participating in SYD. Using PROCESS macro model 3 (Hayes, 2017) to compare change scores of South Asian children of immigrants with change scores of their SYD peers, we found the model to be significant when examining CoBRAS change scores [$t(57) = 2.54$, $p < .05$], each of the CoBRAS subscales change scores [$t(57) = 2.31$, $p < .05$; $t(57) = 3.03$, $p < .01$; and $t(57) = 2.89$, $p < .05$], and change scores for the item "Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich" [$t(57) = 3.71$, $p < .01$] . It should be noted that because of the small initial sample size, any results stemming from a moderation analysis that further fractioned participants should be thoughtfully considered. PROCESS macro strengthens the validity of such potential effects, given that the scripts compute bootstrapped confidence intervals. See Figure 2 for a depiction of the model.

Skill-building

100% of participants agreed that they learned skills about working in groups as a result of SYD, with 50% selecting "strongly agree." 94% of participants agreed that they developed skills

related to understanding and researching social policies as a result of SYD, with 44% selecting "strongly agree." 90% of participants indicated that they developed community organizing skills through SYD, with 32% selecting "strongly agree." 77% of participants agreed that they learned how to navigate conflict through communication through SYD, with 51% selecting "strongly agree." 96% of participants indicated that through SYD they developed skills that will help them to create change, with 40% selecting "strongly agree." And finally, 92% of participants agreed that through the program they developed at least one meaningful relationship with a mentor, with 51% selecting "strongly agree." See Figure 1.3.

Analysis of the open-ended items found the following skills to be most frequently cited, verbatim, by participants: communication (81%), dialogue (75%), public speaking (69%), active listening (69%), leadership skills (69%), confidence (66%), empathy (60%). See Figure 1.4.

Linking Skills with Knowledge and Action

Additionally, to answer our last questions and explore the relationship between content gains, skill development, and action, we conducted a simple content analysis on open-ended items. The analysis revealed the following more nuanced themes from participants' responses, which support the connection between increased awareness and action:

Critical reflection. Though participants did not use this exact phrase, many described their newfound awareness of social inequality as one of the most important skills developed during SYD. In fact, 72% of participants' responses encompassed this theme. Some examples include:

> *"Being able to understand my own socialization, and the ability to recognize how I was contributing to systems of oppression in unintended ways, are both some of the most important skills I have now."*
>
> *"I have learned so much about privilege and oppression, racism and discrimination. I can see it in my life now, whereas before I could not. Because of this, I can now see how I am contributing to these systems, how my family and friends are contributing to these*

systems (we all do). And just that awareness, being able to see it, will change everything for me."

"Now I understand how my privilege and marginalization intersect in weird ways, and I know that someone else with a different set of intersections than I have will probably see the world differently than me. I'm not sure if this is a skill, but it feels like one because now I can make a bigger difference and be more effective working for change."

Critical Action. Relatedly, participants frequently connected their newfound awareness, as developed through critical reflection, to the necessity of critical action. 66% of participants described feeling more prepared to act when they experience or witness injustice or oppression. Some examples include:

"Now I can see that so many people do not take action because they are scared, or because it is uncomfortable. SYD gave me the knowledge, words, and confidence I needed to be able to act – even when it's uncomfortable – because the world needs people to act."

"I developed the skill of voice. I see how powerful voice can be, and SYD has taught me how to tell my story. Storytelling is a radical form of social action."

"One specific skill that I developed is the ability to speak up when something is wrong. That was very hard for me before, even if I knew inside that I should speak up. I know what to do now."

DISCUSSION

This study confirmed much of what has been reported on youth dialogues in the past: youth dialogue effectively teaches young people about important social justice concepts like racism, privilege, oppression, and discrimination. It also provides further evidence that programs like SYD provide essential support to young people as they develop important skills necessary for working towards change: organizing skills, communication skills, leadership skills, etc. In addition, this study went beyond what we have learned in the past by looking more closely at *who* is learning and *what* they are learning, enabling practitioners to develop more nuanced approaches to tackling group differences that emerge in social justice learning.

We were able to answer our first question: does youth dialogue increase youths' cognitive understanding of structural inequality? Using CoBRAS as a proxy for cognitive understanding of structural inequality, the answer was unequivocally "yes." Additionally, this study documented important group differences in key social justice learning outcomes. Specifically, though all groups demonstrated significant decreases in colorblind racial attitudes, the degree of change in attitudes as well as the relative pre-SYD and post-SYD endorsement of colorblind attitudes varied across groups.

Black participants started and ended the program with the lowest endorsements of colorblind racial attitudes. This trend has been well-documented in college-aged and adult populations, but less empirically demonstrated in adolescent populations.
Similarly, white students began the program with the highest rates of colorblind attitude endorsement, but ended the program with the largest change scores and the second lowest endorsement rates – also a trend demonstrated in college-aged populations. And finally, South Asian participants demonstrated the lowest change scores of all groups.

What might help us understand these variances in change scores across groups? Sophisticated statistical analyses may help us explore the nuanced interactions of participants' different identities. A moderated moderation, for example, demonstrated that being the child of an immigrant influences endorsement of certain colorblind attitudes, but only for South Asian participants. The other significant groups of participants who are children of immigrants (Latinx participants and MENA participants) did not demonstrate the same endorsement of these same colorblind attitudes.

Of particular interest is belief in the "American Dream." SYD spends extensive time exploring concepts related to institutional racism, and the curriculum even includes an activity

called "The American Dream Game," a facilitated interactive activity that requires participants to play a board game using a set of social identities different from their own. Each turn introduces a new "chance" card that will either benefit them or disadvantage them based on their characters' identities (for example, a player with a disability may not be able to participate in a Town Hall because the building is not ADA compliant).

The CoBRAS scale includes an item that aligns with belief in the "American Dream:" "Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich." South Asian participants with at least one parent who is an immigrant were the *only* group to demonstrate no change on this item, despite more than half of participants identifying as being the child of an immigrant. This perspective is supported by recent literature that demonstrates a divide among Asian Americans in attitudes towards some race-based policies such as affirmative action (Nopper, 2010; Hartlep & Lowinger, 2014; Sule, Winkle-Wagner, & Maramba, 2017; Fang, 2020). This begs numerous questions: how might socialization, even across marginalized groups, result in different endorsement of colorblind ideologies? And could this socialization impact how receptive participants are to learning certain concepts? The SYD curriculum was designed using the largely binary intergroup dialogue model of balancing identities (for the sake of a youth dialogue on race and ethnicity, this means approximately half participants of color and half white participants), and the readings, discussions, and activities reinforced this binary conceptualization of race. Over the years, more attention has been paid to nuance, spectrums, and the "in betweens" that complicate the racial binary – but perhaps not enough. SYD and similar programs can strengthen their curriculum by incorporating new material on an annual basis from the ever-growing body of resources designed to help young people reflect upon the nuanced

ways that race impacts their lives and our society, especially in this moment in history when people of color are being called upon to examine their own anti-black attitudes.

We were also able to answer our second question: what skills do young people who participate in youth dialogue develop? This study confirms that young people are developing a certain set of skills through the program, but it also doubles down on this confirmation in a powerful way through the words of participants themselves. Both quantitative measures used previously in SYD evaluations, as well as open-ended items inviting young people to identify for themselves the skills that they developed over the course of the program, demonstrated that SYD helps young people communicate more effectively (through strengthened public speaking skills and enhanced active listening skills), organize for change, understand the social policies that are impacting their lives, and navigate conflict. Additionally, youth dialogue helped young people become more confident and empathetic.

And finally, though we were not able to definitively answer our third question, we were able to begin to explore it: do the skills developed through youth dialogue enable young people to bridge cognitive gains related to structural inequality with critical action? Though this study did not include any variables that explicitly measured critical action (thus enabling us to connect CoBRAS, skill development, and critical action), we were able to examine the link between their content gains and their actions by asking young people themselves about what skills they had developed. clear in ways that strictly quantitative evaluations might struggle to capture. This link became clear through our qualitative analysis, in which young people consistently articulated their shift in both critical thinking and intentional action. Although preliminary, this is an exciting line of research to follow up on in the future.

Limitations & Future Directions

Though this study provided some important insights into the nuances involving critical learning and skill development, it does not come without limitations. Notably, the sample size for this study was small, with between-group sizes and moderation group sizes even smaller. While this does render the significant results to be particularly exciting, it begs questions regarding the power of these findings and the ability to extrapolate results to settings and programs that very in size, structure, geography, curriculum, and other important contextual ways. Replication with a larger sample size, or replication combining data from numerous years, may strengthen the validity of results.

Given the community-based nature of this program and related research, limitations around recruitment and participation should also be noted. Strong relationships with community partners has come, in part, from the trust SYD puts in them to select participants best suited for the experience. It could be that students who share certain qualities, attitudes, or behaviors are disproportionally selected as participants, thus skewing results. Though unlikely for this particular case study, considering creating ways to implement randomization in this line of research may also strengthen findings moving forward.

CONCLUSION

Given the deeply divided state of our country, the rise of youth activism and engagement could not be more timely. Ensuring an informed, critical, and active generation is essential if we are to promote a healthy democracy for years to come. We must continue to conduct research not only on what young people are learning, but also on who is learning, how they are learning, and what they need to translate that knowledge into action.

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Table 2.1. *Four Stage Model of IGD, with Sample Activities*

Stage of Dialogue	**Example Activities**
I: Group Beginnings – Forming & Building Relationships	• Relationship building icebreakers • Development of ground rules • Exploration of key concepts (dialogue vs discussion vs debate, social justice terms and definitions, brave spaces, etc.)
II: Exploring Differences & Commonalities of Experiences	• Personal and social identity wheels • Cycle of socialization, web of oppression • Testimonials, caucus groups
III: Exploring & Dialoguing About "Hot" Topics	• Stereotypes activity & fishbowl • American Dream Game • Sim City • Building an Antiracist Metropolitan Detroit
IV: Action Planning & Collaboration	• Community projects/project planning • Coalition building exercise • Where I stand

Table 2.2 *Participant Demographic Information*

Age	Number of Participants (%)
14	4 (6%)
15	6 (9%)
16	30 (46%)
17	25 (38%)

Race	Number of Participants (%)
White	17 (26%)
South Asian	14 (21%)
Latinx	13 (20%)
MENA	11 (17%)
Black	10 (15%)

Gender	Number of Participants (%)
Girl	42 (65%)
Boy	21(32%)
Nonbinary	2 (3%)

Community	Number of Participants (%)
City	30 (43%)
Suburb	40 (57%)

Nativity	Number of Participants (%)
Immigrant	13 (20%)
Non-immigrant	52 (80%)

Parental Immigrant Status	Number of Participants (%)
Child of Immigrant	34 (52%)
Child of Non-immigrant	31 (48%)

