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Disruption, Dissent, and Dialogue: YPAR as a Pedagogical and Institutional Tool

By
Charlene E. Holkenbrink-Monk

San Diego State University | Claremont Graduate University

2023

Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Charlene E. Holkenbrink-Monk as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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Abstract

Disruption, Dissent, and Dialogue: YPAR as a Pedagogical and Institutional Tool

By

Charlene E. Holkenbrink-Monk

San Diego State University | Claremont Graduate University: 2023

Education reform has been at the forefront of educational research for decades, depicted by government initiatives and policy, research, and pedagogical changes and recommendations. When considering elements of educational change, policy, best practices, and individual merit and retention have also been heavily in the spotlight, such as *A Nation at Risk*, *No Child Left Behind*, and other policies that have been put forward. What is often left out is student voice, both within policy as well as ideas around what should be changed. Based on my pilot study, I found that students also did not feel adequately represented in the curriculum, which is what informed this study. Centering a sociological imagination within the context of praxis, I then designed a youth participatory action research (YPAR) study. By utilizing a YPAR approach to design a standards-based curriculum in the form of lessons, I worked with nine high school graduates of 2022 to analyze California State 12th grade Social Studies standards and design curriculum that disrupts cultural capital by centering community cultural wealth. Through standards analysis, curriculum design, workshops, and dialogue, I found that this group of 9 youth had a foundational understanding of systemic influence, but had not been in a position to expand and further develop their sociological imagination. In addition, as a research team, we found many seemingly neutral findings within the California State Standards. These findings

helped inform our curriculum design as it centered students' experiences to reflect on what they had not been exposed to and incorporate ways they could include critical and sociologically imaginative concepts within lessons. Independent from the team, I found not only innovative and insightful ways to foster a sociological imagination, but that collaboration is key, and that youth do want to see social change. Bringing everything together, I have found that YPAR does have a way to disrupt cultural capital, and in turn, create an environment that help youth feel welcome, included, and heard. The outcome of these findings created deliverables in the form of a redesigned survey, lesson plans, and implications for future research.

Keywords: Sociology, sociology of education, sociological imagination, critical pedagogy, teaching, youth activism, youth participatory action research, dialogue, social studies

Dedication

I dedicate this research and dissertation to...

... my children, who have grown up with me through this journey, who deserve to have an equitable education, who have reminded me constantly how much they love me, how important it is to remain true to oneself, and who have tried to help keep me grounded and maintain the innocent, childlike wonder in the world. I dedicate this to you, Owen and Emma, my sweet, witty, wildly spirited, critically aware children.

... my parents, who, through all the obstacles, always remind me of what I am capable of, how important it is to push forward, and never let me forget that it is okay to be proud of the work I do. To my mom, Rachel, I dedicate this to you because of your passion for justice and the reminders you've given me to stand up and speak up. To my dad, John, I dedicate this to you because you never stifled me and always encouraged me to be true to myself.

... to my grandfather, Albert "Shorty" Holkenbrink, who encouraged me to play the saxophone, who taught me how to be vocal against injustices while he stood on the steps of our Catholic church proclaiming the problematic and horrible conditions within the church as a whole, who bought a video recorder to make sure he never missed a single performance of mine, who encouraged every step of my educational journey and listened to classical music with me, and who, even years after his death, continues to inspire me to maintain my liberatory views when I review his old notebooks.

... to my grandmother, Bok, a woman I never met yet feel present so deeply in my soul, a woman who has instilled in me a love of my Korean culture, something that I felt I could not claim for many years, all for me to realize that assimilation violently took beautiful elements of

our heritage from our family and that I must continue to embrace it. Because of the acts of assimilation and imperialism thrust upon you, and that feelings of han and jeong within me and around me, I dedicate this to you as my commitment to challenge systems that attempt to eradicate our family culture.

... to my students, whether you were my student while you were in middle or high school U.S. history, English, or design thinking, whether I advised you or chaperoned a trip to Belmont Park and buried my feet in the sand with you at Mission Beach, if I stayed up late writing a grant with you for a school club, if I introduced you to research methods or helped you apply to grad school, you are why I love teaching, a major reason why I want to change the system, and I dedicate this to you.

... and lastly, to my younger self, somebody who felt so discouraged, scared to use her voice (but still did so,) who never felt confident enough to pursue what she truly wanted, who was frightened by what the future held, who had to wade through trauma, anguish, loss, and pain, education injustices, moments where you questioned your identity, felt lonely, this is for you, for us.

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Thank you to my family, who helped me beyond belief. Thank you to my dad, who helped me through different means, and in whatever ways he could, including listening to me rant on and on about whatever educational hiccup I faced and all despite being 2,000 miles away; the man who drops what he is going to fix my car, video chat, and who has ensured he cheers me on, supports me, and reminds me of how far I have come – thank you, Dad. Thank you to my mom for watching the kids, sometimes across multiple days, so I could write whatever new project I planned on taking on and for being there for me to complain to whenever I needed it, which, let's be real, was often. For being present for me as a confidant, for listening to my cry, or rooting me on whether I was in 4th grade or in a PhD – thank you, Mom. To Ceasar, who, despite everything, ensured the kids appreciate the work I do and tried to do whatever you could to keep them from pulling at me when I needed to write or nap, or would listen to some new plan or pathway I wanted to take, thank you.

I think the biggest thanks, though, go to my children, Owen and Emma, who were 5 and 3 when I started this PhD, and are now 11 and 9 by the time this dissertation is completed and defended, who have practically grown up in this program, sat with me when I had to write, who held my hand while I read books, who laid on me to remind me how loved I am, and who missed their mom some days because of a conference or a tight deadline. To Owen, thank you for making me laugh with your snark that not so coincidentally seems like mine, for all your hugs and kisses when I had a hard day, for understanding the days I needed to write, step away, or even sleep in, for understanding my expressions and being able to read me like I can read you, for everything else, and just for being you. To Emma, thank you for giving me love, drawing me

pictures, or reminding me through your own hugs and kisses that it is good to be vulnerable, for being sarcastic and reminding me where you get it from, for sitting next to me and telling me how much you want to be like me, and for you just being you. Thank you, my sweet, smart, witty, critical, amazing children.

Thank you to my mentors and committee. To Dr. Jung Choi, thank you for everything through the past 9 years of guidance and mentorship and for always being willing to listen to me or call me back when I'm overthinking some aspect of what I'm writing, and for believing in me, for rooting for me, and reminding me how to humanize myself. Thank you, Dr. Marva Cappello, for rooting for me since we met, reminding me to be true to who I am as a researcher, scholar, and teacher, for trying to find ways to keep me going, and for all of your mentorship. I could not have done this with you in the least, and you are one of the biggest reasons I am here, completing this dissertation. Thank you to Dr. Reagan, who gave me great research guidance in ways that could fuse together my teacher interests with my researcher interests, and for keeping me grounded when sometimes I let things get away from me. Dr. Garrison, thank you for sitting with me in endless meetings when I would overthink things and helping to keep me grounded enough to not throw my computer out of the window when I needed to run a test and for helping me articulate what I mean to say in a personable, yet rigorous way.

I also want to thank the many influential educators in my K-12 journey. Dr. Shawn Loescher, though perhaps there has been a disconnect between us through the last few years, thank you for giving me the opportunity to find where my heart is in education, for giving me the chance to become a high school teacher – I will be forever grateful for this. And I cannot thank Mr. Branden Mitchell enough, my 7th grade humanities teacher, who has provided me support and insight through the years, and who was a huge influence on my eventual path in education.

Thank you for being willing to meet with me, even many years later, to give me suggestions on how I can be a better humanities teacher, too; your influence and guidance is beyond measurable in ways you'll never know.

I need to thank the educators, turned friends, who help me see the beauty of education. In particular I must thank is Dr. Tanya Kravatz, who was first a mentor and is now one of my closest friends, and has helped guide me to be the professor I am, and who, if it were not for her Sociology 101 class I stumbled into thanks to my mom, and that honors paper on self-reflections in education, I would not be here on this page to thank you. Thank you to Tali Lerner, Morgan Owen, and Ellis Clay (my co-conspirator), all who provided me support before school closures, and then especially through one of the most precarious times of being a secondary teacher in the U.S. and world, during COVID-19, who humanized me and humanized our students, and who showed me that true, critical, progressive, and loving educators do exist. And specifically, to Tali, for believing in me, supporting me, and rooting for me as both an administrator and especially friend. Without all of you, I would not be here, writing this dissertation, holding hope in my hands because I see what you do, have done, and will continue to do for our students.

Thank you to the many friends who have been alongside this journey with me, show up for me, and know when to poke me if I have been isolated or a little too disconnected. Huge thank you, Misha, for making me playlists and listening to me complain about being a PhD student, heartache, and for being there for me throughout more than half our lives now. To Rhiana, thank you for listening to me vent and cheering me on.

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colleagues to friends (including last minute – the night before - wedding dress shopping for your elopement.) Or like Dr. Heather Jaffe, Al Schleicher, and Jasmine Daniel, who shared sushi dinner with me, helped me wade through personal situations, took sailing lessons and in turn, capsized with me, engaged in long discussions and grew closer through parenting struggles while doing this whole PhD thing and would often spiral into rants beyond our writing session - plus so many others with whom I've crossed paths. The long discussions about children, disability, and intersectionality within our personal lives, including rants that go beyond our much-needed writing session and the writing sessions themselves, conference presentations, long drives, constant messaging through WhatsApp about our day, birthday parties, and so much more, meeting you was truly life changing and I am so fortunate to have met you on this journey.

Breathing, Fighting, for a Revolution

*Feeling, breathing, fighting,
Micro and macro criticized at once,
 Separated in talk yet always working together in action.
Tidal waves of change will hit,
 With liberatory views just behind the swell of water.*

*Never stop,
 Push forward, together,
 For beautiful is collaboration, and necessary for transformation,
With creative thinking and critical awareness making moves and change.*

*A need to value the big questions our children ask,
Wrought with recognition of a problematic system,
 Merely overlooked as defiance,
 For simple compliance will benefit those who reap profit from oppression.*

*We see the different machines of subjugation,
Masked differently for all, robbing us of our humanity,
All while we reproduce it for our kids for the sake of authority, power, and to climb to "the top."*

*Weighing heavy,
 Change will not come easy,
Liberation will be, but will be toiled with labor and tears,
 Don't forget to act in solidarity,
 Striving for emancipation.*

*Don't let these moments cease your breathing,
 Cease your love,
 Cease the voices that have already made strides toward destruction of the status quo,*

*Our resistance is captivating,
 Dissent is necessary,
For conformity will only hinder the revolution.*

Charlene E. Holkenbrink-Monk, 2020

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A Prologue

My positionality is important to the story of this research, and in turn, should be situated and seen as a prologue of sorts. Even as I finished a doctoral program, it's clear my journey has been riddled with trauma and grief, strife, pain, joy, happiness, and laughter. Though these emotions are not unique to only me, something that has always been true is despite the pain or anguish I may be encountering, education is where I feel safe shifting my focus. But I am aware this is not the case for all.

Several things occurred in my K-12 schooling that radically altered my experiences, my relationship to my identity as well as specific fields of study, and how I viewed my social location. My opening line of my personal statement for the PhD application was, "*I was Korean Until the Second Grade.*" In the second grade, my teacher, a well-intentioned White woman, had given two of my classmates more advanced math. When I asked for it, she told me I was not ready, and proceeded to tell me that my classmates were Asian, and in turn, Asians are smarter. This rattled my core, because, after all, was I not Korean? Being a mere eight years old, I told my mother who had a firm conversation with my teacher. She clearly missed the point. Those two students and I were the only ones elected to do gifted and talented testing.

While I was in third grade, my mother was in and out of jail due to drug addiction (though she is sober today for many years) and it of course it took a toll on me. When I failed a spelling test, despite having received 100% on others, my third-grade teacher yelled at me, in front of the entire class, and asked me why I wasn't more like my classmate. My mother was incarcerated for a longer time in 4th grade, when my grandmother died, and in the 7th grade I wrote about these experiences in a memoir piece that was read to an entire audience. For some folks, they may not recognize how impactful their education was in general, to their schooling

overall, their educational achievements, their struggles, and their person. However, this was not missed by me. These moments stand out significantly. While I did maintain a positive relationship with school, what about the others who did not? What about the others who were negatively impacted by microaggressions, explicit racism, sexism, transphobia, ableism, heteronormativity, and other elements of education that are rooted in dominant languages? These realities did not settle in until I was in college, but the internalization was present, as it is for many, many others.

I was a first-generation college student; my mom earned her GED and then Bachelor of Science degree later, followed by her Master of Arts in Liberal Arts. I then was the first family member to receive my Master of Arts degree, and now my Ph.D. As I taught college level sociology, I realized how often I would criticize the institution of education because while education was my safe space, it was not the case for all. As a Korean woman who struggled with family abuse and trauma, the institution of education had failed my mother for many years, though perhaps now reflecting, that institution was doing exactly as it was designed. My father worked tirelessly to support our working-class family by installing flooring for long hours of the day, and though he was immensely supportive of my education, I did not have many to turn to in my personal sphere. So, when I got to college, I had a counselor tell me more than once that I should turn to my family for guidance. This was immensely difficult for me to navigate while I was in college because I was unable to turn to my family for guidance as they did not have the experiences necessary to help. Fellow classmates often commented, asking me why I missed class though I often did because of visits to San Diego to visit my dad or because I had to work against my school schedule, despite having provided my schedule to my boss. Going to UCLA was isolating because I often felt out of place; I felt immensely alone.

I had realized that much of what I experienced as an undergraduate focused on what I was *supposed* to do, rather than what I wanted to do: finding my voice and finding my *joy*. Though I was always vocal, it was not in the ways I felt philosophically sound, even as a teenager. I wanted to attend Berklee College of Music, but outside factors prevented me from pursuing that. I had little guidance during undergraduate studies on how to become a secondary school teacher, as teaching high school, originally music, was my passion that had just never panned out. So, when I was offered a full-time position to teach high school after having taught college for several years already, something just *clicked*. It was in this role, which had started just before the global pandemic that would rock the entire world, I was inspired to center students' voices more than ever before. While I always arranged my classrooms in a circle, even in college, and engaged activities in my seminar style classes and undergraduate courses I taught, students I interacted with at the high school were so different. Not only had their voices been stifled, clearly, they were just on the cusp of critically engaging with materials but were still stuck in the same cycle of what *should* be rather than what *could* be.

When students had identified economic systems as oppressive and were able to express ideas that I had been exposed to only in college while they were in 10th grade, but so often felt as if they were unable to be activists as youth, I realized how necessary it was to center students' experiences and voice in what we were doing. In one instance, we had read *The Paper Menagerie* by Ken Liu (2016). I taught the concepts of structure and agency as it related to sociological thinking due to my previous experience as an adjunct sociology professor. The sociological imagination is a concept, coined by C. Wright Mills in 1959, that I introduce to all my introductory students, but I started expanding it to my humanities students, too. The sociological imagination is essentially the idea that individuals can see their social position as it

relates to the larger social world. In essence, individuals can recognize that individual circumstance are often connected to structure and systems, and in turn, we recognize how the relationship between individuals and structure is reciprocal. When we discussed a sociological imagination (Mills, 2000) I had students express awe, as young as 9th grade, being able to situate themselves in the materials or find connections between what we were reading to the larger world. As it related to *The Paper Menagerie*, they explored concepts of assimilation, culture, emotional anguish, self-reflection, and how the individual characters' experiences were connected to the macro level policies and practices that force people to feel required to assimilate. In essence, these students were able to find where, as Mills says, biography meets history, and where the individual meets the sociopolitical realities. This is a defining moment for my research.

In these conversations, it was clear these students wanted to engage in change, to be able to apply what they had learned, but often the materials felt so detached from who they were or what they wanted to do with things that very well might cause despair. When I taught short stories as part of my humanities coursework, we discussed structure and agency as it related to social studies. From there, they would identify the social identities of the characters and make inferences on the world's structure. They would conceptualize new communities when we played Minecraft online during COVID school closures, discussing economic changes or challenges, writing out ideas. I *thought* COVID-19 was stopping my efforts for youth activism to place in the course materials, as the entire world had stopped with the pandemic. Yet, though it was COVID-19 that had initially influenced my decision to pursue the beginning stages of research, I realized it was so much more. Of course, I knew that youth activism had been hindered before COVID-19, but there were so many factors of course. I would sit with students,

often at their dining table during home visits through the school closures, which pushed me to see beyond the expectations and ramifications of COVID-19. While COVID-19 was what pushed us to transition to online teaching, what followed was anti-Asian hate, George Floyd's murder, and clear disregard of disabled lives. Their hopes and goals to make change, their anger and frustration, and the moments where some would ask me to just sit with them and watch protests – those were the moments that motivated me to pursue this research. These were the moments that pushed me to realize it was not necessarily the pandemic that was hindering their efforts of activism, though I had realized this of course years before, but it was a culmination of personal circumstances, societal expectations, and a lack of space. I knew that while as teachers and a school we could not change the entire world, we needed to make things more readily available; I realized that there was a need for curriculum and lack of accessible materials that went beyond merely representing them, but also allowing them a space to speak up, push against the status quo, and to see the possibilities of dissent.

Education was my comfort, my joy, my passion. But this is not the case for many, as it can be a space of hopelessness, oppression, and even violence, and this reality is what informed this study as I saw it heavily amongst my students, both before and during the school closures. For some, it was safe; I had students who called me at 10pm, expressing despair, frustration, or moments that required me to call resources and proper authorities. Education was their safety, but for others, they felt at ease, more equity from the comfort of their rooms, and felt as if they were able to focus on their education and be in the safety of their families. I wanted to know how, as a school, as teachers, and as a school community, we could change our practices during these school closures to better support all students through the variety of circumstances they were facing.

Prior to this dissertation, I conducted two pilot studies that built upon each other and informed this research. Originally, I had been encouraged to engage in action research by the director of my school, yet the approach to action research was very different than that in which I was trained and that was aligned with my ontological and epistemological philosophies. This is important to note as I have designed this study to stay true to my position as a researcher, which is something that I have historically encouraged my students to do as well within all that they do. I could not possibly engage in this research in a way that was not aligned with who I am as a teacher, researcher, student, or person, and in turn, this has dramatically influenced my shift and approaches in this study. It was clear at this point in the process that the institution was merely performative in its support and encouragement of dissent. The decision to change gears came from the revelation that if dissent is an essential component of how I teach I could not, in good conscious, feel I was exemplifying the very concepts of equity and humanization in my practice that I encouraged my students to engage with.

The first pilot study, still designed in accordance with the previously directed approach of action research, identified a problem of practice at the institution where I worked at the time. The problem of practice identified was specifically that teachers, students, and family members did not feel prepared to engage critically with heavy discussions, such as systemic and institutional oppression, and it was recommended through the administration and my own deliberation that I would create an institutional curriculum. The second pilot study had been informed by this identification of a problem of practice, where I created a survey that centered student experiences as a means for curriculum design, and in essence, a way to encourage student representation and voice in institutional practice. However, it was during this point and creation of the survey that

circumstances at this institution shifted, including a change in administration and a large exodus of teachers leaving this institution.

While I had a foundation set of questions for the survey, some of it was influenced by the school's mission and since I had transitioned from this position and institution, I knew that I had to change the survey. This shift propelled the second study, which was an analysis using descriptive statistics and a reliability test, specifically Cronbach's Alpha, though the population was not the same as the first study as initially planned. This pilot study informed my decision to design this dissertation study in ways that it stays true to my philosophical leanings as an educator and researcher. It was evident that my joy as a researcher and teacher had suffered, and I did not want that to happen again. This study eventually evolved into a way to see how YPAR can be a pedagogical tool, assist with the development of a sociological imagination, and develop accessible practices that are rooted in deeply reflective, anti-oppressive methodologies on institutional levels.

It is important to note something else significant. I have a BA in History and an MA in Sociology. While I've taught sociology for 6 years as of 2022, I sat in one of my graduate seminars in 2015 on popular culture where the topic of *Sesame Street* came up. We discussed it at length, at which point it increased my interest in the field of education, namely because of its longstanding history around dissent to capitalistic modes of education, to a lack of representation, and its encouragement of community and overall learning without context of our real worlds.¹ As I understood the role of *Sesame Street* from an academic standpoint, I would go home and watch *Sesame Street* with my then 3-year-old while nursing my 8-month-old baby.

¹ While not always the case, and not without its flaws, such as a problematic bilingual representation in the early 1970s or a heavy male presence, *Sesame Street* creators eventually revamped curriculum to include authentic Latino/Latina/Latinx representation, along with focus groups and workshops that would eventually change the programming's representation (Morrow, 2005, pp. 155-156.)

Sesame Street, as a sociologist, as a mother, as an educator, had showed me new hope and goals, ways for change to occur, for education to be encouraged outside of formal classrooms, and as my son would excitedly clap with a new song, I knew that I wanted to research education, for my younger self, for my kids, and for so many others, whether education was failing them or was their safe haven. Eventually, this led me to a path of a PhD in Education rather than a PhD in Sociology with an emphasis in education, and in turn, writing this dissertation. I began to see *Sesame Street* as a means for resistance and multicultural representation (Kraidy, 2002.) Hence, why each of the chapter titles are influenced by a *Sesame Street* style wording.

I hope that we can see the transformative power of education, but beyond that, of activism, and how youth can genuinely transform these institutions in ways that those currently in positions of power can never even imagine. My goal is to center this research in alignment with my philosophical stance for equity, humanization, and anti-oppression, as I hope to exemplify this in what I do and be willing to speak loudly against “false generosity” as Freire discusses, showing students what I am willing to do as a person, teacher, and researcher. This research is an attempt for a radical reimagining of educational “reform,” or, an effort to inspire, encourage, and establish collaboration between students and teachers to engage critically with the world around them and in turn, disrupt, dissent, and dialogue to maintain joy and hope for the future.

Chapter 1

The Word of the Decade is *Unprecedented*, Brought to You by the Year 2020

Or

The Problem, Purpose, and its Significance

This research initially began as a larger project that started during the global COVID-19 pandemic. During the year 2020, the most oft used word quite possibly across education – and likely beyond this field of work and study – was *unprecedented*. 2020, and quite frankly, 2021, were both rather *unprecedented* in technique, action, experiences, and phenomenon. For me, I had worked as a full-time secondary school English teacher at a charter school in central San Diego for only two months (almost to the day) when we closed our physical school doors. Despite our full-site planning session on March 9, 2020, nothing would have fully prepared us for the next several months, and then year, and then 18 months and more that would follow. And despite "opening" our virtual doors on March 16, 2020, ready for our attempt at virtual instruction, the realities our students were facing, as well as ourselves, were beyond measure and expectation. While COVID-19 was the social phenomenon that initiated my interest in the research, the reality is that my students, like many others, were experiencing a plethora of social unrest and distress. Sitting with my students often, on the phone with them, or crafting lesson plans that address sociohistorical conditions of oppression and triumph, all through anti-Asian hate, the murder of George Floyd, groundbreaking science in record time and in turn the need for science literacy, the dismissal of disabled people, among so much more, was what propelled the research beyond the scope of COVID-19. This is the context for my research.

My dissertation research was going to originally be designed as phases or cycles of action research due to institutional pressures at my former place of work, but now instead, this study

will take a direction that more aligns with my ontological and epistemological stances as a researcher, teacher, and person. As noted previously, I intended the research would capture the lived experiences of our school community at the charter system that I was working within in my initial pilot study, which, at the time, was framed as a cycle of action research, specifically cycle 1. However, as I began research and discussing with families, teachers, and students, and the data highlighted different experiences than initially anticipated, the purpose shifted greatly. What was originally a focus on COVID-19 school responses, the identification of a problem of practice within our organizational structure, and recommendations for institutional change shifted and morphed into a larger and more transferable research study. This reality has informed this research, which is recognizing the importance of youth in their own educational transformation and institutional and structural change. The pilot study previously conducted was necessary and valuable in framing my dissertation research as I understood the necessity of deep, structural conversations to inform transformative institutional practice. Recognizing that I have previously conducted two previous pilot studies, originally situated as cycles, I am now stepping away from that approach of action research and have opted approach *this* study in a different and more participatory manner. *Unprecedented*, then, not only defined the year 2020 and 2021, but my entire research approach and transition, my position as a teacher, and my research trajectory. Unprecedented truly is the word of the decade.

I conducted two related pilot studies, both organized as different, yet related pilot studies, which helped frame and inform this study. The first pilot study identified that it was not COVID-19 and online schooling had presented significant and *unprecedented* changes, but rather and relatedly, large issues of racism, socioeconomic suffering, ableism, and systemic oppression were still infiltrating our students' and their families' lives. They also felt that the teachers were

not prepared to tackle these issues in the classroom despite the school desperately wanting to do so. Some family members had noted instances of their young students (as young as 5th grade) listening to dispatcher calls of distraught community members. Others noted their student experiencing an amazing assignment about immigration, but it never extending beyond that single assignment. Teachers noted the continual removal of online resources, such as Teachers-Pay-Teachers with no replacement or recommendations for curriculum choices when the school did not have a curriculum to follow or suggest. Students themselves said that they had heightened rates of stress or distraction at home, but that they could tell when their teachers were stressed or burdened as well.

The first pilot study identified a problem of practice: a necessity for curriculum design and institutional implementation so teachers were prepared to address these systemic concerns with students and without concern or fear of access to resources, and in turn, administration encouraged and supported me writing curriculum. This, coupled with my pedagogical approaches, pushed me to think about ways to center student voices in institutional change. For me, this meant that my next steps were to engage secondary students with a survey if I wanted their voices adequately represented in the institutional changes. It was in this survey that I asked questions about students' views on a variety of social and cultural conditions, and in turn, gauged cultural capital not from a deficit lens in that they lacked cultural capital, but rather to center their experiences utilizing community cultural wealth and shift the approach in which curriculum was approached (Bourdieu, 1986; Yosso, 2005). However, I transitioned from this job in August 2021, due to a variety of organizational challenges, and that meant not only did the access to the population change, but I needed to shift my focus as well. At this moment, it was important for me to also pursue my attempt at access and systemic change, and I decided to engage with the

nonprofit organization that I had started in my master's program in 2016 as a means for accessible curriculum for teachers beyond the initial institution. This nonprofit organization served as the context of my dissertation research.

The second pilot study was open to all eligible participants beyond one educational institution, as I was no longer working there. I believe deeply that we need to look beyond our singular organizations or institutions for structural, transformative change, I want to ensure that students can engage critically with materials, be the center of what we do as educators, and be able to see their own role in helping transform the education system. I want to ensure that curriculum is accessible, but also centers students' lived experiences, which is why community cultural wealth and critical pedagogy are so vital to this study. While contained studies are vital for classroom change, institutional practice, and organizational direction, I believe that if we want to truly engage in systemic change we must be encouraging and preparing our teachers and students to do so, which means being able to look beyond merely our own organization's philosophies but navigating ways to use our skills and philosophies to go beyond those walls.

This dissertation, having taken place through one organization with a small sample of students, aims to look at larger, structural patterns. As a sociologist who looks at systems and structures, but also as a secondary school humanities teacher, I feel it is vital, yet often dismissed, to look at structures as possible to change. Working collaboratively with youth, I hope to understand how recent high school seniors/graduates develop a critical consciousness, sociological imagination, and ability to problem-pose about the world through Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). Youth participatory action research is the process where youth are actively involved in the research process for the purpose of change. The use of YPAR was influenced because of my experiences, and because of my previous research. In my previous

pilot studies, students were of minoritized and marginalized identities, having been from impoverished backgrounds, groups that face huge racial disparities in and out of San Diego, and who are disabled, among other social identities.² Therefore, my goal was to work closely with students of varied backgrounds to ensure their experiences are centered, and to work alongside them in the curriculum design and research process, and have them involved equally with the research informed action. Furthermore, my role in this research was to instruct research methods, to frontload the sociological materials and concepts that we are discussing, and then work as merely a facilitator as the students begin building the curriculum collaboratively, establishing myself as a participant-researcher, teacher, and active community member within the community that we will work to build. While a secondary goal of this research was to develop curriculum, the central focus is to engage critically with students, and to shed light on how they can feel empowered, utilize their voice in course materials, and to be able to begin developing an identity aligned with critical thinking and structural levels of thinking. This research has the potential to serve as a guide for future pedagogical tools so educators can begin engaging in similar work with youth in their classrooms and beyond the formal institutional structure.

Statement of the Problem

The U.S. Commissioner of Education, Harold Howe II (Coleman et al.1966), wrote introducing *The Coleman Report*, on July 2, 1966, “My staff members and the consultants who have assisted them on this project do not regard the survey findings as the last word on the lack of equal educational opportunities in the United States,” (p. iv). Due to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the *Coleman Report* focused on gaps in educational achievement that were related to the

² I specifically use the phrasing of disabled as a disabled individual myself and as a preference by the disability community, and in turn, see it as a social identity within a social construction of abilities based on productivity and normativity, rather than it being purely a medicalized situation.

long-standing effects of White supremacy within the larger system of the United States. While the victory of the Civil Rights Act was transformative in many ways, and important for the path to the humanization of Black individuals in the United States, educational injustices were still rampant, and there was not a call to action to rectify these.

Hitting the educational landscape only about 10 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, legally desegregating schools, *The Coleman Report* (1966) established foundational data that pushed a narrative for educational reform, and especially with special attention to disparities among students by race, socioeconomic status, and educational resources, but the report did not find a significant gap around resources specific to race, which was and has been regularly disputed (Alexander & Morgan, 2016). However, *The Coleman Report* presented merely statistical interpretations of patterns, without a clear analysis of historical, theoretical, and conceptual underpinnings that *contributed* to this, the deep colonization that took place and was (and still is) taking place, the ways in which language, questions, and frameworks are *designed* to oppress groups of people, as had been presented through historical and political conditions prior to its study and distribution.

Almost 20 years later, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) identified key changes within the United States from other countries but did not discuss elements of racism, White supremacy, or unjust economic structures. Rather, the emphasis of the report is on individualism, when it reads,

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgement

needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself. (p. 9)

A Nation at Risk emphasizes the ways in which institutions guide the individual, rather than addressing significant structural, political, and social barriers to education established early on that were created by the institution and systems in the first place. For instance, the ways in which interpersonal relations take place, individuals are dispossessed - physically, mentally, culturally - due to the social conditions that are *created*, explain the cultural and linguistic implications for those who have been intentionally marginalized (Murphy, p. 73, 1989).

While *The Coleman Report*, *Brown v. Board*, and *A Nation at Risk* highlighted necessary conversation starters around educational change, and recognized the need to look at disparities overall, including a progression to see disparities across race, socioeconomic status, and access to materials and resources, a commonality is that they perpetuated and continue to perpetuate the idea of the “achievement gap,” which, as a phrase, sidesteps the realities of colonization, Whiteness, ableism, sexism, transphobia, classism, and other systems intentionally designed for oppression (Cross, 2007). For instance, Jonathan Kozol (2012) notes in *Savage Inequalities* that teachers were running out of supplies, paid late, students’ schools were sinking because of poor construction, and that community members were being exposed to bacteria in raw sewage all in East St. Louis, which has a large Black population. This is vital to note because of the lack of attention and care that East St. Louis was receiving, and in turn, the issues the children were facing not just within in education, but beyond. This is directly related to individual experiences as they relate to systemic design. The intersection of identifying race and socioeconomic status is essential, as students are still facing lower rates of performance with course materials and on standardized testing, and that these elements of sustaining inequalities are allowing for the

continuing segregation of students (Logan, Minca, & Adar, 2012). Students are often already equipped with tools necessary to ideologies, materials, and other interactions (Mehan, 1992) and often needed “counter storytelling” (Williams, 2004; Ledwith, 2016). The larger school culture as well as classmates who are situated within the dominant social identities such as White, non-disabled, upper class, heterosexual, and other identities hold power and privilege within their social context (Burleigh & Wilson, 2021). Looking at the ways students are perpetually disenfranchised in the classroom and in their schools is vital for equitable approaches and longitudinal emancipatory educational practices, and how educational organizations and institutions allow for the continual perpetuation.