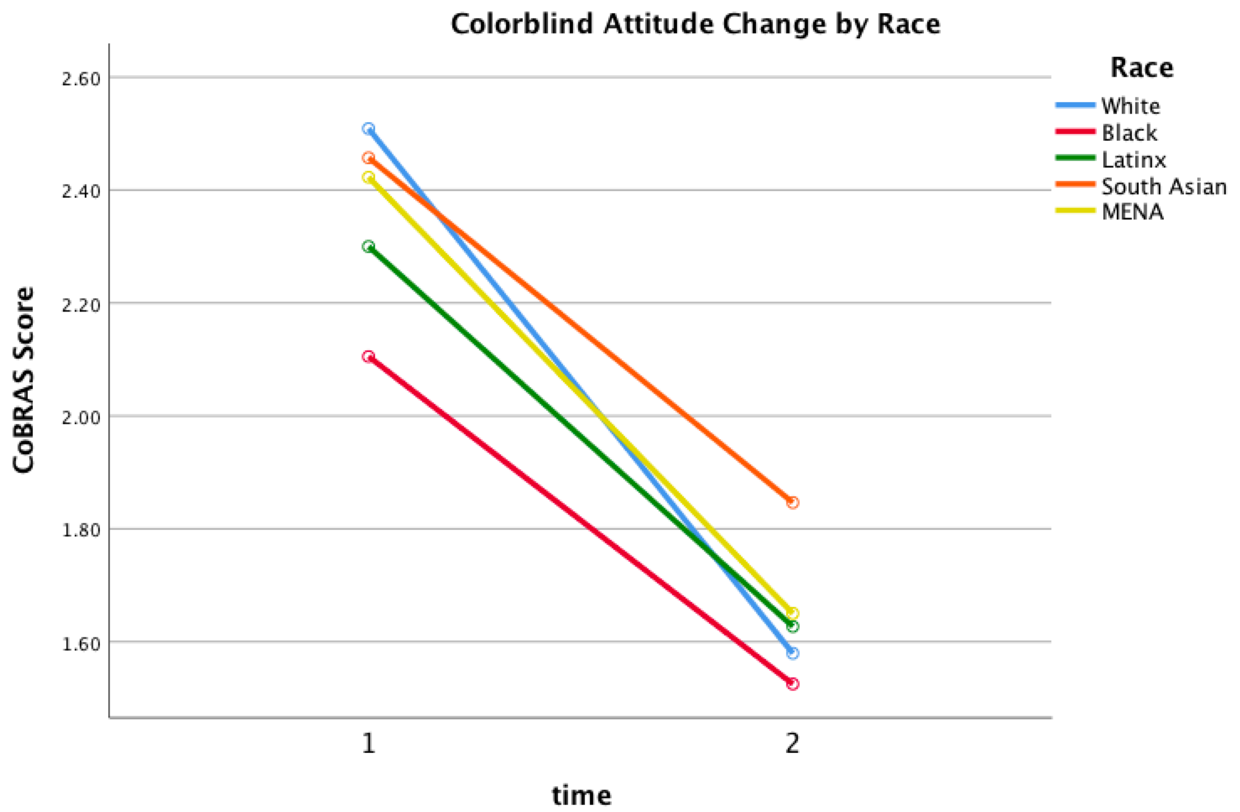

Figure 2.1. Mean scores of CoBRAS at Time 1 and Time 2, by racial/ethnic group

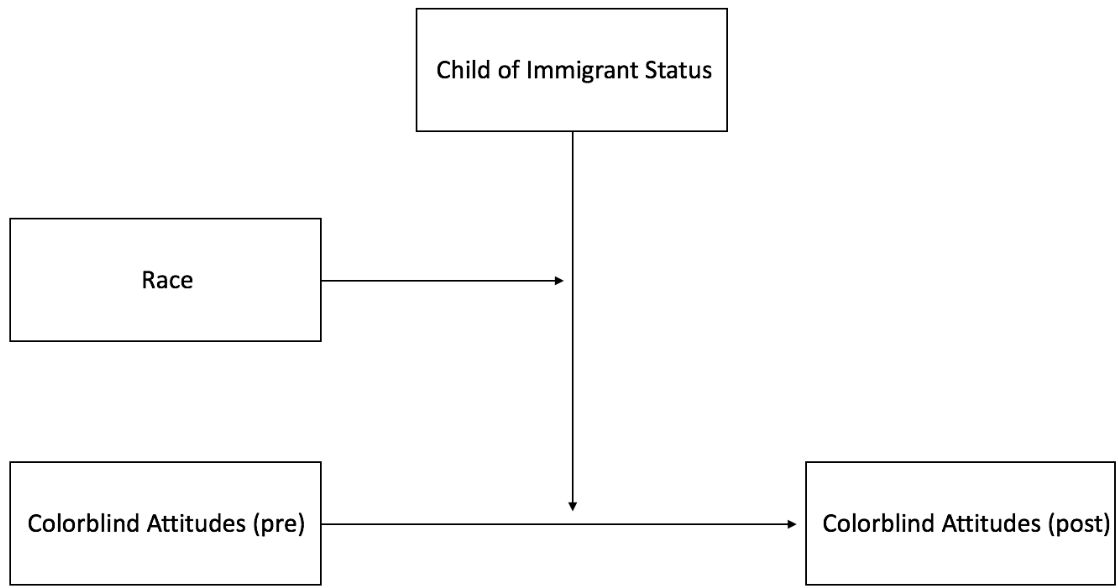

Figure 2.2. Conceptual model: moderated moderation

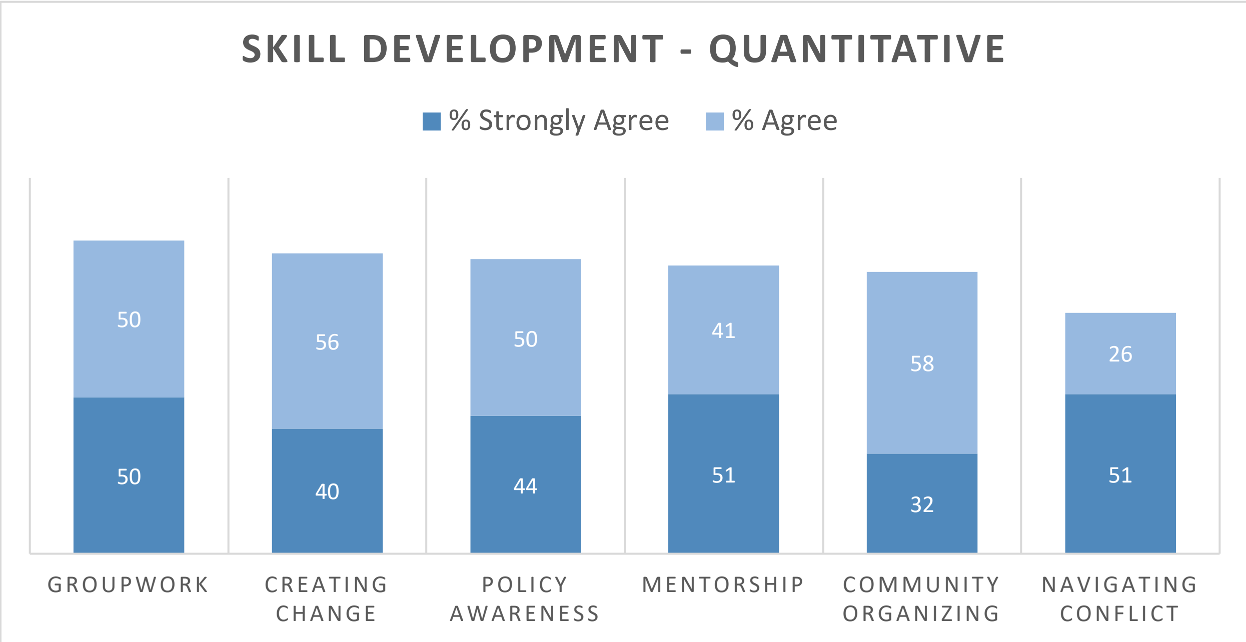

Figure 2.3. Percentage of participant agreement with dialogic skill development

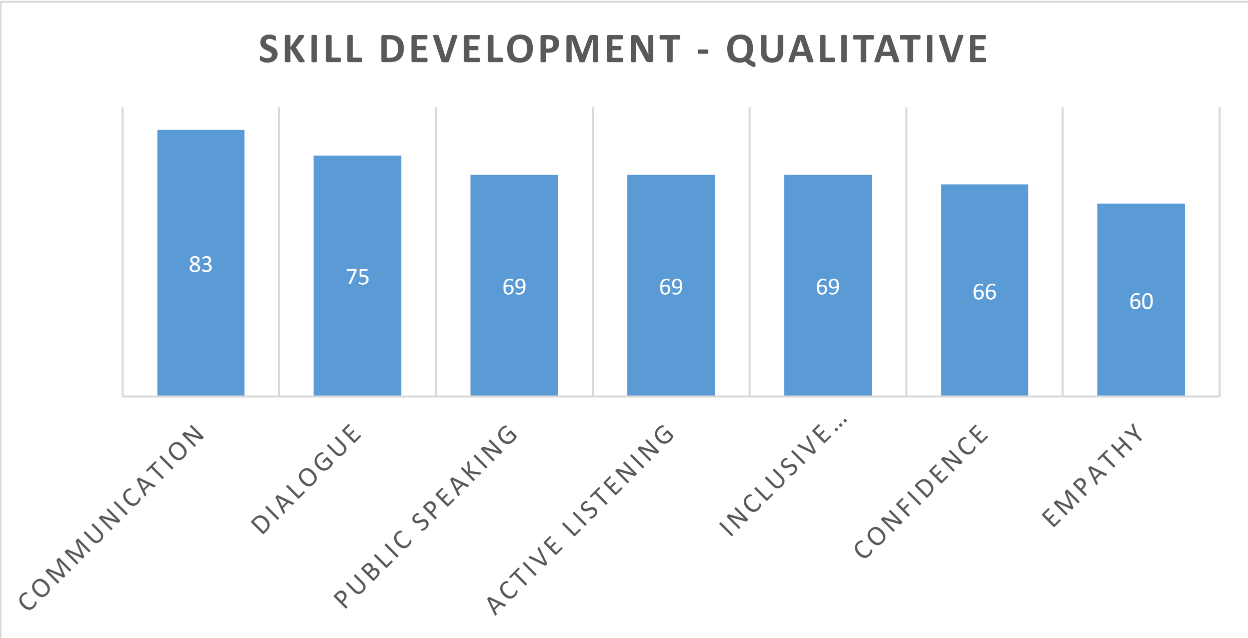

Figure 2.4. Percentage of participants who self-identified dialogic skill development

CHAPTER III

The Potential of Youth Dialogue: Promoting Civic Identity, Social Responsibility, & Anti-Racist Behavior

INTRODUCTION

Our communities, both local and national, continue to experience stark divisions along social and political lines. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States boasts the highest rates of income inequality among the G7 nations (Pew, 2020). Income inequality in the U.S. is exacerbated by both race and gender (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018; Gallup, 2016). Political polarization is evident across social lines including gender, race, age, and education level (Pew, 2018). And all of these differences, divisions, and disparities have been amplified by the global pandemic (Pew, 2020). These ruptures raise important questions about how to best bridge the divides plaguing our country. The United States has a storied history of utilizing collective action to address social divisions and inequality, largely catalyzed by young people. Young people propelled the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam anti-war protests into the spotlight decades ago, and today young people are engaging in activism around issues including immigrant rights, climate change, water rights, and gun reform. In this very moment in history, young people are organizing protests against police brutality nationwide that are forcing the country to grapple with issues of racism and anti-blackness. Such activism can be considered a form of civic engagement, an umbrella term for various forms of behaviors that involve efforts to strengthen our communities and society. Ehrlich (2000) defines civic engagement in the following way:

> *Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes* (p. vi).

This distinction, between political and non-political processes, proves to be a significant one when considering the ways in which young people below the age of 18 (and thus below the voting age) are able to engage with political processes. This paper explores how youth dialogue is one such approach that helps us understand, create, and support avenues for the civic engagement of youth; a vital task as we hope to contribute to a more just, connected, and democratic future.

Adolescence & Civic Engagement

Many scholars consider adolescence (widely defined as the developmental period between childhood and legal adulthood, or roughly the ages 10-18) as an important period for different forms of identity development, including racial identity development, sociopolitical identity development, and civic identity development (Erikson, 1968; Flanagan, 2003; Tatum, 2003; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003; Anyiwo et al., 2018; Diemer et al., 2019). Adolescents can be supported through these developmental processes through structured activities and organizations. Youniss, McLellan, & Yates (1997) present adolescence as an opportune time to develop a civic identity, especially through organized activities, due to cognitive and social developmental stages that coincide with adolescence. Further, organized activities provide not only a structure for social engagement, but also direct exposure to a range of ideological perspectives. The nature of many organized youth activities normalizes values of service and community, helping young people view themselves as active citizens and participants in their communities. This process increases the likelihood of later political engagement; if, during adolescence, individuals begin to see themselves as an active participant in their community,

civic identity will then continue into adulthood and they will see themselves (and behave accordingly) as an active participant within a broader political system (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997).

Kirshner (2009) provides a detailed example of the civic identity development process that young people go through when given structured opportunities to participate. Youth organizing can provide a context for young people to negotiate the relationship between themselves and broader society. Young people move from what Kirshner describes as "atomism" (understanding social relationships to be motivated by individual self-interest) toward "collective agency" (understanding social relationships to be a powerful act of people coming together for a common good). This shift is associated with learning about how local political systems operate, understanding laws and policies that impact the lives of young people, and participating in structured and sustained community action.

Watts, Williams, & Jagers (2003) propose a theory that builds upon existing theories of empowerment and change by integrating them with developmental and social psychological theories of identity. Sociopolitical development (SPD) is a process through which individuals develop a range of cognitive, social, and emotional tools necessary to understand and combat oppression. This process promotes the development of a critical consciousness and a capacity for action. SPD moves young people "from a place of relative uninformed inaction on the social forces that affect our lives to one of sustained, informed, and strategic action" (188). It is not a stretch to draw connections between this theory and civic socialization – the processes detailed in this body of literature describe the transition from holding uninformed "nonattitudes" to developing a mature political identity, and they take young people one step further by assuming action in civic and political realms.

Martinez, Penaloza, & Valenzuela (2011) also connect identity development processes to the civic realm. They argue that adolescence is a period of identity exploration during which young people reflect upon the values and beliefs that will influence the decisions they make and trajectories their life will follow. This identity exploration influences how and why young people join structured organizations – youth are especially drawn to prosocial and political organizations they can easily integrate with their personal and social identities. After continuous participation in these sorts of organizations, young people begin to adopt organizational values and goals as their own, and those values in turn shape the decisions and life trajectories they will follow as adults.

Together, these theoretical contributions all suggest that adolescence is a key period for the exploration of civic identity. The combination of sociocognitive skill development and increased opportunities to join community-based organizations provides young people with ample opportunities to grapple with the ways in which they relate to their communities. But how does this unique developmental period of identity exploration connect to civic action? And do all of these opportunities promote civic action in the same ways? This study will explore youth dialogues as a case study for understanding how (if at all) structured programming can promote civic identity and civic engagement.

Intergroup Dialogue as Civic Engagement

Intergroup Dialogue is one form of structured interaction that promotes the development of civic identity. Intergroup Dialogue (IGD) is pedagogical model that attempts to bring together people from different social identity groups to increase consciousness about privilege and oppression; build strong intergroup relationships across differences in identity and power; and

develop the skills and capacity necessary to engage in meaningful collaborative action that addresses social inequity.

Various definitions and conceptualizations of IGD exist. Gurin, Nagda, & Zuñiga (2013) describe intergroup dialogue as collaborative, as a process that strives for understanding and not agreement, and as an opportunity to develop the skills necessary to work towards mutual understanding – such as inquiry, active listening, and the critical thinking needed to identify our assumptions. Others highlight the unique pedagogical features of intergroup dialogue: the process relies upon structured, facilitated discussions that guide participants through an exploration of their own social identities, all the while providing participants with opportunities to develop and hone important communication skills such as active listening and inquiry (Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013). Still others highlight the environmental context necessary to engage in this process successfully: In their review of intergroup dialogue literature, Dessel & Rogge (2008) incorporate important environmental factors into their definition of dialogue: factors such as fostering a space where participants feel comfortable and able to speak and listen, location of the dialogue, facilitation of the dialogue, and the development of relationships between participants all impact the ability for successful dialogue to happen. And finally, most definitions of dialogue include an explicit focus on action; the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, for example, includes collaborative action as one of the primary goals of dialogue (NCDD, 2007).

Robust research has been conducted on the effects of IGD, and we know that participation in IGD is associated with a range of positive outcomes. College students who participated in an IGD course reported increased awareness and knowledge of intergroup understanding, increased intergroup empathy, and increased perspective-taking (Nagda, et

al., 2009). Data from a longitudinal, randomized, multi-campus study demonstrated that of 24 cognitive and affective outcome measures, 20 proved to be immediately effected by participating in an IGD course (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013). Eighteen of these measures remained significant after a one-year follow-up (Sorensen et al., 2013).

Youth Dialogue as Civic Engagement

Checkoway (2009) argues that youth dialogue is a more specific form of civic engagement, which he defines as, "a process in which people take collective action to address issues of public concern" (41). Though the bulk of research on IGD pertains to college aged students, a growing body focusses on IGD in younger populations.

Research on youth IGD typically involves evaluations of youth IGD programs (Checkoway, 2009; Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013; Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Garvin & Bargal, 2008; Pincock, 2008). Though youth IGD programs differ in structure and scope, they borrow core theoretical tenants of seminal IGD research: all programs include critical thinking/critical consciousness, learning from communication, consideration of or engagement in collaborative action, and some form of sustained participation. Such research has demonstrated that youth IGD increases participants' understanding and awareness of issues related to social justice concepts like privilege; attitude changes such as decreases in biased thinking and prejudice; increases in the development of skills like communication, action planning, and leadership; and increased interest in future action.

Circling back to Ehrlich's definition of civic engagement, we can examine youth IGD as civic engagement by investigating the knowledge, skills, values, and motivations that young people develop through IGD, as well as the actions that participants of youth IGD engage in following such a structured experience. Little research to date has examined whether participation in youth IGD impacts actual behavior (versus intended behavior,

anticipated behavior, or interest in behavior) or participants' sense of responsibility for civic engagement.

In this study, I use Michigan's Summer Youth Dialogues on Race & Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit Program (SYD) as a case study to examine the potential of youth dialogue for civic engagement. I will explore the following questions:

1. **Does participation in SYD impact young people's actual engagement in civic activities?**
2. **Does participation in SYD influence young people's sense of responsibility for civic actions?**
3. **If so, do these outcomes differ across racial groups?**

Examining such questions will help us better understand the potential for youth IGD to help support young people as they develop the values, motivations, and behaviors necessary for fostering a more democratic future with heightened levels of civic engagement.

METHOD

Procedures

Partnering with program leadership and utilizing an action research approach, a survey was developed to examine the impact of SYD on participants' anti-racist and civic behaviors as well as participants' sense of responsibility towards justice. In particular, the survey sought to identify changes in the types of change-related *behaviors* participants displayed after experiencing SYD, and whether their sense of responsibility to create change increased after the program. To measure changes in anti-racist and civic behaviors, the survey included the Anti-Racism Action Sale (ARAS; Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019). To examine changes in everyday behaviors and identify changes in "type" of adolescent, the survey included the

Youth Inventory of Involvement (YII; Pancer et al., 2007). And finally, to examine changes in participants' commitment to societal involvement I use the Youth Social Responsibility scale (YSR; Pancer et al., 2007). Surveys were distributed at the beginning and end of the program, spanning approximately three months.

Participants were recruited through two community-based agencies and six schools/school districts across the metropolitan Detroit region. Of the eight participating groups, half were located in neighborhoods within the city of Detroit and half were located in suburbs outside of the city. On the first day of the program, participants and their parents/guardians were given an overview of the program as well as the evaluation survey and goals. Participation was voluntary. Parental/guardian consent forms and participant assent forms were collected prior to completion of both the pre- and post-test surveys. Out of the 72 program participants, 65 completed both pre- and post-surveys and provided the required consent and assent forms, and were thus included in analysis. The remaining seven participants were excluded from analysis.

Sample

The 65 participants in this study ranged from 14-17 years of age, with a mean age of 16. Participants included girls (64%), boys (33%), and nonbinary students (3%). The majority (80%) were born in the United States, and 52% were children of immigrants. Participants' parents or guardians had achieved varying degrees of education, ranging from no more than grade school to graduate/professional degrees, with a median parent/guardian educational attainment level of a bachelor's degree. The sample included participants from several ethnic-racial backgrounds: white/European American (26.2%), South Asian (21.5%), Latinx (20.0%), Arab American/Middle Eastern/North African (16.9%), and Black/African American (15.4%). See Table 2.2 for detailed reporting of participant demographics.

Measures

Demographic Variables

A number of demographic variables were included in the survey to serve as independent variables for later analysis. Race, ethnicity, nativity, parent/guardian immigrant status, and parental/guardian education level were all variables included in the survey. Race, ethnicity, and nativity have been demonstrated to influence awareness of racism, both in previous literature and specifically with regard to SYD (Rumbaut, 1994; Aldana et al., 2012). Participants self-reported their racial or ethnic background via an open-ended item. Participants submitted more than 25 different labels to describe their racial and ethnic backgrounds, which were coded into five overarching racial categories reported in our sample information. Nativity and parental/guardian immigrant status were both measured via dichotomous items in which the participant indicated whether they/their parents or guardians were born in the United States. Parental education was reported via a single item that asked participants to indicate their parent/guardian's education level from seven options (ranging from grade school to graduate/professional school).

Anti-Racist Action Scale

A 20-point Anti-Racism Action Scale (ARAS) was used to examine the types of behaviors that young people engage in to challenge racism (Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019). This scale measures participant engagement in a range of anti-racist behaviors, and includes three subscales: interpersonal action (i.e., "In the past two months have you challenged or checked a friend who uses a racial slur or makes a racist joke?"), communal action (i.e., "In the past two months have you attended a meeting on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation?"), and political change (i.e., "In the past two months have you attended a protest on an issue related to race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or

segregation?"). The ARAS was developed by young people who participated in SYD, and subsequently validated with a national sample.

Youth Inventory of Involvement.

This scale was devised to assess the types and amounts of social engagement that participants engaged in. A factor analysis identified four subscales, each of which represents a different form of youth involvement: political activities, community activities, passive involvements, and helping activities (Pancer et al., 2007). Further, a cluster analysis of these activities identified four distinct "types" of adolescents: Activists (who reported high levels in a wide range of political and community activities), Helpers (who engaged in high levels of helping individuals in their communities but not in political activities), Responders (who responded to but did not initiate helping or political activities), and the Uninvolved (who did not report high levels of any form of engagement). (Note: for the sake of this study, we examine only political, community, and helping activities as rates of passive activities did not differ across groups or impact "type" of adolescent).

The scale consists of 20 actions scored on a five-point Likert-type scale to determine how often participants have engaged in each action over the past two months (1 = never to 5 = a lot). Items include statements such as, "In the past year, how often have you attended a demonstration," and "In the past year, how often have you taken care of other families' children (without being paid)."

Youth Social Responsibility Scale

The final measure utilized in the survey was the Youth Social Responsibility Scale (YSR; Pancer et al., 2007) $\alpha = .91$ (pre) and $\alpha = .92$ (post). This scale assesses adolescents' commitment to societal involvement. The 14-item scale asks participants to indicate on a five

point Likert-type scale the degree to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements, including “Political matters aren’t relevant to people who are below the voting age,” and, “There is a lot that young people can do to make their community a better place to live” (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

RESULTS

Change in Anti-Racist Actions

Participants engaged in significantly more anti-racist actions after participating in SYD (M = 16.35, SD = 2.64) than before participating in SYD (M = 10.13, SD = 3.43). A repeated-measure ANOVA was utilized to assess changes in anti-racist actions over the course of SYD, as well as to identify the presence of any group differences. Time (pre- and post-test scores) represented the within subjects variable, while race, gender, nativity, and parent/guardian immigrant status represented the between-subjects variables. Data demonstrated a main effect of time on anti-racist actions, Wilks’ Lambda = 0.207, $F(1, 59) = 226$, $p < .001$, indicating that participants across all groups engaged in more anti-racist actions after participating in SYD than before. Data also demonstrated a main between subjects effect of race on anti-racist actions, Wilks’ Lambda = 0.900. $F(1, 59) = 3$, $p < .05$, indicating that some racial groups demonstrated greater ARAS change scores than others after participating in SYD. In particular, Black participants started and ended the program engaging in more anti-racist actions than their peers [$t(59) = 3.01$, $p < .05$], while White and Latinx participants demonstrated larger change scores than their peers [$t(59) = 2.94$, $p < .05$ and $t(59) = 2.86$, $p < .05$, respectively]. There were no significant interaction effects of time and gender, nativity, or parent/guardian immigration status. See Figure 3.1.

It is important to note that some of the items on the ARAS were built into the curriculum of SYD. For example, items like, “In the last two months have you sat with others who are different racially/ethnically from [you] in the school cafeteria or at an event,” and “In the last two months have you talked with friends about issues of race, ethnicity, discrimination, and/or segregation” are items that we would expect all participants to answer, “yes,” to after participating in the program. However, descriptive statistics on all such items ($N = 6$) revealed that over 75% of participants were already engaging in these behaviors before entering SYD, and so change scores still held their significance.

Change in “Type” of Youth

We first conducted repeated-measure ANOVAs to assess changes in helping, community, and political behaviors over the course of SYD, as well as to identify the presence of any group differences in behavioral change. Time (pre- and post-test scores) represented the within subjects variable, while race, gender, nativity, and parent/guardian immigrant status represented the between-subjects variables.

Changes in Helping Behaviors

Data demonstrated no main effect of time on helping behaviors, but a significant between subjects effect of race on helping behaviors, $F(1, 60) = 1372$, $p < .001$. See Figure 3.2, suggesting that rates of helping behaviors remained consistent across all racial and ethnic groups throughout the duration of the program.. Similarly, there were no significant effects of time and gender, nativity, or parent/guardian immigration status on helping behaviors.

Changes in Community Behaviors

Data demonstrated no main effect of time on community behaviors, but a significant between subjects effect of race on community behaviors, $F(1, 60) = 1461$, $p < .001$, suggesting

that participants' rates of community behaviors did not change over the course of the program, but rates of community behaviors varied by racial and ethnic group. In particular, MENA participants engaged in the highest rates of community behaviors, both before and after the program, while Black participants engaged in the fewest. There were no significant effects of time and gender, nativity, or parent/guardian immigration status. See Figure 3.3.

Changes in Political Behaviors

Data demonstrated a main effect of time on political behaviors, Wilks' Lambda = .238, F(1, 60) = 192, $p < .001$, suggesting that participants across all racial and ethnic groups engaged in more political behaviors after participating in SYD than they did before the program. Additionally, there was a significant between subjects effect of race on political behaviors, $F(1, 60) = 1175$, $p < .001$, highlighting how Black participants started and ended the program engaging in the most political behaviors, while South Asian participants started and ended the program engaging in the fewest political behaviors. There were no significant effects of time and gender, nativity, or parent/guardian immigration status. See Figure 3.4.

Next, we coded each participant as a "helper," a "community member," an "activist," or "uninvolved" based on their engagement in helping, community, and political behaviors both before participating in SYD and after participating in SYD. We found a significant increase in "activists" after participating in SYD, as well as a significant decrease in "uninvolved" youth (decreases in "helpers" and "community members" should be contextualized, as "activists" also score high in helping behaviors and community behaviors). See Figure 3.5.

Change in Social Responsibility

Across all groups, participants expressed a significantly higher sense of responsibility for justice after participating in SYD (M = 4.54, SD = 0.32) than before participating in SYD (M =

4.01, SD = 0.25). A repeated-measure ANOVA was utilized to assess changes in participants' sense of responsibility for justice over the course of SYD, as well as to identify the presence of any group differences. Time (pre- and post-test scores) represented the within subjects variable, while race, gender, nativity, and parent/guardian immigrant status represented the between-subjects variables. Data demonstrated a main effect of time on youth responsibility for justice, Wilks' Lambda = .327, $F(1, 60) = 124$, $p < .001$. Data also demonstrated an interaction effect of race and time on youth responsibility for justice, Wilks' Lambda = 0.833. $F(1, 60) = 3$, $p < .05$, with Black participants, white participants, and Latinx participants demonstrating larger change scores than MENA participants and South Asian participants. There were no significant effects of time and gender, nativity, or parent/guardian immigration status. See Figure 3.6.

DISCUSSION

This study has provided promising initial data to support the idea that youth dialogue is an effective method for promoting civic engagement through both demonstrated behaviors as well as motivation to promote a more just future. We were able to affirmatively answer all of our primary research questions: does participation in SYD impact young people's actual engagement in civic activities, does participation in SYD influence young people's sense of responsibility for civic actions, and, if so, do these outcomes differ across racial groups? In just one summer, we found that participants began engaging in an average of six more anti-racist behaviors, most notably on interpersonal and political levels. This behavioral change was supported by data from the YII, that illustrated a sharp increase in political behaviors (and thus, a shift from all "types" of adolescents to "activists") as well as a decrease in "uninvolved" youth. And finally, young people developed a greater sense of responsibility for promoting justice after participating in SYD.

These results are encouraging, but even more encouraging is the main effect of time across all groups. All participants, regardless of racial or ethnic background, demonstrated changes in a similar direction. Notably and consistently, Black participants began and ended the program with the highest rates of anti-racist behaviors, the highest rates of political behaviors, and the highest sense of responsibility for justice. These did not always result in significant between group differences, but oftentimes did. So while we can and should be encouraged that youth dialogue is an effective method for supporting youth civic engagement, we must also consider the ways in which different groups are socialized around civic ideals and concepts, provided (or not provided) opportunities to engage civically outside of youth dialogue, and impacted differently by our current state of youth engagement.

These results beg the question, what about youth dialogue helps young people develop civic identity? What facilitates change in behaviors? Research on college aged participants in IGD courses demonstrate the significance of the pedagogical features of IGD. That is, what students do in dialogue is just as important as what they learn in terms of promoting outcomes. SYD utilizes a number of simulation activities that ask participants to role play, or complete a task imagining they are another person with a different set of social identities (for details on these activities see Appendix A). Some of these simulation activities, for example Sim City, dramatically favors some participants over others. These sorts of activities elicit an affective reaction out of participants, enabling them to perspective take and *feel* what another person with more or less societal power might feel. These activities tend to be transformative for participants, giving more credence to concepts they might grasp only cognitively. For college students, pedagogy directly impacts both cognitive involvement and affective positivity, which are both linked to critical learning, intergroup empathy, and intergroup action (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga,

2013). It could be that pedagogy is facilitating a similar process for young people that promotes civic action as a specific form of intergroup action. These results pave the way for future research on the precise mechanisms of youth dialogue that facilitate civic action.

These findings are particularly timely, youth civic engagement (and particularly youth activism) is on the rise. Young people are garnering widespread media coverage on issues including immigration, gun reform, climate change, and water rights. This uptick in youth activism is at odds with longstanding stereotypes that paint young people as apathetic or apolitical.

We can take Super Tuesday 2020 as a recent example. Media coverage highlighted the abysmal youth turnout in a high-stakes primary election, frequently citing the low percentage of the youth share (the percentage of people who voted who are 18-29 years old) rather than the youth turnout (the percentage of all eligible youth who voted). The youth share was 14%, while the youth turnout was 40% (CIRCLE, 2020). In cases like these, context and information matter. Researchers on youth political engagement consider voter turnout as the statistic that directly reflects the rate of youth participation (not share), and youth turnout has been on the rise in every presidential election since 1996 (CIRCLE, 2020).

Ginwright & James (2002) believe that barriers to democratic participation – not youth pregnancy, violence, or delinquency, as so often cited – are the biggest problem facing today's youth and can explain their civic and political outcomes better than mere apathy. There is a symbolic disconnect between the values our country promotes and the opportunities young people are afforded to embrace those values. Ginwright & James (2002) illustrate how today's young people are struggling with economic isolation, little political power, and social stigma, and pushing back through youth civic engagement in the form of youth organizing and activism.

In a similar vein, the results of this study challenge common misconceptions and stereotypes that paint young people as politically apathetic and civically disengaged. In fact, very few participants began the program as "uninvolved," and when provided opportunities and support to learn about and act upon social injustice, nearly all participants became "involved" – with most involved in political activities. As practitioners and researchers, we must abandon deficit models that assume young people are uninvolved and we must develop interventions and strategies to develop interest in involvement. Rather, we would benefit from an approach that assumes young people are already involved, are looking for more opportunities and support for their involvement.

Limitations & Future Directions

Though this study provided exciting preliminary data, there are notable limitations. Particularly, the small sample size raises questions about the power of the results and the ability to extrapolate findings beyond the specificities of this type of program to a broader application. The sample size also made it nearly impossible to do any form of factor or class analysis with the YII as the group sizes across race and "type" of adolescent were rendered to single digit numbers. This creates ample opportunity for future research: though many studies have utilized the YII to evaluate youth behaviors and "type" of adolescent, few utilize a pre- post- design to assess changes in type as a result of intervention or programming. This could be an exciting new application of the tool, and an extremely useful measure in considering behavioral change during a significant developmental period.

In a similar vein, while the utilization of the YII to examine the immediate impact that a youth dialogue program can have on adolescents is novel and exciting, this idea could be applied further through follow-ups with participants across years. We know little about the long-term

impacts of sustained youth engagement, and so using a measure like the YII to track the types of behaviors that adolescents engage in over time could help us to understand the lasting impacts (if any) different types of structured civic opportunities may have on the behaviors of youth.

Selection bias should also be mentioned. Because of the community-based nature of this program and the related research, it is impossible to include a random sample of participants and frequently results in a particularly engaged and ambitious group of students. This certainly sways results, especially around measures of motivation. However, given that motivation is a key factor in civic engagement, we can utilize measures like the YSR and conduct follow-up qualitative research to better understand how these motivations are developed, facilitated, sustained, and acted upon to better tailor our education, programming, and interventions.

Conclusion

Taken together, these findings coupled with a national context that has been less than supportive of youth engagement demonstrate how it is more important than ever for scholars, practitioners, and adult allies to identify methods that promote youth civic development, create opportunities for young people to engage in structured civic engagement, and support young people as they transfer their civic learning from structured opportunities into the real world.

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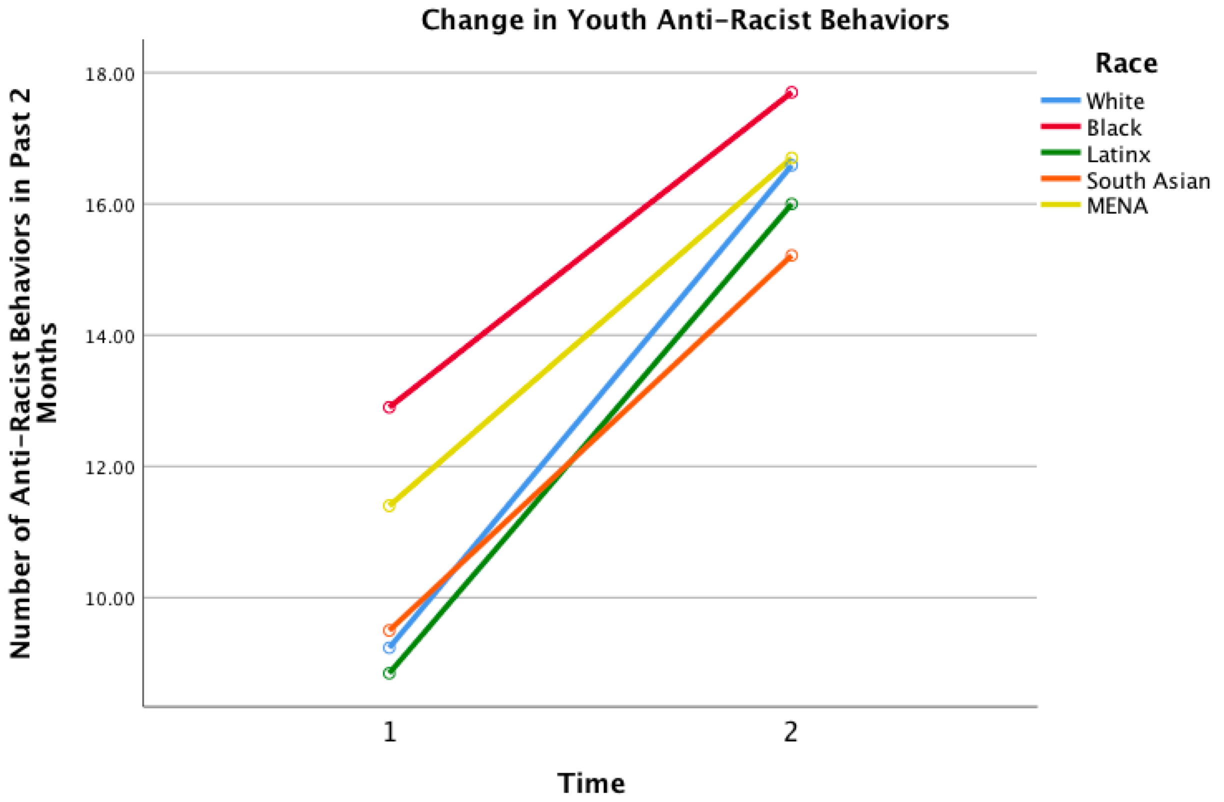

Figure 3.1. Mean scores of ARAS at Time 1 and Time 2 by racial/ethnic group

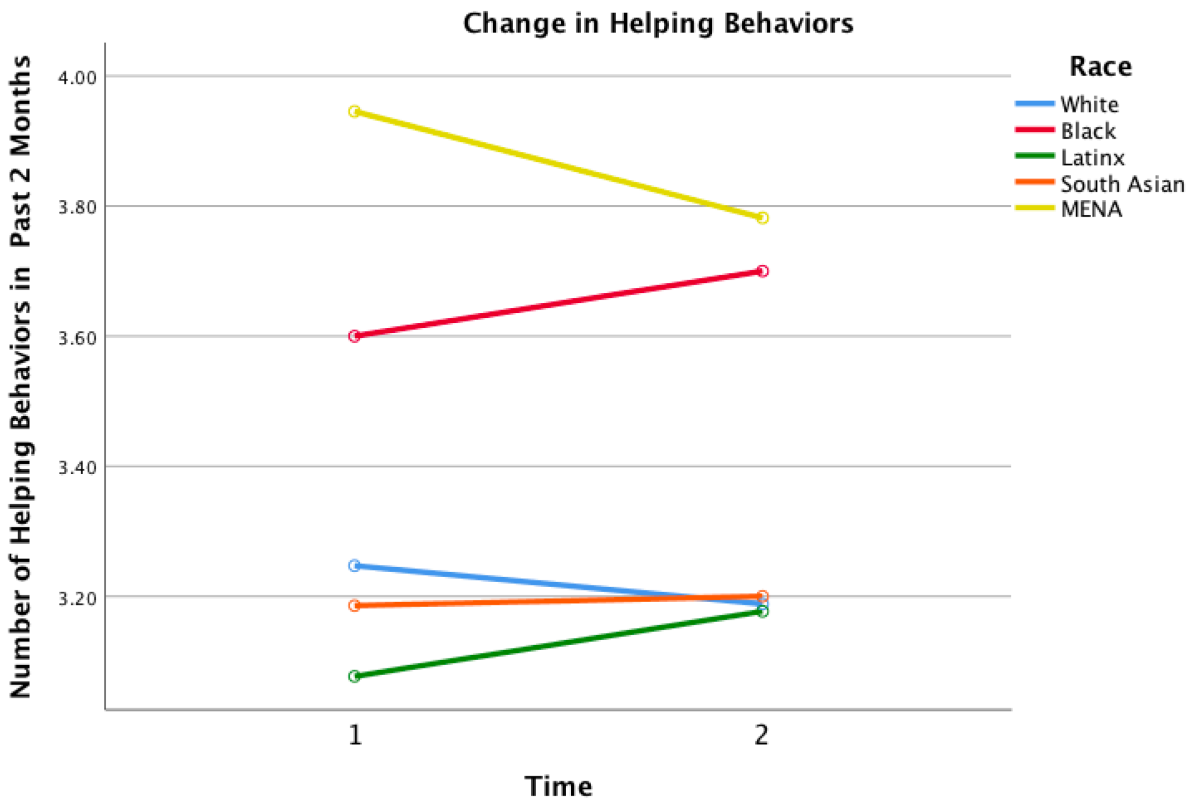

Figure 3.2. Mean counts of “helping behaviors” at Time 1 and Time 2 by racial/ethnic group