In contrast to *the Coleman Report, A Nation at Risk*, and other education policies and reforms, Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006) reframed the source and cause of disparities among racial groups by (re)conceptualizing inequities or the achievement gap as the educational debt. By highlighting the various resources and actions that have intentionally marginalized Communities of Color, Ladson-Billings explains that there are deep economic, sociopolitical, and health debts that negatively impact students’ performances (Ladson-Billings, 2006a; Ladson-Billings, 2006b). By reflecting on the various experiences of wealth disparities, access to health care, and overall health concerns, as well as the longstanding historical circumstances that have disallowed generational wealth and social activities to occur over time, we can come to understand how the achievement gap as a phrase and concept is not only simplistic, but inherently dismissive of structural inequities and oppression. In addition, Crenshaw’s (1989) concept of intersectionality expanded upon by Collins (2019) helps us to understand how different social identities impact the lived experiences understand that not only do current circumstances and sociopolitical landscapes impact individuals, but also their generational and

long-term historical circumstances as well. These must be considered when engaging in the conversation around educational change, and to push beyond merely reform.

By viewing the concepts such as the “achievement gap” from a lens of “educational debt” and structural oppression such as the assertion by Ladson-Billings (2006), we can, as hopeful and equitable educators, begin to see the achievement gap not so much as an individualistic problem, but rather failings by institutions, even if perhaps an intentional design embedded into these systems. It is important to recognize that schools and educational experiences must do a better job at acknowledging and then critically engaging in the sociopolitical conditions in which students exist and study in and focus on the ways that we can upend these issues by centering student voices, experiences, and cultural wealth in redesigning and reimagining equitable practices and materials. However, this does not mean that structural change will take place overnight, or merely through the work of small groups or classrooms. Nor should the responsibility be on the shoulders of those in those spheres.

The sociological imagination (Mills, 2000) establishes that the individual can see their position within the larger systems and structures, to connect their lived experiences, decisions, and experiences as it relates to structure, and how structure relates to their individual experiences. The sociological imagination teaches individuals to see the ways that individually and collectively we can make change through our decisions, how to see singular interactions as a reflection of society, and how there is a constant, and ongoing mechanisms and interaction between systems and individuals. YPAR, on the other hand, highlights the importance of individuals, and specifically youth, in the decisions making and change process. YPAR, while not singlehandedly changing and reshaping structures and systems, allows for a development of critical consciousness (Freire, 2018), which does stand to differ from the sociological

imagination. In this way, youth are encouraged and guided, through YPAR, to engage critical with the sociohistorical conditions of the world, *and then* identify their positions and how all individual interactions can and do shape additional interactions. One way to identify modes of change, systemic inequity, and create a critical consciousness is that of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). While not the only, YPAR proposes alternatives to other teaching tools that we may typically see, as well as goes beyond other equity conversations around critical consciousness, and merges together ontological and epistemological approaches, aligned theoretically, to connect structure and agency, individuals, and systems, and to create, recreate, and liberate, rather than simply imagine.

Recognizing the interconnection of society and individuals, structure and agency, and employing the sociological imagination is a necessity when looking at liberatory pedagogy. This study, while only one, and not capable to dismantle all the world's systemic issues, aims to draw in YPAR practice as a liberatory tool. YPAR, itself, is not necessarily liberatory, but rather its bridge to other larger theoretical and conceptual approaches. One study connects YPAR as liberatory because of the ways that it ties into liberation psychology. Vaccarino-Ruiz, Gordon, and Langhout (2022) highlighted out digging into Latinx' cultural knowledge and background was needed as a means for liberatory psychological methods. There have been other scholars that have recognized YPAR as liberatory, in that it opens a space to recognize youth as vital, challenge dominant narratives and participatory in nature.

Recognizing that YPAR is not bringing down oppressive systems, but rather holding space and honing tools for youth's knowledge to change, this dissertation attempts to address inequities in a way that I bridge classroom practice and pedagogy to inform institutional practice, and encourage a critical analysis of structure. Research within education, educational

transformation and reform, is vast, and in this way, but I created this study to push against dominant narratives of research, develop practices, and eventually establish institutional practice and curriculum for The Dignified Learning Project. While this study utilized an approach (YPAR) that would be considered at the micro-level (i.e., accepting one pedagogical technique that can be used within a classroom or smaller educational setting), this study aims simultaneously to address the lack of institutional and structural transformation in K-12 educational curriculum at the macro-level. In other words, the goal of this micro-level study is to address macro-level inequities.

In this study, I question why we as a collective are not discussing the potential of these studies and methodologies to not only influence institutional change, but rather, act as a tool to encourage students to question structural and institutional change. Bridging the fields of education and sociology, this dissertation draws on the concept of a “sociological imagination” (Mills, 2000) through YPAR: students should be able to recognize their own individual place in society and understand broader sociohistorical conditions.

Purpose of the Study

Students and educators are unable to break down and dismantle oppressive systems on their own, but the first step is to identify the institutional practices that uphold structural and systemic practices that are problematic. The California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards are reflective of systemic practices, in that these standards are implemented as expectations for an entire system. Therefore, the primary purpose of this dissertation is to explore the ways in which recent high school seniors/graduates engage in Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to collaboratively design curriculum that centers students’ lived experiences, while meeting the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards. The intention behind recent

high school graduates stems from two reasons. The first is that, when I began the initial project, I was creating Moreover, this study aims to address the individual's positionality in the world as it relates to the larger structure of the world. Therefore, the purpose of this study to identify whether and how recent high school seniors/graduates develop and demonstrate their sociological imaginations and abilities to problem-pose around large, systemic issues. In addition to this first intended purposes, another intention was to identify how youth can demonstrate their imaginations while addressing system issues, using their own voices and cultural wealth to navigate the California State 12th grade Social Studies standards, and to design curriculum and practice that can transform institutional practice.

The research questions for this study are:

1. How do recent high school seniors/graduates critically engage in YPAR to design California 12th grade social studies curriculum?
2. How, if at all, do recent high school seniors/graduates develop and demonstrate a sociological imagination while engaging in a YPAR project?

Michael Apple (2018) argues that a key component to develop solutions to some of the largest issues of “historical amnesia” within curriculum is that those involved with curriculum should have “organic connections... and to social movements that seek to interrupt the relations of dominance and subordination in the larger society” (p. 5). In addition, students are often disregarded in the consideration for large decisions. Therefore, the focus of this research is emphasized through the utilization of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) for larger, institutional change, using curriculum as merely one mode of institutional change. The sociological imagination, coined by C. Wright Mills (2000) is the understanding that “Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding

both” (Mills, 2000, p. 3). This implies that our lived experiences do not exist in silos, but rather, our individual experiences are influenced by and influence our sociohistorical conditions. In addition, because the California State Standards are a sociopolitical necessity, it is important that students have significant input based on their lived experiences in curriculum design institutionally. Furthermore, studies that focus on the sociological imagination are limited, existing only in small amounts for post-secondary studies, but I was unable to locate or identify studies that look at the sociological imagination within the context of secondary school learning and teaching, and seeing how the sociological imagination can potentially create problem-posing opportunities for social change is a secondary consideration of this study and in turn, curriculum.

A key consideration throughout this study is that there have been large scale criticisms and studies that have taken place, including *The Coleman Report*, *A Nation at Risk*, as well as widely recognized researchers such as Ladson-Billings that focuses on equity, but these larger analyses, and especially those from that have political implications and suggestions for recommendations, youth are seldom involved. Furthermore, literature around YPAR has not necessarily addressed these elements of historical analysis of educational disparities in the United States, though in some instances, such as that as Tintiangco-Cubales, et. al (2014) and the recognition of ethnic studies within the classroom, the historical documents such as that of *The Coleman Report*, from the government tend to focus on educational disparities from a dominant, individualistic, and positivist lens, evident by the language and diction. This goal of this research was never an attempt to single-handedly address and/or change structural problems. Instead the goal was to use YPAR in pedagogical practice so students in the future can see the possibility for change, their place within that action, and to analyze structure in society so they can understand their sociohistorical conditions. In this case, the participants, or rather, research team, was

encouraged to see how their backgrounds provide deep transformative power, and to see how structure and agency tend to be discussed across all scopes of research and rhetoric as two separate entities, rather than concepts that work together as means to pave a better tomorrow.

This study resulted in a substantial amount of data that resulted in several findings, both amongst the research team as well as my own individually and address the research questions in different, yet rich ways. First, the research team identified several important considerations, namely that the 12th grade Social Studies standards are presented as *seemingly* neutral and balanced, but they are still representative of binary and subjective perspectives within the context of the United States. For example, a research team noted that the Principles of American Democracy highlight only the good of a government as it relates to the United States, dismissing some of the range of experiences or possibilities of government. In addition, there was a conflation of government and economics throughout the state standards. The research team members also reflected on their own development of the sociological imagination at the end of the study through written reflections, but woven throughout in conversations as well. Furthermore, the research team had ideas and suggestions for educators who wanted to implement or use youth participatory action research within their classrooms. We also have findings from the curriculum that we developed as well as the redesign of the survey, which doubled as contributions and deliverables. My own findings included my own reflexive and reflective practice as a teacher, the switch from individual to systemic thinking, as well as student personal growth and development. These findings are elaborated further, and highlight additional findings as they relate to the sociological imagination and youth participatory action research.

Additionally, the findings informed and helped answer the research questions as well as provided data beyond the scope of the research questions. For example, the research team's finding of the state standards influenced the team's curriculum development through the form of lesson plans. This allowed for a critical engagement with materials, a reflection on their individual experiences, and also influenced their sociological imaginations. Furthermore, as noted in the findings, research team members demonstrated and fostered their sociological imaginations, highlighting development, sustaining, and application of it as well as noting it themselves within their reflections. These findings along address the research questions and overall purpose of this study, but additional findings also provide insight for future research.

Significance of the Study

This study has implications for theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological changes, as well as curriculum design as a secondary feature of the study. However, curriculum is merely the tool to use to engage in a study such as youth participatory action research, and not the sole purpose. One way to situate oneself in this study as a means for larger pedagogical and institutional practice and transferrable to other educational spaces is that this would be similar to a teacher in a classroom setting that has a particular set of student learning outcomes as they pertain to a standard. This is also an additional consideration of the sociological imagination where individual students can see their connection to the standards and larger educational system. Furthermore, if teachers do not have a set curriculum given to them by a department chair or their school, they will choose a variety of lessons, assessments, and deliverables that students will complete through the process to meet the same standards and expectations of students in their grade level. This study is similar; the participation of youth participatory action research, development and demonstration of a sociological imagination is that of a student

learning outcome, meanwhile, the curriculum we will be co-creating should be seen as an assessment and/or deliverable that highlights the meeting of that outcome and standards.

I initially anticipated that, as a teacher and researcher, through this project I would identify ways in which students who were post-high school, specifically graduates of 2022, would develop and demonstrate their sociological imagination for positive social change, beyond simply career readiness. As it is, the California Common Core State Standards have implemented in K-12 the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CDE.CA.GOV). These standards are related to reading, writing, and speaking and listening, which are skills that overlap across the humanities in the K-12 setting.

This study bridges the fields of education and sociology through the exploration of “sociological imagination” in the humanities or social studies classroom. While I recognize not all teachers have been introduced to the sociological imagination, this is how I managed to engage so critically with my high school students, so they were able to begin understanding concepts of structure and agency both within literature and materials in both our English as well as history and social studies courses. This begins to provide a practical guide to developing the sociological imagination in the secondary setting, which has not been widely discussed or studied as empirical research studies. The sociological imagination, therefore, is not merely an obscure concept, but is a concept that is then taught, developed, exercised, and used to critically think about the world as it relates to state standards. This study provides a genuine course of praxis in the ways we can transform education as a genuine “student-centered” approach.

In turn, the major contribution to the academic field of education is this guide in how to help develop and foster a sociological imagination as it relates to social change and educational transformation, which then becomes valuable as students can use and sustain critical thinking

skills, applicable to educational journeys or workplaces once they graduate from high school. Going beyond formal settings, it also allows individuals to see the ways they can engage in social change and actionable change in society. There are two key significant contributions, then, within specifically the field of sociology: identifying the ways educators can use and foster sociological imaginations in secondary students to make structural change, and literature surrounding sociological imaginations within the secondary itself as there is a significant gap in the literature around this topic.

Next, this study also contributes to methodological literature, both for academic and university scholars as well as secondary classroom teachers. This study provides insight, and can act as a guide, for secondary school classroom humanities and/or social studies teachers to engage in youth participatory action research to encourage deep, critical engagement with students than can not only meet the underpinnings of the College and Career Readiness Standards, but specifically the California State 12th Social Studies Standards, which is the primary focus for this study. Pedagogically, I recommend teaching suggestions that align with the theoretical framework of this dissertation study, specifically that of critical pedagogy, and community cultural wealth to disrupt the current distribution of cultural capital using YPAR. In fact, while I did initially anticipate providing suggestions based on findings from the participants or, as I will later refer to them as, research partners to honor the epistemological truths and histories of participatory action research (PAR), I recognized through the data key pedagogical practices that I engage in and take for granted. I document these in how one can transfer these findings to their own classroom practices. A contribution to the literature that this data on YPAR and teaching methods is that I engage in critical discussions and dialogue around sociology embedded in the curriculum, as previously noted, however, I step away from the idea of success

or learning outcomes as an individualistic problem, and even that of “achievement gaps”, and instead, center student experiences to disrupt structural oppression and see their own contributions to social activism.

Another contribution to the literature and academic field, but more specifically for teachers that this study has is its curricular considerations as not only classroom practice, but institutional practice as well. While the primary focus of this study is not on curriculum itself, there are findings and outcomes that can be shared in a collaborative manner with other educators. The intentionality behind the communal access to the curriculum is that it is by an educator for educators, by and for students, and is deeply critical. Based on findings from the first pilot study, where I found that there are teachers who want to engage critically with systemic issues but are often unprepared or not guided in how to do that, this study is for them, so they have some starting point should they need, and is accessible by and for educators, by and for students, that are deeply critical and can be accessible across the educational landscape.

Participants engaged in collaborative methods, which I guided due to my philosophical and professional experience as a researcher, YPAR practitioner, and teacher. However, I honored the participants’ goals and hopeful outcomes as well. Because YPAR has highlighted the ways students can be critically engaged and involved in social change, these practical approaches are essential. In addition, while this can serve as a guide in terms of a classroom and pedagogical model, this study also has institutional implications for not only pedagogy, but professional development as well as large-scale organizational change and curriculum, as well as the practice of YPAR for actionable change steeped in community cultural wealth.

In addition, through this research, I have produced a methodological, pedagogical, and philosophical approach to conducting participatory action research, with the emphasis being on

youth participatory action research, that can contribute to the fields of critical pedagogy and youth participatory action research, as well as educational equity and social change. While these goals may seem lofty, as a researcher and teacher, as well as a sociologist, it is not ontologically and epistemologically truthful to separate these ideas for me, which I had established well before the completion of this dissertation; structure and agency are not two separately working concepts, but rather work together, and in turn, it is not enough for me to suggest pedagogical practices or contribute to the field of theory, but rather, engage in praxis with the *goal* of structural change that brings these ideas together.

Overall, the purpose of this study was to center praxis through pedagogical practice and theory with the goals of genuine educational change, and at bare minimum, to encourage students to make change and recognize broader structures and their influence on our everyday lives. In doing so, this study creates conceptual model that highlights the importance of YPAR in the classroom and K-12 institutions, examining how student voice can *and should* be considered when making institutional decisions. This study also aimed to reinforce the importance of community cultural wealth. First, it contributes to research of cultural capital, which has been used to theoretically analyze the institution of education. Next, it looks at community cultural wealth at the secondary level as a tool and means for disruption of power dynamics as it relates to students' lived experience.

As note previously, this study also centers students' lived experiences for the purpose of redesigning curriculum as it relates the sociopolitical realities of California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, rather than merely presupposing the importance of students' backgrounds and diversity. While students' backgrounds are necessary, the reality is that teachers are constantly under pressure to meet standards and ensure rigor while also being

scrutinized for not pedagogically and theoretically meeting expectations of inclusion, diversity, and anti-oppression curriculum. Because of the deep separation and disconnect, this study merges the academic world with that of teachers. Teachers are inundated with the “research-backed” or “evidence-based” rhetoric around pedagogical practices that are often out of touch with the realities of the teachers, students, families’, and other members of educational communities that do not adequately address the sociopolitical conditions. Therefore, this study started a lifelong commitment to conducting research beyond publications or merely theoretical models, though exceptionally important, but also genuine connections, methods, and how-to for teachers who want to engage in critical work that would center students, such as the utilization of youth participatory action research. I present a unique experience to do this through this research, in that I have been a researcher, academic in higher education, and will forever remain a teacher. This study is my oath to that commitment and the field of education.

Definition of Key Terms and Phrases

There are several key concepts and ideas that will be used throughout this dissertation. While they will be explored as theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the framework, they also should be introduced as foundational ideas as well. These will be used throughout the dissertation in various contexts. Below are several key phrases, words, and concepts I have briefly introduced. Several terms are explored deeper as they relate conceptually to the research, but several of these are presented here to guide any understanding of concepts in this dissertation.

Curriculum

Curriculum has been a deeply studied topic throughout research and there are many scholars who have contributed deeply to the field of curriculum studies. However, for the

purpose of this dissertation, I am not using curriculum in a deeply theoretical manner or applied research method as those scholars. Looking at several uses of curriculum, definitions, and personal practices, the definition of curriculum is an outline of content, expectations, and outcomes that students are guided to meet. In addition, it encompasses materials, skills, or knowledge that students can expect to learn. Therefore, for this study, curriculum is presented in the form of lesson plans that would encompass a module or section of content related to the state standards, exploring specific content and knowledge that students will learn and developed at the end.

Sociological Imagination

The sociological imagination is a phrase coined by C. Wright Mills (1959), in his book *The Sociological Imagination*. This sociological concept represents many different possibilities for analysis of the social world, but specifically it is the connection between the individual and larger social society. In essence, this is a relationship between how the individual's choices and circumstances, and often "private troubles" as Mills (1959) calls them, intersect with social issues or larger systemic conditions. The sociological imagination, then, is an individual's ability to see the interworking between smaller circumstances and situations as they relate to larger structure and systems. While the individual can see private troubles and social problems, and how they are connected, this can also be applied to the interworking of individual *interactions* as well.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR)

Youth participatory action research, or YPAR, is an approach to research that believes youth voices and experiences are valuable to change the conditions in which they live. Having roots in participatory action research, the intentionality behind YPAR is that youth experiences

and values can guide social change, ranging from topics of interests to the actual action-oriented change to change conditions and circumstances that exist and impact them first-hand. This becomes a participatory research approach that involves youth, centers their vision, and attempts to challenge hierarchical approaches to both the adult/youth dynamic as well as the researcher/researched dynamic.

Dialogue

Dialogue has many different definitions depending on which philosophical underpinnings are guiding the idea of dialogue. For this dissertation and study, dialogue has roots in the Freirean concept of dialogue, where there is an uncovering of truths toward a critical consciousness between the oppressed and oppressor. The goal of dialogue is humanization. As an extension of this, I also define dialogue as critical engagement and consciousness that extends beyond verbal output, but can also take place across different modalities and formats, such as a “dialogue” between materials and readings and individuals.

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital is a concept developed by Bourdieu (1986). Cultural capital is the idea that society and systems value certain cultures more than others. This is not to say that there are specific ones inherently as such, but structurally and systemically some cultures hold more value and that this is reproduced through different forms in society. Essentially, dominant cultures and identities, such as White, straight, non-disabled, wealthier groups and cultural norms are valued more than others, and cultural capital aims to bring awareness to that.

Community Cultural Wealth

Community cultural wealth is a theoretical model created by Yosso (2005). This framework challenges the deficit model of thinking around access and outcomes in education.

For example, instead of thinking of attention, achievement, and the like are merely a matter of student interests or individual experiences, that there is a systemic issue around it, acknowledging cultural capital. However, community cultural wealth aims to utilize critical race theory as a way to center and appreciate student backgrounds, especially of minoritized or marginalized identities, and appreciate the value and wealth that they hold, challenging the dynamic that holds certain cultural values as more important.

Chapter 2

The Word of the Day is Praxis, Brought to You by a Sociological Imagination

Or

Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Praxis from a Freirean perspective is critical reflection and action (Freire, 2018). In many ways, this is necessitating reflection and theoretical concepts tied with action for change based on said reflection and reflexivity. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review is to explore both ontologically and epistemologically concepts and practices that aim to dismantle oppression systems and ways that this can be achieved through pedagogical practices and institutions of education. This literature review is focused on youth participatory action research as both a method and teaching philosophy as they are situated within conceptual models of critical pedagogy, praxis, and sociological imagination. Therefore, this literature review will explore the framework of this study with a conceptual understanding of critical pedagogy, praxis, and the sociological imagination as they relate to youth participatory action research, cultural capital, community cultural wealth, and liberatory pedagogical and institutional changes.

After the conceptual framework is explored, the framework will then be discussed as they relate to literature, studies, and other research-oriented work as it relates to education; this specifically means that I will discuss my framework, but then discuss further the individual components as I have merged together multiple complex theoretical frameworks that together motivated this research. The intention of this organization is that the empirical research must be understood in how they are connected to the conceptual framework, and especially because of the overall concept of praxis being the foundation of this research. In addition, because praxis is the core of how this study has been conducted, the literature and conceptual framework should

not, nor can it realistically, be teased apart, separated from one another, or else it would be antithetical to the intention, purpose, and driving force behind this and future research.

Therefore, this literature review will explore the framework of praxis, critical pedagogy, and the sociological imagination. Next, it will look at cultural capital, community cultural wealth, liberatory activities, and youth participatory action research. Though organized in said way, the conceptual framework attempts to avoid a singular pathway toward emancipatory education, but rather sees things beyond transactional or purely methodological, but rather engaging with multiple modalities and modes of learning and expression.

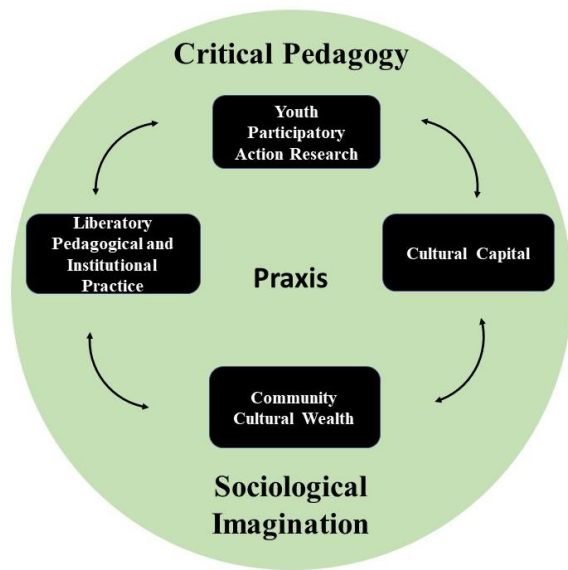
It is important to view the literature review and conceptual framework as a means for understanding the conceptual framework that is the foundation for this research study as seen in Figure 1. This can be seen as an approach to institutional transformation that centers student engagement, lived experiences, and activities that guide transformative change rooted in critical pedagogy, praxis, and a sociological imagination. This is also a model for liberatory methods and engagement as it relates to specifically a K-12 setting in a reflective and reflexive manner, focusing on larger transformation rather than solely individual member, classroom, or teacher learning outcomes. While it can be applied to individual pedagogical practice, the goal should be to look at ways that our positionality relates to the student positionalities, and how they can engage critically, develop a sociological imagination, and begin looking at the intersection of agency and structure. This also allows for continual reflection, youth participatory action research, and engagement that attempts to dismantle cultural capital by utilizing student community cultural wealth, engaging with youth, and participating in activities that understand the sociopolitical conditions within which they exist. While there is no official starting point,

the idea is that we should be rooting these concepts and approaches to challenge structural oppression with constant reflection and action as a means and path for an ongoing journey for justice.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework Centering Praxis

This conceptual framework produces a model of praxis for youth participatory action research within the classroom as a theoretical and actionable pedagogical and institutional practice.



I have organized these scholarly materials presented in my conceptual framework and have structured them in a way that that works toward an emancipatory institutional change and efforts while staying true to my ontological and epistemological foundations as a researcher. Furthermore, the literature relates to words and concepts as they relate to each concept and the K-12 educational system. Seminal works are present in the literature review and conceptual framework as well. The databases used were a combination of WorldCat, through my graduate school institution’s library as well as Google Scholar. These have been organized by the

philosophical lenses by which the research is being conducted, thematically, and applicably to the project of K-12 institutional research. Furthermore, while this is foundational for the conceptual framework, the literature supports the conceptual framework, as it works collaboratively within an academic discussion. One such way to utilize this framework is to understand how this framework can be both a philosophical and pedagogical approach that can support the development of the sociological imagination for secondary school students, and specifically seniors in high school. Therefore, this literature review and synthesis will discuss critical pedagogy, praxis, and the sociological imagination first as well as empirical studies as they relate to these concepts, followed by additional conceptual understandings and empirical studies on cultural capital, community cultural wealth, liberatory activities and institutional change as it relates to curriculum design for this study, and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR).

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is teaching, or pedagogical practice, that is critical in nature, looking deeply at the world around us, and understanding the ways that we are cocreators of the social world (Freire, 2018). There have been many scholars who have written about critical pedagogy, but seminal work can be credited to that of Paulo Freire (2018). Critical pedagogy is one of the foundational texts and theoretical frameworks that guide this research and that of critical pedagogy, however, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire focused primarily on the relationship between oppressor and oppressed in the context of socioeconomic status. It is important to note that Freire, for as revolutionary as his work was, did not go, nor does it continually go, unchallenged. However, foundational, the theoretical influence of his work must remain intact as

we begin furthering liberatory work. For instance, hooks (1994), who has heralded Freire's work, has noted this herself when she wrote,

There has never been a moment when reading Freire that I have not remained aware of not only the sexism of the language but the way he (like other progressive Third World political leaders, intellectuals, critical thinkers, such as Fanon, Memmi, etc.) constructs a phallogentric paradigm of liberation-wherein freedom and the experience of patriarchal manhood are always linked as though they are one and the same. For me this is always a source of anguish for it represents a blind spot in the vision of men who have profound insight. And yet, I never wish to see a critique of this blind spot overshadow anyone's (and feminists' in particular) capacity to learn from the insights. This is why it is difficult for me to speak about sexism in Freire's work; it is difficult to find a language that offers a way to frame critique and yet maintain the recognition of all that is valued and respected in the work. It seems to me that the binary opposition that is so much embedded in Western thought and language makes it nearly impossible to project a complex respond. Freire's sexism is indicated by the language in his early works, notwithstanding that there is so much that remains liberatory. There is no need to apologize for the sexism. Freire's own model of critical pedagogy invites a critical interrogation of this flaw in the work. But critical interrogation is not the same as dismissal. (p. 49).

This is not to say that this work will uphold the potential problematics, but rather, will utilize Freirean way of thinking, in the manner hooks discusses, as a means for further interrogation of current works and, in essence, will contribute to literature and work that

has been done on critical pedagogy and influence studies to begin diving deeper into that of liberatory pedagogies. Expanding on his work, scholars such as hooks (1994) have also focused on ways that education can and should be a liberatory tool, and critical pedagogy allows for that. This section of the literature review will also discuss some of the expanded ideas, such as that of bell hooks, Antonia Darder (2003; 2011), and others (Glass, 2001; Apple, 2018; McInerney, 2009) who have contributed radically to the ideas of critical pedagogy for larger educational and institutional change. In turn, introducing critical pedagogy as a means for liberation is presented here.

A key effort in the goals for a liberatory institutional practice is to recognize the philosophical and ontological stances in which educators approach their educational “reform” efforts, which should really aim to be transformative. In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Paulo Freire (2018) explains that it is vital for individuals to become their own agents of change and inquiry, and in turn aim for emancipation. What is complex about this statement is the possible misconception of what “ideological propaganda” can be understood as, in which case the concepts of leftists and conservative leanings tend to be the focus in our hyper-political society. With that said, a stance of critical pedagogy is *not* the way in which we avoid discussing the hard topics that are often conflated with “leftist agenda,” such as the discussions of dehumanization and a variety of other issues of society that have oppressed individuals in and out of the educational system. In this case, Freire is discussing the reality of society as it is rather than neutralizing education and learning in a way that produces a lack of critical awareness and thinking.

Freire (2018) explains that human beings are the creators of social situations and settings, and it is near impossible to break away from the historical and sociopolitical realities in which people exist and experience the world during this process of creation. Establishing this notion

within the field of education, it's vital to be connected to an analysis of the structure and be able to see the ways that larger systemic issues occur and are socially created by conditions related to power dynamics. However, referencing Freire's (2018) quote in *A Pedagogy of Hope*, it's vital to explore these sociopolitical conditions that create the institutions and social structures. This, however, means that educators must have a firm grasp of the structural issues and systemic levels of oppression that occur in a society. This is further backed by recognition of this in a study around ethnic studies. Tintiango-Cubales et al. (2014) identified the power of educators who had a strong understanding and found reason and purpose to utilize an ethnic studies framework within their classrooms and this translated into their students' work and awareness of issues surrounding White supremacy.

A key component of critical pedagogy is that of critical inquiry as well (Agnello, 2016; McLaren, 2017). Teachers should be able to be engaged critically with structural analysis as systemic oppression is what influences and impacts students and teachers alike. Across the multitude of critical pedagogues, there *must* be a true recognition and analysis of power, an analysis in order to view the ways in which classroom interactions are interwoven within institutional and systemic oppression (McLaren, 2017; Freire, 2018.) Furthermore, critical pedagogy as a philosophical stance not only allows the educator to recognize the role of power, specifically their own power, dominant power structures, and other social constructs, but it also pushes educators to understand the interconnectedness of social constructs and humans.

hooks (1994) discusses heavily the influence Freire has had on her own work in *Teaching to Transgress* where she discusses the ways her work explores individuals within the world as active players. Her work exceeds some of the earlier socioeconomic structures of oppression, which Freire and others have analyzed deeply, such as that of neoliberalism, and explores

teaching and education to encourage students to make sense of the world beyond that of socioeconomic conditions, but also the intersection of these along with race, gender, sexual identity, disability, and other social positionalities.

By utilizing critical pedagogy as not only a theoretical framework but in this case, the foundation by which methodological approaches and implementation of classroom and institutional practices are discussed, this study will encourage students to not only critically reflect on their own positionalities but also that of the larger structures in and out of education. Critical pedagogy has ties to critical theory, which focuses on the role of power dynamics and the tension around resources and access. With that said, looking at the access to knowledge as a resource, critical pedagogy allows the educator to position themselves in a reflective process that challenges their role as a power figure and instead redistributes that power across other human beings within the lived experiences of the world. Lastly, critical pedagogy is the approach by which action research can take place to explore the necessities of cultural capital and in turn community cultural wealth for seeing the ways that students can deeply explore the world within their own identities, and then apply the framework of YPAR within the classroom and as a means for an institutional expectation within the curriculum. Critical pedagogy will be explored deeper in the conceptual framework but is being used as the philosophical lens by which this conceptual framework will be explored.

Dialogue

Dialogue is an extremely important component of critical pedagogy. Going beyond merely talking or conversations, according to Freire (2018), dialogue is a step toward transformative education. Freire (2018) explains that dialogue must happen before we begin acting upon transformation and that it must be ongoing; in addition, it must be situated within the

conditions of the world that oppress individuals because those circumstances are first and foremost what we should center as we aim for liberation. Yet, even though dialogue tends to be associated with conversation, Freire (2018) does not necessarily claim that this is verbalization of words, but rather, “Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world (p. 88). When analyzing this sentence, one should look at the use of *encounter* here, as it does not necessitate vocalization or air leaving one’s mouth, but rather it is an *encounter* focused on one’s ability to “name the world.” While the association of dialogue is logical, in this way, dialogue can be that of curriculum, short lessons or lectures, hands-on activities, service work, and others, so long as the goal is naming the world by the oppressed.

Critical pedagogy, then, cannot be engaged critically *without* that of dialogue; that is, we cannot simply begin to construct deep understandings that criticize and analyze structures that influence our individual abilities, but instead we must also begin to dialogue for the purpose of liberation, and according to the oppressed’s conditions. Furthering this, hooks also explains that dialogue, those who are doing actively the work toward liberation, must be actively participating in that of dialogue as well and in turn, dialogue is a vital piece to that of liberatory pedagogies and especially ones that are rooted in philosophical framings of critical pedagogy for teaching.