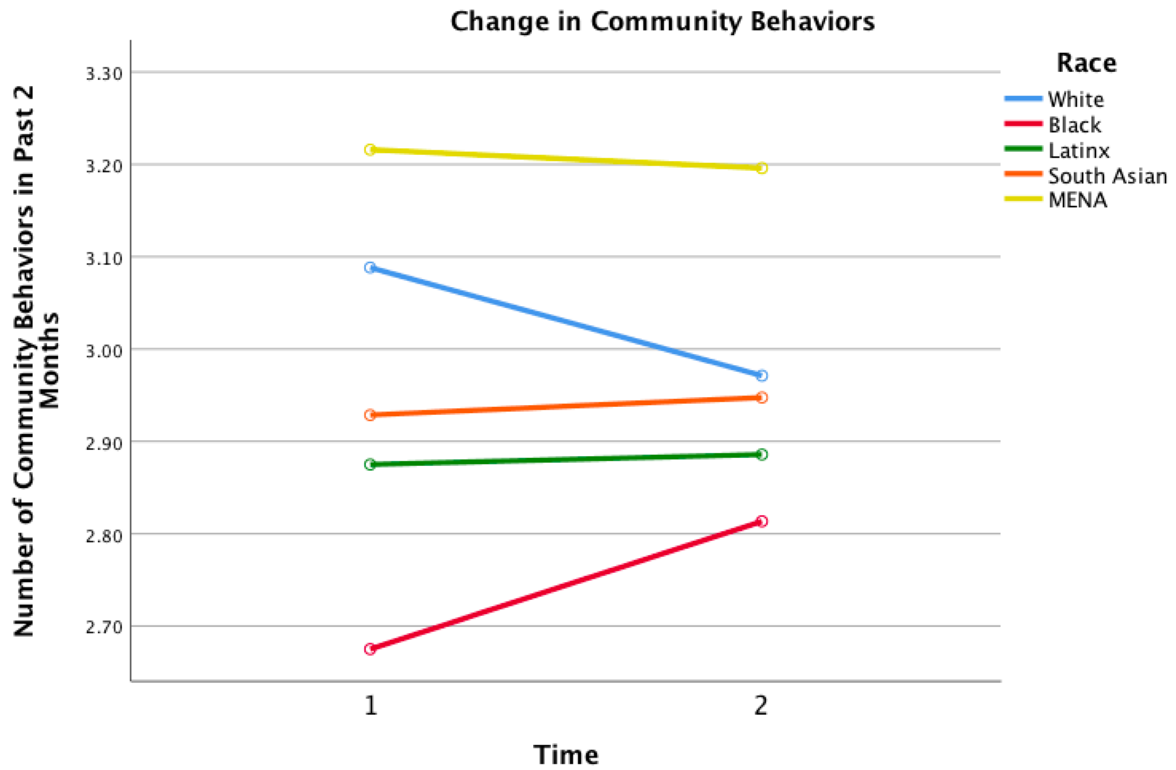

Figure 3.3. Mean counts of "community behaviors" at Time 1 and Time 2 by racial/ethnic group

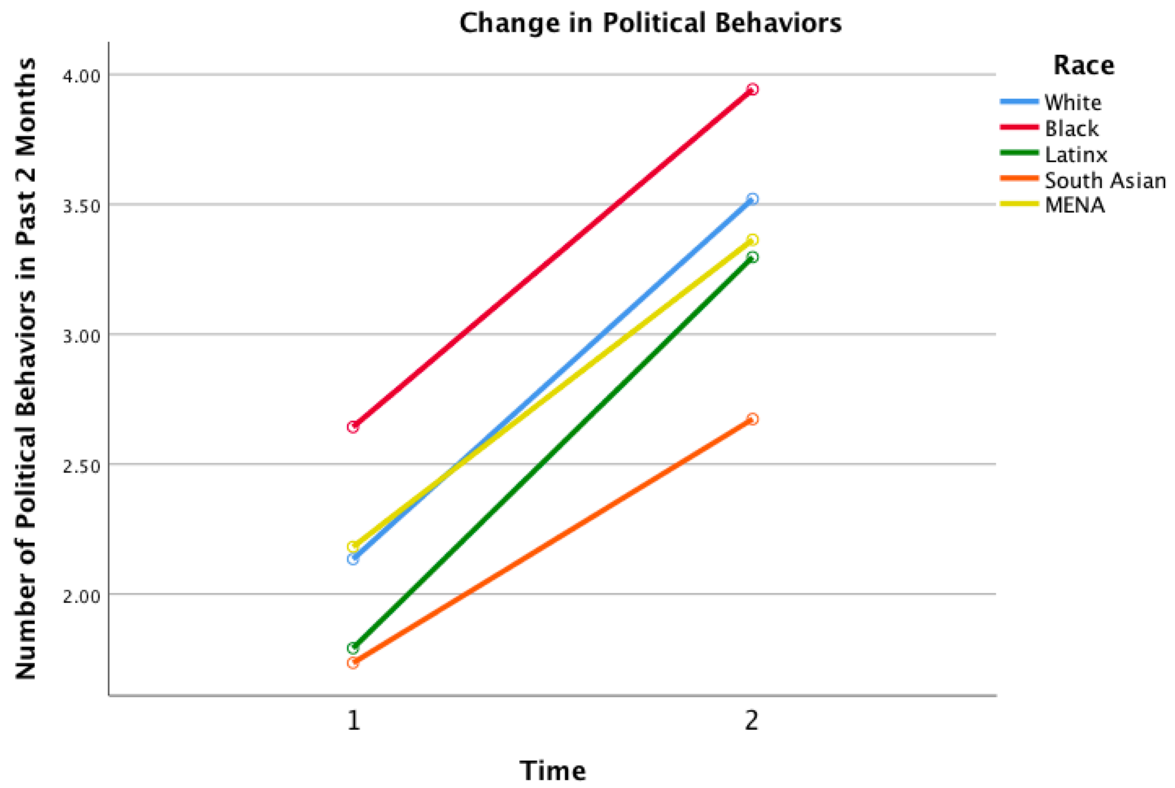

Figure 3.4. Mean counts of "political behaviors" at Time 1 and Time 2 by racial/ethnic group

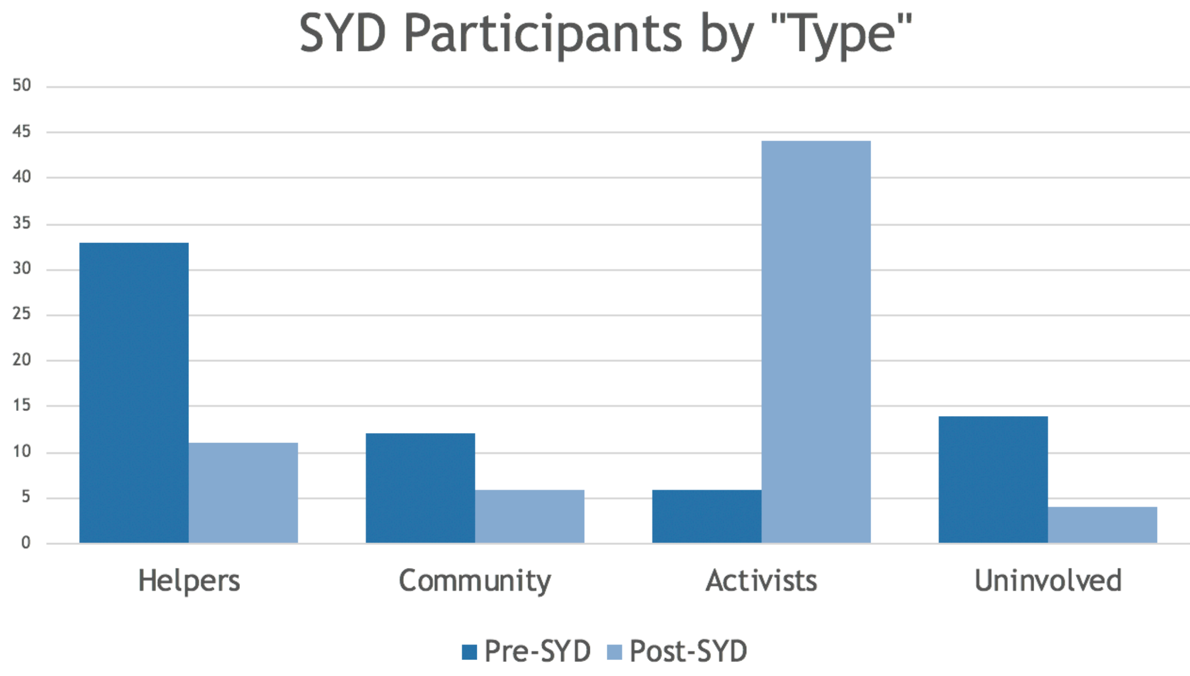

Figure 3.5. Number of SYD participants by YII "type" pre-SYD and post-SYD

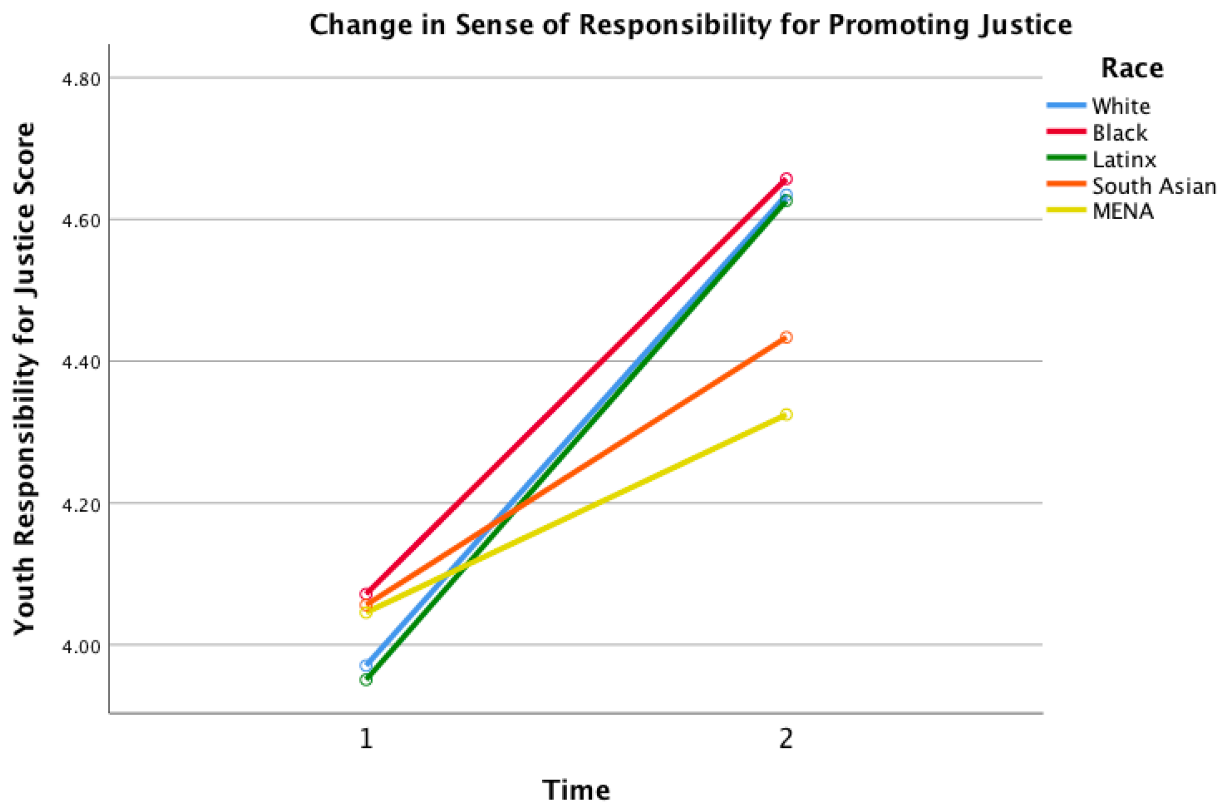

Figure 3.6. Mean scores of YSRS at Time 1 and Time 2 by racial/ethnic group

CHAPTER IV

Towards a Civic Habitus: Imagining Civic Engagement Drive in Youth

INTRODUCTION

Civic engagement is crucial to developing and sustaining a healthy democracy. At least one goal of civic engagement is to create long-term activists and community leaders who will continue to uphold and protect the rights and responsibilities of a democratic society. However, there are competing theories about how best to do this. Do structured programs best engage and prepare young people to become civically active? Will better civic education in schools promote a more informed and active citizenry? Do early direct civic experiences best predict who will maintain civic engagement throughout the life course? Do individual differences such as motivation or identity render some young people more likely to engage long-term? It is important to explore these questions so that we can continue practices that promote long term civic engagement, but also pivot our strategies as we run into barriers for promoting long-term engagement.

Predictors of Long-Term Engagement

Luckily, in recent decades there has been a surge in research on predictors of civic engagement, largely in response to concerns regarding the civic apathy of young people (Putnam, 1995; 2000). In particular, significant evidence suggest that involvement in structured opportunities for involvement, parental socialization, and individual differences best predict future civic engagement.

The role of structured opportunities. Significant research suggests that young people who join structured activities are more likely to be politically engaged later in life (Pancer, 2015). The research on such structured activities is vast and broadly defined. Research on the connections between civic engagement and school-based opportunities is particularly robust (Nieme & Chapman, 1998; Fredericks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Zaff et al., 2011; Torney-Purta & Barber, 2011; Geller et al., 2013; Reichert & Print, 2017). A subset of this body of research focuses on *mandatory* service programs through high schools (Hall, McKeown, & Roberts, 2001; Spring, Grimm, & Dietz, 2008; Metz & Youniss, 2003). Though mandatory service programs do increase young people's engagement in their communities, many worry that the forced nature of this form of engagement will lead to negative associations and less of an interest in long-term civic activity (Stukas, Snyder, & Clary, 1999). More recently, however, scholars have demonstrated how thoughtfully developed mandatory service programs do not carry such negative outcomes, and actually increased students' interest in civic affairs and intention to continue civic activities in the future (Metz & Youniss, 2005). Another type of school-related engagement opportunity, service learning, is also susceptible to debate. While some studies find no immediate or lasting impact on civic behaviors (Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005) others find that participating in a service-learning program enhanced their confidence in creating change in their community (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

The role of parental socialization. In the civic engagement literature there is a trope that "civic engagement runs in families," suggesting that parents, guardians, or family units that engage in civic engagement pass along something (interest, a set of values, learned behaviors) that promotes civic engagement in the next generation (Jennings, 2002; Pancer et al., 2007; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012; Quaranta & Sani, 2016). Other perspectives involving the role

parents and guardians play in their children's civic development is more subtle; parents exert significant influence on the decisions that their children make. In youth volunteerism, young people frequently cite their parents asking them to volunteer as a reason for doing so (Vezina & Crompton, 2012). The type of relationships that children share with their parents or guardians also matters. For example, young people who spend more time with their parents tend to engage more in civic activities (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1999). Relatedly, young people who engage in more political discussions with their parents tend to engage in more civic activities (Pancer et al., 2007). In a seminal piece on civic engagement, Flanagan (2004) describes "political socialization" (one of two prominent theories of civic development) as a process by which parents and other significant adults in a child's life reproduce civic understanding, trust in the political system, and ideological values to the next generation through modeling and other normative forms of social learning. This particular perspective is often critiqued for not focusing enough on individual differences between young people.

The role of individual differences. Thus, the second most prominent theory highlighted by Flanagan (2004) is the generational model, which situates significant sociohistorical events as catalysts for different generations of young people to engage with civically. Rather than reacting in ways learned from an adult, young people are negotiating their own identities, values, and interests with their social world. This model invites conversations about how individual differences might influence how young people engage civically. When examining the role that race might play in civic engagement (and even how researchers study civic engagement) it became clear that the vast majority of research on antecedents to civic engagement has focused on middle-class white youth and families (Zaff et al., 2011). More recently, scholars have engaged more critically with the ways that youth of color develop civic identity and become

civically engaged, often motivated to act against injustice due to heightened awareness of racial inequality (Ginwright, 2010; Jagers et al., 2017; Bañales, 2020). Personality psychologists consider traits, psychological characteristics of individuals that are fixed and enduring, to be another individual difference worthy of exploring. In one of few studies exploring the relationship between civic behaviors and personality traits, strong links were found between increases in a range of political behaviors and two traits: openness to experience and extroversion (Mondak, 2010; Mondak et al., 2010). However, examining individual differences begs questions about the directionality of these relationships. Do these individual differences promote or lead to increases in civic engagement, or does engagement in civic behaviors promote certain outcomes or exacerbate certain traits? Or, are these relationships bidirectional? More importantly, what role does *motivation* play in all of these predictors of civic engagement?

The Present Study: Distinguishing the "Involved" from the "Uninvolved"

In one unique exploration of experiential, rather than individual, differences, Doug McAdam (1989) explores the long-term differences between a group of people who participated in the 1964 Freedom Summer Project (during which white people from northern states volunteered during the summer of 1964 to register as many Black voters in Mississippi as possible) as well as people who applied to and were accepted to participate in Freedom Summer but never showed up (the "no shows"). McAdam found that volunteers were more politically active throughout their lives than the "no shows," among other "biographical consequences" ranging from marriage rates to income levels. McAdam concludes that participation in a transformative civic experience triggers a process that promotes lifelong civic and political engagement. However, his conclusions leave many unanswered questions about these two groups, including individual differences and motivations.

In the present study, I utilize the Summer Youth Dialogues on Race & Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit as a case study modeled after McAdam's Freedom Summer project. SYD is an experiential summer program that brings together a racially diverse group of high school students from the metropolitan Detroit region, one of the most racially segregated metropolitan areas in the United States. Throughout the summer, young people engage in a structured curriculum that guides them as they explore their own racial identity, the ways that race and racism has shaped their lives and the lives of others, and social justice concepts such as privilege and oppression. Through facilitated dialogues with peers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, SYD participants hone communication and leadership skills necessary to work towards a more anti-racist and just Detroit. For a more detailed description of SYD, see Fisher & Checkoway (2011). For examples of activities from the SYD curriculum, see Appendix A.

SYD is a well-established program that not only promotes learning over the summer, but also provides opportunities for continued engagement after the program ends. Each year, SYD participants are invited to apply for a social justice fellowship that would support their social justice work throughout the school year. In the present study, I conduct in-depth interviews with an entire cohort of SYD participants who were awarded this social justice fellowship, as well as another group of SYD participants (matched by race, gender, and community) who did not apply for the fellowship. Through a qualitative investigation, I explore the individual differences and motivations of these two groups: "The Fellows" (the cohort of students who participated in SYD, applied to, and were selected to participate in the social justice fellowship to continue their social justice work) and "The Non-Fellows" (the cohort of students who participated in SYD but did not apply to the social justice fellowship).

Through this exploratory interview project, my questions organically shifted from those directly related to young people (How do these two groups of young people differ in their motivations around civic engagement? How do these two groups of young people conceptualize civic engagement? How do these two groups of young people describe their civic engagement?) to questions that researchers and practitioners dedicated to strengthening youth civic engagement should be grappling with:

1. **What barriers to youth civic engagement persist even within well-intentioned structured opportunities for young people to engage civically?**
2. **What indirect messages are adults sending to young people about civic engagement, and how might these messages work against goals of more inclusive and democratic communities?**
3. **Can and should we be expanding our definitions of civic engagement?**

In our collective quest to build a healthier, more participatory, and more just democracy, researchers and practitioners must constantly reflect upon our practices, perspectives, and biases to ensure that we are, indeed, working towards our goals.

METHODS

Participants

A total of 26 young people were interviewed. All participants were 18 years of age. Sixteen were young women (6 Black, 4 Latinx, 2 MENA, 2 South Asian, 2 white) and ten were young men (2 Black, 2 Latinx, 2 MENA, and 2 White). Sixteen were from a suburban neighborhood, and ten were from an urban neighborhood.

"Fellows." Each year, there are groups of students who are so moved by their participation in SYD that they demonstrate interest in continuing engagement in social justice work. Because of this, the University of Michigan has developed a fellowship program to

provide structure and support so that interested SYD participants can continue their engagement. In the past, "fellows" have engaged in an impressive array of projects and activism: surveys to explore the most pressing issues facing the youth of the metro Detroit region; social justice conferences focusing on different forms of oppression impacting the metro Detroit region; a statewide resolution that encourages Michigan schools and districts to promote civil rights education and diversity learning; a public television special about adult-youth partnerships; and ongoing policy presentations at conferences across the state and country.

"Non-fellows." Additionally, I also recruited 13 "non-fellows." "Non-fellows" refer to SYD participants who, for one reason or another, decided not to apply for the fellowship. I worked with facilitators to identify "non-fellows" that shared as many demographic variables as possible with the fellows, to act as a form of "control" when analyzing similarities and differences in experiences and responses.

Procedures

Interviews. Interviews were semi-structured and followed a basic interview protocol that involved four main sections:

1. General experiences with SYD (for example, "Are there parts of the summer youth dialogue program that you still think about today?" and "Do you keep in touch with anyone you met through SYD?")
2. Socialization questions (for example, "Did you talk to your parents or guardians about the youth dialogues program? If so, what sorts of conversations did you have about it? If not, why not?")

3. Questions specifically about the fellowship program (for example, "I'm wondering if you heard about the social justice fellowship program offered to SYD participants. Did you consider applying? Why, or why not?")
4. Questions about civic engagement (for example, "What does civic engagement mean to you?" and "Do you think you have a civic identity? If so, how would you describe it?")

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes to 90 minutes, and were conducted in person (10), via Skype (8), and via telephone (8). All interviews were recorded using at least two methods, and recordings were transcribed. Upon completion of the interview, participants were thanked for their time and given $20 for compensation. Upon receiving their incentive, participants could indicate whether they wanted to receive a copy of their transcript to review for accuracy.

Analysis. Transcriptions were analyzed using an inductive and iterative process. I read, interpreted, and reread transcripts, developing initial categories that represented the data (Patton, 2002). I then utilized a mix of Saldana's (2009) first- and second-cycle coding methods: in-vivo coding, process coding, values coding, and narrative coding to generate specific codes within each category before "theming" the data. After multiple iterations of this process, constantly comparing codes between and within groups, I developed a set of three categories that stemmed naturally from the interview protocol:

1. Parental influence on youth participation (as either a catalyst or barrier to transparent participation)
2. Youth attributions of others (as static or growing)
3. Youth sense of self (concrete identity or fluid habitus)

To enhance the validity of these findings, interview transcripts were shared with participants, who were then given the opportunity to edit or rephrase any aspect of their responses (it should be noted that none of the participants requested any edits). Preliminary findings were also shared with participants, who confirmed the findings were in line with their experiences and responses. Finally, throughout this process, I worked closely with colleagues and mentors to discuss themes and articulate findings to strengthen reliability of the data.

RESULTS

Analysis surfaced three significant and distinct themes that helped distinguish between the experiences and outcomes of the "fellows" and the "non-fellows." The role of parental influence in youth participation, the attributions that young people make about those with whom they disagree, and the ways in which civic behavior and identity is internalized by young people.

Parental Influence on Youth Participation

One of the most striking differences between the fellows and the non-fellows was that the fellows had the complete support and active encouragement of their parents in continuing their social justice work. All 13 fellows described ways in which their parents vocalized the value of participating in programs like SYD (while only 2 of the non-fellows described such conversations with their parents), 12 of the 13 fellows provided examples of participating in civic activism with their parents (while none of the non-fellows could cite such an experience with their parents), and 11 of the 13 non-fellows shared that they didn't apply simply because they were confident that their parents would not let them. In these ways, parents seemed to act as either a catalyst or a barrier to transparent youth civic participation.

Parents as catalysts to youth civic participation. In addition to having the vocal support of their parents to apply for the fellowship and being socialized to engage in civic activism, the

fellows' parents tended to ascribe additional value to programs like SYD that promote youth participation. 11 of the 13 fellows described how their parents highlighted the ways participation in SYD could count towards high school credits, strengthen their college application, and build valuable connections to the University of Michigan. Here are some examples that demonstrate how parents can facilitate civic engagement in their children:

> "Oh, it was a no brainer to apply. My parents practically forced me to, 'cause they knew I would like it. We do stuff like this all the time, we'll go canvassing for Bernie, or we'll register people to vote. I enjoy it, and so they knew that I would like this fellowship."
> *-Civil Rights Fellow, girl, white, suburb*

> "Well, I sorta wanted to apply even before I talked to my parents, but talking to them just like solidified my decision. They thought, I think part of them thought it would look good for college, but also they thought I should be doing more of this stuff. Which, I guess I agree with."
> *-Civil Rights Fellow, boy, Black, suburb*

Many of these responses read as if parents were pressuring their children to participate in ways that their children might otherwise not want to do; it is important to note that this is not the case. In each instance where a participant shared a story that could be interpreted as parental pressure, follow-up questions clarified that participants did, indeed, independently want to participate in the activity in question, but stressed that their parents know them well and sometimes know what they will like or benefit from even before they know this themselves.

Parents as barriers to youth civic participation. As noted above, 11 of the 13 non-fellows shared that they did not apply for the fellowship simply because they knew their parents would not let them. 3 non-fellows even admitted that they lied to their parents about what SYD was, knowing that if they told their parents the truth they would be banned from participating. When asked about what, exactly, their parents objected to, participants frequently cited the following:

1. Competing responsibilities. 8 of the 13 non-fellows described how their parents felt they had more pressing things to spend their time on, such as getting a job to help the

family, providing childcare for younger siblings, or focusing on their school commitments.

2. Political brainwashing. 5 of the 13 non-fellows described how their parents were more conservative, and worried that programs like SYD would "brainwash" them into shifting their values away from those of their family.
3. Distrust of the University. 5 of the 13 non-fellows described how their parents were skeptical (rather than excited, like the parents of the fellows) about the University's involvement. These parents seemed to believe that the University was exploiting the diversity of Detroit for "good PR."

Here are some examples of responses that speak to the ways in which parents can act as a barrier to their child's engagement:

> "I wanted to apply. For sure. But I knew my dad would never let me. It's fine, though. I talk to [a current Fellow] all the time about what y'all are doing, and, you know, I still go to all the events and stuff. I just can't talk to my parents about any of it, it would upset them."
> *-Non-fellow, boy, Latinx, city*

> "Hah! Whatchu mean did I know. You were practically shoving that application down my throat. I'm sorry I didn't apply, I guess I never told you why. My parents would just never let me, simple as that. They'd probably be mad knowing that you're interviewing me now."
> *-Non-fellow, girl, MENA, suburb*

Youth Attributions of Others

There was a stark difference between the ways in which the fellows and the non-fellows described people they disagreed with. Overwhelmingly, the fellows expressed a range of negative emotions (coded as anger, frustration, impatience, or exasperation) when describing interactions they have had with people with whom they disagree. Conversely, the non-fellows expressed more positive emotions (coded as understanding, empathy, patient, hopeful) when

describing similar interactions. Similarly, the language used by both groups was different. All 13 fellows used at least one of the following words when describing an encounter with someone they disagreed with during an act of civic engagement: “wrong,” “stupid,” “ignorant,” or “hateful.” 10 fellows used at least three of these words, with “ignorant” being the most commonly used word. Non-fellows, on the other hand, used words like “young,” “sheltered,” “learning,” or “growing.” 8 fellows demonstrated empathy by acknowledging that they have likely done something similar to what they were critiquing. Taken together, these trends suggest that the fellows and the non-fellows make different attributions about the people with whom they disagree in civic spaces. Fellows tend to draw attributions of dispositional ignorance, while non-fellows tend to draw attributions of dispositional growth.

Attributions of ignorance. In one example, a South Asian fellow described attending a Black Lives Matter protest with her parents. As the police began to show up, white protestors began to make a physical barrier between police officers and protestors of color. A man kept urging this participant to join the physical barrier, assuming she was white. Here is an excerpt from her description of the event:

> “Ugh, it was so annoying. I’m sure he thought I was white, and didn’t understand why I was getting so visibly upset. But how ignorant can you be, not all Bengali people look the same. I get so frustrated by stupid people sometimes. Sorry, but they need to educate themselves before continuing this type of harmful behavior. It’s not my job to teach him. He was in the wrong.”
> *-Civil Rights Fellow, girl, South Asian, suburb*

In another example, a white fellow described collaboratively hosting a diversity day at his school, and engaging in a tense discussion with some of his white peers about the event. When his peers began mocking the event, and specifically asking when the “White Day” would be, the fellow disengaged. He shared this about the exchange:

> “I just have no patience for that kind of ignorance. If people are going to trivialize the

work we're trying to do, and ask stupid questions like that, I just won't engage. It's not worth my time or energy."
-*Civil Rights Fellow, boy, white, suburb*

In these examples, fellows demonstrate a clear and informed critical consciousness. Their ability to identify power dynamics, critique situations and structures, and convey their discontent with injustice is evident. But their emotional responses, the language they use, and their willingness to engage with these forms of injustice and conflict differ significantly from their non-fellow peers.

Attributions of growth. In one example that demonstrates how non-fellows approached disagreements in civic spaces, a Black non-fellow described attending a friend's birthday party when a white classmate of his ran up to him and touched his hair, apparently as a dare. He described feeling humiliated as others laughed at him, and angry that his friend or his friends' parents didn't intervene. However, he quickly recalibrated and described how he has learned to "lead with compassion:"

> "Oh, yeah. I mean it didn't feel good. But I'm not perfect, I've made mistakes. She was clearly young, like younger than me, and our school is pretty sheltered, so how would she even know? She's probably still got a lot to learn, you know? I always try to give people the benefit of the doubt, especially the first time, because I've changed so much even in this last year."
> -*Non-fellow, boy, Black, city*

In another example, a non-fellow describes the frustratingly slow process of talking with her conservative Latinx family about social justice issues. She described herself as "disagreeing with [her] family on just about all things political," but felt a sort of responsibility to continuously engage in critical conversations.

> "Another example is, well I talk to my parents all the time about religion. To me, things like reproductive justice are *so* important, and have way more to do with equality and oppression than religion. But my parents just don't see it that way. It's hard because I have to balance being respectful towards them while also challenging beliefs and actions that I see as oppressive. But, I think I am able to come at it from a place of love, share my own process of seeing things differently (because, you know, I was raised super religious so I can see where they're coming from). I try to come at it like, we're all learning and

growing together."
-Non-fellow, girl, Latinx, city

In these types of responses, non-fellows would make explicit connections to SYD. 10 of the 13 non-fellows provided examples, without being probed, of how they try to ask questions, model perspective taking, or practice empathy when engaging in these disagreements.

Internalization of Civic Identity & Behaviors

When asked how they conceptualize their own civic identity, fellows and non-fellows answered the question in thematically different ways. Fellows tended to provide concrete answers by focusing on specific projects they are working or have worked on, and they framed their civic identity as one of their core identities, just like their race, or gender, or religious affiliation. Their civic identity was closely connected to how others perceived them, in particular meaningful adults in their lives. Non-fellows, on the other hand, provided more fluid and organic answers when describing how they conceptualize their civic identity. They spoke less about how others viewed them (and even provided examples of how adults frequently and incorrectly view them as disengaged), and more about the ways they weave small actions into their everyday lives to produce a civic norm that is simply a part of who they are. These different approaches to internalizing the role and responsibility of civic engagement can be understood as a focus on civic identity or on civic habitus.

A Concrete Civic Identity. 11 of the 13 fellows said in their interviews that they consider their Youth Civil Rights Fellowship to be one of their identities – not a part of their identity, but one of many, alongside their race or gender. When asked to describe how they engage civically, 12 of the 13 fellows gave examples of specific projects they have been involved with as part of the Youth Civil Rights Fellowship. Their definitions of civic engagement and civic identity were concrete and literal, rather than general or overarching. And finally, all 13 fellows made note of

how others (mainly adults) consider them to be "leaders" – this also seemed to be a significant factor in establishing a civic identity, that adults (and particularly adults they respected) saw potential in them and value in the work they were doing. The language around their conceptualization of their civic identity appeared to be more externally driven. One example that encapsulates many of these points:

> "Being a Fellow has become my favorite new way to introduce myself to people, haha. I'm definitely civically engaged. Like, Mrs. Hall* tells me all the time how much I'm doing and what a good youth ambassador I am for older generations. Right now, let's see, right now right now I'm not doing anything per se but I just finished a project with the Fellows, we organized a youth conference about a bunch of social issues, so there was that. I know I'll have more things to say in the future, too."
> *-Fellow, boy, Black, city*

And another example:

> "It's funny you ask, last summer after SYD was over my parents started referring to me as 'their little fellow,' instead of my name, haha. I really think that SYD and this fellowship are probably the best things to ever happen to me. I see myself as an activist now, it has really become a big part of who I am. I feel more confident now, because of people like you and [my facilitator] and [SYD director] to step up as a youth leader. I recently drafted a, well I hope it becomes a law, but for now a resolution about violence against women, and that was one really cool thing I've done recently."
> - *Fellow, girl, white, suburb*

A Fluid Civic Habitus. Non-fellows described a more flexible conceptualization of their civic identity and civic engagement, stemming from "who they are," and enacted in a range of everyday behaviors that become norms. Borrowing language from Richards-Schuster (2005), I describe this as a form of "civic habitus," described as: "mechanisms which are replicated and repeated, and over time form subconscious behaviors and produce actions" (162). Like the civic habitus described by Richards-Schuster, the non-fellows describe their learning in SYD as transformational, resulting in their ability to see instances of injustice and their difficulty leaving those injustices unaddressed. This process of seeing injustice, naming it, addressing it, and

promoting change (big or small) is repeated and replicated to the point where it has become part of "who they are." An example:

> "I mean, I do think I'm civically engaged, just not in the same way as like Sasha [a fellow] is. I don't work on things with city council, I work on things with my parents, and neighbors, and you know even Mr. Davidson [teacher at her school]. You don't even know how much time I spend talking to them, listening to them, asking questions. And to me, that's engagement. I'm like helping them to see things from a youth's perspective, because it's so different from what they know. And if that happens, little by little, I can see a change. So like, of course I care – but they'll never believe me about it. It's fine, though, because at the end of the day I know myself, and I can see the change coming."
> -
> *Non-fellow, girl, Latinx, city*

This response is a typical one for non-fellows. 10 of the 13 non-fellows indicated a more broad definition of civic engagement that did not involve specific examples, but rather behavioral norms that have been engrained in their lives. When pressed for specific examples, 12 of the 13 non-fellows pointed to interpersonal relationships that they are invested in helping to grow, usually a figure of authority (like a parent, older relative, or teacher). And all 13 non-fellows dismissed my questions about adults, confidently asserting that adults won't ever see within them the same types of leadership skills that they see in the fellows (many were even specifically named), and it was unlikely that they could do anything to convince adults that they care as much as they do. However, this did not discourage them, but helped them feel more confident in their own sense of self.