There are many different philosophical interpretations of dialogue; for instance, according to Trifonas (2018), Burbules remarks that, “Dialogue represents, to one view or another, a way of reconciling differences...” (p. 252). In addition, Trifonas (2018) writes that Burbules believes, “The second, related issue is the proceduralism of most accounts of dialogue: the characterization of dialogue in terms of a particular set of communicative norms and the response, when conflict or friction arises, that the

resolution of these can (and should) take place through a reinvigorated application of *those same norms*” (p. 268). The recognition of Burbules’ interpretations of dialogue, while valuable, does seem to dismiss the nuanced reality of *encounter*. Therefore, for the purpose of this study as it pertains to critical pedagogy, dialogue is what Freire (2018) explains is an interaction or encounter amongst individuals to critically analyze structural oppression, explain their own lived experiences, and to “name the world.”

Praxis

Praxis is not a concept solely from Freire (2018) or the foundations of critical pedagogy, having been discussed by Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates (Bénatouïl & Bonazzi, 2012; Dotts, 2019). However, for this literature review and research study, praxis is situated within the framework of a critical pedagogy. Often there is a significant disconnect between critical reflection, or theoretical underpinnings, and action, where people are doing the real workday in and day out. However, praxis allows for a combination of the two. Freire (2018) discussed the importance of praxis as it relates to liberation when he wrote,

It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves.

The discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis (p. 65).

For Freire, it is important to note that activism is not to be defined in the ways that we understand it currently, but rather it is mere action without the critical reflection, essentially jumping into action without a reflective component that has potential to push one to see the structural inequities and oppression as an institutional and structural problem. With that, praxis is a necessary component to analysis and implementation of

equity, inclusion, diversity, which are all major topics and words used within the entire institution of education, but truly, for that of liberatory and emancipatory education. We must go beyond mere representation and aim to dismantle systems of oppression, and the Freirean notion of praxis is a key conceptual framework moving forward.

Darder (2011) explains that if we are to remain “critical educators” we must, as she credits Freire for this line of thinking, be fully aware of our stance and how we relate to or uphold positions of power, and in turn, we must be striving for an “educational praxis” that embodies freedom, true freedom, as a way toward our existence (p. 182). Furthermore, Allsup (2003) writes that “Freirean praxis, for sure, is non-neutral; it occurs when we disavow the traditional separation between abstracted learning and real life” (p. 158). Darder and Allsup highlight important concepts of praxis both from our understanding as educators as well as the perspectives from those who are learning: we must be able to strive for praxis in what we do so that we are not merely reproducing inequities and power differentials that will further perpetuate the oppression of our students or each other. Ultimately, we must be engaging in educational change from a lens of praxis so that we can truly see education as a means of freedom, education as action that will be liberatory, (Glass, 2001; hooks, 1994; Darder, 2003) because the practice for freedom will never be done. In this study I centered praxis both ontologically and epistemologically, in how I engaged with my research team, or participants, my pedagogical practice, and specifically, the modeling of non-hierarchical modes of communication, research, and interaction that allows for the teacher-student, students-teachers (Freire, 2018) relationship that challenges the banking method.

Sociological Imagination

C. Wright Mills (2018) explains that the sociological imagination is where the individual meets society. Furthermore, Mills asserts that,

It is commonly recognized that any systematic attempt to understand involves some kind of alternation between (empirical) intake and (theoretical) assimilation, that concepts and ideas ought to guide factual investigation... What has happened in the methodological inhibition is that men have become stuck, not so much in the empirical intake, as in what are essentially epistemological problems of method. Since many of these men, especially the younger, do not know very much about epistemology, they tend to be quite dogmatic about the one set of canons that dominant them. (p. 74).

The sociological imagination, in other words, is an approach to understanding theory and methods collaboratively, as well as utilizing that approach to make sense of our own individual circumstances in relation to larger working society. This is essential as we can differentiate between “private troubles” or “public issues” as Mills highlights. Often, we are individualistic in thinking how our own issues are merely private troubles, but what can come to fruition is an understanding that often our seemingly private troubles are instead part of a larger systemic and social concern. However, while a sociological imagination is understood as important for sociologists, as well as to recognize how to understand societal situations as part of our lives and our lives as part of societal circumstances.

Mills is the sociologist who coined the term *the sociological imagination*, however, others have taken on to conceptualize this in different spaces. It is important to note though that sociology tends to be focused on college level coursework rather than that of K-12 schooling,

which is where a significant gap exists within research. Furthermore, the sociological imagination, while a sociological way of seeing the world exists, it is typically not explored in history coursework at the secondary level. Considering the fact that the sociological imagination is not used in the secondary setting, it is also important to consider that empirical studies around the sociological imagination have not been prolifically conducted either. One last key consideration for as well is that the sociological imagination was coined by C. Wright Mills (1959), and while progressive in general, is vital to recognize how structure and agency are intimately connected, yet are missing many modern day systemic issues in its analysis in that it should be expanded to explicitly understand and explain things such as ableism, transphobia, and other things that may not have been as widely explored.

Along these lines, Heather M. Dalmage (2020), in her presidential address at the Society of the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) annual meeting, stated,

Sociologists have a unique skill set: we are able to depress people. Our sociological imagination allows us to find the critique in even the most joyful moments... As educators and mentors helping students develop their sociological imaginations, we often see the rage and despair they feel when they begin to see injustices they had been socialized to ignore. Some students feel relief—the words and theories legitimize their lived experiences; they feel seen gaining language to explain and express their experiences. When students see themselves and others through a sociological lens, students feel themselves transforming, they begin to rethink their goals and plans, and some also fear that their connections with family and community will fray because of these changes.... When the sociological imagination gives our students the ability to see social problems without giving

them tools to see and build pathways toward social transformation, students may by default feel despair or hopelessness.

Dalmage's humorous approach to the reality of a sociological imagination highlights an important outcome for the development of a sociological imagination: feelings of despair, but also, students' ability to "feel seen," to understand, but also, to fear potential marginalization from everything they knew prior. A sociological imagination, gives words to the world, or, in a Freirean sense, allows students to "name the world." However, being able to name the world in this case, or make sense of the world can only do so much; they must be able to see the ways in which they can enact and engage in change so that they can maintain that hope.

Cultural capital, which is a major concept in sociology, can then be analyzed critically using a sociological imagination, by both teachers and students alike. However, an analysis of cultural capital is not enough, but rather students must be willing to understand how cultural capital does not, nor should it be, a forever structural reality, but rather is only in our structure as a society, has allowed to remain as such. In the address that Dalmage (2021) gave, she notes that there was an immense amount of concern historically that the research on marginalized individuals was truly more to maintain power, uphold positions of power and the status quo, and in turn, gave way to the creation of the SSSP. However, recognizing this is also vital, because without a sociological imagination, our research methods and analyses may very well uphold the very inequities we are researching, and in turn, uphold the disparities that cultural capital inherently create. Therefore, an educational analysis of cultural capital as a structural inherency with community cultural wealth to disrupt this is necessary moving forward.

Furthermore, a sociological imagination allows individuals to focus on how we can connect pieces of our individual stories to the larger systemic situations we see daily.

In the field of sociology, the “sociological imagination” is a necessity to learn, and should be central to learning within introductory sociology courses (Grauerholz & Gibson, 2006; Wagenaar, 2004). Many studies that draw on the concept of “sociological imagination” have been aligned with that of undergraduate sociology courses and how to develop a sociological imagination within this context (Atkins & Grant, 2022; Ghidina, 2019). There are few studies that have conducted empirical research on the sociological imagination, and even fewer within the context of K-12 or secondary schooling. For instance, studies that have existed thus far focus primarily on struggles and policies of private troubles and social problems within teacher education and recruitment, teacher bias and complicity in White supremacy, or as a framework for institutional leaders around implementation of courses (Passy & Ovenden-Hope, 2021; Crowley, 2019; Pham, 2022). Research on development of student’s sociological imagination does exist within hands-on, action research, and service learning in higher education (Ostrow, et al., 1999). However, I could not locate empirical research on student development of the sociological imagination within the context of secondary schooling and the intersection of this with the utilization of YPAR.

Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1986), having identified specifically a functionalist understanding of culture within education, highlights the ways in which cultural symbols and values play a role in overall interactions in society by looking at what he identifies as *cultural capital*. Within sociology, structural functionalism is an ideological lens by which the world is viewed as a holistic,

functioning system that allows for us to subscribe to specific roles to maintain its function.

Furthermore, it provides the explanation that if it exists, it has an inherent purpose, such as the institution of education, prisons, or otherwise. In this case, Bourdieu explains that while education has explained the ways in which educational achievement can contribute to society as a means of productivity, it also does not reflect on the ways that education also reinforces and perpetuates structural inequalities that house the disparities around culture (Bourdieu, 1986).

This is not to say that Bourdieu is wrong, in fact, many analyses misinterpret Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital, thus almost assuming it comes from a deficit lens, but rather, there is evidence that there must be efforts to push beyond cultural capital and ways to dismantle its existence.

The functionalist understanding of value and education, then, allows us as a society to accept that certain cultures maintain more value than others, especially if it is situated within institutions and structures within society. This also means that certain activities and beliefs are more widely accepted due to their perceived value in relation to "highbrow" culture and activities (Reay, 2004). In turn, this also means that for student educational achievement access, that the parental and student cultural capital, that is, their own cultural values or understanding of dominant culture, can also influence and impact their educational achievement (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Tramonte & Willms, 2010). However, what is lacking from this analysis is the fact that while yes, students need to understand not just the dominant culture, but rather to focus on both navigation of that cultural system as well as a means of valuing other cultural backgrounds, and eventually dismantling the hierarchical systems in place that put more value on certain cultures - those of the status quo. This adoption of the status quo is why the understanding of community cultural wealth is valuable for going beyond cultural capital as the structurally inherent state of education.

The analysis for cultural capital is an important discussion starter for educational reform, and further, educational transformation. Looking at the ways that cultural capital can influence educational attainment and success is important due to the fact that students of various backgrounds struggle regularly and have done so, as evidenced by the growing literature and research surrounding the “education achievement gap.” However, what is heavily missing in the discussion around cultural capital and educational success is that it is not so much a necessity of changing students’ cultural assets to fit the structural dynamics of highbrow culture as a necessity, but rather to transform the structure that values students’ cultural backgrounds and diversity as central to their humanity. In this case, further analysis of culture by using Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth as a framework for recognizing student achievement and support is needed. Cultural capital is vital to understanding the power dynamics by which society values certain cultures over others, and in turn that perspective is reproduced in schooling, however, it must go beyond that and honor student experiences, backgrounds, and cultures. In this case, a theoretical understanding of cultural capital and community cultural wealth is necessary for furthering curriculum design and student equity and collective liberation.

Community Cultural Wealth

While cultural capital is vital to recognize due to the power dynamics around culture, and its specific application and analysis within the K-12 classroom, an important view to see how educational “reform,” or rather, transformation can dismantle the power dynamics that are rooted in educational curriculum and practices is to look at the usage of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth acknowledges that there is an understanding of capital when looking at identity and backgrounds, but not in a sense of cultural

capital from the perspective of Bourdieu. In addition, while the model tends to look at students of colors' experience in college, this can be understood in a K-12 setting as well.

An important emphasis within this model is also the infusion of critical race theory as a component in analyzing and understanding the vast wealth of knowledge and experiences that students bring with them to their educational careers. An important recognition differentiating between cultural capital and community cultural wealth is written by Yosso (2005), which states, "Therefore, while Bourdieu's work sought to provide a structural critique of social and cultural reproduction, his theory of cultural capital has been used to assert that some communities are culturally wealthy while others are culturally poor" (p. 76). Reflecting on the differences and necessities of community cultural wealth is vital for further analysis in how this framework can and should be applied when looking at an institutional foundation for liberatory design. Yosso's (2005) analysis is also important to recognize that historically, some individuals have been deemed "poor" culturally due to the discrepancies around what is valuable or not in society, therefore, community cultural wealth opposes this understanding and frames the concepts of the community *as* wealthy, and notable to include in recognizing experiences and change.

Students' personal backgrounds are necessary as a form of resistance, which is a key element of Yosso's (2005) framework. Research has also identified that utilizing community cultural wealth, there is a disruption to the social capital paradigm that exists. For example, a study by Zambrana & Zoppi (2002) noted that the utilization of culture to topple the hierarchy of social capital (rather than cultural capital in this case) allowed for Latina students to experience academic success in ways that perhaps had not been previously noted or recognized.

Understanding the ways that looking at culture can challenge social capital can be vital for cultural capital, in that disrupting a perceived hierarchy of culture, which in turn even creates the

conditions of cultural capital, to begin with, allows for a redistribution of capital “wealth,” and can challenge the circumstances, to begin with.

Furthermore, community cultural wealth can extend beyond the concepts of racism, which is a systemically entrenched and inherent feature of the educational system and an important element of institutions to analyze. Yosso (2005) explains community cultural wealth as, “... an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and used by Communities of Color to survive and resist racism and other forms of oppression” (p. 154). For this research, the concept of cultural wealth aims to understand ways to identify culture as key to dismantling oppressive and dehumanizing pedagogies and center student experiences of diverse cultural backgrounds. Because of the deeply intersectional identities that exist for our students, it is vital that there is an analysis of identity that can understand culture in terms of values and norms rather than ethnic origin or racial categories, though also important (Crenshaw, 1991). For instance, Audre Lorde (1983) stated,

I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity. I know that people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence... There is no hierarchy of oppression. I cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only. I cannot afford to believe that freedom from intolerance is the right of only one particular group. And I cannot afford to choose between the fronts upon which I must battle these forces of discrimination, wherever they appear to destroy me. And when they appear to destroy me, it will not be long before they appear to destroy you (p. 9).

While Lorde (1983) was not discussing explicitly the concepts of culture in this case, the intersectional, sociopolitical identities that exist are vital to recognize as encompassing their own cultural values. This, in turn, means that community cultural wealth for the purpose of conceptual framework recognizes a sociological concept of culture, where it is defined as “... the languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make their social environments meaningful” (ASA.net). With that said, centering the understanding of community cultural wealth within K-12 equitable lenses should be considered when looking at the sociopolitical realities students face and how to create representative and transformative literacies. In addition, recognizing the ways in which culture establishes understandings and interpersonal relationships, as well as the ways that institutions have dispossessed non-dominant cultures and ideologies when engaging in research, it’s vital to consider community cultural wealth. Furthermore, to do proper justice and support students from diverse backgrounds, the utilization of action research can be helpful in engaging in useful, equitable pedagogical practices in the classroom. Action research allows for research-informed practices and changes, and in order to utilize action research from an equitable, critical pedagogical approach, community cultural wealth can help a teacher become a researcher-practitioner with an equity lens.

Youth Participatory Action Research

Youth participatory action research (YPAR) has its roots in Participatory Action Research (PAR), and therefore, it is important to discuss foundations of PAR. PAR has deep roots that reject typical, mainstream lenses of research that posit a positivist approach but have also been appropriated in many ways to uphold dominant ideologies (Jordan, 2009). Despite its deeply critical roots attached to Freire, participatory action research tends to be disregarded even

by progressives likely because of the current neoliberal conditions of society (Jordan, 2009). Many practices can be interpreted as being a Freirean notion of false generosity rather than true liberatory practices (Freire, 2018). In this case, false generosity is the concept that those in power provide just enough to those who have been disenfranchised and pushed out of conversations so that they feel cared for *just enough* to not begin dismantling the system, but not enough to truly incorporate their humanity into the institutional structure.

PAR, like any other tool or idea, *can* be used to uphold power dynamics, however, the historical value of this is for the sole purpose of action (Baum et al., 2006) and in turn, a community-engaged research approach. This effort has its role and value in upending hegemonic values within research, which tend to dominate the very Western and colonized ideas of research. Furthermore, participatory action research pushes the researcher to reflect on their positionality essentially because they must be engaging with, and within, the community. This begs the question of power and power dynamics, how the research is conducted, who makes decisions about necessity, and what social issues are important (or not) to explore, research, write up, and discuss (Udas, 1998). Furthering PAR is the focus on critical participatory action research, which encompasses and centers the practitioner as central to understanding the conditions, circumstances, and lived experiences, and dismisses the views that science should be objective (which in turn rejects lived experiences as data) (Kemmis et al., 2014). The understanding of PAR coupled with critical perspectives is also necessary to understand how and why a philosophical underpinning of critical pedagogy can foundationally provide an anti-hegemonic perspective when pursuing research, and PAR at that. In addition, continuing on notions of PAR is that of Critical PAR. Critical PAR is critical because, according to Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon (2014):

... critical participatory action research aims to help participants to transform (1) their understandings of their practices; (2) the conduct of their practices, and (3) the conditions under which they practice, in order that these things will be more rational (and comprehensible, coherent and reasonable), more productive and sustainable, and more just and inclusive. Critical participatory action research aims for a deep understanding of participants' practices and the practice architectures that support those practices. In critical participatory action research, we are interested in what happens here—this single case—not what goes on anywhere or everywhere. (p. 67).

A key component of critical PAR is the reality that those being researched must be part of the research process, especially because they are part of the structure and system being investigated. It attempts to reject the hierarchy that is in place often with research that situates the research at the top. PAR came to become a reality as well, especially with the recognition Swantz (2008) writes as it relates to the political landscape within which PAR is entrenched, “Critiques of the colonial scholarship, imperialistic history, and continuing neo-colonialist presence prepared the ground for new research approaches.” While this is specific to the work that Swantz (2008) was doing on Tanzania, this sentiment is echoed through many other movements that saw PAR as a means for solidarity with the working class. PAR, then, paves the way for YPAR to flourish as an effort to reject dominant narratives, and develop solidarity. In this case, then, YPAR is to disrupt power dynamics that reinforce hegemonic patterns within the education system.

YPAR is rooted in notions of critical PAR, and the central concern is that individuals of a community or organization should be involved in the research process. Understanding PAR

within the K-12 setting, we can better understand YPAR. According to Rodriguez and Brown (2009), YPAR should meet three criteria: allow students to understand their sociopolitical conditions and to meet their goals and better their own conditions; youth must be able to be actively involved in the entire research process, which may mean that they must do unlearning and relearning to be contributors of their own learning process, and in turn, disruption of power dynamics and instead power-sharing; and lastly, the intention should be to encourage activism for the purpose of transformative practices, learning, and education. In this case, it means that students are active researchers, are encouraged to question the conditions of the world around them and be involved in the power of transformation of said conditions. However, there are obstacles that can arise, as recognized in Kohfeldt et al. (2011). In this study, students' structural analysis and other actionable items were limited due to cultural practices, beliefs, and institutional policy (Kohfeldt et al., 2011). In this case, YPAR is valuable, but it can be met with resistance, especially as it *does* disrupt power.

Utilizing Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) requires educator skills that focus on the student, however, are often disregarded in terms of teacher preparation (Rubin, et. al, 2016). Centering a critical pedagogy framework (Freire, 2018) it is necessary to also look at the ways that YPAR allows for student-driven inquiry within the sociopolitical world. In addition, centering important elements of education can prove useful and empowering to develop critical perspectives including that of critical literacy (Mirra et al., 2015), which is aligned with the ontological and epistemological lenses of critical pedagogy. Students should be encouraged to participate in active resistance especially when reviewing oppressive systems of which they may or may not be directly impacted (Cammarota, 2017). It is not, however, as simple as merely throwing students into a position to critically engage, but instead, it must be a deeply embedded

process that allows for the development of said critical literacy and critical research work that YPAR encourages and research has indicated that increased critical consciousness is developed (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Mirra et al., 2015; Rubin et al., 2016).

Students must have encounters that also allow them to critically view the world through new perspectives. By building a YPAR curriculum that is inquiry-driven and develops foundational knowledge for students to conduct and utilize research for community change, students must also have a firm understanding of their positionalities within the larger sociopolitical world. Therefore, prior exposure to learning experiences rooted in critical pedagogy with an emphasis on their own community beliefs that challenge dominant cultures is necessary for YPAR to be emancipatory. In addition, teachers must be explicitly taught to incorporate elements of YPAR in the classroom, which also means that the curriculum should be centered around students' diverse community beliefs, challenging dominant narratives, and clearly utilizing YPAR (Rubin, et. al, 2016).

YPAR has the potential to contribute to understanding broader sociopolitical contexts. Though critical pedagogy is vital for teachers' positionalities to view the world and social implications, YPAR pushes students to engage dialectically with the contextual understanding of curriculum or materials within education. However, it must be understood from unpacking the various circumstances that seem to sidestep the realities students face around their experiences and identities. For instance, minoritized students are often explicitly or implicitly dissuaded from using their voices within K-12 settings. Therefore, there must be a different approach to not just using voice, but feeling empowered enough to do so (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009). Rodriguez and Brown (2009) highlight how participatory action research (PAR) is "explicitly political;" because PAR tends to analyze and discuss structural oppression and delve into these issues on a

personal and collective level, it becomes a deeply inherently political act to engage in it. This is important to note as well because of other potential obstacles, such as the reality that teachers and students alike may face pushback or be incapable of even participating in a YPAR oriented practice if the school is antithetical to the approaches and philosophical underpinnings of YPAR (Rubin et al., 2017.) Looking at the ways that YPAR is politicized is also vital to recognize as YPAR goes beyond merely student voice, which can essentially happen in any setting regardless of social identity and especially those of dominant identities but must be encouraged across all and more so for those who have been disenfranchised personally and historically in and out of the classroom.

YPAR has increased youths' critical thinking and engagement as well as adult's perceptions and change overtime by their act of utilizing YPAR (Ozer, et al., 2020; Kennedy, 2018). In addition, YPAR has limited use within the confines of research-oriented change, or, in other words, YPAR is often not used for things such as institutional or policy implementation (Kennedy, 2018). Few studies have identified the ways in which YPAR itself as a method can be used to meet various standards within public education (Kornbluh et al., 2015; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008.) For example, one study in a school district utilized a quasi-experimental research design to quantitatively measure academic outcomes for students who have been introduced to YPAR, which found a positive relationship between the use of YPAR and academic attendance, though not necessarily indicative of academic achievements (Voight & Velez, 2018). From this research, Voight, and Velez (2018) recommended aligning YPAR with other techniques, such as project-based learning and as part of the core curriculum.

An important understanding of not just social activism and YPAR is that students' cultural backgrounds are vital to recognizing awareness, hence why cultural capital is so

important in conjunction with community cultural wealth. For example, Cammarota and Fine (2008) identify the ways in which students develop their “critical awareness” beyond the confines of a classroom (p. 3). There is a significant necessity to see the ways in which a teachers’ critical pedagogy stance - looking at the multi-faceted social identities that exist - coupled with a desire for “student voice” can provide an argument for the use of YPAR. It is not merely enough to center student voices as historically dominant groups have had those centered. Instead, utilizing YPAR and completed from a lens of critical pedagogy allows for deep unpacking, training, deliberation, dialogue, and investigation that pushes students to see their own power, ability, and interest for social change. In turn, this is vital for not just classroom practice, but also curriculum selection and more importantly, the redesign of curriculum that rejects a hierarchy of knowledge and culture as this often comes from an administrative, bureaucratic, and top-down approach. Lastly, YPAR must be looked at beyond merely a method, but a form of pedagogical praxis, in that theoretical foundations must be firm and in place beyond the utilization of YPAR.

Research and Utilization of YPAR

YPAR is a relatively new field in terms of the academic landscape, but research has highlighted its success, as previously noted. For instance, Voight and Velez (2018) followed an elective that was embedded into the curriculum that focused on the use of YPAR. This curriculum was not about using YPAR for redesigning institutional choices and practice, but rather allowing students to problematize a specific social issue within society. Their study found that YPAR did increase engagement, and they produced quantitative data to support this. However, while it did increase engagement and attendance, they did not necessarily find any connection to other academic endeavors, such as reading or math skills. Meanwhile, Marciano

and Warren (2018) *did* focus on how YPAR can be utilized as part of core curricula, specifically high school English. One key finding they highlighted was how deeply involved the writing process was, and in turn, the contributions their participation in a YPAR project was to a critical literacy approach to reading and writing while also activating their prior knowledge and sociopolitical realities within the assignment.

Additional research has incorporated a variety of unique, yet necessary considerations of YPAR as well and how it is related to, and can be used, by and for youth teaching, learning, and social engagement. For example, Akom et al., (2016) engaged in a project entitled YPAR 2.0, which engaged a framework of YPAR with digital activism. In this project, the researchers identified the use of digital researching and mapping as integral to what they called a “food revolution” in East Oakland, noting food deserts and applicable approaches to combat these issues that youth and the community were facing. Furthermore, students engaged in this project identified how importance it was to be engaged, having a critical awareness of issues that they had not noticed before.

While there have been YPAR studies conducted within the secondary setting, the vast majority are done within community-based settings (Voight & Velez, 2018). Upon further review of the literature, it is apparent that few address institutional practices within the organization or school that the students themselves are attending or with which students are engaging (Kirshner et al., 2011). In the case of a study around district influence,, findings around the school district project indicated that YPAR should and can be used to inform policy changes. However, specifically it noted its connection to impact Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) which is part of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) especially as it related to funding policy currently in place in California (Cohen et al., 2020). It is clear that across the

empirical research conducted on YPAR, though, that YPAR has significant potential to not only increase student participation and engagement, nor only increase classroom change and involvement, but to also make significant institutional, policy, and systemic change.

Revisiting the Conceptual Framework

Praxis is the central motivating theoretical grounding for this research. Praxis, being the critical reflection and action, does not require a specific order, but rather encourages a teacher-researcher approach that is rooted in critical reflection. Actions, then, for pedagogical change and transformative educational practices must be considered how they will aim to dismantle oppressive systems and challenge the status quo, rather than merely an act of what Freire calls false generosity (Freire, 2018). In this case, false generosity is an approach that gives the appearance of structural change, but instead perpetuates inequities and systemic arrangements that allow for disparities, and the encouragement of disparities, of those who have been minoritized and oppressed. Therefore, revisiting this notion of praxis, which is in alignment with critical pedagogy, I must present the reminder that praxis guided this research as I move forward in all that I do and will continue to do as a teacher researcher. With deep conversations around educational reform, equity, or disparities, even such as that with *The Coleman Report*, it is important to reconceptualize, or radically reimagine, the ways that “student-centered” approaches can truly be student-centered with approaches such as YPAR as a way for research-informed and dissenting institutional changes. One such way is to look at how activities can be used through YPAR while building institutional foundations, and in the case of this study, curriculum.

While there is growing literature around YPAR (Rubin et al., 2016; Rubin et al., 2017; Ozer et al., 2020; Kennedy, 2018), it is not a consistent form of pedagogy; for instance, Rubin,

et. al. (2016), identified the lack of use around YPAR in teacher education. Meanwhile, with YPAR's roots in participatory action research (PAR) these research methodologies are often disregarded because of the neoliberal ideologies that are deeply entrenched in institutional and systemic approaches (Jordan, 2009). This is not a limitation of YPAR, especially from a critical perspective, but rather, a reflection social expectations and perceptions around ideologies that are not normative. Lastly, empirical research around the sociological imagination, and especially within the secondary setting, is extremely limited, By centering critical pedagogy (Freire, 2018) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to challenge and disrupt cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), the goal is to contribute to the gaps in the academic conversation around studies in the sociological imagination in the secondary setting, as well as the application of disrupting cultural capital through community cultural wealth for institutional decisions. In addition, another goal is provide empirical research around the use of YPAR for institutional change and practical approaches to using YPAR with youth. While a significant obstacle of this study is that it was not completed in a formal secondary setting, the hope is that this will prove useful for secondary teachers and leaders who are interested in using YPAR for organizational and classroom change. This research, along with its findings, contribute to these gaps, in that there are methodological and practical outcomes, youth feedback and insight, and actual activities and reflections on the sociological imagination that center community cultural wealth, as well as the applied practice of visiting, and challenging, current cultural capital. Specifically, the contributions include the process of fostering a sociological imagination, and specifically, how to incorporate YPAR for institutional decision making.

Chapter 3

The Phrase of the Day is Epistemological Truth, Brought to You by Ontological Reflections

or

Methodology

Praxis

While praxis has been explored in a deeply conceptual and philosophical manner in this dissertation, it is important to mention once more that praxis is not merely a philosophical underpinning of this research, but also a methodological approach. Praxis, then, acts as *both* an ontological and epistemological method, staying true to my philosophical views as a teacher and researcher. This research study was formed because praxis is at the core of who I am and in turn could not be conducted, or understood, without a deep understanding of the conceptual framework as a cohesive unit *with* the methodology, rather than as separate components. The conceptual framework and literature review are not merely pieces of work or simply an academic conversation within the field of education and research to identify gaps in the literature or highlight the significance of this study. Instead, it should be viewed as integral to understanding the ontological and epistemological approaches and foundational concepts that influenced this study. Furthermore, the utilization of YPAR is an approach to align this study with an ontological and epistemological truth of praxis.

YPAR is a methodological approach that should be viewed not only as a methodology but is also a deeply ontological understanding of anti-oppressive pedagogy that can be used, and in turn belongs as both a component to the conceptual framework as well as the methodological approach. Therefore, YPAR will be used to explore how 8-10 recent high school

seniors/graduates develop and demonstrate a sociological imagination exploring, analyzing, and collaboratively writing curriculum that adhere to California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards by redesigning said curriculum to center their lived experiences and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005).

Research Questions

Revisiting the research questions for this study, they are:

1. How do recent high school seniors/graduates critically engage in YPAR to redesign curriculum?
2. How, if at all, do recent high school seniors/graduates develop and demonstrate a sociological imagination while engaging in a YPAR project?

Positionality

While my prologue serves as my positionality that has influenced my trajectory as a teacher, researcher, student, and even parent, it is important that I address my position as it relates directly to this research. When I started the larger project, I was a secondary school teacher, and some of the initial steps were designed for the school where I was working. When I left that position, I radically shifted gears to stay true to who I am as a researcher. The idea of dissent has essentially been at the core of this project, as the original stages of curriculum development was supposed to be an institutional critical literacy framework, just not for the nonprofit that I lead. This study did develop into something different than the initial plan, which has allowed me to stay true to who I am ontologically, but I did have strong feelings about this research after I quit the position as I was passionate about the intentionality of YPAR in this project.

In addition, I am the executive director of The Dignified Learning Project. This puts me in a position of power as this position does carry weight when it comes to interactions within and outside of the organization. I have social capital which allowed me to recruit participants for this study as well, which in some cases, I already had a preestablished relationship with one of the participants, and the others were through other means of connection, such as students of sociology professors, as this does impact how participants would demonstrate their sociological imagination. This also means that my critical perspectives would likely be well received between my position of authority and the potential introduction the participants have to sociological concepts. Being a teacher of students this age, and knowing this demographic of students even if I was not their teacher directly, has given me a sense of insight around these participants that may influence my analysis and interactions. However, I aimed to mitigate this by addressing this through my own positionality, sharing my positionality with the participants, and have the participants to address their own positionalities for the research.

Research Design

For this study, I utilized Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) as a research tool for institutional change, structural analysis, and exploration of YPAR as a pedagogical practice and philosophy. A systematic review of methodologies by Anyon et al., (2018) of YPAR indicate that studies are still relatively new, however, they did find that 68.3% (41) of YPAR studies utilized qualitative approaches, 5% (3) utilized quantitative approaches, and 23.3% (14) utilized a mixed methods approach. While this systematic review did approach YPAR from a methodological approach, another study that centered students and the usage of photovoice noted that, “Yet, YPAR projects often require communities and local organizations to behave in new ways toward youth, to implement unfamiliar activities, and/or to work with others in new ways”

(Foster-Fishman, 2010, p. 82). Lastly, another study conducted by Cook and Krueger-Henney (2017) asserts that, “YPAR positions youth as active participants in group processes, authors of assessment tools, and investigators of group work outcomes” (p. 186). Recognizing YPAR as a methodology that must be flexible, and in turn, is rooted deeply in anti-oppressive, non-hierarchical epistemology is how I designed this study. Namely, I recognize that this methodology can seem unconventional to traditional research methodologies because there *must* be a transformative and reimagining of research, community, and change. Taking this into consideration, I approached this YPAR project and study with a semi-structured research design; this is not to say that the study was not be rigorously conducted, but rather, I approached this study with the idea that youth are active participants in this study, and in turn, I was fully aware and prepared to be flexible, act as merely an agent of guidance, and to assure that this project approaches youth projects differently than typical, dominant, scholarly approaches to methodologies may normally consider. This study draws from and builds on previous work of classroom practice, organizational and community practice, and other YPAR projects and literature views (Anyon et al., 2018; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Kennedy, 2018; Kohfeldt et al., 2011; Kornbluh et al., 2015; Mirra et al., 2015; Rodriguez & Brown, 2009; Rubin et al., 2016; Swanz, 2008).