DISCUSSION

This qualitative study confirmed many things that we know about why and how young people engage civically, including that parents play a critical role in youth civic engagement (Andolina et al., 2003; Quaranta & Sani, 2016). However, findings provided a nuanced addition to this line of research: parents seem to impact how their children communicate about their engagement, not whether their children engage civically. Though not a perfect analogy to

McAdam's Freedom Summer Project (admittedly, all participants in this study *did* participate in SYD), these findings raise questions about the assumptions we make about the "uninvolved."

Differences also arose in how Fellows versus Non-Fellows engaged in conflict. While Fellows demonstrated clear social justice values, and, because of those values, were less likely to back down when confronted with conflict that related to oppression or injustice. They held so steadfastly to these values that when confronted with injustice, they drew judgments and dismissed others. When faced with similar instances of injustice, the Non-Fellows utilized skills they developed through SYD: empathy, dialogic communication, and the suspension of judgment. These two approaches characterize common strategies employed by activists when working for change: a more radical approach that consistently rejects the very thing they are trying to change (Tausch et al., 2011), and a more incremental approach to change (Halperin, Cohen-Chen, & Goldenberg, 2014). Both approaches have their merits; while incremental approaches align more closely to dialogic forms of conflict resolution, more radical approaches (often fueled by anger at injustice) can lead to larger and more constructive effects when attempting to resolve conflict (Schuman, Halperin, & Tagar, 2018).

Finally, there were stark contrasts between how Fellows and Non-Fellows described their own civic identity and civic engagement. Fellows developed a strong civic identity, based in concrete action and supported externally by adults in their lives who view them as strong leaders. Non-Fellows, who didn't have the same type of support or encouragement from adults, had a more flexible understanding of civic engagement, and understood their civic identity to be more organic and stemming from everyday actions that have become norms to them. Collectively, these themes paint a picture that says far more about the adults in these young peoples' lives than about the young people themselves.

Implications for the field

Our findings provide multiple entry points for critical reflection for those of us engaged in research and practice with youth around civic engagement. First, it is clear that we need to work with parents and other salient adults to frame civic engagement in ways they can connect with and support. Why do some parents and guardians so quickly shut down conversations about opportunities for their children to engage? How can we engage in those sorts of conversations, and build relationships based on communication, trust, and respect so that even if disagreements arise parents feel comfortable with the idea of their children participating in programming that promotes civic engagement? How can we identify and address barriers that might exist for families who might support their children's civic engagement, but simply have other more pressing priorities? In our research and practice, we must be constantly reflecting and adjusting our work to be more – to reach more young people, to be more transparent, to involve more families, to eliminate more barriers to participation.

In a similar vein, researchers and practitioners must be constantly tailoring curriculum and interventions to reflect the current times and meet the ever-changing needs of young people. In the "Age of Information," high schoolers have nearly instantaneous access to a wealth of social justice resources. In the case of SYD, a greater focus on concepts like social justice humility, personal limits to productive engagement, healthy boundaries, and dialogic communication may be more beneficial to participants than social justice concepts that are now more frequently integrated into school and social life.

And finally, adult allies can be more intentional about the messages we are sending and who we are sending them to. Are only some students being tagged as "leaders," while others (who may have significant leadership potential) being overlooked? Do personality traits like

extroversion and openness to experience not only predict political participation, but also who receives (and doesn't receive) positive feedback from adults about their engagement? These messages seem to be having negative effects on those pegged as youth leaders; while they demonstrate confidence in their civic identity, their confidence stems overwhelmingly from external factors (most notably, in the present study, from adults who provide verbal affirmations to them).

Westheimer & Kahne (2004) present three conceptions of "good' citizens that are widely accepted as promoting democracy: the "personally responsible citizen," who engages in altruistic individual level acts such as volunteering; the "participatory citizen," who engages with the political process to address local and community needs; and the "justice-oriented" citizen, who fills a leadership role in the quest to eradicate injustice and oppression on a structural level. All three, they argue, are necessary for a healthy democracy; but all three also differ significantly in their approaches, need for support, conceptions of engagement, and implications for curriculum, intervention, and policy. Similarly, Carlson (2006) describes a triangle model of youth civic engagement that highlights pathways to engagement that capitalize on the different interests, capacities, and strengths of different youth. The top of the triangle represents youth leaders, while the slightly larger middle section of the triangle represents young people who provide input and consultation, and the largest bottom section of the triangle is made up of young people who work on projects, tasks, and service. These are only two examples of ways to think more broadly and creatively about how to conceptualize what youth civic engagement is and how young people are engaging civically; just as we must constantly evolve our questions and interventions, we must also evolve the ways we support and celebrate a range of skillsets required for youth civic engagement without consistently prioritizing some (like leadership).

A Focus on the Aspirational

In this study, we reconnected with SYD participants just over a year after they participated in the program. While a one-year follow up can, and indeed did, provide us with helpful information about the continuous development of young citizens, it is a relatively early stage in the long-term trajectories of these young people. Civic work with youth is both developmental and aspirational, and so our frame and interpretation of these qualitative check-ins must be developmental and aspirational as well. In this case, such an approach means considering the social justice learning curve for young people. In a five-year follow up with the 2013 cohort of SYD "fellows," the "fellows" seemed to embrace more of the reflective, empathetic, and organic civic habitus that was characteristic of the "non-fellows" in this study (Rodriguez-Newhall, forthcoming). The 2013 "fellows" had maintained continuous engagement in social justice work for multiple years after SYD, and conveyed a humble "lifelong learner" perspective. The reactions of the "fellows" in this study may be indicative of a social justice learning curve that moves from an intense need to act immediately against injustice anywhere and everywhere it surfaces (fueled by a number of things including guilt, newfound awareness, a sense of responsibility) to a more sustainable form of engagement with injustice fueled by information-seeking, collaboration, and a focus on structural change in addition to interpersonal change. These are hypotheses, and so it will be important to follow up with the 2018 "fellows" to track and document their social justice development and trajectories to inform such theories and models of how young people develop and maintain civic identities and behaviors. These takeaways, of course, must be contextualized in a longer timeframe that acknowledges that some actions take time.

Limitations & Future Directions

The current study raised critical questions in our research and practice pertaining to youth civic engagement, specifically regarding the assumptions that we make about young people and their motivations for engagement. However, it is not without limitations that should be considered. Notably, the study involved only 26 participants; low by most empirical standards for drawing meaningful conclusions. A more robust interview sample (or, alternatively, more far-reaching focus groups) would provide a more accurate picture of the full SYD cohort and enable stronger conclusions to be drawn. Additionally, though efforts were made to match "Fellows" and "Non-Fellows" on demographic variables to more accurately evaluate differences that arose from the qualitative data, the lived experiences of people who share social identities are undoubtedly complex, nuanced, and diverse. Therefore, we should not assume that these matching efforts "controls" for all differences, and should consider this when interpreting the differences between "Fellows" and "Non-Fellows."

Conclusion

This study highlighted important differences between seemingly engaged participants (the "Fellows") and seemingly unengaged participants (the "Non-Fellows") relating to parental influence on civic engagement, attributions of others during instances of conflict, and internalization of civic identity. These findings confirm previous research on the predictors and outcomes of civic engagement (such as parental involvement in civic development, internal versus external motivations for civic engagement, and further support for the conceptualization of a civic habitus), and raised important questions to the field. As researchers and practitioners with a vested interest in understanding and promoting youth civic engagement, we must be engaging in constant praxis – that is, engaging in constant critical reflection to inform and

strengthen the actions we take in our research and practice. This involves questioning the assumptions we make (about both young people who are seemingly involved as well as young people who are seemingly uninvolved), the messages we send (both consciously and unconsciously), and the ways in which we define what is (and what is not) considered civic engagement.

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CHAPTER V

Conclusion

This three-paper dissertation made several humble contributions to the growing body of literature on youth intergroup dialogue. The central purpose of this project was to deepen our understanding of the impacts of youth dialogue on actual behavior and civic identity and engagement, while simultaneously raising questions about the future of this field. Across three papers, and using entire cohorts of SYD participants and SYD social justice fellows, I track changes in attitudes, skill development, behaviors, and motivations – and do so while attending to group differences and other contextual factors.

Summary of Findings

In Study 1, I document and connect three separate goals of IGD: cognitive gains in participants' structural understanding of inequality, increased critical action, and a conscious application of lessons learned and skills developed through SYD in the form of critical action. Though the specific mechanisms of IGD are generally understood with respect to college IGD courses (Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013), less is known about whether awareness and action are linked in youth dialogue settings. Using CoBRAS as a proxy for cognitive understanding of inequality, I achieved three goals. First, I confirmed a main effect of SYD on CoBRAS that has been documented in previous SYD evaluations (Richards-Schuster & Aldana, 2013); that is, SYD participants endorsed fewer color-blind racial attitudes after participating in SYD, suggesting a deeper understanding of structural racism. Second, for the first time, I highlight group differences in CoBRAS change scores for SYD participants. Black participants began and

ended the program with the lowest mean CoBRAS scores (suggesting they began and ended the program with the greatest understanding of structural racism), white students demonstrated the greatest gains (beginning the program with the highest mean CoBRAS scores and ending with the second lowest), and South Asian students demonstrated the smallest change scores. Upon a deeper investigation into these trends, I found that South Asian students who were children of immigrants endorsed the highest rates of colorblind racial attitudes, even after participating in SYD. Third, I demonstrated through both quantitative and qualitative measures that the vast majority of SYD students develop a number of dialogic skills as a result of the program (across all races and ethnicities). And finally, I demonstrate (through participants' own words) how SYD participants consciously applied concepts they learned through the program to their own world, describing this action-oriented ability as a meaningful skill developed over the summer. Though the sample was small, this is an important preliminary step in empirically documenting the underlying mechanisms of youth dialogue that enable participants to bridge critical awareness with critical action.

Study 2 focused more closely on types of critical action, as well as what sense of responsibility (if any) SYD participants felt young people hold in promoting a more just future. I extend the literature on youth dialogues by measuring changes in actual behaviors (rather than anticipated behaviors) influenced by participating in SYD. Measures included an anti-racist action scale (ARAS, developed by former SYD participants; Aldana, Bañales, & Richards-Schuster, 2019) as well as the Youth Inventory of Involvement (YII; Pancer et al., 2007), to measure changes in both critical actions as well as non-critical actions after participating in SYD. I also measured youth social responsibility through the Youth Social Responsibility Scale (YSRS; Pancer et al., 2007). Results demonstrate significant evidence that SYD promotes more

critical action, both via increases in ARAS scores as well as increases in political activities from the YII. Further, an analysis of changes in "type" of adolescent show significant increases in "activist" adolescents and significant decreases in "uninvolved" adolescents. Lastly, there was a main effect of time on YSRS, meaning that participants across all racial groups demonstrated a significantly higher sense of responsibility for creating a more just future after participating in SYD than they did before they began SYD (it should be noted, however, that starting levels of YSRS were impressively high – which makes the significant gain all the more striking). Again, despite the small sample size, this study contributed exciting evidence that youth dialogue has the potential to change actual behaviors as well as sense of social responsibility, which might have predictive implications for long-term engagement.

Study 3 began as an inquiry into how seemingly "involved" and seemingly "uninvolved" young people define and conceptualize their civic identity and civic engagement. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with SYD participants who applied to and were selected for a social justice fellowship (the "Fellows") as well as SYD participants who did not choose to apply for the fellowship (the "Non-Fellows"), three distinct themes surfaced. First, parents played a significant role in whether their children engaged in transparent communication around their civic engagement. While the Fellows had significant support from their parents with regards to their engagement (nearly all Fellows participated in civic activities with their parents), the Non-Fellows largely hid their engagement from their parents, knowing their parents would likely not approve. This finding complicates the notion that parents influence whether or not their children engage civically (Jennings, 2002; Pancer et al., 2007; Mahatmya & Lohman, 2012; Quaranta & Sani, 2016) and suggests a more nuanced conclusion that parents influence whether or not their children are transparent about their civic engagement. Second, this study surfaced differences in

how Fellows and Non-Fellows different when confronted with interpersonal conflict, and particularly intergroup conflict involving race. The Fellows took a harder and more radical stance, standing firm in their constructions of justice and dismissing perpetrators of racist acts. The Non-Fellows engaged in a more dialogic approach, utilizing skills developed through SYD such as empathy, perspective taking, and the suspension of judgment. And finally, the Fellows and Non-Fellows differed quite dramatically in their own conceptions of civic identity and civic engagement. While the Fellows considered their role as a Social Justice Fellow to be *one of* their core identities (like race or gender), the Non-Fellows considered their civic identity to be more fluid and simply a part of who they are. This final point offers more support to Richards-Schuster's (2005) conceptualization of a "civic habitus," whereby young people replicate and repeat civic behaviors that eventually become so unconscious and deeply engrained in them that the actions become dispositional.

It is important to note, however, that while Study 3 did, indeed, produce significant findings directly related to youth's civic identity and engagement, it also raised significant questions about the direct and indirect roles that adults play in the process of youth civic development. Through the qualitative interview data, it became apparent that some young people were receiving strong verbal affirmations that led to externally driven conceptions of civic identity and civic engagement. While adult support and validation is integral to healthy youth development (Vygotsky, 1978; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976), it can also limit development by defining concepts (like civic engagement) that young people should be exploring and defining for themselves. In this vein, Study 3 also explores important challenges and poses difficult questions that researchers and practitioners should consider in future work.

Implications for Research & Practice

Collectively, these three papers present ample opportunities to strengthen our research on and practice of youth dialogue. First, this dissertation utilizes methods that are part of an ongoing evaluation of SYD to provide opportunities for longitudinal analysis. However, to strengthen our understanding of the impacts of youth dialogue (not just SYD, but all youth dialogue programs inclusive of different locations, structures, and time frames) researchers should consider a more systematic approach – one that utilizes the same concepts and measures across programs that employ different structures. It is important that we begin to consider how to best demonstrate widespread effects. A more robust empirical investigation of youth dialogue (across programs, utilizing shared measures, and engaging a large sample) will enable the same sort of modeling potential that was possible for the MIGR study. Such statistical potential will provide a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of SYD.

These papers also challenge practitioners and programmers to engage in constant praxis both with regards to personal beliefs and assumptions as well as with regards to curriculum, pedagogy, and intervention. We are at a unique period in history when national activism is directly confronting the ways in which anti-blackness shows up across U.S. institutions. Spaces of higher education are no exception to this (Dancy, Edwards, & Davis, 2018). Though IGD distinguishes itself as a social justice pedagogy – centering power in curriculum and conversations – rather than multicultural pedagogy – which celebrates diversity with a less critical lens – it could still benefit from incorporating stronger anti-blackness concepts into its curriculum. Dumas (2016) argues that an anti-blackness educational approach is an effective theoretical frame to use when addressing racism in educational settings, specifically highlighting the tendency for even the best intended educational pedagogies to

> "celebrate the social and economic advancement of select Black individuals and, perhaps more significantly, the success of other groups of people of color. In fact, it is the social and cultural inclusion of non-Black people of color that is often offered as evidence of the end of racial animus and racial barriers in the society" (15).

Study 2 provides preliminary evidence for this potential to happen in SYD. South Asian students who were the children of immigrants endorsed colorblind racial attitudes and concepts related to the "American Dream" at higher rates than other SYD participants, lending support to Patel's (2016) assertion that non-Black people of color, and particularly South Asians, have a unique cultural history in the United States that lends itself to complicity in subtle forms of white supremacy. For SYD, these implications move beyond the adult practitioners involve with the program and also involve the "near peer" college students who facilitate most SYD sessions, as well as the adult allies who will support SYD participants once the summer is over.

Study 3 also invites opportunities for curricular development. In particular, program leadership can reflect upon the ways that SYD participants describe engaging in conflict and adjust the time and attention given to different program goals. It seems that participants are entering SYD with a greater baseline knowledge of social justice concepts, but some participants are leaving still struggling with things like: social justice humility (Fisher, 2013), identifying personal boundaries and limits to productive engagement, and suspension of judgment. Theorizing around "social justice identity development" may be a useful future direction for research. Personal practice and peer anecdotes seem to suggest a trend where initial awareness of injustice leads to a spike in energy spent towards interrupting oppression, whereas a more seasoned social justice identity embraces imperfection and the idea of lifelong learning (rather than arriving at a destination).

Study 3 also suggests that providing support for adult allies outside of academic and practice settings is another significant implication. The qualitative data from Study 3 made clear

that young people are responding to and internalizing messages about civic engagement and their own civic agency from adults who play meaningful roles in their lives. It is also clear that many of the adults in the lives of SYD (and particularly the Non-Fellows) are skeptical about their youths' engagement in civic and political activities, for a slew of reasons ranging from mistrust of predominantly white institutions, to competing priorities and resources, to misunderstandings and disagreements about the role young people should play in creating change. It would be optimistic to assume that one summer of programming could completely re-socialize young people with regards to their racial socialization and sense of political efficacy. Therefore, attention and support must be given to *both* young people *and* the adults that will persist in their lives long after SYD has ended. This will help both young people and adult allies feel prepared to address differences and conflicts when they arise, so that youth civic engagement is more accessible, a more realistic option, and more transparent.

Finally, taken together these three studies encourage both researchers and practitioners to explore new ways to define and conceptualize youth civic engagement. A good starting point is with youth themselves. Centering the definitions, perspectives, and experiences of youth will most accurately and efficiently identify the directions that we should be moving in as a field. Leaders in the field of youth development have conceptualized and reconceptualized how we define civic engagement and youth activism (Flanagan, 2004; Ginwright, 2010; Zaff, Kawashima-Ginsberg, & Lin, 2011), and that critical reflective process must continue.

Conclusion

These three papers represent a modest contribution to the growing body of literature on youth dialogue. Through an analysis of one cohort of SYD participants, and one cohort of SYD Social Justice Fellows, I find significant evidence that youth dialogue is effective at decreasing

color-blind racial attitudes, increasing structural understanding of oppression, increasing anti-racist and civic behaviors, and enhancing young people's sense of responsibility in promoting a more just future. Through a qualitative analysis comparing SYD Fellows and Non-Fellows, I find evidence that the messages adults send to young people play an incredible role in the ways young people engage in conflict, view themselves, and define their own forms of civic engagement. Taken together, we can feel confident moving forward in ways that promote opportunities for structured youth dialogue (as well as developing opportunities for robust and systematic research on the widespread effects of youth dialogue) while also challenging ourselves as researchers and practitioners to engage in critical reflection on our own assumptions, practices, and pedagogical approaches to our work.

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APPENDIX

Sample activities from the Four Stage Intergroup Dialogue model used throughout SYD

*****all sample activities credited to the Summer Youth Dialogues on Race & Ethnicity in Metropolitan Detroit Dialogue Curriculum, Modified from IGR Process/Content Outline & Dialogue on Race/Ethnicity Common Curriculum v. 2

Multicultural Ground Rules for Dialogue

1. Our primary commitment is to learn-from the staff, from each other, from materials, and from our work. We acknowledge differences amongst us in skills, interests, values, scholarly orientations, and experience.

2. We acknowledge that racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and other forms of discrimination (religion, age, ability, language, education, etc.) exist and are likely to surface from time to time.

3. We acknowledge that one of the meanings of racism is that we have been systematically taught misinformation about our own group and especially members of devalued groups (this is true for both dominant and dominated group members). The same is true about sexism and other forms of prejudice-we are taught misinformation about ourselves and others.

4. We will try not to blame people for the misinformation we have learned, but we hold each other responsible for repeating misinformation or offensive behavior after we have learned otherwise.

5. Victims should not be blamed for their oppression.

6. We will trust that people are always doing the best they can, both to learn the material and to behave in non-racist, non-sexist, and multiculturally productive ways, and confront the person.

7. We will actively pursue opportunities to learn about our own groups and those of others, yet not enter or invade others' privacy when unwanted.

8. We will share information about our groups with other members of the class, and will not demean, devalue, or "put down" people for their experiences.

9. We each have an obligation to actively combat the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and group gain.

10. We want to create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. Thus, at times, members of the class may wish to make a comment verbally or in an assignment that they do not want repeated outside the classroom. If so, the person should preface his or her remarks with a request and the instructor and class will agree not to repeat the remarks.

11. Challenge the idea and not the person.

12. Speak your discomfort.

Safety and Comfort in Dialogue

SAFETY: We want to create an environment in which we feel safe sharing our views, our experiences, and ourselves. To learn from each other, we need an environment that allows us to open up, to feel safe challenging ourselves and challenging each other. Safety means knowing that we will not be harmed. However, this does not mean that we will always feel comfortable during this process…

COMFORT ZONES: We all have zones of comfort about different topics and experiences. The dialogue process asks us to move beyond our traditional areas of comfort so that we can open ourselves to new challenges, knowledge, and awareness. Inside our comfort zone we are not being challenged; therefore, not learning. Outside our comfort zones we are being challenged and learning. Too far outside our comfort zone and we begin to resist new information and withdraw. Throughout this dialogue we will learn to recognize when we are on the edge of our comfort zone and challenge each other and ourselves to expand this zone of comfort in the classroom.

LEARNING EDGES: We call the edge of our comfort zone the learning edge. When we are on the learning edge, we are most open to expanding our knowledge and understanding –as well as expanding our comfort zone itself. Being on this edge means that we may feel annoyed, angry, anxious, surprised, confused, defensive, or in some other way uncomfortable. These reactions are a natural part of the process of expanding our comfort zones, and when we recognize them as such, we can use them as part of the learning process –signaling to us that we are at the learning edge, ready to expand our knowledge and understanding. The challenge is to recognize when we are on a learning edge and then to stay there with the discomfort we are experiencing to see what we can learn.

CONFLICT: Conflict of opinion, viewpoint, and understanding, is a normal and even beneficial part of the dialogue process. It will take place in various ways within the group -within individuals, between individuals, or between groups. It may be overt or submerged in the group, present but not fully recognized. We are more likely to work with conflict when we feel that the environment is safe and that people are committed to learning from the conflict present in the dialogue.

So, we always want <u>safety</u> in the group, but we don't always want *comfort*. Discomfort happens at the learning edge of our comfort zones, where we are most likely to gain new understanding from our experiences. Conflict of understanding pushes our comfort zones and is a necessary and beneficial part of the dialogue process. It is our job as participants in this dialogue to turn conflict and discomfort into learning and growth for everyone. One of our first steps in this direction involves creating a safe environment where we can push our comfort zones and challenge ourselves to learn and grow.

Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

DIALOGUE	DEBATE
Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.	Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong
In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.	In debate, winning is the goal.
In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.	In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.
Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.	Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.
Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.	Debate defends assumptions as truth.
Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.	Debate causes critique of the other position.
Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.	Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.
Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.	Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.
In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.	In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.
Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.	Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.	In debate, one searches for glaring differences.
In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.	In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.
Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.	Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.
Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.	Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.
Dialogue remains open-ended.	Debate implies a conclusion.

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelly Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492-1764.

Differentiating Dialogue from Discussion: A Working Model

Kardin and Sevig, 1997

DISCUSSION --

- Discussions are often conducted with the assumption of an equal "playing field," with little or no acknowledgement of status and power differences in the room.
- Discussion can occur with social inequities and problematic power relations active and uninterrupted during the course of discussion (e.g., individuals with privileged social identities dominating the discussion).
- Individuals may engage in a discussion without an awareness or understanding of how the content of the discussion is related to the personal experiences of those in the room.
- The impact a discussion has on individuals in the room is often identified and processed outside of that room with individuals other than the discussion participants.
- In discussion, emotional responses may be present but are seldom named and may be unwelcome.
- Discussion tends to contribute to the formation of theoretical community—what society in general needs to understand to exist as a collective.
- Discussion is often aimed toward the identification and expression of generalities, frameworks, and collective truths.
- Discussions are often conducted with the primary goal of increasing clarity and understanding of the issue with the assumption that we are working with a stable reality.
- The goal of individual contributions to discussion is to say the "right" (intelligent, polished, etc.) thing.

DIALOGUE --

- In dialogue, these differences are key elements in both the process and the content of the exchange.

- Dialogue breaks down and becomes untenable if such processes are not interrupted and addressed.

- In dialogue, personal experience is one of the key avenues through which participants deepen their understanding of conceptual and political issues.

- In dialogue, our goal is to identify, express, and work with as much of the impact of our exchange as we can in the moment and to bring the other after-effects of our dialogue back to the dialogue process.

- In dialogue, emotional responses are honored and highlighted as important information that can be used to deepen our understanding of personal issues, group dynamics, our content, and the implications of our exchange.

- Dialogue works to form active and immediate community among the specific individuals in the room.

- Dialogue works to uncover specificity, contradictions, paradox, and a deeper understanding of and respect for one's own personal reality and reality as it is experienced by others.

- Dialogue may promote understanding and clarity but is often aimed at disruption, disequilibrium, confusion, and the destabilization of personal and collective realities.

- In dialogue, our mistakes, biases, and shortsightedness can sometimes be the most important thing we have to offer to the process of bringing about personal and social change.

Personal Identity Wheel

Favorite Music

One Skill you are Proud of

Favorite Movie

Favorite Book

Favorite Food

Favorite Hobby

Favorite Color

Personal Motto

Number of Siblings

Birth Order

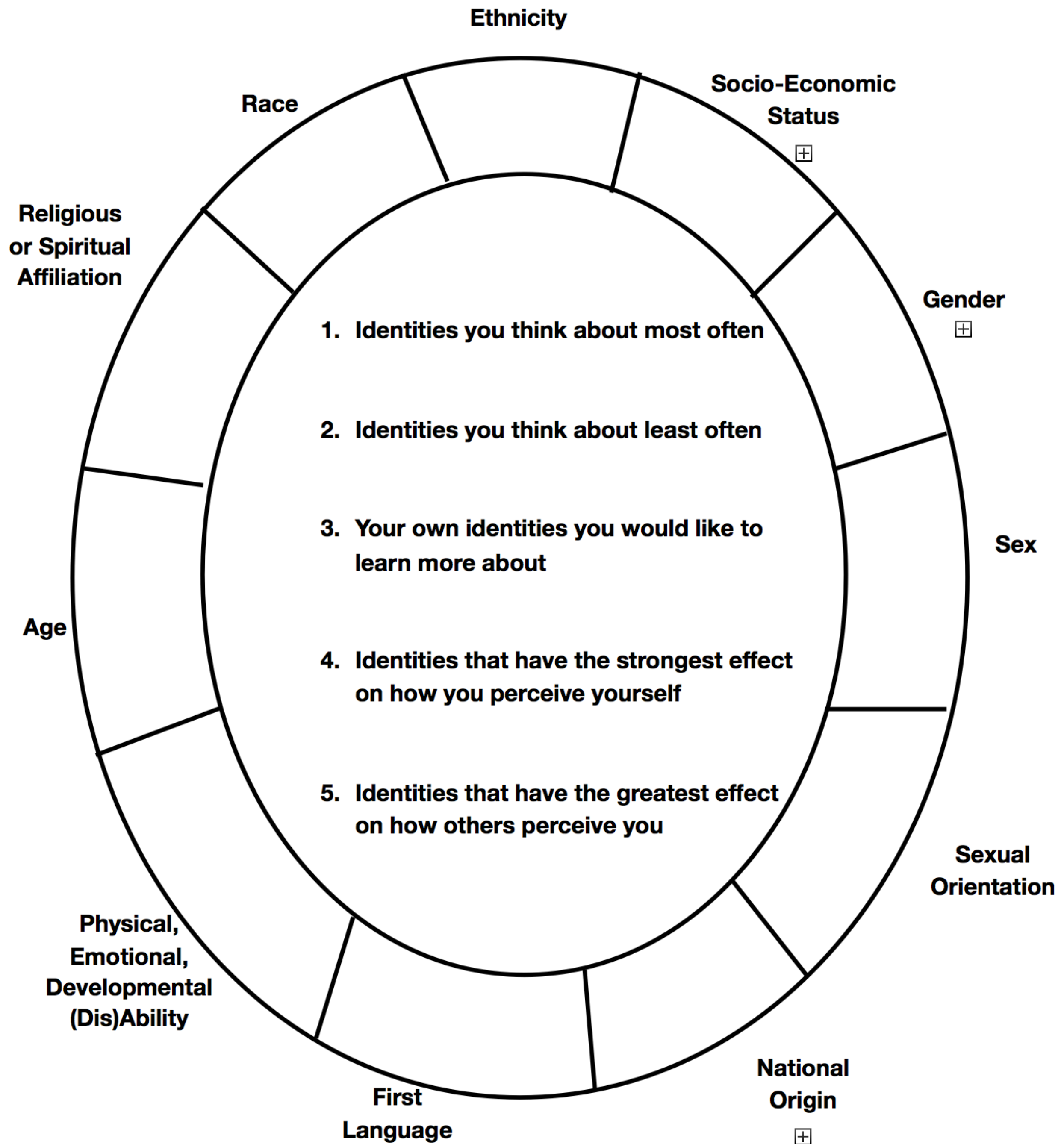
Three Adjectives to Describe Yourself

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________

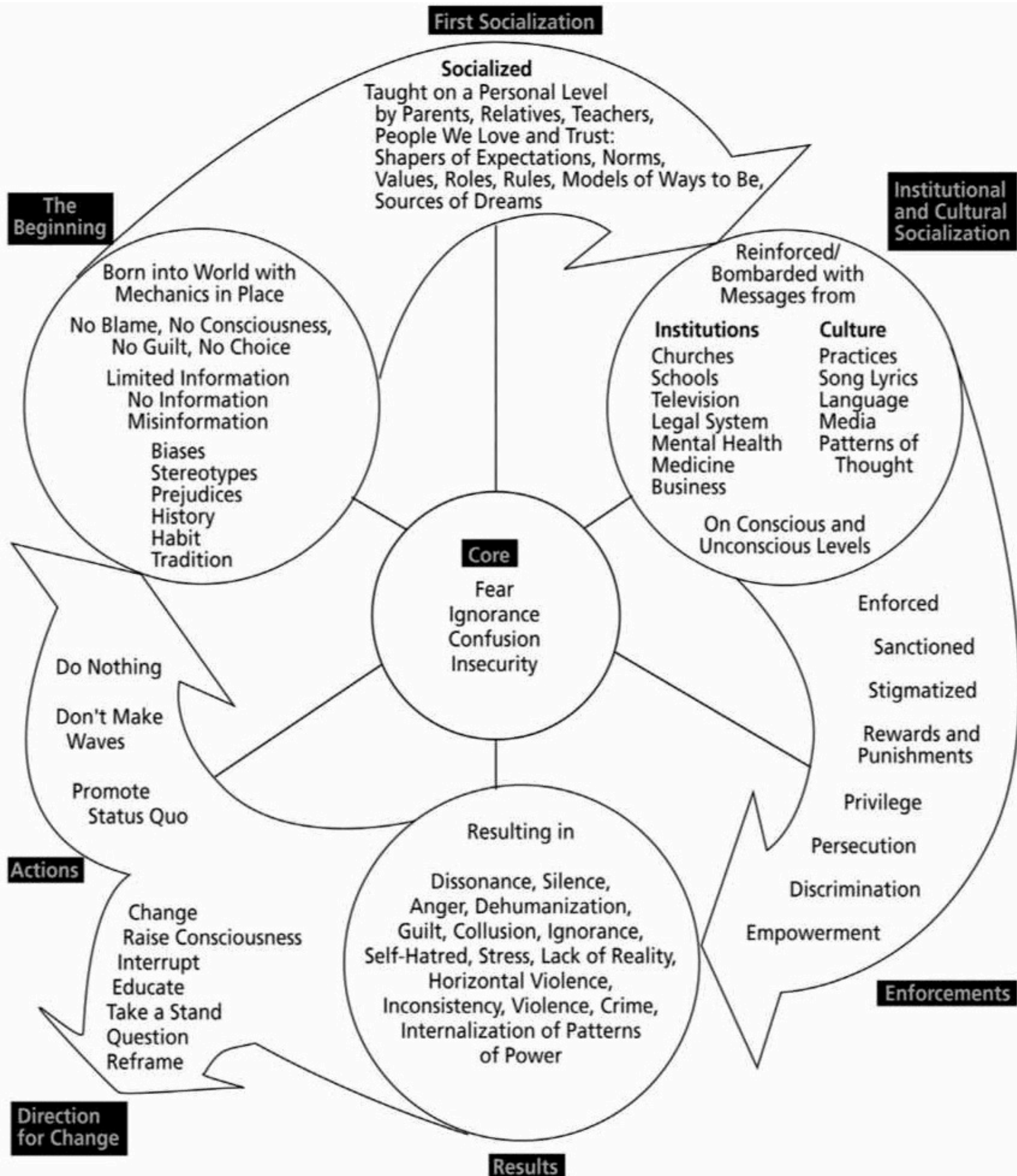
____

Name

Social Identity Wheel



Cycle of Socialization



Source: Cycle of Socialization developed by Bobbie Harro

© Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, Routledge 2000

<u>Web of Oppression</u>

Spread the Web on the floor in the center of the room, and have participants form a circle around it.