While this study primarily used qualitative research methods within YPAR, I also incorporated secondary data that I collected from a previous study that surveyed students on their perceptions of cultural representation within their schooling experience. Qualitatively, we developed curriculum around California State Standards for social studies as a content and an outcome to exemplify YPAR in action. Qualitative research was conducted centering praxis as the motivation underpinnings and YPAR as both a methodological and philosophical research

model. Additionally, this study's quantitative component specifically is a reanalysis of the previous survey from the pilot study and a redesign of the survey done collaboratively with the participants.

The design of this study includes data collection through workshops which I facilitated. In these workshops, I frontloaded the concepts that pertained to sociology, critical pedagogy, and research design/YPAR. In addition, we discussed the pilot studies, findings from that research, and how to conduct analysis of the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, how we would engage in collaborative lesson planning. I also administrated pre- and post-knowledge checks of sociological concepts, and then also had student reflections on the entire process.

There are several pieces to this research to consider as well. Because the data sources are so vast, there were elements of both inductive and deductive analytic approaches, and the approaches were divided into participatory as well as research oriented. For instance, my theoretical framework motivated my engagement and ways that I interact with the students, so in turn, this inductive approach is focused on how to center critical pedagogy and critical concepts in an educational setting. The deductive approach was centered more on how to look at students' demonstration of a sociological imagination and how YPAR can contribute to the development of the sociological imagination, as the theoretical framework informed my approach, but it was not directly connected to this research outcome. That is, there was more of a focus on observing the participants and how they demonstrate their sociological imaginations and engage in a YPAR project.

In this study, my initial goals for the workshops, where the workshops were where data were generated, were to:

1. Explain and teach youth participatory action research to students so we can engage in the process of YPAR.
2. Co-Create curriculum that meets California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, collaboratively created with students that center critical sociohistorical concepts as well as students' lived experiences.
3. Generate data that highlights the feelings, experiences, and responses from students' interactions during the YPAR process.
4. Better understand how to develop and foster a sociological imagination with youth using YPAR and in turn, refine pedagogical approaches to teaching the sociological imagination

The decision to use the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards requirement as a tool for this study is important to note because of a few reasons. First and foremost, I have expertise in the social studies fields having been a humanities teacher for grades 8-12, as well as a sociology professor for undergraduate students. While I was a secondary school teacher, I was working in both history and English due to the humanities role. However, because of my social studies and sociology background, this will study will be focused on the creation of lessons and content that meet California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, which include Economics and Government. In addition, teachers are expected to meet the state standards, so a major goal of this study was to bridge the gap between the idealistic and hopeful goals of an education system that challenges and dismantles oppressive systems, with practical approaches to engaging in collaborative, participatory means in the classroom.

Lastly, as the researcher and facilitator of the workshop, I observed and analyzed the knowledge checks as I was looking at sociological thinking within their work. This was done

primarily as the researcher due to the expectations of the study. The rest of the data were analyzed collaboratively. I was transparent with students with the goal of developing and demonstrating a sociological imagination, and while there had been prior concern around influencing the data, I later decided that this would not be as big of a concern. I did not, nor do I, feel this negatively influenced the participants' engagement with the study because they understood what the expectations would be similarly to how that would be in a classroom setting, and, if they did not develop sociological thinking or understanding, they would not be able to demonstrate a sociological imagination regardless of attempts to do so. However, the data collected around their sociological imaginations were analyzed solely by me, the researcher.

Context of the Research

Originally, this research and its activities were going to be completed entirely in-person at a college university in the urban southern California area through a nonprofit, *The Dignified Learning Project (DLP)*. The Dignified Learning Project is a nonprofit based in San Diego, CA. Most of its activities have been virtually or on various borrowed or rented spaces, including college campuses. The location for this study took place on a large university campus that The DLP has an agreement on file for its community engagement. Historically, we have conducted workshops and other activities at the location where we were serving students, but because of COVID-19, we have been engaging primarily virtually, including our conferences, research, and student services.

The Dignified Learning Project is a nonprofit that I started in 2016 as part of my master's level project and comprehensive exam. The intentionality of The DLP was in fact, praxis, which is also the name of our annual student-based conference. The nonprofit started as an independent research project, but we continued to research pedagogy and community engagement in

education, Dr. Jung Choi, a professor in sociology at San Diego State University, and I decided it needed to be a long-term interaction to make transformative change. Dr. Choi has a background in community-based research, so we merged together our interests and goals to create the organization. I did the research on how to create a nonprofit organization in the State of California as well as federal exemption. I then filed the documents with the state and the federal government and established the DLP. The three primary pillars of The DLP are: student services, teacher collaboration, and community engagement, with an emphasis on sustainable equity efforts that prevent gatekeeping. A key tenant of the organization is that we believe education should be accessible at all levels and, for instance, the only requirement for conference or college acceptance is a desire to learn and do the work to get there.

We (the DLP) have worked with students during their college application process, worked as consultants with a variety of institutions including Parks and Recreation city departments, other universities, and art museums. In addition, we have done guest lectures, conducted courses on structure and agency within school, and are launching our Institute on Youth Participatory Action Research. This is central to our mission that centers praxis. The mission statement for The DLP is, “To Manifest the Values of Dignity through Student Services, Teacher Collaboration, and Community Engagement” (DignifiedLearningProject.org). In addition, we have several partnerships, including with a university department and their community engagement. Because we have relationships and we are launching our institute, the research is conducted in a way to critically engage with the materials, aligns with the mission statement of the organization and my persona philosophical belief, and will provide accessible materials, both content and pedagogical, for further access to equity in the future. Our unofficial, off the books motto is, “We want to be put out of business as soon as possible.” While this is an

idealistic stance, we hold this firmly as our belief because our goal should be to transform systems that would no longer require organizations like ours, as equity, and liberation, are achieved. We also recognize this is an ongoing journey and not an end goal, and therefore, this research is one effort to maintain that journey.

It is important to note that the intentionality of this was that a central component of this project was to focus on the utilization of dialogue and collaboration. Despite my reservations to conduct research and engage online, several considerations took place that ultimately resulted in our shift to online modality. First, because the research team was made up of college freshman, excluding myself obviously, the members were exiting their first semester and then entering their second semester. Then, with the rise of COVID-19, influenza, RSV, as well as accessibility to the materials and the workshops if a participant as experiencing any type of transportation issue, physical hurdle, or otherwise limiting opportunity to get to the physical location, we decided to shift the modality of the research. In turn, three workshops were in-person with virtual options if somebody were unable to attend, and six were online during a time when all participants were not going to be in San Diego or on campus; while there were eight workshops toward the research, there were a total of nine meetings. Furthermore, the first meeting, which I call Workshop Zero, was entirely in-person. This was a collaborative effort that was decided by the group. This will be discussed further in the section on the first round of data collection as this was a collaborative decision and not done solely based on my own perceptions, preferences, or goals.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through sample snowballing techniques. I contacted teachers with whom I had previously worked and I also reached out to interested members of The DLP,

who have been following our activities and programming for several years. I created a flyer and posted it to The DLP's social media pages and reshared it to my personal social media as well, specifically Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, seen in Appendix A. The recruitment registration included detailed information about the project, length of the workshops, and proposed meeting times. I also explicitly wrote that the times could change according to the overall group's schedules. I included my contact information through The Dignified Learning Project. From there, other individuals who have attended our conferences also shared the information to their network.

The eligibility for this study was that participants had to have graduated high school in 2022 and reside in Southern California. I highlighted that this research project had a goal to apply classroom experiences to educational change. The reason that the inclusion criteria is that they are recent graduates is that they will have already completed their senior year of high school, which, in the State of California, is the year that they would take 12th grade social studies, specifically economics and government. Therefore, participants only had to be 18 and were high school graduates of the Class of 2022. This study and accompanying workshops were open to students of any gender, ability, racial identity, sexual identity, or other social identities so long as they met the criteria for participation in the study.

Participants

I initially aimed to recruit between 8-10 participants, due to the various forms of data collection as well as the number of workshops. I ultimately ended up with 9 participants who were members of the research study, or part of what I will later call, research team. Because The DLP has interacted with many sociology majors, individuals who were current and past teaching

assistants at the university also shared the information to their students. This means that there was a higher representation of students who have taken a sociology class.

There were 8 female presenting, women identifying individuals, and 1 male presenting, man identifying individual who participated the study. Their racial identities included: one Latina, three White, two Asian, two Multiethnic (one Asian and Latina, and the other White and Latina) and one Arab identifying individuals. A limitation, which will be explored further, is that while this is relatively diverse, there were no Pacific Islander, Native American, or Black participants in this study, as well as only one male research team member. While racial backgrounds were of importance to this study as it relates to community cultural wealth, I did not center solely their racial identities as the emphasis is on cocreating the curriculum with their direction based on cultural backgrounds, and not my preestablished assumptions of their cultural backgrounds. I relied on their own reporting, dialogue, and engagement, as well as the ongoing activities, to use and inform my understanding and analysis of the curriculum and overall study. Refer to Table 1 for more detail. Participants are referred to as their participant letter to keep their participation and identities confidential. Please note that while these identities are important to recognize the importance of community cultural wealth, in order to respect and honor their participation, detailed life experiences were not captured on an individual level unless it was related to education, curriculum, and the study. In addition, because the recording and capturing of individual personal stories were not included in the IRB submission, those will not be included. For these reasons, identities relevant to the systemic nature of the study are included. Lastly, while this section refers to them as participants, it is important to note that later in the methodology section, I begin referring to them as research partners, and that is done intentionally so.

Participant A.

Participant A participated in workshops 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7. She joined the study because she responded to a sociology teaching assistant's email. She followed the link and submitted her information to the study registration. She was unable to make it to workshop 0, but had followed up with me and maintained contact to be present for Workshop 1. Participant A, at the time, was a student in an introductory sociology course and had expressed interest in the study due to the nature of community cultural wealth and applied research.

Participant A identifies as an Asian female, more specifically as a first-generation, Filipina American woman born in the Philippines. She had moved around quite a bit and recognized that though she struggled throughout her life with a variety of personal struggles that will remain private. The U.S. education system was "dysfunctional" as she puts it, though she did have individual teachers who acted as mother figures to her. Her hope for joining the study specifically was to see how she was able to relate to the curriculum and schooling in the U.S.

Participant B.

Participant B participated in workshops 0, 1, 4, 5, and 8. She is former student of mine. I was her high school advisory teacher, and have worked on a variety of projects, including grants for a food justice club, college applications, and additional items. When I had expressed my study to Participant B prior in a meeting where we caught up, she had stated that when I was ready to recruit, to let her know and that she would try to recruit individuals as well as she is a student at a different large university in the San Diego area.

Participant B is a multiethnic, Latina and Filipina American female student. She identifies as Queer and is a first-generation college student. Another key part of her identity is her ADHD, which she discussed in the meetings as a contributing factor to some of her engagement through schooling. She does not attend the same college as the other participants in the study. She elected to join the study because of its similarities to projects that she has been part of before at her high school as well as her interest in being part of a research study. When I had been granted approval to begin collecting data, I had sent her the link, with no expectation for her to participate, though she did register for the study.

Participant C.

Participant C participated in workshops 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8. He responded to a teaching assistant's email from his sociology class expressing recruitment for high school graduates of 2022. He is a first-generation male, Asian student, specifically identifying as Chinese American. He attributes being the oldest son and brother as important parts of his identity as it relates to schooling, primarily because of the pressures of being a first-generation college student who is also middle-class as he has familial expectations and pressures as it relates to his academic progress and success. He works part-time as well. His reason for joining the study was to participate in research that can make actual change and impact future students in ways that he was not able to experience. He also stated the importance of research skills and personal development as contributing factors for his participation in the study.

Participant D.

Participant D participated in workshops 0, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. She was also a student in the introductory sociology course and responded to a class announcement. She is a White female who is the youngest of four children. This is significant to her identity due to the relationship she

has with her siblings and the various personal struggles she wanted them face. She mentions having grown up in a privileged area, but she also struggled within her educational journey because of her unidentified and undiagnosed ADHD, which is one of her identities. She also attributes her gender and ADHD to some of her struggles because of the expectations of what it meant to be a girl who “misbehaved” and felt like “the boys.” She questioned her self-worth before realizing it was systemic, and this has contributed to her career trajectory of wanting to become a K-12 teacher. This is also one of the reasons she joined the study: to engage in an actionable approach to educational reform and, as she states, she has a “deep appreciation for creativity and the youthful mind.”

Participant E.

Participant E participated in workshops 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. She responded to a teaching assistant’s email in the introductory sociology course. She identifies as a neurodiverse, able-bodied, multiethnic, multiracial, specifically in her words, Hispanic and White, Queer female, with ADHD, sister, and American, who grew up in a low-income community. These identities were important for her because of her positionality as a student, as well as how she interacts with schooling. She also feels that a lot of the familial relationships contributed to her self-reliance and the way that she engaged within the education system, including many of the difficulties she faced and especially as it relates to her identity as being neurodiverse.

She recognizes that she was in gifted classes even though she struggled, and that she was able to see how this, along with her sister’s disability, were often disregarded in the educational system, lacking support and structures in place. She joined this study because of her status as a student at the university in sociology, but also because, she states, “I think my input as a young woman of color who grew up in a low-income community brings much needed representation to

this study... I have found that there is very little to no representation or consideration of my or other's identities, and there is not much effort being made by those with the ability to change this to actually change it.”

Participant F.

Participant F participated in workshops 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. She was recruited by a classmate in the sociology class and responded to the class email. She identifies as a, Arab female, child of Algerian immigrants, and in turn as Algerian, and felt very disconnected from elements of her family, having been one of two members (her brother as well) of the entire family to be born outside of Algeria. She faced barriers surrounding language, generational gaps, and cultural divides. This contributed to a lot of her differences and passionate interactions within school, which is what also contributed to her interested in the research project.

She was an active participant in school events and movements while in high school, which is what allowed her to see the education institution in a different light and, as she states, “how the voices of students were listened to but not truly heard.” She believes that voices should be elevated, and in turn, wanted to be a part of a project that could encourage youth voice.

Participant G.

Participant G participated in all 9 meeting sessions. She responded to a sociology class announcement about the study. She is a White female student with ADHD who has stated she has geographic privilege, and prefers to leave her sexuality as “unlabeled.” She feels ADHD is a part of her identity, but does not like the label as she says she feels defined by only that part of her identity. Other important parts of her identity include being a sister and daughter from Northern California and an artist, as well as a girlfriend, friend, and full-time student. She loved school until she no longer did. She said that when she was younger “school felt like an

adventure” as she was curious. However, she felt like she only completed school and met standards because there was pressure to go to college. She felt that materials were repetitive and boring. This contributed greatly to her interest in the study because she wanted to help others after her begin critically questioning things and maintain their interest and curiosity in ways she was not afforded.

Participant H.

Participant H participated in all meeting sessions. She also responded to a class announcement from her sociology class about this study. She identifies as a Latina, first-generation college student who grew up in a lower socioeconomic neighborhood that she said is “not the best”. It was her financial position both in and after high school that has encouraged her to push through and take advantage of school and educational opportunities. She is paying for school herself and was able to see how schooling impacted her and others. She joined the study as a personal endeavor to “embrace new opportunities” and she wanted to see ways that sociology could be applied and hopes to see change come from the process that we engaged in during the research. In addition, she has participated in an AP research class in high school, which also piqued her interests in this research.

Participant I.

Participant I responded to a class announcement from sociology as well to participate in the study. She participated in all 9 meeting sessions. She is a White female who cites always being critical of education and school as the biggest factor to join the study. In addition, both of her parents were sociology majors, which has contributed to some of her earlier ideas and introductions to critical perspectives. Because of her background, she states that this contributes

to her interest in “taking down corrupt systems and evaluation institutions based on qualifications of equality.” For her, participation in this study is one applied way to do that.

Table 1

Participant Letter with recruitment method and details of identity

Participant Letter	Recruitment	Details
A	Responded to teaching assistant’s email	Asian, Filipina, female student First-generation Participated in workshops: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7
B	Former student	Multiethnic female student Queer First-generation college student Disability: ADHD Participated in workshops: 0, 1, 4, 5, and 8
C	Responded to teaching assistant’s email	Asian, Chinese, male student First-generation college student Oldest son Participated in workshops: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8
D	Responded to class announcement	White female student Disability: ADHD Youngest of four children Participated in workshops: 0, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8
E	Responded to teaching assistant’s email	Multiethnic female student Hispanic and White Disability: ADHD Queer Participated in workshops: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8
F	Recruited by classmate/participant	Arab (Algerian) female student First-generation immigrant Participated in workshops: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8
G	Responded to class announcement	White female student Disability: ADHD

		Sexuality, unlabeled Geographic privilege Participated in workshops: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8
H	Responded to class announcement	Latina female student First-generation college student Lower socioeconomic status Participated in workshops: 0, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6
I	Responded to class announcement	White female student Parents were sociology majors Participated in workshops: 0 (online), 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8

Data Generation

Data were generated through eight workshops; I had additional meeting session that was a meeting, but did not constitute as a workshop, on the anticipated start date, on November 18, 2022. Eight participants had signed up for the workshops, however two did not attend the first meeting. Participant I was unable to attend in person, so she was online, while the other five participants, Participants B, C, D, G, and H were in person in the conference room. In addition, one of the initial registrants had a change in his circumstances, so was unable to attend, while Participant A was unable to attend the first meeting, however, she did attend starting the next meeting.

I chose the seminar format because it could simulate a similar classroom environment, though with substantially fewer individuals involved than in a typical secondary classroom setting. Because dialogue is an important component of critical pedagogy, dialogical engagement is a necessity, and this was encouraged in the workshop format, with heavy emphasis on in-person preferred. While this was conducted through a nonprofit organization, the intentionality was to use the findings to inform pedagogical practice in addition to contributing to the academic conversation and institutional contributions. In turn, workshops were the best route because I

needed to present mini lessons where students would be entrenched in dialogue. Through the data collection and collaborative planning, we also fostered community in multiple ways.

The initial round of data I collected was that of the student's prior knowledge of sociological concepts that they may or may not have had. This knowledge check began at the beginning of the first meeting session for the participants who attended, and then at the beginning of the first workshop for the new participants. The remaining data were collected during the 8-weeks and at the end with a final knowledge check to reflect on change and growth of the participants. Additional data were analyzed using content analysis of the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, along with secondary data analysis of the survey from a previous pilot study around community cultural wealth and cultural capital. We also co-created curriculum that centered community cultural wealth analyzed through a YPAR approach with the participants. A final collaborative assessment of the curriculum was analyzed with the group. Lastly, student reflections on their experiences, final thoughts, and processes during the workshops were collected and analyzed. The knowledge checks and student reflections, as well as the field notes were analyzed by me, the researcher, while the remaining data – the standards, curriculum, and secondary data – were analyzed by the entire group.

Each workshop focused on a significant part of the process, including community building, sociological concepts, the sociological imagination, California State 12th Grade Social Studies Standards, and engagement in the YPAR process. The focus was on using sociological thinking and YPAR to analyze the standards, collect data, and redesign curriculum that addresses and centers the lived experiences within standards. Reflecting on these experiences was also a collaborative effort to stay epistemologically true to the YPAR and critical pedagogy approaches. Further detail of each of the workshops and sessions are provided below.

Procedures and Steps

This research study took place through nine meeting sessions, eight of which were designated as workshops. These acted as seminars and included observations, reflections, and done similarly to that of a classroom environment. Initially, we planned for weekly workshops, however, in the first meeting session we establish meeting times that were best for everybody as the participants wanted to continue the study through break and wanted to be flexible with the formatting. Originally, while I anticipated solely in-person, to honor the YPAR approach and students' voice, I was flexible. Each session still lasted 90 minutes, but because dialogue, collaboration, and YPAR were the heart of this study, the workshops were semi-structured. With that said, I have provided procedures and steps I took during each of the works to ensure that the research design stayed organized, reliable, and on track.

The workshops had been outlined previously in a way that was similar to a lesson plan – organized with student outcomes per session and end goals – but also allowed for flexibility as a classroom setting will rarely to never go as planned. Workshops 1 and 8 included knowledge checks. Workshop 1 was a space to be introduced to the project and build community. Workshop 2 introduced participants to sociological and YPAR content, where these ideas were also continuously woven throughout the workshops. Workshops 3 & 4 was where we began our content analysis as a group. Workshop 5 is where we reviewed the secondary data from my pilot study, analyzed the data, and then discussed how to redesign the survey. Workshops 6 and 7 focused on curriculum design and lesson planning. I left open space for the last workshop for flexibility purposes in case we needed to go over, students wanted to lead a workshop, or there were unforeseen circumstances that would arise due to the structure of YPAR. Participants were informed that they were able to leave the study if they needed to, and we discussed obstacles that

we may face. It is important to note that because of my teaching background, and my goals to produce guidance and outcomes that can help other teachers and institutions use YPAR in the classroom and organizations, I engaged with the participants in this setting in very similar ways that I do as a classroom teacher and sociology instructor. In turn, each of the meeting sessions are described in detail below for both pedagogical practice as well as an understanding of the research methodological within each workshop.

Workshops

Workshop 0: Initial Meeting

Workshop 0 was not a true workshop, but rather a meeting or first session. I refer to it as Workshop 0 because of its original intention to be the first workshop, but it instead turned into a meeting session that resulted in collaborative planning of the entire study. Participants began showing up just before 4pm, and I invited them into the conference room. Before this meeting, one participant, Participant I, had emailed me and told me that they wanted to participate and were very interested in the project, but that they would not be able to attend in-person due to a family obligation that took them out of town. Because we had just experienced a global pandemic, which was still in effect in many ways, technological shifts were not new, and this did not pose any major obstacles. I agreed, and I invited her to a Zoom link at that point. I turned my computer to face the group, and by then four other participants had arrived. Shortly after, by 4:25pm, the sixth participant had arrived. Now, Participants B, C, D, G, and H were in person in the conference room, with Participant I online.

My initial plan was that participants would be completely in-person, as previously noted. My justification for this was that students had been online for several years of their high school careers, so this would provide valuable in-person engagement and foster community in different,

and dialogical ways, which was a challenge for the participants as students and myself as a teacher via an online format. Because dialogue is a component of critical pedagogy and my teaching philosophy, the expectation was that in-person workshops would also encourage that. Yet, this eventually changed upon further discussion, which I will describe in more detail and decided collaboratively as well.

It was important to me that we used the conference room or at least a room that was flexible with seating because of my own teaching philosophy. Every educational setting that I have taught in I have attempted to set the room in a way that allowed for students to sit in a circle. We normally explore and discuss why this is, especially when students have not been exposed to this. I believe that one way of humanizing each other in an educational setting is to be able to see each other, and in turn, this is how we sat in the group. I intentionally avoided sitting at the end of the table and instead sat *with* them. We went around the room, me included, and introduced ourselves. Participants introduced themselves with their names, majors, and how and why they decided to be part of the group. Participant D expressed that she wants to be a teacher and wants to change education. Participants C and G talked about how they thought it would be a fun. Participant H stated that she had been in an AP Research class in high school. Participant B joined because she was a former student of mine, and Participant I was interested in the project and had expressed that she hated school and likes talking about it. Five of the six participants were there from the same sociology course, however, only two participants knew each other, Participants D and I.

After we introduced ourselves and I explained briefly about the study, I administered the knowledge checks. I had emailed Participant I her knowledge check, and the rest of the participants filled out theirs in the session. The questions in the knowledge checks were

foundational concepts to sociology. These knowledge checks were not intended to gauge where they were and in turn, influence what my goals were for sociological teaching, but rather to identify what prior knowledge they are coming to this study with. In addition, to gauge their sociological imaginations, I also asked them questions about representation. These questions were given to them on paper, and I read them out loud. To understand the questions on the knowledge check, please see Appendix B.

While they finished the knowledge checks, I did notice something interesting, which prompted a side conversation. Of the five participants in-person, three of them were left-handed. I brought this up to the group for two reasons, 1) to model how observational data can be collected and 2) because it was an interesting observation itself. This did initiate a conversation among the participants as to why, some noting that perhaps there was a connection between their handedness and interest in sociology, and in turn sitting in that conference room.

Once we were finished, we began discussing the project in more detail, and Participant G stated that they could all recruit a person. They counted how many participants were there and stated that if they could each try to recruit one participant, we could hit the minimum of eight participants. I then sent them the link. Several participants also stated that instead of email, we should communicate through a messaging app called GroupMe, as they do not use their calendars or school email frequently. I created a GroupMe group for our study, invited people, and in there we shared the information about the workshop meetings and additional contact information.

Because this was not a typical workshop, I did not record the session. I did take field notes while we were there and explained to the participants why I was doing that. I also expressed to them how we would proceed after that meeting time. We concluded the meeting,

and then I followed up with them the next day thanking them for their participation, willingness, and reminding them of our meeting that we collaboratively planned for two weeks later.

Workshop 1: Knowledge Check and Community Building

On Friday, December 2, 2022, at 4pm, participants arrived at the conference room again. I introduced myself to the group as we had three members who had not previously been in attendance, but who had registered between the time of the first meeting and this first workshop. They also had been introduced to the GroupMe application, which had the chat thread between all the current members, and had current information about meetings. To begin the session, I asked that we let the three participants complete the knowledge checks prior to beginning, and individuals quietly engaged with each other. They completed these by hand on a worksheet that I had printed for them. After fifteen minutes, all three of the new participants had completed the knowledge checks and I collected them. Then, to be welcoming to the whole group, and as this was only our second meeting and it had been two weeks since our first meeting, we went around the room and introduced ourselves again. Introductions included participants sharing their names, majors, how they found their way into the research study and YPAR project, as well as why they wanted to participate.

After introductions finished, I introduced in detail the research project. I explained what youth participatory action research is, the goals of the research project, and its connection to sociology. I also explained my background so that the participants understood who I am as a researcher; this included my experience as a secondary school teacher, a sociology college professor, as well as a master's level graduate from the same institution they attended.

Positionality is vital to recognize, and as a researcher, educator, and an older person in the room

with the participants, I recognized my positionality both internally as well as vocally with my participants.

Once I explained the study as well as my background, I asked them for permission to record the workshop, and explained it would not record their faces or identities, and that only I would have access to the data and recordings. I used Otter.Ai to record the session, which was recording for the entirety of the session. Once recording began, I laid out the goals of the session and then we started talking through educational experiences. This intentionality of this was to be a dialogical experience, centering students' community cultural backgrounds as it related to education. In addition, because this was supposed to replicate a classroom experience to establish pedagogical tools and practice, I posed questions as it related to the project and methodologies. With that said, participants connected the concept of YPAR to student voice, which prompted my question for the group. I asked the participants, "How many of you have been told before that 'We value student voice'?" Discussions then ensued around student voice, educational experiences, and individual reflections.

Throughout, I made several observations, which also allowed for shifts in conversations and prompting questions, such as a shift in their views on teacher versus education system. In any classroom setting, educators do need to be flexible but also ensure that there is guidance. In this case, I allowed participants to engage in dialogue around their education settings, but also ensured that we stayed on track with room to adjust and accommodate conversation and directions that participants may have wanted to take the discussion. The conversation covered a variety of topics, including their personal experiences, deep dialogue on Gifted and Talented Education (G.A.T.E), emerging multilingual classification, and built rapport with each other over shared struggles and differences in school settings. Several students who did not know each other

learned that they were from adjacent districts, which prompted excitement through the community building.

From there, participants also shifted gears and started asking me questions about my perspectives on some of the topics they were discussing. I was still involved in the conversation for guidance, but I also allowed the dialogue to develop organically. We started discussing the connection between educational settings, curriculum, and redlining, as well as sociohistorical conditions as they asked me questions. From there, we refocused on the intention of the study and how we would proceed, so in turn, it turned into discussing the change in education, curriculum, and its connection to standards. This allowed the conversation to be connected back to the purpose and intentionality of the study. After we finalized the workshop, we concluded at 5:31pm. This prepared us for the second workshop to follow on our next date, which would be the next session on December 9, 2022. Immediately after Workshop 1, I then transcribed the audio from the recording through Otter.Ai.

Workshop 2: Content Workshops

Workshop 2 was designed to be a content workshop, introducing participants to sociological concepts, critical pedagogy, and YPAR, which included research methodologies. It is important to note that these concepts were continuously woven through the remaining workshops, however, the primary concepts and foundational knowledge was presented here and went as planned. At 4:00pm, participants arrived at the conference room. Due to circumstances beyond my control, two participants, Participants B and H were unable to make it to the workshop, however, I had prepared the session with a graphic organizer (See Appendix C.) that pertained to the key concepts, as well as a video for participants to review as it was a content focused, lesson focused workshop. Shortly before the workshop, I had sent the participants two

readings on participatory action research, one PDF (Krishnaswamy, 2004) in a shared Google folder and a link to another, on participatory action research (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). Then, at 4:15pm, we began talking about sociological concepts in more detail, where we began using the graphic organizer. This was created as a way for participants to take notes should they need, to collaborate, and to organize the key concepts. The first part of the document had two photos, a photo of a Starbucks cup and another of several Barbies, as seen in the graphic organizer in Appendix C. I created this activity to begin developing and demonstrating the sociological imagination as it related to both the overall study as well as research question two. Furthermore, this activity is something that I use regularly to begin having conversation about the sociological imagination in introductory and foundational sociology classes. Participants were put into small groups – there were two groups of two, or pairs, and then another group of three, as only seven of the nine participants were present.

Before the participants began, I explained what the activity was going to be. I asked them to analyze the photos using their sociological imaginations. I generally do this as an introductory sociology instructor as well. I walked them through the graphic organizers, which had key vocabulary words and concepts that pertained to that workshop and the overall study. I explained that we will go through those concepts, but before we do they would begin the activity and spend no more than five minutes analyzing the photographs. I also reminded them that I would be recording the session. I prompted them to look at the photos and reflect on what they think they may represent, how they might analyze what they see, and to begin surveying the photos. Then, I asked them to partner with somebody near them and that after they had some time to discuss, we would come back together as a larger class. This was to use the think-pair-share cooperative

learning strategy (Lyman, 1981) that is often used by K-12 teachers, and I have used in my secondar humanities class, as well as my sociology courses.

The participants began discussing the photographs. I wrote on the board the name of the coffee chain and the name of the doll manufacturer on the board to prepare for when we came back together. I watched the clock and after the first 5 minutes, I recommended that they switch gears to the second photo, and then spent another 5 minutes while they were exploring the second photo. We then regrouped and turned our attention to the sharing portion of the activity. I asked the participants to share with the class while I wrote their answers on the board some of the key findings, they had from the photos based on their usage of their sociological imagination.

The first response was that it was about capitalism. From there, I prompted additional thoughts and deeper analysis. Participants discussed everything from gender to sexuality, representation, Eurocentric facial features, marketing, and their own personal experiences around coffee. After offering a few guiding questions, participants began piecing together different concepts and how they were interconnected from the micro level to the macro level. Once we finished the activity and had delved deeply into the ideas, tracing these seemingly simple photos to farm workers, sweatshop labor, and imperialism, I explained that one of the biggest goals of a sociological imagination is to be able to see the ways that our individual, small-scale situations are intertwined with the sociohistorical and systemic issues at hand.

From there, we began diving into key sociological concepts and methods-based concepts. The concepts, which can be found in Appendix D, covered were systems/systemic, structure, agency, race, culture, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexuality, disability, intersectionality, qualitative methods, quantitative methods, participatory research methods, sociological imagination, representation, and we stopped then, leaving equity, equality, liberatory practices, and pedagogy.

The workshops were designed merely as a plan, and they stayed as that: a plan, much like teaching in a secondary classroom. It is important to note here that while most of the participants were sociology majors or were in a sociology course, they were already not familiar with many of these foundational concepts in a deeply sociological way and did not know who coined the term the sociological imagination (Mills, 1959). This did leave open the opportunity for further dialogue that connected micro and macro issues that related to agency and structure.

We dove into research, specifically quantitative and qualitative methods, we discussed some of the primary differences between the methodologies and what type of data collection we will be engaging in from then on. Participants were not familiar with the difference or concepts of qualitative and quantitative methods, though we discussed what their initial thoughts were with them based on root words. Participants were able to identify quantitative having to do with numbers, and from there we discussed deeper what types of tools are used in each of them, how they are used, and what types of questions we may be asking, in turn, how they relate to what methodologies chosen.

I broke the workshop into two groups and assigned two separate readings, as noted previously. Group 1, with participants D, F, G, and I, read and annotated the article entitled, *Participatory Research: Strategies and Tools* (Krishnaswamy, 2004) and Group 2, with participants A, C, and E, read and annotated the other article, *Participatory Research Methods: A Methodological Approach in Motion* (Bergold & Thomas, 2012). After the groups discussed and provided key concepts, we came back together as a larger group and shared what each of the individuals and groups came up with regarding the readings. This paved the way to discuss further research methods, what society tends to value, and why we will be using youth participatory action research, the role of research methods, as well as community voice.

We discussed once more how the workshops would be organized and how we will be discussed and applying many of these concepts of the work that we will be completing and data we will be collecting. I emphasized the importance of cultural backgrounds, and how culture, race, and ethnicity are different and how this will be applicable to the data we collect and how we will analyze it. Continued conversation is vital for the growth and development of the sociological imagination, as well as the applicability of the sociological concepts to data and educational transformation. In addition, I explained how I used and developed the graphic organizer, and these will be an important means for organizing data as we begin data collection, coding, and analysis. Because we are a group of individuals who have come together to complete a research project that uses youth participatory action research, and this is intended to be a research team essentially, discussed about timing and the next semester ensued. The participants are all undergraduate students, and the initial state of research would have required us to continue into the second semester. Our research team talked about pros and cons of this schedule, and to better dedicate time and flexibility, the group decided to complete the workshops before the start of the next semester. They had noted that they were stressed currently with finals, as it was their first semester, and that was actually why the two participants who were absent had to miss: finals and stress. Because of my critical and humanizing stance, I followed their lead, and we elected to complete the rest of the workshops before the next semester with a schedule that was accessible for all participants. In addition, because of the rise of COVID, RSV, and influenza, and then the holiday surges, the shift from in-person to online was a necessity as several of us, me included, had underlying health conditions *or* had family members who would have been impacted. I wanted to model humanizing pedagogy as well as collaborative research and team efforts.

In addition, because of the origins of PAR, the deeply critical history, and the readings that we explored during this workshop 2, it is important to note that, from here on out, I will refer to my participants both as participants and research partners in the following workshops. This is done intentionally to honor the historical and sociopolitical roots of participatory action research. The intention of this dissertation is to challenge dominant narratives around education, structure, and research methodologies, and in turn, I will respect and refer to my participants as my research partners (RP) as it relates to the analysis of the California State 12th Social Studies standards and curriculum building. In addition, after the completion of Workshop 2, like that of Workshop 1, I immediately transcribed the recording from Otter.Ai.

Workshop 3: Document and Standards Analysis

At 11am on December 20, 2022, I and the research partners logged into Zoom. Research partner B (RP-B)³ was unable to attend but did reach out to me to communicate that she would be present for Workshop 4. At 11:02am, all participating research team members were logged into the call. I asked the research partners for consent to record the session. They agreed and I began recording the session. Because workshops 3 and 4 were designed to be focused on data collection, the recording only last for 28 minutes, as the remainder of the session was focused on small group/paired data collection per the recommendation of the entire research team.

Because of the nature of YPAR, it was important that I covered data collection. In previous workshops, we had discussed qualitative and quantitative data and how to use those according to different research questions. I initiated the conversation asking the research team what their understanding of the word data were, where three different research partners

³ From this point on, I will be writing RP- and the corresponding “participant” letter to honor my research partners and their engagement in this study, but to also identify them as their previously keyed “participant” letter and identity. This is done intentionally due to the nature of YPAR and my framework and belief in non-hierarchal approaches to educational transformation.

responded, stating data were information, numbers, and it depends on qualitative or quantitative. I explained different types of data as it related to qualitative or quantitative and what type of data we were primarily collecting throughout our process of analysis of the standards. This was an opportunity for us to revisiting the content that we had discussed in Workshop 2. I also differentiated between data collection and analysis for the purpose of our study.

I provided the research team with three different documents. Two documents were readings that we read through and explored together. One document was chapter 1 from Saldaña’s (2013) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* while the other explored what an analytic memo is, what its purpose is, and how to draft one (Satterland, 2012). Then, the research team also had access to an editable Google sheets file, which had a table for them to fill in according to their findings (please refer to Table 2).

Table 2

Table Title

Below is the table I created to help the research team organize their data. The number of subsequent rows were not set as it would be dependent upon their data collection.

Standards Link: https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsocscistnd.pdf			
Standard:			
Location/Line	Word(s)	Codes	Memo

We then had a discussion on how to organize research partners. We collaboratively agreed to organize four groups of pairs, with each group taking four standards to analyze. Before the research team was given breakout rooms in Zoom, we reviewed the standards briefly to understand the general concepts and expectations that high school seniors were expected to meet

in the State of California. After we did an initial review, the research partners were divided into their breakout rooms randomly. We did discuss whether they wanted to be partnered with specific individuals, but they provided feedback that they were content with a randomization of teams.

After 28 minutes of discussion and concepts, the research teams were put into their breakout rooms. Organization on the Google sheets was broken into the respective groups: Breakout 1, Breakout 2, Breakout 3, and Breakout 4. Each breakout room was also assigned four different standards. The standards are divided into Principles of American Democracy and Principles of Economics. Beginning on page 54 for 12th grade, they are found in the History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (1998). The following breakout rooms had the following research partners and standards:

- Breakout Room 1: RP-E and RP-H
 - Principles of American Democracy: 12.8, 12.9, and 12.10
 - Principles of Economics: 12.1
- Breakout Room 2: RP-C and RP-F
 - Principles of American Democracy: 12.3 and 12.4
 - Principles of Economics: 12.2 and 12.3
- Breakout Room 3: RP-G and RP-D (and later RP-B as well)
 - Principles of American Democracy: 12.1, 12.2, 12.5
 - Principles of Economics: 12.4
- Breakout Room 4: RP-A and RP-I
 - Principles of American Democracy: 12.6, 12.7
 - Principles of Economics: 12.5, 12.6

Once the research team received their standards, I would then go into the different breakout rooms to check for understanding as well as to make sure any questions they may have had were answered. I explained in more detail how to code and how they would go line-by-line. From there, I utilized the broadcast message and broadcast voice features on Zoom for larger-scale announcements. As I checked into each of the rooms, I kept note of the time and expressed to them that I wanted to honor their time and ensure they did not go over the 90 minutes workshop timeline. I also monitored their Google sheets to see if any of the research partners had issues around coding data and to follow along with some of their findings. I also told them that we would reconnect at 12:20pm, which was ten minutes until the end of the workshop.

The research team members then rejoined at 12:20pm and we debriefed through the process. As the process was designed to take place over two workshops, I explained they did not need to worry about finishing the data collection or analytic memos before the end, and they would have the next workshop available to them to continue the process. We discussed some of the key things that they initially came across and what they found interesting so far, both about the content as well as the process. We wrapped up the session and we prepared for the next workshop to take place the next day. During the session, I recorded the meeting when we were together as a larger group, finished recording at the end, and I also made observational notes from my interactions and engagement, as well as the research partners' interactions, when I was working with them in their breakout rooms. In addition, I watched their Google sheets to see progress, their process, and to watch for any hesitations or halts throughout the process. Immediately after the workshop, I rewatched the recording from Workshop 3 and transcribed the session.

Workshop 4: Document and Standards Analysis

On December 21, 2022, at 11am, we logged into Zoom once again. However, RP-D was unable to attend the session. She reached out and did notify me. Because she was partnered with G, I notified RP-G of this, and as RP-B was able to attend this session, RP-G and B were partnered for the remainder of data collection. Because the plan had already been discussed in the previous workshop, the research partners were assigned to their respective breakout rooms.

From this point, I logged into each individual breakout room to ensure that the smaller pairs of research partners felt supported, and I was present in case they had any questions they needed answered. In addition, because we had already planned and outline the activities for this workshop, we were able to begin the process immediately upon logging in, aside from a quick five-minute check-in across each other. As I was going from breakout room to breakout room, I took notes in how they were engaging and noted anything that stood out. In addition, I monitored their shared Google sheets to follow their coding process. As I engaged with them similar to how I taught secondary school through the pandemic, I watched their online engagement solely to see if they had potentially hit obstacles and in turn, I could then also go into their breakout room to inquire about their process and any guidance they may need. Because this session was more of a working session, only the end when we discussed the process did I record the session, and that was transcribed.

Workshop 5: Pilot Study and Data Review

On December 30, 2022, at 11am, I and the research team logged into Zoom. A few participants were running a little late, so I provided a link to the paper and data from the previous pilot study I conducted that surveyed students' perceptions about cultural and social representation, and support from and within their schools. Once all research partners were logged

in, I shared my screen, and we discussed the pilot study that I had conducted. From here, I gave the research team approximately five minutes to briefly review the study and data before we reviewed it together. At that point, I asked the team what their initial reactions, observations, and thoughts were surrounding the study. Several noted the sample size, demographics, and geographic locations. In addition, we discussed the purpose of the study, how it related to the literature review and theoretical framework, as well as the decisions to proceed with a survey instead of interviews.

I discussed with the research team my positionality as it related to the study, and how its initial plan was that it was to take place at the high school where I was working, but after I transitioned from that role, the alignment was perfect in that this allowed for a wider audience. The research team noted that this could have potentially complicated the findings, they discussed the demographics, and also recognized the intentionality of the study and expressed informed opinions on how student voice could be used to inform institutional decisions. Once we explored this, I explained the analysis of the study.

I went through and explored a brief introduction to what Cronbach's Alpha was, what descriptive statistics were, and how and why this was used for analysis of this quantitative survey. I discussed the rationale for the sample size, being $n = 30$. I also provided an explanation of the specifics of the Cronbach's Alphas for this pilot study, being $\alpha = .794$ and $\alpha = .799$. RP-F noted the disparity in demographics, where most survey respondents were White, which prompted how this could inform the survey, while RP-D commented that the demographic of participants, likely being from the San Diego area due to the nature of the pilot study, would also influence how respondents would respond to the survey and experience circumstances around social identity and support within their educational setting. This is methodologically important as

this paved the way for the procedures we took as we moved through the remainder of the workshop. I then outlined what the research team would need to be doing, which was to redesign the survey centering from their perspectives that would be logical and flow. We discussed the size of the smaller teams, where we all agreed that three research members per smaller team would be ideal. From there, I gave them access to the survey so they could review it as it was presented in Qualtrics, and they created Google documents to keep track of the changes, additions, and comments they had regarding the survey, titled according to the breakout room they were assigned to. I then created break out rooms for them to enter.

Like other workshops, I switched from one room to another to check for understanding and answer any questions they may have had regarding the surveys. At 12:20pm, we reconnected in the main room and discussed what some of the items were that they changed, what questions they may have added, and why they made the changes they made. This allowed for an open dialogue to see what other smaller research teams had thought. I explained what the next steps would be in the following workshops, to take place the next week, and then we concluded the workshop. Once the session was completed, I transcribed the recording.

Workshop 6: Curriculum Building and Lesson Plans

Workshop 6 started at 11am on January 4, 2023. RP-A and RP-B were unable to make the meeting due to outside obligations that took precedence, though I did share with them the materials that we covered, specifically as it related to positionality and lesson planning. At the beginning of the session, we discussed how to compile all the data and to use that data to inform our next steps. Because we were exploring the data and discussing our analytical process, we discussed positionalities and how that influences our research interests, designs, and analysis. I provided an example of my own positionality, and from there the research team worked from

11:15am to approximately 11:35am on their positionality statements. I checked in with them every 5 minutes to see if they had questions.

After they were done with their positionality statements, I spent the time from 11:35am to 11:50am discussing how to lesson plan and provided examples of my own lesson plans from previous sessions, seen in Appendix E. At this point, we opened the data excel sheet where we looked at the codes and memos and had a discussion on what the findings were and how that can influence our curriculum building. Then, we discussed the important components of a lesson plan, including connection to the standards, student learning outcomes, readings and materials needed, as well as the assessment that will be used. From there, research partners decided whether they wanted to use a format like mine or if they wanted to create one of their own.

Each group was broken down into three smaller groups, randomly done through Zoom's breakout rooms. Two of the groups only had two research partners so that RP-A and RP-B could join them for the last two working sessions. I checked in with the research team periodically, making sure they had no questions, and asked them for what some of the ideas were that they were thinking about around the lesson plans, and which standards they were going to include into their lessons. At 12:26pm, I closed the breakout rooms, and they entered the main room. We briefly shared what each group anticipated covering, and then we wrapped up the session, planning for our next session, January 5, 2023. In similar fashion to the last workshops, I immediately transcribed the session.

Workshop 7: Curriculum Building and Lesson Plans

At the end of workshop 6, RP-C had told me that he would be unable to attend the workshop due to an outside obligation and then shortly before the start of workshop 7, RP-B and RP-H contacted me and told me they were unable to attend as well, but that they would be

present for the final workshop. I sent RP-B, RP-C, and RP-H the documents that we would be doing within the workshop as RP-H had asked about completing materials or reviewing items before. I did express to them that they did not need to complete them outside of the workshop, and that I would give them time in the next workshop to finish the documents. At 11:00am, I and the rest of the research team logged into the Zoom call.

All other research team members were present, and because we had already established groups prior, we were able to move directly into breakout rooms. The only addition was that I had added RP-A to the group with RP-C and RP-D, though noting that RP-C was not present for the session. The research team members went into their respective groups to continue the work that we were doing from the previous session, which was building a lesson plan. I would log into each room and address any questions they had. For instance, the group with RP-A and RP-D asked me about if they were able to be theoretical nature, such as hypothetically allowing students to speak with an Indigenous leader to discuss tribal government and contentious issues, at which case I said if it was not fictional, then yes. I used the broadcast message button when I was in the main room that we would reconvene in the main room at 12:12pm so that we could have a quick debrief and then to complete the reflections.

At 12:12pm, I closed the breakout rooms and the research team joined back in the main room. I asked a few questions, specifically what some of the biggest hurdles were, what they came up with, and whether they would need additional time for the next workshop. We engaged in a quick dialogue, where they said that they struggled with things such as incorporating student outcomes that were critical in nature, but otherwise they were able to overcome that. They did not need additional time, but I told them that if they find that they might, they will have some additional time to complete that the following day. I then emailed them all the reflections, both in

a Word document as well as a Google doc link, allowing them to choose which option they wanted to use so that the reflections were anonymous. I told them that they should not put their names on it and that they should share only what they would like as this data will be analyzed in our final workshop collaboratively for tweaks, adjustments, and insight around the use of YPAR. Some research team members elected to finish the reflections after the workshop, and at that point we finished the workshop. Because this workshop was almost only a working session, I did not record, nor did I transcribe this session, but I did collect field notes on interactions.

Workshop 8: Final Workshop

Workshop 8 had 7 of the 9 research members, as RP-A and RP-H were unable to attend in the call, but they did complete activities asynchronously, and RP-E ended up logging out early due to technological issues but was able to participate for the remainder asynchronously as well. At 11:02am, on January 6, 2023, we began the final workshop. This workshop was dedicated to cleaning up any other things we had to do, to finalize reflections if they had not previously completed them, and then to code and analyze the anonymous reflections and the curriculum lesson plans. I shared my screen with the entire group, and we went through the reflections and I provided step-by-step guidance in how I would code. We elected to code as an entire group on one document for the reflections, highlight passages and phrases from the reflections, grouping things into three categories of a sociological imagination, community cultural wealth, and disrupting cultural capital. We also left it open for additional categories, themes, or ideas if the research team had determined there were additional codes needed. To not intervene or markup lesson plans from the groups, we opted to record passages, phrases, and artifacts from the lesson plans in a separate document. I randomized the group rooms, with the following breakdown:

- Breakout room 1: RP-C and RP-G

- Breakout room 2: RP-B and RP-D
- Breakout room 3: RP-F and I
- Asynchronous: RP-E and RP-H

I opened the breakout rooms and then went from room to room to check for understanding and to answer any questions. I had conversations with different groups about their findings so far, what some of the things were that surprised them the most or perhaps did not surprise them, and then what they thought was the most interesting part of this analysis process. At 12:10pm, I closed the breakout rooms, and we reconvened in the main room. We debriefed about the project, the process, and I thanked them for participating in this project. I then asked them to complete the final knowledge checks, to share in the chat that they are done, and then they are free to log out. At 12:35pm, the last research team member logged off, concluding the data collection for this study and the final workshop. Immediately after this workshop, I compiled my field notes and organized the data, memos, and documents from the research team into a single folder on a Google drive. I then began coding the data that I only had access to, and then began combing through their data as well, leading to the final round of coding of each workshop and all data sources.

Comprehensive Explanation of Data Sources

Because this study was so expansive, there was a large amount of data in the form of documents, observations of participant and research team interactions, self-reflective observations on my own pedagogical practice, research team reflections, and the curriculum developed by the research team, I have outlined each form of data source as it relates to the study.

Documents

There were several documents that function as data sources through this study. They are as follows: the pre- and post-knowledge checks, California 12th grade Social Studies Standards, the finished lessons/curriculum, the pilot study surveying community cultural wealth within schools, and the participant reflections. While some of these were analyzed solely by me, and others by the entire team, these documents served as data sources for this study.

Observations

Observations were an integral data source for this study, especially as its intention is to serve both as a pedagogical and institutional tool, as well as contributions to the fields of education, sociology, and youth participatory action research. In addition, because the interactions were only loosely structured, similar to a class, I observed and took field notes, focusing on interactions across the entire research team. In addition, I took observations and reflective notes on my own pedagogical practice both immediately after within the workshop, as well as when I reviewed the recordings of the workshops.

These notes served a few purposes. First, this allowed me to see critical thinking and dialogue that demonstrated concepts related to sociology and a sociological imagination. This also allowed me to capture thoughts and reflections of participants engaging in a YPAR project as well as my own pedagogical thinking and reflections. In addition, I observed how participants fostered and built community, expanding on ideas of community cultural wealth, and how they attempted to disrupt cultural capital. Lastly, observational data proved useful to see how dialogical and collaborative processes could take place in an environment that utilizes YPAR and how it related to the sociopolitical nature of the California 12th grade Social Studies Standards, and the anchor standards as well as a secondary consideration.

The observations and field notes collected aimed to address the research questions, as well as provide additional, rich data around practices, lessons, standards, engagement, dialogue, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth that may not necessarily be considered or captured in the planned approach.

Participant Reflections

Participants provided final reflections on the process of YPAR, their learning, and their understanding of the workshop materials. This took place during workshop 7 so that in the final workshop, we could collaboratively analyze the data. Because we shifted to a virtual setting, the reflections were collected through a Word document or Google document, depending on participant present, that only I had access to in order to protect the research team member's identities, especially as the entire group would be analyze the data. This was conducted with a few guiding and prompting questions administered through a separate document, seen in Appendix F. These questions were focused on personal thoughts and reflections, their experiences, feedback, and their overall feelings around the development of a sociological imagination, YPAR, and how they believe this could be used in a classroom and institutional setting.

Data and the Purpose of the Study

Because there was so many data, I have organized the following tables that connect the data to the workshops and data source, as well as the data sources with the corresponding research questions.

Table 3 provides a matrix connecting the workshops with data sources as well as the topics covered across each workshop and on which date they occurred. Table 4 provides a matrix of the data sources mapped onto the research questions.

Table 3*Data Source and Collection According to Workshop and Activities*

Workshop # & Date	Activity	Resulting Data Source
0: 11.18.22	Initially planned for first workshop, but collaboratively decided to move forward at the next meeting once we attempted recruitment as an entire group Research team members participated: B, C, D, G, H, I	
1: 12.2.22	Knowledge check-in 1, recording prior knowledge and experiences with concepts; IRB and consent; introductions of group community Research team members participated: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I	Observations/field notes; prior content knowledge of (sociological) concepts
2: 12.9.22	First major introduction to concepts important to the sociological imagination Research team members participated: A, C, D, E, F, G, I	Observations/field notes
3: 12.20.22	Group and collaborative data collection of CA State 12 th grade Social Studies Standards for content Research team members participated: A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I	Observations/field notes; content of CA State 12 th grade Social Studies Standards for group analysis
4: 12.21.22	Group and collaborative data collection of CA State 12 th grade Social Studies Standards for content Research team members participated: A, B, C, E, F, G, H, I	Observations/field notes; content of CA State 12 th grade Social Studies Standards for group analysis
5: 12.30.22	Group review of secondary data from pilot study	Observations/field notes; content for analysis; survey redesign

	Research team members participated: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I	
6: 01.04.23	Collaborative curriculum building Research team members participated: C, D, E, F, G, H, I	Observations; field notes; curriculum content
7: 01.05.23	Collaborative curriculum building, positionality Research team members participated: A, D, E, F, G, I	Observations; field notes; curriculum content; group analysis
8: 01.06.23	Knowledge check-in 2; participant reflections; lesson plan coding and memos Research team members participated: B, C, D, E, F, G, I	Knowledge analysis; content analysis of sociological concepts; participant experiences

Table 4

Data source as it aligns with specific research questions

	How do recent high school seniors/graduates critically engage in YPAR to redesign curriculum?	How, if at all, do recent high school seniors/graduates develop and demonstrate a sociological imagination while engaging in a YPAR project?
Knowledge checks		X
Workshops	X	X
Standards analysis	X	X
Pilot Study Data Review	X	
Lesson Planning	X	
Student Observations	X	X

Data Analysis

As described above, the data for this study were collected through knowledge checks, (both in Workshops 0 and 1, as well as Workshop 8, concluding the study) observations of the workshops themselves, collaborative content analysis of the California State 12th Grade Social Studies Standards, a review of the secondary data, redesign of the survey, curriculum development, and final reflections, as well as observations and field notes of my pedagogical practice through voice recordings and Zoom video recordings.

The most important form of data analysis that I engaged in was constant comparative due in large part to the sizeable amount of data that resulted from this study. Constant comparative was used both by me as well as the research team as we went through the research findings and began to apply them to the lesson planning and curriculum development. While there were data sources that only I analyzed, namely the observations and the knowledge checks, I still utilized a constant comparative approach to the data analysis, as constant comparative is not just for grounded theory, but also allows for a reduction of codes as we recode over time (Fram, 2013).

I have organized the analysis section according to analytical process, all who were involved with, as well as my procedures to analysis. This analytical process will outline it by approach, with further explanation as to how it addresses the data source, detailing what is seen in Table 6. In addition, it is important to note that immediately after each workshop, I review the data, transcribed the dialogical portions of the workshops, and then began coding the data, resulting in the use of constant comparative after each workshop, through the duration of the study, and after all data had been collected and analyzed at the completion of the study.

Table 5.

Data set as it aligns with its respective coding process.

Data Set	Attribute Coding	Descriptive Coding	Axial Coding	In Vivo Coding	Content Analysis	Constant Comparative
Workshop	X	X	X	X		X
Field Notes						
Knowledge Checks		X	X	X	X	X
Pilot Study			X	X	X	X
Curriculum		X	X			X
Standards		X	X		X	X
Reflections	X	X	X	X		X

Attribute Coding

Because of the participants' intersectional identities,⁴ attribute coding is best suited for the observations of the workshops. I was the only research team member who utilized attribute coding, as this was integral to my field notes and interactions with the research team. I was the only researcher who took field notes as it related to the question on how research high school graduates demonstrate a sociological imagination and how they engage in a YPAR research project. This meant that I was coding my observations around demographics and traits of the participants, as Saldaña (2013) asserts that, "Virtually all qualitative studies will employ some form of Attribute Coding" (p. 69). I initially kept demographic information written in my notes as we engaged in dialogue and discussed our backgrounds, which provided a better understanding of the group, and allowed context to the study. Furthermore, the purpose behind attribute coding is that my framework explicitly includes community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to disrupt cultural capital, research team member cultural characteristics were vital for

⁴ For the purpose of this study, I am using intersectional as it is situated within the context of intersectionality from Crenshaw, 1989, and Collins, 2019: intersectionality is not merely diversity, but rather the different identities that intersect *within and by that of structural oppression*. It is important to note that intersectionality should not be misconstrued as diversity.]

deeper analysis and connection of the literature, findings, and purpose of the research to the sociopolitical landscape of the curriculum, research team, and critical inquiry.

I did not inquire about personal lived experiences specifically, as my submission to IRB did not highlight this as part of data collection, and in turn, only an emphasis on cultural backgrounds commenced. In order to capture these demographics, we discussed positionality and identity, and explicitly intersectionality, throughout the entirety of the study as these were ongoing workshops, similar to those in the secondary classroom setting where we revisit concepts and apply them. To make note of these, I utilized Otter.Ai to record the dialogue and then transcribed the workshops. For virtual workshops, I recorded the sessions using Zoom and then transcribed those workshops as well. During all workshops, I wrote field notes as we engaged, and made comments on various quick observations for future analysis. This was important due to the dialogical nature of the study, as well as a recognition of the students' identities and how they contribute to different views.

Specific characteristics that I recorded within attribute coding were related to geographic location, racial and ethnic identity, disability status as this was explored within the workshop dialogue, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexuality, and whether they took coursework in “advanced” or “honors” studies in high school as this was a recurring topic of conversation. I also recorded any additional identities the participants felt were important to their relationship of the study. In addition, these were all important attributes of the participants that contributed to how they would view cultural components and their cultural capital within the sociopolitical conditions, centering cultural backgrounds as wealth within the data analysis (Saldaña, 2013). Furthermore, I chose attribute coding as it is insightful due to the attempt at disrupting cultural capital in a smaller classroom setting and in turn, its transferability to institutional settings.

To capture the attributes of the research team, I utilized a combination of observations and field notes, as well as the materials we covered. For instance, we created positionality statements as part of our reflexive process, but as we also discussed the importance of intersectionality when we discussed sociological concepts at the beginning of the content sessions. Because I often run a dialogical class as well when I am in the classroom, I used dialogical interactions as well, as the research members often discussed their identities and how that influences their views on things, especially related to privilege, voice, and representation.

Initial attribute coding of field notes took place immediately after Workshop 0, and then again immediately after Workshop 1, as the research team was present and had discussed various parts of their identities. Then, attitude coding took place again after Workshop 2, which is where we discussed intersectionality and how it influences and impacts our experiences in the world. Lastly, attribute coding then also took place one last time after the team wrote their positionality statements, as this was informative for analysis as a team as well as their own analysis of the data. This was completed for a multitude of reasons, especially for positionality of the research team, but it also provided good “data management” (Saldaña, 2013) during analysis.

Descriptive Coding

Descriptive coding was completed by both myself for data that only I had access to as well as the data that we as an entire research team collaboratively. Depending on the content and the data itself, descriptive coding was often employed as the first initial stage of coding. I utilized descriptive coding as a first round of coding and the research team did as well. According to Saldaña (2013), descriptive coding, “... summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data...” (p.88). In addition, he notes that it is also useful for beginning qualitative researchers, which was well suited for the research team that

we had building our qualitative research skills in a safe environment conducive to the learning process.

The first round of descriptive coding took place when I began coding the knowledge checks for sociological concepts. I created parameters that aligned with sociological concepts to better connect the data to a sociological imagination, specifically: structure, agency, sociological imagination, as these are the major concepts and ideas that were discussed and explored from a larger, systemic approach throughout the study. In addition, I coded for cultural capital as well as community cultural wealth. I looked at these ideas as they related to these concepts primarily because of my experiences and background as a sociologist and critical research, which is in alignment with my conceptual framework that I established before and at the beginning of the study (Saldaña, 2013). These were coded and then categorized according to code for both the initial check as well as the final check-in. However, while the parameters included these theoretical concepts, I was flexible in my coding process as additional concepts or discoveries did occur, especially since, “multiple realities exist because we each perceive and interpret social life from different points of view” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 8). This established the rationale for additional coding methods as well, which I discuss later.

The next use of descriptive coding began when I began coding the transcribed workshops; after each workshop, I transcribed, and had compiled codes. I also utilized descriptive coding for the first round of coding for the first knowledge check. I went through the first knowledge check and organized it question-by-question into a Google sheet. Then, I copied and pasted each of the research team member’s responses into a sheet cell with its corresponding question so that each of the responses were grouped together. For the final knowledge check, I used the same format, but had it on a separate tab in the sheet so that I could compare the

changes across the knowledge checks. The purpose of the knowledge checks was not to necessarily identify a specific individual's change or "academic growth" in a traditional sense, but rather to see the collective change and some of the ways that a sociological imagination was fostered across the entire research team.

For the descriptive coding of the transcripts of the workshops, I went through and highlighted the transcripts using the highlight feature in a Word document and developed a key within a Google sheet. I kept a Google sheet of each individual workshop's transcripts, with each tab representing a new round of coding. To establish codes, I looked for patterns and commonalities across the research partners' responses, interactions, and engagement. I also used descriptive coding with my field notes, transcribing those into a Word document as well as I had previously used a notebook with handwritten notes in the first in-person workshops and as well as in a Word document on my computer for other workshops. I also looked for sociological concepts, examples of community cultural wealth, and additional examples that may disrupt cultural capital. I combined field notes for the first two workshops, and then maintained typed field notes during the rest of the virtual workshops.

I organized the codes into the Google sheet and color coded them so that as I went through the transcripts and field notes, I was able to organize data into specific codes that had already been established, and then highlight additional data if there were codes that had not already been established. I consistently did this after each workshop, and then following both knowledge checks. This process was a similar process for the entire research team as well. I should note that I did this for research team's positionality statements and final reflections. The final reflections were a collaborative effort initially, and then I did my own coding as well, first

using descriptive coding, to identify sociological thoughts and additional perspectives from my perspective.

When we began our document analysis for the California 12th grade Social Studies Standards, each research team member was put into a smaller group, which allowed for more organized and coordinated coding within smaller teams. I created a Google sheet for each group to document their codes in, as referenced in Table 2 from workshop 2. This was where the research team went through and conducted descriptive coding, identifying patterns, themes, and concepts within each of the standards they were assigned. Each smaller research team went through, line-by-line, and would copy and paste sentences, phrases, key words, and content from the standards into the Google sheet and then label it with its corresponding standards number. For the first round of descriptive coding then, the research team drafted a variety of preliminary codes in the first part of the data collection, coding, and analysis.

We also used descriptive coding for the first round of coding for the final reflections. In paired groups, we coded the reflections in two ways, like the standards, in that we had three categories as a starting point, focusing on a sociological imagination, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth, but then we also identified additional codes. These were codes that were created and established by the research team. We worked in one document this time as a whole group, though we had smaller teams as well, where we color coded line-by-line in each of the reflections. From there, we organized the codes into a shared Google sheet, copying and pasting the passages along with the code for organization.

Lastly, we used descriptive coding for the initial coding of the curriculum developed through the research team's lesson plans. This was done collaboratively where I went from breakout room to breakout room and inquired about their findings, things that were of interest,

and if there were any overlapping codes and themes across all of the data sources that we had analyzed so far. They did not color code the lesson plans so they would not disturb any of the work that had been done by other groups, but they did copy and paste statements, activities, and other data from the document into a Google sheet along with a code and then followed with a brief sentence or two that acted as a memo. I looked at the documents they were working on in real time, making sure if there were any hesitations I could assist with, and then also so I had access to it as they were working on them. I then reviewed the codes and had discussions with each of the groups about their ideas, observations, and codes. This is what helped with the next stage of coding; while we did not have ample time to complete axial coding as a group, the research team did through produce descriptive codes for the curriculum lesson plans.

Axial Coding

While the initial coding was bound within certain concepts that related to the sociological imagination, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth, the research team and I all identified additional concepts and themes that had not been initially considered, which was found in descriptive coding. Because of the first round of descriptive coding, we then did a second round of coding, or axial coding. With the first round of coding, we had created many different codes, at which point in axial coding, we began consolidating codes and connecting the coded content into fewer categories. Saldaña (2013) explains axial coding, where it “describes a category’s properties and dimensions and explores how these categories and subcategories relate each other... The ‘axis’ of Axial Coding is a *category*... discerned from the First Cycle coding” (p. 209; p. 218). In this case, we did a second round of coding where we identified categories that reduced the number of codes and sorted it more into a categorical manner due to the process of

axial coding. Once the axial coding was completed, we then wrote analytic memos to capture initial ideas, processes, and thoughts.

In addition to the research team's axial coding of the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, we also utilized axial coding after we had the initial descriptive coding for the final reflections. In the same document, we went through and reviewed the codes that we had already established, and then had discussions within the small groups, where I went from room-to-room, to discuss the codes that were present, see if there were any that could be consolidated, and then further discussion on if the additional codes were needed more as categories than mere codes. This assisted with the creation of the categories, and in turn themes, that we established as a team and that I noted as the facilitator of this research.