1. *Have a participant take hold of loose end and pick up the Web. (If too few participants they can hold multiple ends; if too many participants, they should share or watch.)*

2. *Ask participants what the rope reminds them of. Web, net, grid, etc*

3. *Ask each holder to choose an attached label, and read it aloud. Hand each the corresponding card, and have him/her read its example aloud.*

4. *Repeat around the web until all labels and matching example cards have been read.*

5. *Ask what these examples are about. Racism, against people of color, etc.*

6. *Ask whether they have heard these examples before. Whether these examples exist and are "out there" in society--not to say we support them, just that they're "out there." Can they think of other examples that target people of color around these label groups?*

7. *While most people will admit they've heard these or something similar, resistance will show immediately as someone talks about how some have changed, and/or how there are jokes, etc. against white people too. It is important to acknowledge that some things are changing, in some places, in some ways—but even if they merely recognize the individual items, they still exist in some form. It is also important to acknowledge that there are "white trash" jokes, etc.; however, use these points to transition into discussion*

8. *Why are these examples presented in this format? Why a web? How are they connected? They add up to bring/keep people of color down and to bring/keep white people up. Discuss how the individual pieces connect. (Whites, too are objects of some such pieces, but the broad systemic problems are not there in the same way.)*

9. ***If people of color are the target/object of each of these pieces, what effect does the web/system have on them? (Demonstrate how it literally prevents someone from moving freely.)***

10. *Who supports this system? White people and people of color. (Discuss how whites are traditionally blamed for racism, and how people of color also collude in the system too.)*
11. *How can we stop supporting it? Let go of the system. Stop participating in jokes, media, etc.*

12. *Let's say one or two of us stop participating (or let go), what happens to the system? Weaker, but still supported by many.*

13. *What happens to those who resist? Are criticized by those still in it. Ostracized. Their own racial identity is questioned. What are some specific examples of how white people and people of color will receive pressure to conform (enticement to return and/or punishment for letting go)?*

14. *Are there costs for white people (or other agent/privilege group)? Yes: white people have a harder time having authentic relationship with people of color, they may be afraid of how people of color view them, etc. HOWEVER, these are costs of the greater privileges and freedoms--NOT equivalent/equal to oppression.*

The web/system is one of both oppression (against target group) and privilege (for dominant/agent group); that it serves different groups differently is important to show the inequity of it. AND, it also shows that we all have costs and responsibilities to challenge.

15. *Participants may feel hopeless at this point, since discussion has indicated that it's difficult if not impossible to escape the system(s) entirely. Ask about, and acknowledge these feelings.*
16. In order to let the "hopelessness" (i.e., challenge posed by the system) sit with students, this might be a good place to TAKE A BREAK, mindful of any participants who have been particularly hard hit by the exercises.
17. *At the same time, what does the constructed/piecemeal nature of the systems tell us about resisting/changing it? Since they are constructed by individual, institutional and other acts, they can be de- and re-constructed by the actions of individuals, groups and organizations. The small change of the individual is still important, and stresses the need to build cooperative resistance through co/alliances.*

Additional discussion points to bring out in debriefing:

- If previous discussions have included introduction of levels of prejudice/oppression (individual, intergroup, institutional, societal/systemic), <u>discuss how different examples are parts of different levels</u>. For example, jokes may be interpersonal, while laws are institutional. Yet all support the larger, integrated system.

Stereotype Activity, Caucus Groups, & Fishbowl

Instruct participants that they will be divided into small groups for part of the next exercise. In the caucus groups ask them to develop a list of messages (stereotypes) that they have been given through various institutions about the other group based on their student status, race/ethnicity and geographical location (e.g. suburban blacks). These should be recorded on flipchart. ***Stress honesty!! Remind them that the list DOES NOT represent what they believe but what they have heard, seen, etc. each group should prepare four lists)***

Activity questions:

1. How are stereotypes created?
2. How are they shared, promoted, enforced?
3. How are we affected?
4. How do we uphold or challenge them?

Silent Gallery Walk Reflection **10”**

Then have the group reconvene and each group post their flipchart(s) about stereotypes and then instruct them to silently read each other’s lists.

Break **10”**

Fishbowls **30”**

Groups will now take turns doing a fishbow. One group will arrange a small circle of chairs in the center of the room facing inward towards each other. The other group will arrange a larger circle of chairs around the first, so that they can observe the group inside. Each group will have 15 minutes on the inside to talk about what the stereotype activity was like for them. Facilitators can help guide this conversation if necessary. The group on the outside cannot talk, just listen. Encourage this group to take note of what they are hearing, feeling, and noticing. After 15 minutes, the groups will switch. After each group has had a turn on the inside of the fishbowl, rearrange the chairs into one large circle for a debrief.

Group Debriefing **40”**

Then lead a dialogue about where these messages come from? How and why do they develop and persist? What effect do stereotypes have on race relations, and justice in the metro area?

The American Dream Game Guide

Rules of the Game

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Objective:

To get to the finish first and achieve the American Dream!

Rules:

- Players will roll to determine who will go first.
- For each turn, the player will roll the dice and move that number of squares.
- The player will then select a "Chance" card and read it out loud to the group. Each player in the group affected by the "Chance" card must move accordingly, *even* if it is not their turn to roll the dice.
- If a player lands on a starred square *and* has an identity match, then they must follow directions accordingly. Only that player is affected by the starred square. However, that player must still read a chance card and all persons affected must move accordingly.
- The first player to reach "Finish" achieves the American Dream!
- If a player disagrees with the content of a "Chance" card or would like further explanation, please set that card aside for large-group discussion.
- If a player is unsure of whether a character card's identity is affected by a particular chance card, that player may have a discussion with their group members about whether or not to move forward, backward, or stay in the same place. The group may also ask a facilitator for advice.

Sim City

Directions:

1. (In advance) Make envelopes for each of the four groups (Vanilla, Strawberry, Banana, Chocolate) comprised of clearly differential amounts of the resources.

2. (In advance) Mark the floor of the room off to separate it into four areas of different sizes

3. Write the group names on the board "Vanilla, Strawberry, Banana, Chocolate"

4. The general spiel: Here is your group's land: you are to build a community. You must physically stay within your community. Here are your resources. Build houses, hospitals, land, etc. You present a permit to city hall to get approval to build.

5. Even though each group is told this spiel, here's the deal: Vanilla doesn't have to fill out permits, everything they build is fine, if they need extra resources give them to them, have the police offer them assistance, they'll be in the room the most amount of time and land.

6. Strawberry has a little less resources than Vanilla. Give them pretty full directions of what they are doing. They need to write permits but approve 80% of what they request. They don't get extra resources. The police offer them assistance. They have less time than vanilla and the next largest amount of land.

7. Banana has much less resources than Strawberry. Less full directions. They have to write permits AND have to have police permission to approach city hall. The police can deny them this right at their discretion. The police monitors to make sure they stay within their community. If not, take the person who steps out to jail. Only approve 50% of their building requests. They have less time and less land then strawberry.

8. Chocolate has few resources. Directions for this group? Tell them they have to build a community and write permits before building and walk away. They have to write permits AND have police permission AND police escort to approach city hall. The police *do* deny them this right at their discretion. The police monitors to make sure they stay within their community. If not, take the person who steps out to jail. Only approve 20% of their building requests. They have the least amount of time and space.

Summary chart of the above:

	Vanilla	Straw.	Banana	Choc.
Time allotted	30	20	10	5
Access	Complete access	Must request	Must request; w/police escort	Must request; w/police escort
Police	Protect; offer assistance	Protect	Monitor	Monitor; keep in space
Neigh. Control	Can do whatever they want with land	Write permits; grant most of what they ask for (85%)	Need permit and police escort; grant them 50% of request	Need permit and police escort; grant them 20% of request

<u>Supplies</u>

1. Papers
2. Scissors
3. Tape
4. Rubber bands
5. Campus mail envelopes
6. Envelopes
7. Paper clips
8. Stapler
9. Drinking cups
10. Bowls

<u>Privileges</u>

1. Time
2. Access to city hall/gov't
3. Police protection vs. monitoring
4. Spatial arrangements
5. Control over neighborhood
6. Guidance/directions/knowledge of the system

Discussion Questions:

1. Ask each group (starting with chocolate) “how did you feel about the activity?”
2. Were there any differences in the treatment of the groups? What did you notice? Were you aware of the other groups?
3. How did you feel about the other groups? How/did the groups relate to one another?
4. What do you think the consequences of this treatment were for each group (in building their community)?
5. Specific consequences of specific behaviors/treatments? [e.g. how much time did your group have? What instructions did your group receive? What supplies did each group receive?]
6. Can you think of concepts that relate to this activity?
7. How can you relate this activity to real life?
8. What societal groups did you represent?

Coalition Building Exercise

Objectives

• To address the notion of who determines who or what is an ally

• To learn how to work with people that don't meet your ideal of what/who an ally should be

Directions

In this activity, we will be reading a series of statements that will give you the opportunity to build
a coalition with your fellow colleagues around the topic of **racism**. After each statement is read,
you must either agree (by stepping forward together) or disagree (by stepping backward) with the
statement by saying "yes" or "no." If you respond "no," you have the option of removing yourself
from the coalition and starting another coalition. Furthermore, if your fellow colleagues do not feel
comfortable having you as a member of their coalition, they can ask you leave and you must
comply.

Statements

1. Are you willing to work together to end white privilege/supremacy?
2. Are you willing to support tangible reparations for people that have been historically oppressed by White privilege/supremacy?
3. Are you willing to support minority entitlement programs for people that have been

historically oppressed by White privilege/supremacy (e.g. affirmative action, small business loans, scholarships, etc)?
4. Are you willing to participate in civil disobedience such as marches, rallies and public demonstrations up to the consequence of going to jail for this cause?
5. Are you willing to support the practice of interracial adoption, either personally or among others, or this cause?
6. Are you willing to bus your child to an integrated, and possibly lesser, school-district for this cause?
7. Are you willing to live in a racially integrated area, even if the living conditions are less than desirable, for this cause?
8. Are you willing to sacrifice personal security, even the risk of losing your job or your personal safety, for this cause?
9. I will oppose family or friends whose attitudes, beliefs and opinions go against the cause of racial justice, and I am willing to distance myself from those relationships if need be.
10. I would not attend a pimps and whores party because it's denigrating to women.
11 . I would not enroll my son in boy scouts because they don't allow Gay and Bisexual participants
12. I'm willing to be on the LGBT speakers bureau as an ally.
13. I'd be willing to pay more for tuition if it would reduce the cost for lower middle income students
14. I would interrupt or challenge a joke that was based on sexism and denigration of women
15. I'm willing to stop purchasing music and challenge others who listen to music that denigrates women or other groups
16. I'm willing to speak up when I hear hate speech that is purported to be freedom of religious speech
17. I'm willing to disavow my membership in campus organizations that have a history of oppressive practices (e.g. fraternities that are more prone to fostering rape of women).
18. I'm willing to destroy my clothes that have a history of being made in foreign sweatshops
19. I'm willing to not participate in activities that put women at physical risk (e.g. binge drinking, greek parties)
20. If I encounter buildings where there is not handicap access I'm willing to not walk into a building and to complain to the Dean of students
21 . I'll patronize only coffee shops that sell free trade coffee

Additional "Take a Stand" Coalition Building Statements

- I am willing to not attend a feminist event if the event is not trans-inclusive.
    - *NOTE: Ask people whether they are thinking of this as an individual choice to distance themselves from the event, or part of an organized boycott to change the group sponsoring the event. Does this change their answer?*

- I would support the organization I work at adopting a new pay equity policy that would cause a reduction in my salary, so that everyone in the organization can make a living wage.
    - *NOTE: Who did you imagine 'everyone' to be? Other 'professionals'? The Janitorial staff? Does this change your answer?*
- I would be willing to give money to our social justice organization in lieu of owning an expensive home.
- I would be willing to give money to our social justice organization in lieu of being able to take a vacation.
- I would be willing to work with the coalition on an issue that leaves out some social groups in order to make concrete policy improvements now.
- If asked by the coalition to be our leader, I would step up even if my social identities are not directly oppressed by the issue we are working on.

Overarching Questions

• Was the overall goal of the coalition greater than the differences between you? Do the ends justify the means when it comes to building one's ideal alliances?
• What is different about the process of opting out versus being pushed-out?

Developed by Montsine Nshom, Roger Fisher and Sundari Balan

"Where I Stand" Activity

- *Prior to getting started, facilitators should post signs on the wall behind the participants to signal a continuum that runs from "Comfortable" to "Uncomfortable." The middle section of the continuum is marked by a sign that reads "Neutral- You can not stand here." Facilitators may put making tape on the floor to divide the room between "Comfortable" and "Uncomfortable" in order to help participants visualize the dividing line.*

- *Facilitators invite participants to gather around the "Neutral- You can not stand here" line. They briefly describe the objective of the activity and encourage participants to take a "position" even if it involves taking risks. It is important to encourage participants to ask questions to each other about why they are standing in a certain place in the continuum. Often people stand in the same place for different reasons.*

- *As statements are read, participants are asked to place themselves along the continuum based on a "gut" reaction. Participants who feel more comfortable with a statement are likely to stand closer to the "Comfortable" sign. Participants who feel less comfortable with a statement are likely to stand closer to the "Uncomfortable" sign. Participants will redistribute themselves as the next statement is read.*

- *Statements are purposely created to be ambiguous to allow for individual interpretation and decision making about the particular issue at hand.*

- *If you plan to facilitate conversation right after each statement make sure to allow 15-20 minutes to talk about each statement and time at the end for debriefing and closure. Should you work with a large group (15 people or more), it might be best to hold the discussion after the statements are read.*

- *In wrapping up the activity, thank people for sharing and taking risks. Acknowledge the emotions expressed and highlight commonalities and differences of experience in the group. You may want to close by commenting on the value of asking questions about why people feel the want they feel.*

Examples of statements around race/ethnicity on the college campus – develop more for high school:

- Affirmative Action as a means of increasing minority attendance at colleges/universities
- Inter-racial couples
- “Passing”
- Reverse discrimination
- I am primarily attracted to members of my same ethnic/racial group
- I make effort to attend events of people of color
- All of my friends are white
- “I am not a racist”
- Busing as a means of forced integration
- I have primarily had relationships with people of my own ethnic/racial group
- The use of derogatory racial terms even within the same race
- My family can afford to send me to college
- I would boycott stores like the GAP when I find out that they exploit workers who make their products.
- I have boycotted stores when I’ve found that they exploit their workers.
- I believe that affirmative action based on class is a better way to ensure racial/ethnic diversity on campus.
- I would support an initiative to make school funding more equitable by redistributing money from wealthy suburban systems to urban and rural schools.
- I have volunteered at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.
- I would cross a picket line to shop in my favorite store.
- I believe that if someone really works hard enough they can succeed.
- I believe my parents were rewarded fairly for their work in their job or career.
- If my parents lose their jobs tomorrow, they have the financial resources to “ get by” for six months without much trouble.
- I know how much money my parents make.
- I have shopped and feel comfortable shopping at high-end department stores like Nordstrom’s or Saks Fifth Avenue.
- I have shopped and feel comfortable buying clothing at Goodwill.
- I know where the clothes I’m wearing were manufactured.
- I know that workers were not exploited in the manufacturing of the clothes I’m wearing.

- Poor people are lazy.
- People are only victims if they let themselves be victims.
- Neighborhoods of poor people are dangerous neighborhoods.
- The only thing separating the lower classes from the upper classes is money.
- Nobody is better than anybody else.
- Responsible people do not accept handouts.
- I believe that everyone was honest in their responses to these Where I a Stand statements.
- I was always honest in my responses to these Where I Stand statements

Debriefing Questions

1. *What reactions came up for people?*
2. *What was hard?*
3. *What was easy?*
4. *Were some statements more challenging than others?*
5. *What assumptions did people make about others "positions" depending on where they were standing?*
6. *Were they any surprises?*
7. *Did you notice any interactive patterns in the room?*
8. *What was one thing you learned from doing this activity? Do you have any questions for others in the group about their views or feelings about a specific issue or about where they were standing?*

Note to Facilitator

This activity can be done in silence or with a dialogue after each statement is read. Doing this activity in silence is valuable because participants often feel the need to explain where they are standing right away. They also wish to know what people are standing in a particular place. If you decide to debrief after ALL statements are read, limit the number of statements read and allow sufficient time at the end to encourage questions and dialogue.

Having participants talk about why they are standing where they are after each statement is read is often valuable if your goal is to encourage in-depth dialogue and if you are working with an intact group. This method also makes it easier for participants to keep track of where they and others stood after each statement. Usually less number of statements are read if dialogue occurs after each statement.