Due to time constraints, we did not use axial coding for the lesson plans, but I did use axial coding for my own findings. What this means is that I left the descriptive codes intact from the initial coding that the entire group did for the curriculum review, but then I also initiated axial coding as an alternative set of findings, or consolidated set of findings, that I will discuss further in the findings section. This allowed me to see their line of thinking within the codes while also identifying categories related to the finalized lesson plans.

In Vivo Coding

We used In Vivo coding across different data sources, and both as a research team as well as my own coding. In Vivo coding allows for participants' own words and language choices to be visible and represented in the data (Saldaña, 2013). In Vivo coding, which is an inductive method of research design, drew on the research team's language and words in relation to the conceptual framework and research questions. I used In Vivo through my field notes and observations, transcriptions of the recordings from the sessions, as well as with the reflections

and dialogue around the curriculum, found within the transcriptions. A key decision to using In Vivo coding is for the very reason Saldaña (2013) states, in that it, "... is particularly useful in educational ethnographies with youth. The children and adolescent voices are often marginalized, and coding with their actual words enhances and deepens an adult's understanding of their cultures and worldviews" (p. 91.) I wanted to honor the research team's voices and insight, contributions and experiences, which is why In Vivo was one of the first considerations for coding. This was woven throughout the entire process of all coding, including the descriptive and axial coding. While all members of the research team were over the age of 18, they still represented a population of students who would classify as adolescence, in that they just graduated high school six months prior, close in age and educational level as high school seniors. In addition, I recognize that In Vivo is not *only* the instance of phrases, statements, and the voices of marginalized and minoritized groups, but it is applicable and vital to use when interacting with them. In addition, with the utilization of YPAR within a framework encompassing praxis, I recognized that the use of In Vivo would be vital to stay true both to the pedagogical and philosophical underpinnings of this study and action.

Our research team's first instance of In Vivo coding occurred when we were coding the California State 12th grade Social Studies standards. The first stage of descriptive coding and the initial coding process. While descriptive coding allowed the research team to break the data down into smaller, more manageable codes as they relate directly to what is going on, such as "discussion of power," In Vivo also occurred in that at various moments, the research team members would take explicit statements and phrases from the standards and paste them directly next to the descriptive code. Some instances they opted to choose descriptive coding if it felt

applicable, but in other cases, they chose codes that were In Vivo, especially as it related to certain concepts around critical thinking or specific government levels.

The research team also used In Vivo coding when we began coding the final reflections. All of the final reflections were compiled into a single Google document, where we all had access to it. As noted, we shared one document, but we were divided into smaller groups, where I facilitated the process and worked collaboratively with each of the groups. For this phase of In Vivo coding, we highlighted sections and phrases of the reflections and color coded those. We then took exact statements that represented a category and copied it into a word document, work-for-word and to represent the beauty of their own words and lived experiences, centering their student backgrounds and to honor and center community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Each group used In Vivo coding and did not disturb specific codes, and then we had a further discussion on how to code these into categories through an extension of In Vivo, and not quite axial coding, to ensure the voice was intact, but also allowed for a thematic representation with use of the quotes or statements as support.

The last data source where we used In Vivo coding was with the finalized lesson plans created by the research team. At this point, the smaller research groups worked across all three lesson plans and then copy and pasted the statements into the shared Google sheet. From there, we identified statements, phrases, and words that were used across the lesson plans and within each of the lesson plans, identifying specific curriculum content, standards, or ideas that were represented through the words within the plans. The code was then placed in a corresponding column on the Google sheet immediately next to the words that were pulled from the lesson plans. This was also to ensure that the heart of the plans and curriculum that the research team created as accurately represented within the analysis. A unique, yet vital consideration around

this is that Saldaña (2013) writes, “In Vivo Codes ‘can provide a crucial check on whether you have grasped what is significant’ to the participant and may help ‘crystallize and condense meanings’” (Charmaz, 2006, as cited in Saldaña, 2013). While the understanding of In Vivo coding is that the researcher is not necessarily imposing their own beliefs or interpretation on the words or generalizing it, but rather attempting to appropriately represent the ideas, this study had the participants as active members of the research team. This added an additional layer of representation and value to the In Vivo coding process, as collaborative and dialogue could and did take place in terms of interpretation and coding.

I also used In Vivo coding for the data that I collected independently. Because I recorded the sessions and transcribed the recordings, I ensured that many of the statements and experiences were accurately captured using In Vivo coding. As a note, because there were individual breakout rooms, I did not capture every single interaction, which is a limitation. However, I did take note and keep recording on for when I was in the breakout rooms. Therefore, I had transcriptions of when I was observing breakout rooms and when I was working with the smaller research teams. Like that of the research team’s coding process, I color coded the transcripts. In addition, I used In Vivo in both the initial coding phase as well as the axial coding phase of the recorded data. While I did use some descriptive coding within the initial round of coding as it related to non-dialogical methods of communication, such as descriptions of interactions and observations, In Vivo coding was used as the primary mode of coding for workshop dialogue and spoken interactions. In this case, I took exact statements and phrases from the research team’s statements during any given time and organized it into a Google sheet matrix with quoted codes next to the pulled sentence or statement. From there, I then established thematic categories according to commonalities across the quoted statements.

Lastly, I used In Vivo coding for the knowledge checks and reflections. While the reflections were coded by the research team, it addressed several analytical considerations across the entire group, but also vital and insightful for the purpose of my research questions. In this case, I used In Vivo coding for the sociological concepts and understandings of sociology at the beginning of the study to address the development and/or demonstration of a sociological imagination. I kept the coding intact from the initial round done by the research team for the reflections, for separate purposes, but still as vital data for the process of a YPAR project, demonstration, and development of the sociological imagination as well, and for pedagogical implications and considerations. In this case, I used the same practice I had used similarly, where I color coded statements, phrases, and words, and then established an In Vivo code with words from the written pieces in quotes to keep the integrity of the statement, then established thematic categories. This final stage of In Vivo coding was important to address both research questions. In addition, I wanted to ensure that the research team's thoughts, feelings, observations, growth, and of course the academic considerations of a YPAR project, pedagogical practice, and a sociological imagination, were appropriately captured to uphold the importance of praxis and community cultural wealth.

Content Analysis

While we did use descriptive and In Vivo coding for the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, the process in which we engaged in reviewing the materials was a form of content analysis as well, where Saldaña (2013) states is when we “generally prescribe systematic counting, indexing, and categorizing of elements” (p. 53). While I had initially intended this to be a primary tool for us to engage with the standards, it ended up acting as an initial screening, so to speak, where we went through the standards as a read through, first,

similar to how teachers would do in a classroom setting. We engaged much deeper with the standards analysis, as highlighted in the coding processes discussed previously. This process was practiced, however, in that we were looking at key concepts, words, and phrases.

The data sources where we engaged the most in foundational content analysis, however, as the pilot study's survey. The survey was not deeply coded due to the nature of needing to redesign it. We did discuss the data, what it meant, and how it was interpreted, as well as the intentionality for the survey. Because this was the purpose, smaller research teams went through collaboratively and identified key phrases and words that represented community cultural wealth and critical perspectives and connected it to the findings from the secondary data as well as the literature in the pilot study. From there, the research team reorganized and offered additional questions to the survey, and checked it for representative components. Lastly, they used the data from this survey as well as their intended redesign, which will be presented in Chapter 6, to inform their lesson plans.

The process in which we did required research team divided documents, in that each smaller team had its own document. They had access to the survey through Qualtrics as well as the pilot study's report, and combed through the findings and survey questions line-by-line. From there, they identified key phrases and questions within the document for representation of the framework, and then rewrote the questions or added additional questions to better represent language choices, logistical order, and their own interpretation of how a survey should be presented to youth, whether it addressed understanding, interest, or order.

Constant Comparative

I used constant comparative to reduce codes as the study took place over 8 weeks with multiple data sources. Because my focus was on the interactions of the research team in how

they engaged and interacted in a YPAR project, as well as the demonstration of a sociological imagination, constant comparative made the most sense for me to use due to the amount of data. Fram (2013) states that, “The Constant Comparative Analysis method is an iterative and inductive process of reducing the data through constant recoding” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in Fram, 2013). In addition, Fram (2013) asserts that she wanted to “present a call to action to qualitative researchers to further investigate the use of the CCA [constant comparative approach] outside of GT as a part of the tradition of innovation in qualitative research” (p.). In this case, my use of constant comparative outside of grounded theory is just that: the intentionality for innovative qualitative research. However, grounded theory is not the only methodological approach that uses constant comparative, though it is an inductive approach.

Goetz and LeCompte (1981) assert that through constant comparative:

“... the discovery of relationships, that is, hypothesis generation, begins with the analysis of initial observations, undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, and continuously feeds back into the process of category coding. As events are constantly compared with previous events, new typological dimensions, as well as new relationships, may be discovered” (p.).

This study generated many sets of data sources through workshops, which the observations alone for were also data. Furthermore, this process, within this context is a logical approach throughout the duration of the study, since this process “means the researcher will compare incidents in a category with previous incidents (Tieet al., 2019). To manage the data and respective data sources, and to compare all data collected within each workshop, and from each workshop meeting, I complied Google sheets and a Google folder for all of my data.

In these sheets, I had a variety of data sources with codes, color coding, and memos attached and linked to them. For instance, in the knowledge checks, I had codes in the cells at the bottom of the corresponding columns. Next to the codes, I insert a link that would take me to its corresponding analytic memo. After each workshop, I transcribed all workshops immediately after, and then when I coded, I would code before the next workshop. From there, I had descriptive and initial coding, followed by axial coding. As noted in the previous sections, I also used In Vivo coding. These were important parts of the constant comparative process, as I would take the codes and categories from the previous workshop, and compare it to the data generated, codes established, and analytical memos of each workshop after. From there, I would write in my memo additional findings and research thoughts, as well as newly established codes and then categories if there were any changes.

After each workshop, I also wrote down procedural steps based on field notes and the recordings. I connected these steps with each of the codes and data sources so I knew which process I had undergone and to engage in my reflexivity throughout the entire process. Reflexivity was important as I was engaging critically with my research team, but also because I had to go into this with almost two separate research lenses – one as a facilitator of a YPAR project, and the other as a doctoral candidate who is collecting data for her dissertation. While these identities were overlapping, they also had to be separate as the sole researcher side had to engage in coding throughout from an participant observe standpoint, in that I had to look for demonstration of a sociological imagination and identity pedagogical procedures and steps. This allowed me to actively engage in analysis throughout the duration and maintain connected to the data rather than leaving it for a separate round of coding that could perhaps be disconnected from the theoretical framework and philosophical underpinnings. I was engaging in a constant process,

where Kolb (2012) explains that this process is where "... the researcher continually sorts through the data collection, analyzes and codes the information, and reinforces theory generation through the process of theoretical sampling" (p.). I was not necessarily seeking to generate new theory, but it did allow me to find new connections between the data, theoretical framework, and pedagogical philosophies involved.

With each workshop and after its subsequent data analysis, I would compare the codes and categories to the last, and then I would look across each one again. For example, if I was on Workshop 3, not only would I look at it in relation to Workshop 2, but I would look at Workshops 1, 2, and 3. I kept the initial round of coding and any axial coding in a separate document, and kept a running list of the changes in connected folders so that I could see the progression over time and the ways in which reflexivity was a process I engaged in throughout the entire study and analytical portions. The coding eventually turned into categories that allowed me to merge that of descriptive, axial, and In Vivo coding, to establish categories, but also allowed for flexibility of changing categories over time. This is how I established thematic concepts, categories, and data to address the research questions, as well as additional data beyond the scope of the research questions. Constant comparative approach is also how I eventually develop a metacognition of my pedagogical practice, something that perhaps logically I knew, but was not completely cognizant of until the constant comparative method was used and the findings were presented in front of me through this process over time.

Memos

During and after each session, as well as upon the transcription of the sessions, I would draft memos of initial thoughts. Memos have the capability to capture thoughts during a process of reflexivity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In these memos, I would write down things that

various research partners said in regard to a sociological imagination, how this connected to the research questions, and would also write down initial analytical thoughts. For instance, after the Workshop 1, the research team had a conversation around education, youth voice, and action. I noticed a pattern in the session that they were not discussing problems with a specific teacher or teachers, but rather the school, institution, or systems. When I asked them when the switch happened, they unanimously said that the pandemic school closures solidified the realization that it was systemic and not individual. In a memo for that first workshop, I wrote down, “Systemic thinking” as an initial idea around coding if it recurred (which it did).

In the memos, I also wrote down ideas and potential analytical processes and thoughts not just around the research team, but the study, how to strengthen it when this approach is used again, as well as my own pedagogical practices and beliefs. Reflexivity was at the core of what I did, and memos allowed me to ensure praxis was deeply embedded and consistent in the study. I took note of my engagement, the way that I fostered dialogue, my interactions with groups whether it was in-person or online, and how I taught concepts. Though my specific pedagogical practice, and in turn, pedagogical recommendations were not necessarily at the heart of this survey, memos during this process allowed me to discover different findings than anticipated.

In addition, after each round of data collection and coding, the research team would draft memos as well. In these memos, it was thoughts, reflections, and initial rounds of analysis, which would often prompt conversations within the workshop as well. We used those memos after the coding so that we could prompt our deeper analysis and category generation, as well as to organize thoughts across the entire research team. This was an important part of the analysis process as we had many individuals involved in this project, but it was also a whole group,

collaborative effort. This not only allowed for organization of thoughts, but immediate analytical think so we did not lose track of any thoughts, discussions, and interactions.

Memos were not considered a data source for this study, but they were part of the analytical process. I did not necessarily code the memos in the same way that I did the data sources because the memos were initial thoughts, researcher(s) reflections, and a process of the ongoing reflexive process. While I could have coded the memos and considered them documents or document analysis, I do not consider them as such because the role they played in the analytical process rather than the data collection.

Summary

My methodological approach to this study included many different forms of coding and analysis. While there were times that I could have felt overwhelmed, and quite honestly, did, my data management and flexible, yet organized approach is what kept me guided. In addition, because of the richness and quantity of data, constant comparative is what was one of the most important tools for coding throughout the process. Though the other forms of coding – descriptive, axial, and in Vivo coding were vital, as well as the research team’s content analysis of the standards – constant comparative is what allowed me as a researcher independent from the research team to identify themes and categories, as well as the reflexive, pedagogical practices that were present. In addition, the research team engaged in several forms of coding, and while we as a team did not engage in the practice of constant comparative due to access to specific data sources, timing, as well as the possibility for confusion or the amount of learning that could take place and feel overwhelming, the data management and organization was what allowed us to stay focused.

The overall process was also insightful especially as we had to do this collaboratively. While it could seem perplexing or overwhelming to do this as a team, it was important, as Saldaña (2013) writes about the process of coding collaboratively, “Multiple minds bring multiple ways of analyzing and interpreting the data...” (p. 34). We used a variety of approaches in the collaborative process, where we as a team we coded data that was accessible to the whole team, and then cross referenced them, discussed, dialogued, and fleshed out ideas as they related to the theoretical framework and the process of a YPAR project as a whole, and then especially for the centering of lived experiences and community cultural wealth within a curriculum. This process required a dialogical approach, collaborative creation, and implementation of praxis. In addition, because this study was essentially a two-fold project, in that the deliveries of a curriculum and pedagogical practice, as well as the implementation of a framework and understanding of how youth engage in a YPAR project while demonstrating their sociological imagination, the amount of data, and in run analysis, was vast, but manageable due to the collaborative process.

Protection of Human Subjects

I submitted to San Diego State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB.) I initially submitted for exemption due to the nature of the study. On October 13, 2022, I received an email from SDSU’s IRB stating that my research was not considered regulated activity. In the email, with protocol number HS-2022-0197, it was determined that this did not meet the criteria as regular research activity. I did call the IRB office to ensure I understood what this meant. Both analysts in the office spoke with me and said because of the format of the study, and because the primary focus is on curriculum building and institutional analysis and procedural building, that the activity involved would not require an IRB review. In the IRB submission, I was detailed and

thorough and ensured that the activities were detailed. The email I received referenced 45 CFR 46.102(I). The email they sent me can be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Letter from San Diego State University's IRB noting this research as not regulated activity.

13-Oct-2022

Principal Investigator: Charlene Holkenbrink-Monk E
Department: School of Teacher Education
Protocol Number: HS-2022-0197

Title: Disruption, Dissent, and Dialogue: YPAR as a Pedagogical and Institutional Tool

Study Status: Not Regulated Activity

Regulation: *The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46.102(I)) defines research as a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.*

Dear Charlene,

The SDSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) screened the submitted proposal titled: *Disruption, Dissent, and Dialogue: YPAR as a Pedagogical and Institutional Tool*. Based on the information provided on the HRPP Initial Review Application, your proposal does not constitute research as defined by 45 CFR 46. Therefore, your proposal is not subject to IRB review. If you have any questions regarding the use of human subjects in research, please call our office at 619-594-6622. To access relevant policies and guidelines related to the involvement of human subjects in research, visit the IRB web site [here](#).

Sincerely,



**Asst. Vice President
Research Support Services
Research and Innovation**

Participants were explained typical IRB and consent information to align with ethical research. In addition, participant names were not recorded, and I had a key that only I had access to. In addition, only I had access to voice or video recordings, transcripts, and any data that would have potentially identified a participant or research team member. Because all participants were of majority age, they were provided verbal informed consent, but because of the IRB determination, they were not required to sign an informed-consent document.

Considerations

This project centered youth participatory action research (YPAR) as a methodology rooted in an epistemological and ontological foundation of critical pedagogy. YPAR can fall into either qualitative or quantitative research designs but must also be seen as an ontological stance as much as it is an epistemological approach or method. Due to the nature of YPAR, which attempts to disrupt the status quo, and in turn must be flexible according to community representation, voice, and the nature of participatory action research, YPAR should be considered a necessary approach to praxis when researching. This means that it needs to be seen as a conceptual framework and understood as a means for flexibility throughout, which is exactly what I enacted and modeled through the duration of this study. That said, while rigor and structure were not sacrificed, I was flexible to honor the participants' voices and experiences and to stay true to a philosophical foundation of critical pedagogy.

Pilot Studies

As discussed previously, two pilot studies had been conducted. Prior to this study, I had conducted action research in an institution and then followed that line of methodology with administering a survey to research high school graduates who have graduated in 2020 or 2021, though no longer with that population. It was during this time that as a researcher who had previously been confined to the expectations of my place of work, I ensured that from then my ontological and epistemological approaches were aligned with my positionality and views as a teacher and researcher. This actualization pushed me to switch from “stages” to recognizing my previous “stages” as pilot studies instead. These pilot studies informed this research.

In the first pilot study, I conducted a qualitative research study for my place of work. Because we had transitioned to online teaching within a matter of 3 days, (we closed our

physical doors on March 13, 2020 and were online teaching on March 16, 2020), I wanted to identify the ways that our school was providing well enough for our students and to identify the ways that we needed to improve. The study had $n=12$ participants who were various members of our school community, teachers, family members, and students, and I identified several problems of practice that were unrelated to school closures, but rather structural disparities that had already existed. In this study, I had interviews participants using a semi-structured interview protocol that had been slightly altered for each group of participants and grade appropriate. Students, teachers, and family members all noted that they were happy with the fact our school was providing for students a space to talk about systemic oppression but did not feel teachers were adequately prepared or had enough resources.

I sat with administration to discuss these findings, where they decided that I would spearhead a school-wide curriculum initiative as my action research item, which prompted my second pilot study: a survey that looked at community cultural wealth to disrupt cultural capital at the school within our curriculum choices. It is also important to note that I was directed to engage in action research in a manner that did not align with my epistemological and ontological approach or methods in which I had been trained. This was not for ill motivated reasons, but due to the training our director had experienced. This pilot study was supposed to be an initial “cycle” of action research. However, as I transitioned from this job, I decided to continue into the pilot study, but open it up to more participants than the school community and I felt that curriculum development utilizing YPAR was still vital. For this study, I received IRB exemption because of it was acting as an institutional analysis.

The second pilot study, I created a survey that survey community cultural wealth and representation within curriculum choices. I had $n=30$ participants and ran a reliability test as well

as descriptive statistics on the study. Cronbach's Alphas were $\alpha=.794$ and $\alpha=.799$, which indicates internal fair consistency. Because recent graduates had taken the survey, the purpose of using this survey for further redesign is to redesign it using YPAR with the now recent graduates, class of 2022, for their experiences to be centered in its new form. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics indicated that students did feel supported or heard in their schools, but they felt there were significant gaps in representation within the curriculum. Essentially, on an individualistic interactive level, they felt connected or heard, but they did not feel that their community cultural wealth was adequately appreciated or present within curriculum choices. The findings of this survey further solidified my decision to co-create curriculum with youth, which informed the trajectory of my research and in turn, this dissertation study. For this pilot study, I also received IRB exemption. In addition, this is the survey that the students will be redesigning with me in this dissertation.

Chapter 4

The Phrase of this Research is Beautiful Co-Creation, Brought to You by Collaboration

Or

Research Team Findings

This research had multiple purposes, but at the heart of this study is praxis, Freire's (2018) idea of critical reflection and action. However, it also went beyond praxis in that praxis had to incorporate community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005), embody a sociological imagination, and aim to disrupt disparities around cultural capital. One way to address this was to foster a sociological imagination, whether it was already established or not, and to collaboratively engage youth in a project that centered their cultural backgrounds, elevating their voices and viewpoints, and addressing educational injustices as it relates to systemic and institutional decisions, in this case, curriculum.

Because of this, to revisit the research questions, they were:

1. How do recent high school seniors/graduates critically engage in YPAR to redesign curriculum?
2. How, if at all, do recent high school seniors/graduates develop and demonstrate a sociological imagination while engaging in a YPAR project?

This chapter is dedicated to focusing on the research team's findings which was driven by the collaboration of the research partners, or youth participants, of this study. While this was a whole team collaboration, where I did participate, worked with the research team, and helped guide them with foundational and introductory research methodologies and analysis, my research partners should be credited for these findings, as their own community cultural wealth, critical thinking, and sociological imaginations were at work during data collection and analysis. The

findings have been written as thematic, and beautifully depict the collaborative nature of co-creation within education. In addition, these findings are divided into two parts: curriculum analysis and its development, and then the process of engaging in a YPAR project. These findings have been divided as such due to the nature of the data, data collection, and analysis, as well as the final collaborative organization and grouping of concepts. As a reminder, the research team analyzed the California 12th grade Social Studies Standards, which encompass government and economics, divided into two separate, yet connected, set of standards.

While this section covers a great deal of standards analysis, these standards were vital for the creation of the curriculum. The data was informative for creation of the curriculum, which then in turn was application of the sociological imagination and community cultural wealth while looking at the state standards and their nature. As one example, the “sanitized” finding of the standard was useful for the application of a sociological imagination when creating critical content and materials in the lesson plans, such as the introduction and emphasis on tribal governance, discussed further. Therefore, these findings help inform an understanding of the curriculum creation and how the research team also analyzed the findings later in this section.

Standards Findings

The research team analyzed the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards through a variety of coding and analytical processes and as a way to inform their curriculum development, which is discussed further in this chapter and highlighted in chapter 6 with the deliverables. Within the curriculum specifically, we established a variety of findings that allowed us to dig deeper and later informed our curriculum development and creation, as well to expand on the sociological imagination, which will be discussed later. I say we because I facilitated the process and collaborated with the groups, but ultimately this was motivated and guided by their

own lens and perspectives. Many things did arise, such as the idea of a seemingly neutral education, analysis of power, systemic thinking, rights, representation, and how the curriculum is drafted overall around language choices. In addition, the idea of neutrality stems only within the wording of specific ideologies, such as economic systems, but not the importance of a government. The research team established several categories and themes that relate to these findings. Some of this data came from written memos, as well as interactions and spoken interactions. While they did explore these curriculum findings as informative for their lesson plans, the lesson plans are explored in another chapter for several reasons: first it is a set of deliverable, and then second, because different groups created the lesson plans and were assigned standards that were different from the ones that they explored for coding and analysis.

References to specific standards will be written like the following: HSS-PoAD refers to Historical and Social Sciences, Principles of Democracy, which is often takes place in the first semester of senior year in high school, and then HSS-PoE refers to Historical and Social Sciences, Principles of Economics, which often takes place in the second semester of senior year of high school. It is important to recognize that the findings presented in this section are a collaboration of the entire research team, including the quotes, statements, and a combination of analyses across our whole research team, but with the youth voices centered. Data also were generated primarily from interactions and research team member generate data by analyze the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards. In addition, the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards were also data itself analyzed by the research team, but are also supported with additional data sources.

In addition, for context, the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards have been outlined below for future reference. First, they are divided between U.S. Government,

Principles of American Democracy, and then Economics. Each of the larger umbrella standards also have smaller substandard and expectations as well. The larger umbrella standards are outlined here, while the sub standards can be found in Appendix F.

Principles of American Democracy

1. 12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.
2. 12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.
3. 12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.
4. 12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.
5. 12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.
6. 12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.
7. 12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

8. 12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.
9. 12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.
10. 12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

Economics

1. 12.1 Students understand common economic terms and concepts and economic reasoning.
2. 12.2 Students analyze the elements of America's market economy in a global setting.
3. 12.3 Students analyze the influence of the federal government on the American economy.
4. 12.4 Students analyze the elements of the U.S. labor market in a global setting.
5. 12.5 Students analyze the aggregate economic behavior of the U.S. economy.
6. 12.6 Students analyze issues of international trade and explain how the U.S. economy affects, and is affected by, economic forces beyond the United States's borders.

“Sanitized” Education

For the idea of a (supposedly) neutral education, or, as RP-G wrote, “sanitized” education, it was clear that the standards were not neutral as presented, nor were they intended to be neutral. There were several phrases that the research team used that ended up being synonymous with this section, such as “sanitized” from RP-G, as well as “voluntary”, which

after axial coding ended up resulting in sanitized education, specifically from the smaller research team consisting of RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B, though also woven throughout other groups. Bringing everything together within the curriculum, we found that nearly standard (and substandard) was framed as neutral, though it dismissed a significant number of events and situations that have occurred within the United States. While the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards are situated within the context of the United States, and in turn, are intended to highlight the neutrality of concepts, such as capitalism, socialism, and other items, there are no mentions of critical theoretical ideas around race, nor is there a representation of other social identities. The idea of a neutral education was very present, and highlighted throughout, noted by the entire research team and smaller teams for that matter. For example, in HSS-PoAD, 12.1, the standards read, “Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution, and other essential documents of American democracy.” Further into the standard, it discusses influence by “Greek, Roman, English, and leading European political thinkers...” Again, while this is important, it does sidestep some other realities, such as some of the influence of Native American and tribal influence of democratic practices, which were present before the establishment of the United States. In this case, RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B wrote several notes on this topic, specifically, “These are only westernized ideologies and ideals; we are seeing this through the lens of only political thinker or set of thinkers, rather than how you view the perils and promises. We’re groomed into thinking only one way.” Furthering this was the idea in how these ideas are further sanitized for the purpose of neutrality in additional standards. For instance, RP-C and RP-F coded, “... voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not a part of government,” from HSS-PoE 12.3. RP-C and RP-F wrote in their memo, “How separate from government ARE these

relations really?” In this instance, they also discussed using their sociological imaginations where RP-C said in discussion, “... because everything works together.”

HSS-PoAD 12.1 is not the only example of the conflation of government and economics, as well as the “sanitized” concept. For instance, immediately in HSS-PoAD 12.2.2, the standards state, “Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one’s work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).” At this point, RP-C and RP-F wrote in their memo, “Are these economic rights really for us or for the people with the means of production?” As a group, we discussed this in detail when we reviewed the curriculum, where we deliberated on how the process is valuable and the underpinnings of future and past interactions are to understand the intersection of government and economics; however this neutrality also dismisses important considerations around these “rights” in that, not all individuals were considered human enough to be afforded these rights. In this case, RP-C and RP-F understood the importance of this neutrality as seeming to appear for all, but in reality, for those who own wealth. In addition, the idea of having the right to join a union or not also allows for a misunderstanding of the history of unions in how they may not be beneficial, tactics used by union busting, when there is a deep labor rights history within unions. Furthermore, RP-C and RP-F looked at HSS-PoAD 12.2.4, that states, “... Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.” In this case, RP-C and RP-F wrote, “The idea of being a citizen is subjective. The top 1% don’t exactly participate in these activities, but everyone else is supposed to because it’s our civic duty. Not everyone could take part in these either. E.g.: Women and minorities for a big part of history.” While the assumption

is that prior to 12th grade, students will have learned important considerations in 11th grade U.S. history, the dark historical facts of the U.S. government are not considered in this state of neutrality for the studying of U.S. government, but important to note as these things are essential to understanding the details around U.S. government. This is highlighted through the “sanitized” standards the research team found.

Another example where neutrality, or, sanitization, is presented merely with the wording of the standards is ins HSS-PoAD 12.5 and especially in 12.5.4, where it states, “Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v Pena*, and *United States v. Virginia* (VMI.)” While noting the controversies around these court cases, the standards do not explore the necessity of addressing the human rights and sociohistorical conditions that contributed to the establishment of *Brown v. Board of Education*, or any of the other rights. The lack of wording focusing on race, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and other sociopolitical identities and conditions within the curriculum is recognized, and only further contributes to the idea of neutrality. This was realized with RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B, where they wrote in their memo, “Biased thinking, civil rights and liberties can be argued into and out of existence, taking away the emotion and opinion out of the cases.” This realization in how the wording is neutral further “sanitizes” these cases, in that it is not just neutral, but inadvertently biased.

RP-C and RP-F wrote, “The 12.3 standard asks that students be able to understand that it deems as the core values of American society... What is notable is that those relations are arguably not voluntary at all. It also states that these relations are ‘not a part of government’ which is again questionable as those things are arguably often dictated by the government,’

which is again questionable as those things are arguably often dictated by the government, which is worth making clear.” RP-C and RP-F’s direct analysis emphasize the neutrality of this section. The ideology that the relations being voluntary are in fact voluntary, and that government dictation is central to the idea of these interactions because it seems as if it is neutral and independent from government rule, but only further pushes the idea these can be, or should be, taught from a purely neutral approach.

Overlapping the ideas of conflated economics and government were evident in the standards as well through several different standards. In HSS-PoAD 12.9.5, 12.9.6, and 12.9.7, which are right after the other, have several different statements. These are housed under the overarching 12.9 standard, which states, “Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.” 12.9.5 focuses on “illegitimate powers that twentieth-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.” 12.9.6 states, “Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.” And then 12.9.7 states, “Describe the ideologies that give rise to Communism, methods of maintaining control, and the movements to overthrow such governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, including the roles of individuals (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel).” The organization of these standards were key and something that stood out to us as a research team and within a smaller team. First, this is under HSS-PoAD. While there is an overlap of economic structures and government systems, this conflates them. The idea that communism is a matter of government control is interesting in that this dismisses different forms of government that can

exist with different forms of economics. RP-E and RP-H wrote regarding these considerations, “Here there are a lot of important patterns. This would specifically be systems of power and the ways things carry out in our democracy and in others. Power is also important because we learn WHO is putting these systems in place. Power is also seen to be linked with authority.” This highlights the way that these standards are not actually neutral, but rather “sanitize” them in a way that dismisses *who* has put the power in place. In addition, the organization of these not only conflate the government system with the economic structure, but also that there are significant ideologies that contribute to revolutions, rather than it being a question of power, which is a significant finding within this study as well. Lastly, the discussion in this section of 12.9 does not address structure and agency directly, but rather separates them, in that the individual leaders rose to power illegitimately and there were individuals or causes that supported them, rather than looking at structural patterns that may have contributed to it. RP-E and RP-H also wrote that, “Mainly, this discusses relationships between key systems in our government and democracy. The ‘balance’ between the rigidity of government but the rights of the citizens.” When we discussed this further, RP-H clarified and said, “The government seems as if it is democratic, but it's actually rigid, but somehow makes it seem like the rights of the citizens are most important.” This further addressed things around the balance between government expectations and citizenship.

Flaw of Masses, and Not Just A Few

While a seemingly neutral education seems to be a central consideration within the standards, contrasting, and even so much as contradicting this idea of neutrality, is that there are a significant number of standards that talk about power as a concept, but only when it seems to “serve” the interest of the curriculum. Within these ideas around power, there is discussion of power, but not necessarily looking at it as a systemic level. Expanding on the previous section,

with 12.9, is where the research team started to see content around power, leading to additional findings by the team. With 12.9 specifically, RP-E and RP-H noted, which is written in the previous section as well, “There are a lot of important patterns. This would be systems of *power* and the way things are carried out in our democracy and others’. Power is also important because we learn *who* is putting these systems in place and is seen to be linked to authority.” This is important for both sections because it highlights both the sanitized or neutrality attempts addressed in the previous section, but also how power is reflected only on occasion.

Another example of how power, or the lack of its discussion, is analyzed is by RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B. They looked at HSS-PoAD 12.1.4, that states, “Explain how the Founding Fathers’ realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in the *Federalist Papers*.” RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B noted how this standard represented power, because of its limits, but it also is relevant to power because of considerations beyond the words on the paper. Specifically, they stated, “This is hypocritical because it’s written that they saw human nature, but slavery was still present, which is a flaw of masses, and not just a few.” Essentially, the idea of power is presented here, and how its limits meant that it was merely considerations of power on paper, and not in action. Another observation this smaller research team of RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B made was in reference to HSS-PoAD 12.3.2 that is written as, “Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.” This specific standard is relevant to the recognition of power, or lack thereof, in that there is an assumption that anybody can be engaged with these systemic and governmental ways of interaction. However, RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B

explained their analysis as, “Nepobabies⁵; Only White men really have a fair and equal chance of asserting power over and in government.” This research team highlighted the role of power in what one would learn, but beyond the scope of the standard (i.e., White men) while addressing the weakness of the standard.

RP-A and RP-I began writing about enumerated powers when they looked at HSS-PoAD 12.7.3 and 12.7.4. 12.7.3 reads, “Discuss reserved powers and concurrent powers of state governments” while 12.7.4 states, “Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government’s power.” The research team’s interpretation discussed how power is reflected upon in the standards, but not necessarily in terms of what power is, where its roots are, and specifically what the limits are of the federal government. They looked at 12.7 as the overarching theme of, “Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.” This standard does focus explicitly on power as it relates to procedures of various levels of government, *including tribal government*. I note this because the entire research team discussed in workshop 6 how, while this was a significant portion of the overall standard, they had never been exposed or introduced to *tribal government*, how it fits into power, and that it may be governed differently as a different type of government. This was also discussed further in workshop 8 when we were exploring the lesson plans. When we covered this, and then we explored RP-A, RP-C, and RP-D’s lesson plan, which they titled, “The historical struggles between tribal and federal government,” RP-F said, “This is interesting because I never learned about this in any of my classes,” where RP-D echoed this sentiment around her lesson plan when she said, “Yeah, I never did either.” RP-D also was part of the

⁵ Nepobaby is a newer word, initially referencing folks in the entertainment industry who ended up in the industry because of a parent in the industry. This is a newer term as of December 2022. In this case, this team was referencing Nepobaby as transference of power from generation to generation due to status.

group that used this standard later in the lesson plan, but that lesson plan will be discussed further in the following chapter. Analysis also came from both the written analysis as well as the discussions around these in the last workshops. Clearly, this is not necessarily a fault of the standard, as it was written, but a fault of curriculum, access to materials, and an unpacking of concepts and critical theories, which also further makes the case for critical pedagogy as a foundation for educators.

Going back to 12.9, specifically 12.9.2, it is stated, “Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).” In this case, there is a recognition of power, but there is no description or explanation in any of the 12th grade standards that explain *what* power is, something noted across the research team, which in this case then, further highlights how power is central to many of these standards, but no discussion of what it is or how it is played out. In addition, the smaller research team, made up of RP-E and RP-H, wrote how it discusses and compares power, but now what contributed to who has power, why they have power, and whether that power was abused. Specifically, they wrote, “Simply systems, but doesn’t look at this as an ideology and only as some independent or individual thing.” Interestingly, it was discussed as well how power is structural and systemic, but that it is not discussed in the standards nor is there any underpinnings to explain it in terms of transference or power, abuse of power, and different forms of power. In this case, power is a central consideration across the standards, but there is a significant structural understanding of power that is missing, as well as how it influences agency, and how power is transferred, or not.

In general, there is a lot of mention of power within the standards, especially as it relates to power, authority, and systems. However, there is no description or defining of the word power, nor discussions about transference of power unless it is “overthrowing,” as well as how some groups of people have more power than others. Though, RP-E and RP-H did note, “Rebellion is a no no” next to several of the standards. In addition, there is no connecting of the structure and how it influences agency, and in turn, how systems influence power and the creation of the structure.

Binary Thinking

Binary thinking was a dominant finding across all research teams and was present. A variety of phrases was used to narrow down into binary thinking, such as “sanitized,” “critical thinking/lack of critical thinking,” and then specifically binary thinking. These codes were reduced into the overall category of binary thinking as what we found was that there was an expectation to *choose* a stance that was provided, think of governments or systems as only two, and a lot of the options or standards referred to a binary process or analysis. For example, in HSS-PoE 12.5, the standard states, “Students analyze the aggregate economic behavior of the U.S. economy” followed by, 12.5.1 that states, “Distinguish between nominal and real data.” In this case, this is an economic set of terms and not a methodological set of terms. With that said, it is still written in a very binary way of thinking and situated within solely an economic set of terms as coded by the research team. This was a finding consistent throughout the workshops, findings, and overall study. In this case, RP-A and RP-I noted that while these may be the two options, there can be situations where it exists beyond the scope of merely these two, but that by limiting to this it may prevent deeper thinking about possibilities. Specifically, they wrote, “This is very black and white. There are a lot more things to think about with money and economics

than just this.” This was also an example of when they were exercising their sociological imaginations because of the connection between a seemingly simple ideas of economics, but how the interpretation can go beyond the individual situation as well as the social circumstances.

12.1.3 reads, “Explain how the U.S. Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as ‘self-evident truths’.” In this case, RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B wrote in their memo that this standard was, “This is an outdated way of thinking; it isn’t logical, doesn’t apply to modern politics, and thinks with only republic and democratic values.” In this case, there was the recognition by the research team that there were standards focused on how historical elements of government influence today, but there is little regard for the current conditions of the world that may no longer be applied.

Another interesting finding was that there is this binary thinking around freedoms and power, yet, there is also a level of fluidity. This is more contradictory than binary, but in its own way, the standard contradicted itself. For example, in HSS-PoAD 12.5.1, the standard states, “Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal-protection-of-the-law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.” There seemed to be a lot in the standards that focused on a lack of critical thinking, yet this standard changed, where it recognized the changing scope of freedoms over time. For 12.5.1, RP-G, RP-B, and RP-D wrote, “This implies that freedoms can change based on perception of the individuals.”

Another example the research team highlight was in HSS-PoAD 12.5.3, that states, “Evaluate the effects of the Court’s interpretations of the Constitution in *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, and *United States v. Nixon*, with emphasis on the arguments espoused by each side in these cases.” In this case, RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B wrote, “Asking for arguments based on the interpretation of constitution, where cases are not considered 'controversial' and it is just one side vs. the other.” In this case, the smaller research team noted that there is no emphasis on whether one side is problematic or not. Of course, as we discussed as a group, there is an important consideration that understanding “the other side” of an argument is beneficial and valuable for the purpose of debate and deliberation, however, in some cases, it might be problematic to consider the other side, especially if it is rooted in the dehumanizing of people.

Another example of this binary thinking, versus the process, was identified by RP-E and RP-H, where they noted in HSS-PoAD 12.8, which states, “Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.” The standard goes on to state 12.8.1.) “Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press,” 12.8.2) “Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics,” and 12.8.3) “Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.” While all these standards look at processes involved, RP-E and RP-H wrote, “We find the most important thing with this standard is about the influence and the cause for it. We see and realize they want students to learn how things are impacted and how this can influence and cause other occurrences to happen.” They also noted, “Action and reaction.” While the process and importance are noted in this standard as the point out, another consideration they highlight though is that there is more of a focus on

taking a single stance between two and defending them. In this case, the binary presentation was necessary to see how one may cause the other.

There were many findings that focused on the way that binary thinking, or a lack of critical thinking, was present. There were some standards that discuss processes, but it seemed that overwhelming the research team noticed that there was little wiggle room for critical inquiry, and instead, a preference for choosing one side or the other, or being situated between only two options. In this case, there is little critical pedagogy available within these standards unless it was left solely to the teacher, and that is extending beyond the scope of the standards, and absolutely missing a sociological imagination.

The [Capitol] Hill to Die On

As previously noted, there is a conflation between government and economics, and though they influence each other, this was a recurring theme across both HSS-PoAD and HSS-PoE, in that economics was purely reflective of being individual in achievement and exchange, but seemed to be embedded in systems as well. For instance, RP-A and RP-I analyzed HSS-PoE 12.6.2, which states, “Compare the reasons for and the effects of trade restrictions during the Great Depression compared with present-day arguments among labor, business, and the political leaders over the effects of free trade on the economic and social interests of various groups of Americans.” In addition, RP-A and RP-I also looked at 12.6.1 that states, “Identify gains in consumption and production efficiency from trade, with emphasis on the main products and changing geographic patterns of twentieth-century trade among countries in the Western Hemisphere.” Within these sections, RP-A and RP-I wrote, “Voice, equity, and political parties. It connects voice with equity, but then doesn’t look at how these parities impact this.” Looking at both underneath the overarching 12.6 standard, RP-A and RP-I looked at how the role of

capitalism in this, but also noted that there was significant interactions and systemic concerns that were not presented. For instance, it discusses trade in the Western Hemisphere, but it does not mention the negative impact (for example, perhaps environmental degradation) that some of these factors may influence or impact. 12.6.1, notes “main products” and then 12.6.2 asks for arguments among various leaders. However, this is centered in capitalism, and dismisses several things that the team highlighted, which is that it does not include marginalized or minoritized peoples, only leaders in positions of power. Specifically, for this, RP-A and RP-I wrote, “There is direct democracy here, but whose voices are REALLY represented in this democracy?” This highlights how democracy is ideal, but, it does not consider how voices are represented differently throughout economic means.

There was an interesting relationship that the team found where the standards would discuss systems, but it seems that the recognition of the role that systems play in the everyday life was missing, or in other words, there was recognition of structure, but not how structure impacted agency. For instance, in HSS-PoAD 12.3.2, the standards states, “Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.” While in the United States, people are legally free to associate across these considerations, the research team noted how this dismisses the negative components to this, and how the government did *not* allow this for many years for certain groups of people, though it would have been deemed a “civil society.” Furthermore, RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B noted that 12.3.2 focuses on a level of “positivity” in that there is only “good” the government has done, rather than looking at the structural and systemic issues that have been caused by the government. Specifically, they wrote, “Only brings up the good that government and capitalism brings to people, ignoring the mass amounts of bad, inequality is not mentioned.”

Another example of dismissing the politics and economics of the United States as potentially problematic or good, but merely neutral was noted by RP-A and RP-I where they pointed out their observations of HSS-PoE 12.6.4, that reads, “Explain foreign exchange, the manner in which exchange rates are determined, and the effects of the dollar’s gaining (or losing) value relative to other currencies.” This was explained as interesting because it was merely a neutral explanation of the dollar, rather than the effects of the economy, and how those who are thriving in the economic system, have arrived at that point. Specifically, a memo written stated, “This is patterns and trends, but do not talk about corruption.” In addition, it compares the U.S. dollar as relative to other currencies, with undertones of hierarchy. For example, RP-A and RP-I wrote, “Talks about it as production and consumption, but not how it impacts others.” Further, RP-A and RP-I wrote, “Emphasis on diplomacy and what that means for US economics + politics.” Another example of idea of a neutral economic setting is in HSS-PoE 12.4 that states, “Students analyze the elements of the U.S. labor market in a global setting,” followed by 12.4.2, that states, “Describe the current economy and labor market, including the types of goods and services produced, the types of skills workers need, and the effects of rapid technological change, and the impact of international competition,” and then 12.4.3, that states, “Discuss wage differences among jobs and professions, using the laws of demand and supply and the concept of productivity.” In this case, RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B discussed how this focuses only on some abstract idea of economics that we have no control over, rather than the socialization or social construct of value. It dismisses a great deal of cultural capital as if it is inherent and natural. For RP-G, RP-D, and RP-B, they wrote, “Simplifying a complicated process, taking the people, discussions and agendas out of it...” and “Discusses this in relation to something that’s already established and not critical thinking.”

Overall, each specific standard highlights an interesting relationship to the United States government and economics, in that it is heralded as good, or at minimum, neutral. In this case, the idea is that capital and the government are natural fixtures and good, dismissing some of the realities of these systems and structures as well. Furthermore, the standards seem neutral, but there is an undertone of praise and hierarchy.

YPAR and The Sociological Imagination

Understanding how youth engaged in a YPAR project and demonstrated their sociological imaginations were the two key considerations for this project. Specifically, the intentionality was to look at how the sociological imagination was not just developed or demonstrated, but *within* the YPAR project. There were many takeaways from this study specifically to the YPAR process both as a project but as the process itself. Specifically, there were many things stated in how a sociological imagination was understood, explored, or applied throughout the project, and how this overlapped with the centering of community cultural wealth through lesson planning and the project as a whole.

Not only did I make observations about this process, which I will explore deeper in the next chapter, but the research team made their own observations throughout the process, in their own reflective practice, their positionalities, as well as the final reflections and coding and analysis of that process. Some of those findings included an expansion of the sociological imagination, including development, demonstration, and growth, personal development and reflections, collaboration, and a centering of community cultural wealth. In addition, there was a sense of collective connectedness that had occurred throughout, where several research team members talked about the collaborative process of engaging through this project. Lastly, because

of the In Vivo coding and the pulling of quotes, I summarize what the research team collected and analyzed.

We Have More in Common Than We Think

Overwhelming, the research team noticed that all the members saw a value in the practice and use of YPAR, and this was exemplified through both reflections and the overall engagement. While some did note potential struggles of a YPAR project, as with anything, in general it was valuable and had potential for student growth in the future. Of the 9 participants, 7 participants, all but RP-B and RP-E, stated that this specific project allowed them to reflect on their past experiences differently, which will be explored in another section in greater depth, but that this was one of the most important pieces on an individual level. This alone exemplifies the sociological imagination as this represented how “history” meets “biography” and quite literally the depiction of Mill’s (YEAR) concept. These findings were identified by the research team in our final written reflective pieces, as well as findings that looked at the expansion of their sociological imaginations. These statements were expressed by various research team members, as shown in the findings section. Lastly, these reflections were written anonymously so that when analysis took place, we would not be able to make anybody feel uncomfortable with reading their reflections on the process.

For instance, one research team member wrote, citing their analysis of another’s reflection, “... it seems like a lot of us agree that a good lesson plan cannot be made just by following the standards, especially when somebody wrote, ‘I realized how much effort teachers put into making a good lesson plan.’” In addition, another person pulled this quote, “My biggest personal takeaway from this project is that schooling is almost the exact same for all of us” and then analyze it, saying, “This shows how the study made us more aware of the systems that

impact our personal lives, and we have more in common than we think.” Meanwhile, one research team member wrote in their reflection, “My own personal takeaway would be a new interest in fixing the system and working however I can to make that happen.” This is a prime example of how a sociological imagination was developed because in this case, this member highlighted not only their own experiences, but how they can find themselves within the system and as a way to make it happen – this merges the role of agency within the context of structure. Meanwhile, the team member who analyzed this quote and coded it wrote, “A lot of us said things like this in our reflection. This proves that developing and using your sociological imagination could likely make K-12 students more included to find and follow their passions and accomplish change.” These examples and their respective analyses identified a few things – not just that they developed their own sociological imagination, but that they were able to identify them amongst each other as well as shown through their reflections and analysis of said reflections.

One research team member had a suggestion for educators and the system overall, exemplifying their own sociological imagination and highlighting how to foster others. The quote they analyzed was, “I would also suggest educators find ways to make lessons relevant to current events students are already likely hearing about.” From there, the analysis and recommendation said, “If teachers are able to take their lessons and apply those concepts to the real world in a way students can understand, especially in talking about issues such as race, gender, and class, students will be able to advance their sociological imagination.” Another example of how to engage with this was the representation for students, in that two different members highlighted this as collaboration within a sociological imagination. They stated, “I think my positionality made it easier to interact with team members because I was aware that we

all volunteered for this; I was excited to work alongside other people who were passionate about this subject” which then led into the idea of connection. For instance, expanding on this, somebody wrote, “The lack of representation in subjects like U.S. History and the way economics failed to give me an idea of how it applied to me and my peers.” Being able to apply and use the sociological imagination to see the larger connection and collective was a recurring theme. This was significant for several reasons, but namely because they had all elected to participate in this study, and attempt change. This collection of thoughts further exemplifies the demonstration of a sociological imagination because there is the interconnectedness present, as well as how there can be an incorporation of larger, critical ideas within materials to teach and learn through. Again, the idea of the individuals and their agency connecting to the structure and changing of systems is relevant, and further addresses the first research question.

Personal reflections around the sociological imagination continued, highlighting continued growth and demonstration. One member took this quote, “This gave me the time to reflect on my schooling and what I learned and hearing other people's experiences gave me this wider perspective of how others' schooling went. For instance, I remember some talking about econ and government and the things they learned, and I don't remember learning anything about things they talked about, therefore the study really made me question my exposure.” The member analyzed it with this statement, “This reflects how differently experiences are seen after the development of a sociological imagination. This person was able to see the flaws in their experience as well as understand the experiences of other. But the connectedness was not just about peers, as the team realized that it meant a connectedness between teachers and students, too.” For instance, one member wrote this in their reflection, “I would advise educators to trust and listen to their students when engaging in a YPAR project. This is a very effective tool, but

only if you listen and apply your findings to your experience as an educator.” A different member had analyzed it beyond the scope of just classmates, saying, “It’s very important to make sure students and teachers work together on YPAR or else it will not work. Many teachers and schools say they will listen to students then not act on the suggestions given. For YPAR to work they must actually listen to the suggestions and criticisms and work with the students.” It was clear that the idea of collaboration was vital for YPAR, but also highlighted their collaborative approach and application of a sociological imagination.

While there was a great deal of analysis that took place around personal reflections and growth, their sociological imaginations were addressed, flourished, and grew. This is exemplified throughout what they wrote, as well as their interactions and engagement. Through words, reflections, and commentary, as well as their own analysis, while the research team members did not have a foundational understanding of systems, the exploration of this as it relates to structure, and their own agency, was understood much deeper. The research team members were able to piece together individual experiences as they related to larger systems, or as Mills (YEAR) calls them “private troubles” and how they are connected to “social problems.” This is the definition of a sociological imagination, further supporting the findings around research question one.

Lesson Plan Analysis

Reflections were not the only examples of a sociological imagination and support research question two, though findings around that can be found woven throughout all of the findings. The team also analyzed the lesson plans, highlighting where they saw the importance of different themes and how it related to the sociological imagination. After analysis of the lesson plans that the team had created, the team also noted that a sociological imagination was presented throughout or was encouraged. For example, in one of the lessons a student learning

outcome stated, “Students will interact with each other showing they understand the steps of the process as well as the important of power relations.” This analysis focused on hands on learning, but also an applied sociological imagination.

Specifically, the application of the sociological imagination is highlighted because it showed not only the individual analysis, but the way that they were able to see how their team members were also applying their own. This contributed to critically inquiry, in the same way that this student learning outcome did as well, saying, “Students go through the process of making a law starting at the local government.” This outcome allowed for individuals to see how they would be encouraged to develop a sociological imagination. Furthermore, another outcome that highlighted a sociological imagination read, “Students understand how these systems give power and who the power goes to.” Another example of an applied sociological imagination within the lessons was highlighted when one of the outcomes stated, “Situations may include students assessing the way their government systems have historically treated people of different classes, races, backgrounds. Did your government system have aspects that supported people of color, people with low income, etc.”

These findings were the result of coding lessons and organizing findings and phrases according to code. The research team noted that the lesson plans not only encouraged a sociological imagination, but also highlighted their own within the way that lessons, activities, and assessments were created. Furthermore, they were able to see ways to bridge the gap between critical thinking, critical pedagogy, and meeting the sociopolitical needs of the state standards.

Disruption, Dissent

Within the reflection, one team member stated, “I felt more empowered to make suggestions and express ideas that I otherwise would have felt might have been disregarded before participating in this study.” With that, it was analyzed in the ways that students are often disempowered, situated within the dominant culture. In this case, a research team member analyzed this with a final statement, saying, “This suggests that the current CA standards prevent students from expressing their unique identities/backgrounds in the classroom setting - incorporating sociological imagination helps to change that.” While this did mention a sociological imagination, the team felt this was a matter of disrupting cultural capital, primarily because of the way that this challenge dominant narratives and encouraged identities and backgrounds. Furthermore, while this quote looks at the standards, it does highlight how the standard’s “sanitization” may not encourage or incorporated a diverse background or understanding, or in turn, community cultural wealth, in its presentation or expectations.

Yet another example of disrupting cultural capital that the team identified was then a member wrote this, “I feel this helps get a better understanding of their knowledge and experiences as opposed to a survey. I feel much more connected and involved in this research so I am more likely to give better feedback.” In this case, the analysis statement noted this, “Rather than a survey taking basic answers without hearing the story behind them, YPAR helps include students in the storytelling of what is happening and why.” We did discuss the role of surveys, but in discussion, we noted how the interactive and collaborative style provides its down mode of storytelling that is missed from a singular survey. In addition, initially coded as engaging learning and then moved into disrupting cultural capital, a member wrote, “I definitely feel like the biggest strength of the project would be the creative ability we had because I feel

like it encompasses one of the major goals of this project, which would be to let students have more creative control in learning.” This was determined to be disrupting cultural capital because of the role that “creative control” for students, and especially recognizing unique and diverse backgrounds, there is almost an inherent disrupting that happens with this engagement.

One last example of a disrupting of cultural capital, is when a member wrote, “Oftentimes school becomes thoroughly sanitized and it sucks. Students want to learn about their reality and listening to them will help everyone.” In this case, the team analyzed it, ultimately resulting to this statement, “The inclusion of students in determining what they learn and how it is relevant to them will create a more engaged class who cares about what they learn. It will also help students think critically about the systems that affect their lives.” In this case, the team noted how critical reflection helps with thinking about the individual lives, and while this does overlap with a sociological imagination, it also disrupts the normative culture within education. They noticed the ways that they actively disrupted cultural capital in their process and projects.

This disruption was also present within the lessons. For example, a student learning outcome that a member highlighted was “Students will understand the concept of agenda-setting in media” followed with an analysis of, “The more political media outlets want us to hate the other side based on what they say.” This recognized the role of media, and addressed the way that critical inquiry can be encouraged through this student learning outcome. Another coded outcome that focused on disrupting cultural capital was a statement read, “Students can compare and contrast different and be able to compare how this affects the citizens of that cultural community.” This was overlapped with a sociological imagination, in that this is the result of a sociological imagination but disrupts cultural capital by focusing on impact dependent upon power. Meanwhile, one of the guiding questions that a team wrote within their lesson plan,

asked, “Did your government system have aspects that supported people of color, people with low income, etc.? Who benefited most from the laws, rules, beliefs of your government system?” Within this, it was coded for disrupting cultural capital because of the role this plays in critically thinking and challenging dominant narratives around benefit, government, rules, and questioning whose rules are centered. And lastly, one important question a different team had that was coded for disrupting cultural capital and a sociological imagination was, “How is power different than authority? Why is power so valuable in our society?”

Throughout the lessons, the research team managed to embody assessments and lessons that represented a disruption to cultural capital. It was not only a matter of the research team creating lessons that disrupted it, but that the rest of the research team also was able to identify explicit examples of disrupting cultural capital. This is an important element of connecting various systemic issues throughout, and then challenging them through the use of community cultural wealth, which is another concept coded throughout the lessons.

Community Cultural Wealth in Action

Community cultural wealth is *always in action*, as we cannot wash ourselves of our cultural backgrounds and the influence they play. However, in terms of the educational setting, we realized that there were examples of community cultural wealth throughout the study. Community cultural wealth as seen as not just culture in the traditional sense, but also a sharing of space and culture. For instance, one quote that was analyzed was this, “The second a member stops feeling comfortable enough to share is when it all goes wrong.” The analysis resulted in this statement, “YPAR research only works if you establish trust among the group, enabling people to accurately share their cultural capital.” This was an interesting analysis that we discussed, where it is a matter of sharing the resources, disrupting the current distribution of

cultural capital, and then recognizing that we can center community cultural wealth in the form of sharing space and in turn capital.

Similarly, to this, spaces contribute to the suffocation of cultural wealth. One member reflected, stating, “I know there are many students like me in the public school system who would benefit from being represented and feeling seen within the curriculum.” The analysis resulted in this statement, “Students of certain (especially marginalized) identities may be deprived of cultural capital in education that students of other identities get. Repairing that divide by making curriculum/education more representative of more identities is the goal.” This was reflective on how to disrupt cultural capital by centering and representing cultural diversity, and in turn, the importance of community cultural wealth.

Community cultural wealth was not only exemplified in the reflections, but also in the lessons. For example, in one of the lessons, the team wrote, “In class, students will read Andrew Jackson’s “Letter to the Cherokee”. They will then read an article on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Both of these sources provide examples of how power has historically and currently been distributed by tribal and federal government.” This was noted as community cultural wealth because it recognized the “wealth” or capital that tribal governments held within the relationship and dynamic of power and decisions making.

Another example was the activity of a Socratic Seminar. The activity example, “Socratic Seminar discussing the systems of government, what worked and what didn’t during the game. What would you adopt for your system, what would you definitely not do. What would you change about the US government system, and what would you keep the same.” This was identified as community cultural wealth because it valued the student voice not just during the seminar, but also how it would impact their own government as well as the U.S. government

system. This was also highlighted as community cultural wealth because it did not reference the teacher, but the student engagement. In addition, upon discussion, it was identified that this student learning outcome, “How do the sociological factors of a bill relate to the process of it being passed (or not passed?)” also was community cultural wealth. The reason behind this was that it recognized the way that some cultures have more value, and what wealth others have brought to the process to make change, such as the community cultural wealth of Civil Rights Leaders and groups to make change and fight for rights, which highlights the strengths of people that have historically been oppressed due to cultural capital.

Overall, the process of recognizing these three components of the framework, as well as these ideas discussed throughout, were present not only in the reflections, but also through the lessons. The process was an overall exercise in disrupting cultural capital, the utilization of a sociological imagination, and the center of community cultural wealth, valuing student voice. The process of using YPAR managed to merge all of these together to use for empowerment, and ultimately resulted in these findings by the research team. This practice highlights how valuable student cultural backgrounds are, and how often was underestimate and undervalue the experiences, practice, and value that our students have already.

Overview of the Team Findings

Many of the overall research team findings overlapped and were independent of each smaller research team. Ultimately what the research team found was that the standards seemed neutral, but instead, were “sanitized,” where neutrality was not even necessarily by default, but rather realities of history were wiped away. In addition, the research team identified a great amount of binary thinking, where it lacked a critical sociological imagination. In addition, there seemed to be almost contradictory cases, where the team noted discussions about government not

having impact, while also influencing economics, but viewing them as separate. However, the findings within the standards were not the only ones, but the team also identified the importance of a sociological imagination and *how* it was enacted throughout. Specifically, they noted the importance of a sociological imagination within their reflections as well as through the lesson plans created. Meanwhile, the team also explained how community cultural wealth, support, inclusion, and making a space feel safe is important and valuable to not just a YPAR project, but being critically engaged within the social systems of their everyday lives.

Chapter 5

The Word of the Study is Dissent, Brought to You by Dialogical Musings

Or

Researcher Findings

When I designed this research study, I expected to have findings that would align with my expectations, mostly because of my teacher background and previous activities that overlapped with some of the activities or scaffolded projects that we were doing throughout the duration of data collection and analysis. I also expected to find certain things due to the theoretical framework that was created for this study. While this was true, and they will be presented here, I was surprised by some of my reflections and the various data that I did not expect, like that of my pedagogy. Of course, I expected to provide recommendations for a YPAR project, but I did not anticipate reflecting on my pedagogy, though something that would logically occur. Yet, this was one of the most surprising elements of data and analysis that I did not necessarily consider, especially due to the necessity of reflexivity and teacher reflection.

The findings themselves were insightful, and I found myself in awe with each new discovery because of the ways my research partners participated in these types of projects using their imaginations that have not yet, or only mildly, been tainted by the confines of a restrictive and “normative” society. My findings include stratification, youth’s systemic thinking, though without articulation, identifiable events that shifted youth’s thinking to systemic thinking, a sociological imagination present without sociological vocabulary, youth observation skills, dialogic pedagogy and other pedagogical practices, collaborative critical inquiry, and power differentials and dynamics. They will be presented and expanded on in this part of the findings section.

Stratification and Sorting

One recurring theme and topic of conversation I found as the researcher was the concept of stratification. While this was not specific to a YPAR project, or the framework, it was still indicative of reasons why these research team members wanted to join the research, how they wanted to participate, and what may have influenced their involvement. What happened often in conversation was the concept of stratification and sorting, which is the idea of being sorted into specific groups and social groups. The research team members often would engage in conversations around their internalization of certain negative experiences, whether it had to do with Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), honors courses, or even simply the way that they navigated the educational system.

RP-G discussed her experience with GATE, where she said, "... like the GATE program; I lost friends because of that, because they're like, 'You're not in the GATE classes.'" Meanwhile, RP-C stated, "Being smart means being in AP classes where the only difference is that it's more homework. Yeah. And then you're just like, oh, well, I'm just a failure... like what?" RP-D stated, "I never knew like how I got like into GATE. I was just like... frustrated. I don't know how they pick you to take it. I was wondering if it was because my older siblings all took it, but they didn't have a record of that. Because then if I don't get it, I'm stupid."

While GATE was the topic of conversation in this case, as disability and other concepts appeared as well. For instance, RP-D said, "Like elementary school like little boys can like be like running around and have a lot of energy and do that and they're like the funny class clown. Like, to me that goes down boy. So then the girls like, you can't be like that or it's like, what's the heck is wrong with you? So I feel like that's how it gets diagnosed... like for me at freshman year of high school, but like I was a mess and it was so obvious." In addition, RP-E said, "So,

my district actually had one school that was dedicated to GATE and every student there was GATE. And I was recommended to test but at that time I was undiagnosed.. but I'm... I have ADHD, so I'm like neurodivergent. And, of course the system does not care about people like me. And so um, my issue was I was advanced and I was I qualified, but I couldn't finish section soon enough. We were on a timer. And so I was never placed into it because I couldn't like I didn't do it in time. So first of all, it didn't support students like me to where like I could have flourished.... Then my stepbrother actually was placed into ELL because he was living... Well when he was going into kindergarten he was living in a household with my step grandparents who spoke Spanish but he grew up learning English and so by default it put him in there but he was very obviously, but we actually learned he had dyslexia. But because he was put into ELL, so every time he tried to test out, he was deemed still needing ELL even though his issue was not that he wasn't an English learner. He had dyslexia and he genuinely couldn't read at the time, but he knew English. So it's just like the system failed both of us in extreme ways, or the system did exactly what it was supposed to do.” This extensive quote highlighted the various ways that the educational system stratified students, from GATE, to disability dismissal, as well as how it fails emerging multilingual students.

The reality of stratification and sorting taking place is not new, and has been studied. However, to see that these research team members had experiences these realities in schooling and that it was a large motivator for why they participated in this study or at minimum, assists with guiding how these team members recognized systemic issues. In fact, RP-I said her reason for joining the study was, “I hated school and I love talking about it.” These realities highlight that learning was not the problem, but schooling and the institution of school itself.

Reflexivity and Reflection

Before I explore other findings, I want to discuss first my pedagogical practice, and my reflexivity and reflection as this influenced and impacted my engagement with the project. When I was collecting data for this study with my participants turned research partners, I went into the research with both an open mind as well as anticipated findings and outcomes. Being a critical pedagogue, it was not unexpected for me to critically engage with my research team, especially as that is my pedagogical practice, regardless of grade and setting. The use of student evaluations, peer evaluations, and both formative and summative assessments provide valuable insight as to how educators engage with their students and can, and should, be used to adjust, improve, and change pedagogy according to the students within the classroom, as no single student, or group of students, is the same.

I knew going into this that I would be engaging with my research team in this manner, as it is at the core of who I am, but I was not prepared to begin a process of metacognition, which is essentially the process of deeply reflecting on the things we think about (Flavell, 1979). I am a deeply reflective educator, hence the centering of YPAR as the philosophical and methodological foundations of this study. Yet, I did not expect the findings I made when it comes to my pedagogical engagement.

In addition, the findings across the research team as it relates to the curriculum, and specifically, the curriculum itself, provide valuable insight as to not just YPAR as a practice, and student reflections, but *how* to engage critically through YPAR, as well as a foundational curricula that is accessible, created by youth, and exemplifies the outcome of YPAR as practical and capable of influencing institutional practice, not just through The Dignified Learning Project, but rather as an exemplar for what could be at other institutions, including formal public school

settings. Specifically, as it relates to the organization, however, The Dignified Learning Project now has empirical research around the importance of YPAR, as well as contributions to curriculum and lesson plans, accessible to anybody who wants to critically engage with topics that also meet the state standards. Therefore, chapter 6 is focused essentially as a practical guide for educators, as well as accessibility to the curriculum that the research team and I created so that if a California 12th grade social studies teacher should need or desire a set of critically imaginative of lesson plans, they then could use this section or findings within this chapter as that guide. In addition, this section does not serve as a traditional set of findings due to the nature and intent of being a practical guide for educators and institutions. While there are analyzed components, this does not constitute as findings in the ways the prior chapters do.

Workshop 0 served as an initial community-building space, though not initially as planned. While I entered the setting, which took place in a conference room in the sociology department of a large 4-year public university in San Diego, I set up the space in the same ways that I would when I teach. In this case, I ensured that my philosophical self was present well before the participants arrived. As a dialogical educator, I did not sit at the end of the table very intentionally as I have, through my years of teaching, recognized that students tend to gravitate toward me first and foremost when they are responding to questions, whether I was the one who answered it or not. While this is something that I have been very intentional about, I did not notice truly how active I am in this process until I listened to recordings and then reviewed the video recordings from Zoom.

However, my hands-on activities were something that I valued before, and truly noticed how important they were after this study. While this is purely instructional, RP-I wrote about engaging in a YPAR project, “I would suggest making the process very clear (like Charlene did)

and reiterating why the participants are so important to the process. It really is all about centering students perspectives and lives.” This was a reflective moment for me because I have often questioned whether I am clear, but I have been told many others that I am. This is not about me, however, but rather the way that reflexivity is important, because RP-I states that the process needs to be clear and the *why* needs to be repeated. This is important for pedagogical practices as a whole, even beyond my own. One statement, from RB-F stands out for me the most, where she said, “The activity we did on Starbucks... and how it’s a cog in the machine of sorts for people (you get a coffee to make yourself awake enough to make money for someone else at your job, your coffee is made by someone who is making money for their boss, their boss’ boss, etc.) was honestly transformative for me. Being able to see the world in that light is a little grim, sure, but it’s realistic and it helped me to understand what was really meant by applying your sociological imagination to everything in everyday life.” The activity I have on the sociological imagination is something that I do for all of my sociology and social studies courses. I did not think about the impact this may have on students in this way, but is important for future adjustments and tweaks in additional activities and assignments.

Meanwhile, there was one statement that was a critique of the process, where a member said, “...sometimes I didn’t always know 100% what I was supposed to be doing at a given time.” While the responses in general were positive, this statement pushed me as a teacher to reflect on my processes. I noticed that this occurred *after* we had switched to an online setting, which requires me to think about my pedagogy and the ways that I need to engage with my students, or in this case, research team. First, not all individuals will understand the process immediately or the same. This means that I should consider different modalities of instruction, especially when we’ve switched instructional methods. But, it also made me realize that my

preparation may have needed to be considered differently because the process was more labor intensive than I had anticipated, which may have impacted my pedagogy, as well as how this research team member interacted with me. In addition, this is something that I do want to explore, but the other findings are more important in the process of a YPAR project and development of a sociological thinking. Though, I am a believer that teachers must model activities, and being a researcher engaged in reflexivity was my goal.

Structure, Agency, and Systems Before, During, and “Post” COVID⁶

When I was engaging dialogically with the research team in our first workshop, I had been asking questions about their educational experiences. This was done in a very similar fashion that I engage dialogically with my secondary humanities classes. Generally, I pose a question, initiate the dialogue, and then eventually aim to remove myself from the conversation for a period, handing the conversation over to the students so that they can engage dialogically in an academic setting. I had done that for many of the prompting questions, but what I had noticed was that they would discuss education as an institution, and there was a major shift within their conversation: they were no longer discussing teachers as the problem, but the school, systems, and institution. This was one of the most surprising and, to me, interesting findings. At this point, I engaged with the (then) participants (later research team) about their educational experience a little deeper. RP-C commented about a teacher who they felt was a poor teacher and they signed petitions, following it with, “The whole institution thing, like, I didn’t really look at it as an institutional thing until like my senior year...” and then I said to the group, “I have a quick question – you made an interesting statement that you didn’t recognize it was a system issue until

⁶ I want to note that I use the word “Post” in quotations because COVID is still a reality and real threat for all of us in and out of education. Society has normalized the state of the world, but it is still very much a reality, and something that many folks, especially disabled individuals, must face and navigate, dangerously so, within our world. With that said, since the COVID school closures are not “a thing” I have chosen the use of the word “post.”

you were around a senior. Does everybody kind of feel similar? Or maybe not that exact year but... when was the transition of when you made the switch from being frustrated with an individual to a system?"

They almost immediately and unanimously stated it was during COVID. This finding was significant and stands out to me through the entire study because COVID school closures really increased heightened awareness of systemic thinking. RP-I said, "I feel like, with... because of COVID, we have that like, kind of separation and that was... I feel you could see the bigger picture for me. Personally. I was in ASB too, and I was with the principal and vice principal like that. I know all of my friends were' thinking more about like, the actual school itself and not just specific classes... we were able to be like, oh, we don't want to go back to school not just because these teacher suck, but also because there's just a bunch of sh*t that's wrong with it."

Meanwhile, RP-D responded and said, "Yeah, that and... once I got to the end of high school... Yeah. I've had a bunch of teachers that suck and stuff, but, I can't even blame them. They just like a curriculum put on their desk, or they have to teach... they can't teach what they're passionate about. And it's so obvious. I think that's the reason we think about the bigger picture is that because... the teachers are just as much of a part of it as like we are, like they're kind of experiencing it similarly to us. I feel like that's why we just like automatically see it that way... like a hierarchy kind of issue."

Another example of this systemic level of thinking occurred when RP-G said, "I've like... I've had situations where I dislike teachers, but it's never been a situation where it's like, this teacher is responsible for what's going wrong at the school... I've been fortunate enough to like, work with teacher, through volunteering and stuff, and they're always just as frustrated as

the students and parents on the outside...” RP-F stated similarly issues, where she said, “If a teacher has a problem, it’s often like an individual problem. Like with that teacher, it’s not really systemic, you know, the teachers, they’re stuck, and most of the general problems with the school have come from the systems, the institutions...” and went on to explain situations about decisions around honors classes, decisions where the principal enacted practices without input, and other situations that had caused uproar in the school community. There were, of course, some exceptions where the research team members had identified systemic thinking before, but more in an abstract way. RP-G began discussing some earlier realizations when there was a scandal at her school, where she said, “It’s not the fault of teachers, like the teachers were having some secret meeting, it was kind of coming from the higher up. I don’t think I really realized how systemic it was though until I started high school in 10th grade, with COVID, where I didn’t realize it was like, this whole system in place dictating what was happening until the end of middle school.”

RP-E attributed her realization to a combination of maturity and extracurricular engagement, specifically as ASB president. Going beyond even principals and boards, she stated, “I think what a lot of us are saying is that... we kind of like, blame it on the higher ups and the principals and the board, but in reality, or in my opinion, I don’t identify systems as people, identify more as like, the rubric or idea of our society. I think when it comes to that, it’s really easy for us to put the blame on them... I think they feel they’re trapped in this too, in how they should act and there’s no way to get out. This highlighted a deeper analysis of the systems not only being those in positions of power, but rather patterned arrangements, which aligned with a sociological thinking, discussed further later.

This fascinating finding highlights how the reality of COVID was what really propelled these research partners to identify systems rather than frustrations with purely individuals. Of course, they did have frustrations, as is natural, but overall, they recognized that there was something institution and systemic with the issues they were facing. Furthermore, during the series of the workshops, they also noticed that a lot of these situations were similar across their experiences. In more than one instances, various members of the team noted that their experiences were more similar than they expected, as highlighted in the research team findings.

Personal Development and Reflection

Many of the research team identified personal growth and reflection through this process, as part of their own personal humanization of themselves. For instance, RP-C wrote, “This study allowed me to really see how similar my experiences were with some of my classmates. I’ve seen that curriculum is the same and the ways they were taught the exact same. They give us busy work and want us to regurgitate all the information onto a test. I have found out more about myself in this study than I have in the four months of college.” Meanwhile, RP-D wrote, “I interacted with other students in the group to form connections... I’ve discovered that I want to be an educator. This study has really taught me a lot about myself, and I’ve learned a lot from the other participants as well.” These personal developments went beyond their own goals, but they were influential. For instance, in one reflection, a team member wrote, “I noticed myself reflecting on my past schooling a lot more. I started thinking about the teachers that helped me become more of a critical thinker beyond just the material they were required to teach me.” This highlighted the ability to be reflective and recognize the role of the past in the personal setting. This was an important component in *how* youth engage in a YPAR project, but also its potential.

The personal development was also exemplified when a team member wrote, “I think participating in this study really paid off for me. Not only did this help me build on my critical thinking skills as a sociology major, but it also made me reflect on my high school experience and learn more about what I value in my education. I feel that I became more confident as the workshops progressed, and I felt more empowered to make suggestions and express ideas that I otherwise would have felt might have been disregarded before participating in this study.” There was a lot of personal development and discoveries that took place, but often they overlapped with the sociological imagination. However, this is all connected as we know our lived experiences are connected to the larger sociopolitical and sociohistorical conditions of the world. This also means that mean of the research team engaged deeply with the materials, grew in their sociological imaginations, and managed to demonstrate it through different ways, including reflections on their personal experiences.

Growing in the Sociological Imagination

While I did expect to see a sociological imagination in some ways, the growth, and personal reflections on growth, were substantial and as an educator, sociologist, and research, were inspiring. In addition, there were *many* instances where the idea of a sociological imagination occurred, as well as overtime. For instance, near the end of the study, a member of the research team (this was the anonymous segment of reflection,) wrote, “My biggest personal takeaway from this project was learning how to better analyze what may seem like innocuous aspects of my life and how they have a sociological depth to them.” This mention of the “innocuous aspects” of their life highlights the development and growth of a sociological imagination, especially in the ways that the individual sections of one’s individual life is connected to the larger societal setting. Another example of this is when RP-A stated, “I’ve

uncovered the flawed nuance of the structures and agency involved within the educational institution. Initially, I did not think twice about analyzing the faults tied to the core curriculum beyond the teachers.”

While I was not seeking insight on feelings around specific classes necessarily, but the overall process of YPAR, a sociological imagination, as well as curriculum design, interestingly, yet still relevant, is that the entire research team had strong feelings about the role of Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) in their education, with seven of the nine members having been in GATE, and one of the two who had not been did not have it offered at their charter school system. While I did not think too much about its relation to the study, it did highlight important relationships between agency and structure, as well as systemic thinking within a sociological imagination.

Of course, another important data source that provided findings about the demonstration, development, and fostering of the sociological imagination was evident in the knowledge checks, with a pre- and post-knowledge check being administered at the beginning and end of the study. When looking at the first round of knowledge checks, it was clear that the members of this research team had a foundational understand of systems, but not necessarily structure and agency. There was *some* understanding, but definitely not was it related to the vocabulary of it. However, when it came to certain levels of oppression, it was evident that they had an understanding. For instance, when I asked about what they think of when it comes to systems, one member wrote, “When I think of systems I think of the different institutions in our daily lives. I think of businesses, economics, religion, and the overall workings of our society. When I hear “systemic” I immediately think of systemic racism which defines the way in which racism has been built into the foundations of our society for many years.” This was a fairly common

respond, or a variation of it, for instance another response was, “When I think of the word "systems" it reminds me of these built traditions set before by people I don't understand. But at the same time it reminds me that "process" can sometimes be used in place of "a system to things." One last example was when one member wrote, “This makes me think of institutions we had in place in our society, such as educational, economics, political, legal, etc.”

While there was an understanding of systems, what there was a discrepancy on was the idea of structure and agency, and this is connected to systemic ideas. There was a minor understanding that touched upon the surface for some, but for others, they had not explored these concepts yet. For instance, one member wrote, “Structure, to me, relates to systems. Rules and functions in place to, ideally, function well in society. Agency also relates to systems/institutions.” Meanwhile, another member wrote, “I see structure as an outline which keeps things in order. A building structure keeps things inside of it (???). An agency is a group with a specific purpose and serves people. Insurance agency sells insurance, adoption agencies carry out adoptions.” They were able to use prior knowledge to infer, but there was a disconnect between the understanding of systems and then structure agency. However, at the end of it, there was a much firmer grasp. For instance, the post check, one member wrote, “Structure is the rigidity of function whereas agency allows you to make your own decisions. In structure, people are often trapped with either one way up or down” while another wrote, “Structure is the way in which we format something as a society. This includes the laws and rules that we are obligated to work within. Agency is affected by this structure, as certain groups might get more agency than others, and have a more limited definition of free will due to inequalities.” Their growth in sociological concepts was evident throughout in some of the foundational concepts of sociology.

Another example of their sociological thinking is the understanding of race. One member had written down their preconceived ideas around race, for instance, where they wrote, “I honestly don't know how to describe race, it's a social construct that has something to do with genetics and family history (and skin color?)” Yet, at the end of the process, they wrote, “Race is a social construct used to divide people based on skin color (the amount of melanin someone has).” Another wrote, “... divided by traits and said to be inferior or superior.” It was clear that there was growth in the understanding of race, as well as other identities.

In addition, there was only one person who had noted disability as a social construct in the pre-check, but at the end, every research member had written that disability was a social construct. For instance, one person mentioned a limiting ability, “...but how society has accommodated (or not.)” Another wrote, “A condition that society has created to determine who is or isn't normal.” The concept of disability being a social construct is not necessarily a common underpinning of sociological teachings, so for all of them to note disability as a social construct by the end highlighted the growth in sociological thinking.

Lastly, the explanation of representation really highlighted the growth in a sociological imagination. All members had a foundational idea of representation, but often as it related to the presence of certain people. For instance, in the pre check, one member wrote, “There is a new wave in the media of people trying to have better representation and being more culturally and racially inclusive. In schools I believe representation is teaching students about all types of different social identities without bias.” Another response from the pre-check was, “It's people who look or act like you. I haven't really seen it too much in my life.” While this person did note that they were not much in their life, the idea was dedicated primarily to just who you act and look like. Meanwhile, the post check, they all had a different view of representation that pushed

against simply representation. For instance, one response was, “Representation is important to the concept of equity. In order to have equity, people must see their identities represented through the larger institutions and forces that impact their lives, such as education.

Representation could be seeing people that look like you, act like you, think like you- any part of your identity.” Another response noted, “Representation is who you see, seeing people that look like you, but also things that can change systems and structure so it doesn't become a problem again.” The idea of structure being used, the usage of writings, dialogical engagement, and these changes represent the ways in which youth demonstrate, and develop, their sociological imaginations.

Collaboration, Dialogue, and Dissent

One of the research questions asked about how recent high school graduates engage in a YPAR project. Collaboration, dialogue, and dissent can sum up the observations and statements made by the entire research team, and how I have observed it. All of the research team members engaged dialogically. At first, if I would pose a question, they would look to me to answer it, but eventually, they were able to foster a space that was positive and encouraging for all members of the research team to engage *with* each other rather than just with me. Many of the interactions of engagement were found by observations, but there was also significant number of findings in here that were through their written responses.

For instance, one member wrote in their reflections, “The biggest strength of a YPAR project is that it makes students actually feel heard. I felt like this project was more collaborative than the school-related experiences I’ve had in the past.” This highlighted how they had interacted in a collaborative manner, but that it was more than just working together, it made them feel represented in the practice. It was more than just that for many. Another reflective

response stated, “The biggest strength of a YPAR challenge is the cooperation of everyone in that study instead of just taking a survey. Everyone gets a say and a chance to contribute what they want to the study.” This was important because they noted how the opportunity to contribute was present to everybody, and how they could all cooperate. This person did note that if people are not engaged, then it may cause a weakness of the process, but overall, they did highlight how this was important to the process. Another reflection highlighted this as well, where they wrote, “I think the biggest strength of a YPAR project is allowing the participants to really engage with the research and the material. I feel this helps get a better understanding of their knowledge and experiences as opposed to a survey. I feel much more connected and involved in this research so I am more likely to give better feedback.” Yet, in a different section, a different member wrote the value of a YPAR project as, “It creates a sense of inclusion and belonging and less of a lab rat feeling.” This point to a variety of things: a collaborative nature, the role of dialogue in creating this sense of inclusion, and how important a dissenting methodology such as YPAR is to pushing against dominant narratives.

Furthermore, it was reflected in their engagement with the curriculum building. Because the lesson planning was our last activity, they had already been introduced to the key ideas and we’d discussed them deeply throughout the entire process. Watching their engagement in the lesson planning, coming up with ideas and resources together, dialoging about what should be included, how to present it, and discussing their lived experiences as examples, we a form of dissent: dissent against cultural capital. In essence, their engagement in the YPAR project was an explicit example of centering, and using, community cultural wealth.

Chapter 6

The Plan of the Year is Disruption, Brought to You by YPAR

Or

A Set of Deliverables for Researchers, Teachers, and Curriculum Design

This chapter has a unique, yet applicable purpose: to provide a practical guide for teachers and institutional leaders to engage in a YPAR project, as well as curriculum that centers community cultural wealth using a sociological imagination that aims to meet the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards. This section also identifies the outcomes from both research questions that guided this study. While findings answered the research question, these highlights two important resources for educators interested in engaging in a YPAR project: 1) a practical guide with advice, suggestions, and obstacles I faced when utilizing a YPAR approach for teaching and learning and 2) accessible curriculum that is equity centered, challenges the dominant narratives, was developed by youth for youth using a sociological imagination, and aims to meet the sociopolitical expectations of the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards. In addition, while I could simply include the lesson plans as appendices, to honor them and do justice to the work and creativity of the research team, I have included them here in entirety with descriptions, analysis, and explanation.

Survey Redesign

As noted in my explanation of one of my pilot studies, I had created a survey that was initially created for the demographic of secondary students that were enrolled at the institution where I was an 8th, 10th, and 12th grade humanities and design thinking teacher. When I left that institution, I opened the survey to a wider population, but this also meant that I needed to switch

the questions around and change some so that it better addresses the ideas of community cultural wealth and cultural capital, rather than the school's goals and mission.

I presented this survey to the research team, and we reviewed the entire survey as well as the data and findings from the survey. I was transparent with them that I had initially created the survey for a specific demographic of students, and then tweaked it as necessary for when I left that school. In addition, I also discussed research validity and reliability, and how reliability was measured. Lastly, I also discussed approaches to survey design. I was more interested in their feedback and insight from a YPAR perspective than having to follow processes explicitly, but it was also necessary to approach this with both thoughts in mind. Their recommendations highlight important findings in terms of a sociological imagination, cultural capital, and community cultural wealth, but for the purpose of this chapter, I will be providing their feedback and recommendations to highlight how YPAR can be used in survey design and to perhaps approach survey research in an innovative way that does center community cultural wealth, not just in analysis, but also research design. The redesigned survey can be seen in Appendix G.

From this point, after reviewing the data and questions, the smaller research teams provided the following feedback and recommendations, where this is a culmination of their recommendations and worth considering for a new survey and in turn, pilot study to test for consistency and reliability, especially as this is from the perspective of youth for youth.

Recommendations

The research team recommended putting the demographics at the beginning of the survey, especially because there were many questions around identity and demographics. There was also a recommendation to break down the diversity of the materials and representation as it related to segments of education, such as K-5, 6-12, or other smaller groupings, though we did

discuss how the emphasis was on secondary schooling. They also had recommendations for the order of the questions as well as adjustments to the questions. The suggested change can be seen in Appendix G.

Reflection

I had given each of the smaller research groups autonomy to make changes accordingly, and they had access to the previous survey that I had created on my own. What was interesting was that, after explaining how survey design takes place, what the purpose was of a reliability test and internal consistency measurement, the research team did not have additional questions. They took to it quickly and creatively, and then we were able to have a deep dialogue about why they chose what they had chosen. Overwhelmingly, they had a deep understanding of social issues that they stated they felt while in high school. In addition, when I had posed a question around gender identity as a concern of mine and others was that there would need to be an explanation of cis versus trans, they stated that most of their generation have an understanding of that, but that it would be useful to have a quick sentence explaining it if necessary because they would not want or feel it appropriate to leave out these identities for friends or classmates who identified explicitly as trans versus “just” being a girl or boy.

What I reflected on mostly here is that the ways in which creativity took place was necessary and vital and really can influence the ways that we think about innovative research. We are often restricted within the constraints of what is expected, how things should be, or the standards, that we forget that these standards are *sometimes* exclusionary, and that sociohistorical outline of various methodologies been created by the dominant cultures. In this case, the research team pushed me to rethink my identity not as a teacher, but as a researcher, and to make sure that I stay true to my ontological and epistemological truths even more than I had pushed myself

when as the institution where this research began. While this survey has not been readministered, it is worth noting that this should be done especially as the research team was of the same age as the eligible participants were for the survey when it was first administered, which does beg the question on whether reliability will be higher than it had previously been.

Regardless, perhaps the strongest finding from this section and the process is truly the innovative and creative mindset that the youth provided without the pollution of the academic “what should be” and instead, pushes us to see the possibilities of “what could be.”

Curriculum using Critical Pedagogy and a Sociological Imagination

This section of the guide, or set of deliverables, is where I share the lesson plans that had been created by the smaller research teams. As noted in the methodology section, I had given each smaller research team autonomy to decide which standard(s) they wanted to work with, as it was vital that what they felt was most important should be centered, but at the same time required dialogue and collaboration.

Lesson Plans

In lesson plan 1, the smaller research team began brainstorming on what they wanted to explore. These members had previously brought up being engaged in government courses and shared different activities they had used. From there, they discussed the role of power, and how they could incorporate sociological thinking. We did engage in collaborative conversation, where I discussed what power was from a sociological perspective as part of our teamwork and their inquiring. Lesson plan 1 can be found in Appendix H.

For lesson plan 2, this group discussed how they had never been exposed to tribal governance, which is why they wanted to discuss this topic and standard. From there, they began researching resources on their own. They asked me if they could do hypothetical so long as they

were realistic and could do, and I said absolutely. They truly wanted to represent community cultural wealth, and wanted to actually have students (hypothetically) speak to tribal leaders.

Lesson plan 2 can be seen in Appendix I.

For lesson plan 3, this group wanted to use the data that we had explored to discuss topics around power and systems that they had not been exposed to previously and were completely unaware that they were in the standards. From there, they opted to create this lesson. Lesson plan 3 can be seen in Appendix J.

Reflections and Findings

The curriculum development was the deliverable and result from this study. The process was, of course, just as important, but highlighting the work and efforts, and the outcome from the process, was just as rewarding. While this chapter is focused on presentation of the curriculum that the research team created, there are significant observations that the team found outside of the typical findings presented in the two chapters prior. The research team regularly discussed items while debriefing, where we had a chance to discuss collaboratively. These discussions mixed with observations of smaller discussions amongst the breakout rooms, coupled with the curriculum itself informed this chapter and set of findings. Though there may be minor repetition, such as the sociological imagination, it is important to note that they are significantly different in execution and context.

When I would visit breakout rooms, conversations would ensue where we would have significant conversations on how to center community cultural wealth, and what the intentionality was behind that: to disrupt cultural capital. In addition, we reviewed the data several times before we dove deeper, discussing how we were using the data to inform our process. The data we explored once again was the pilot study and survey, the data from the

standards, as well as memos. We used that data to inform the creation of the curriculum. From there, each of the research groups orchestrated it themselves, with me merely guiding them and being present for brainstorming and questions. The use of YPAR to create these deliverables highlight the applied practice of using a sociological imagination while center community cultural wealth so long as the goal is critical inquiry to disrupt cultural capital. But of course, this requires a deep unpacking across all members in the process.

Chapter 7

The Concept of this Dissertation is Transformation, Brought to You by an Education

Or

Discussion, Implications, and Final Reflections

Discussions of equitable education have been prevalent for decades, as evidenced by the Coleman Report (1966), *A Nation at Risk* (1983), and a multitude of other studies identifying specifically inequitable and structural levels of oppression rampant in U.S education. Regardless of this, we see that not much has changed, from continued segregation, lack of representation in curriculum and classroom materials, a lack of administrative support, unequally distributed resources, and so many other inequitable practices that run rampant in education. While not all of these can be solved overnight, or in a single research study, the goal of this research was to develop curriculum that does not only attempt to help with representation, but rather *center* the experiences and voices of students willing to engage in youth participatory action research. In fact, the intentionality was not so much the curriculum itself, but rather to understand and encourage the use of critical methodologies for educational equity, being able to looking at structure, agency, and really systemic thinking.

Much of the conversation around student-led or student-focused teaching still does not disrupt the power dynamics involved, where policymakers, administrators, and even teachers hold power, but rather, aims to create a nonhierarchical approach to blending California State Standards with critical curriculum. By recognizing the reality of cultural capital in our world and disrupting that dynamic by utilizing cultural community wealth, the goal of this study will be to not only develop a lesson that can exemplify how larger decisions can be shaped by YPAR, but to also develop a pedagogical and methodological approach to disrupting problematic practices.

The intention is to teach research informed student advocacy, produce teaching methods and practices to build social movements that allow students to build, sustain, and strengthen their sociological imaginations, and in turn, better understand their educational journeys, as well as their own, personal identities in connection to the larger world.

The framework I created merged a sociological imagination, praxis, and critical pedagogy at its foundation, building onto that with another tier of theory, connecting in a nonlinear and reciprocal process of youth participatory action research, cultural capital, community cultural wealth, and pedagogical and institutional change. I believe in the power of education, but I also recognize the oppressive nature education as a system can be, which is critical thinking and collaboration, and in the case of his study, YPAR, can help elevate voices and experiences of our youth.

The research team expressed the power of YPAR, how they felt their voices were not used or valued and that adequate representation did not occur, attributing intersectionality to many of the issues around curriculum and processes. There were a lot of findings that I did not expect; of course, that is the point of research, to make discoveries beyond the expected, but many things that I did not anticipate finding occurred, such as personal discovery across the research team, including myself and my reflections on my own pedagogical practices.

Revising the research questions, they were:

1. How do recent high school seniors/graduates critically engage in YPAR to redesign curriculum?
2. How, if at all, do recent high school seniors/graduates develop and demonstrate a sociological imagination while engaging in a YPAR project?

Through this research, there were many things that we, and I, found, that address and answer the research questions, but also many additional findings that were unexpected, surprising, and outside the scope of the research questions.

Toppling Innocuous Dominance

Throughout the process of curriculum design within the framework, it was evident that cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) was present. Perhaps it was not explicit, in that it spoke of *only* Whiteness, but it did center structurally inherent problems, such as a lack of discussion around power, who maintains most of the decision-making abilities, and how those decisions are transferred. This is seemingly innocuous because it is framed within an idea of neutrality, but, what it ends up doing is upholding cultural capital. This case, it absolutely reinforces the disparities around cultural capital, or which cultures are valued in society (Bourdieu, 2010). This is also a perpetuation of the hierarchy of culture, and what we value in terms of our *historical understanding*, of injustices, achievement, and what should be important or valued within popular cultural, activities, and traditions (Reay, 2004). In fact, this also reinforces the dominant cultural understanding of historical injustices, which can impact student's achievement (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Tramonte & Willms, 2010). Watching the research team be deeply engaged, and in ways that they had say historically they may not have been in the high school setting, did highlight the ways that engagement can be impacted, and in essence, educational achievement.

While the research team was diverse in many ways, which I will discuss later, there were some limitations surrounding racial and gender representation. But, it was diverse across ethnic identity, socioeconomic status, disability, and geographic location. Culture includes traditions, values, language, and beliefs, so it goes beyond one social identity. So, there was a culturally diverse group of research members involved, and add in that as a generation, especially one that

has seen tremendous social unrest and injustices, there was a community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that was present throughout the study and analysis. And even the referencing and utilization of the term “Nepobaby”, though a very small and slight inclusion, did highlight how youth can infuse systemic thinking with popular culture. By being able to bring together their own cultural understandings of the world, they were able to reflect on their own personal journeys and how it influenced their social and cultural understanding of world, making a case for “success” perhaps beyond academic or outside of the realms, but personal success nonetheless (Zambrana & Zoppi, 2002).

Another understanding of this process is in the ways that critical pedagogy was embedded into this study, and how it challenged a lot of the dominant norms, especially as it related to cultural “dominance” or cultural capital. A foundational idea around Freire’s (2018) concept of critical pedagogy is that individuals and the collective oppressed have to lead the charge in their own liberation. Of course, this is extremely difficult within a system and structure that expects conformity. However, as the research team had noted, they eventually recognized that teachers were also part of the same system that was oppressing them, and so they eventually, in part “thanks” to the global pandemic and school closures, were able to see the teachers as part of, and oppressed by, the same system. As part of our workshops, we discussed sociohistorical conditions and social situations, but through a dialogical approach.

Interestingly, the research team highlighted the use and discussion of power throughout the curriculum itself. There were a lot of mentions of power, but the team did discuss something important: there was not discussion or expectation of understanding what the word power is. In this case, it is almost as if the standards, in their neutrality, reinforce power dynamics and obedience, as critical theorists and pedagogues have explained how a deep analysis of power

within critically inquiry needs to be woven throughout to combat systemic oppression (Agnello, 2016; McLaren, 2017; Freire, 2018). Through a dialogical approach and the process of critical inquiry, we were able to “name the world” (Freire, 2018, p. 88). And it was through this dialogical and collaborative engagement that we also used praxis, which in some ways felt like an act of dissent.

This is indicative of an ongoing development of a sociological imagination, which will be discussed again, but also the ways that the research team engaged with the project. Using a YPAR approach, they were deeply engaged and participated, discussing things from a sociological perspective, and more so as they continued on. However, the findings from the curriculum were not the central focus, though in hindsight, there should have been heavier considerations around this. The focus, though, of the YPAR project, as determined by the entire research team, was how the curriculum addressed or upheld cultural capital and how can we use community cultural wealth to challenge this. Their development of the project around cultural capital and community cultural wealth, their process of analyzing the standards, the actual analysis of the standards, and then in turn, their lesson plans, did highlight *how* they engaged in the project and the ways that they used their sociological imaginations during this project.

Practice, Praxis, And Everything In-between

The practice of YPAR is praxis (Freire, 2018) embodied. All the research members, at one point or another, had said that they hoped to see change, wanted to be a part of change, or that even when presented with the options to share their voice that “nothing was done.” Praxis, then, was a very important idea for the research team and was a huge motivator for why they participated in the study and their ongoing efforts during and after the study. In this case, this aligns closely with Allsup’s (2003) idea that in the roots of Freirean praxis, there must be a

connection between all elements of learning: real life, the classroom, theoretical, and everything in-between.

The research team was diverse in many ways, but upon exploring the ideas of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2019) it was evident that some of us had identities that were impacted by various social issues differently, as expected. That did not stop them from critically engaging, even if they were not impacted, and they were actively trying to resist the dominant ideas in which the state standards are rooted, which is the encouragement they were given here (Cammarota, 2017). However, discussed in more detail later in this discussion section, is that, pedagogically, YPAR must be explicitly taught, used, and it is not something as “simple” as a collaborative or dialogical endeavor. While I have experience with teaching secondary school, college, and participatory action research approaches, even for me, it was still much more labor intensive than I had expected, so in this case, YPAR needs to be critically introduced, but *also* centered around cultural beliefs, and intentionally challenging dominant narratives (Rubin et al., 2016). This means that YPAR must be seen political – not in the binary of partisan politics, but challenging the political fabric of our society, and further, the students must be encouraged to use their experiences, not just encouraged, but given the platform to use their own empowerment (Rodriguez & Brown, 2009).

In this case, a sociological imagination was fostered, which aligns very much with past studies that have noted YPAR has increased critical thinking, inquiry, and arguably consciousness (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Mirra et al., 2015; Rubin et al., 2016). But, not just the students or in my case, research team, but the “adult” as well, which is highlighted in my own reflective practice (Ozer et al., 2020; Kennedy, 2018).

As we were exploring the standards and how to engage in the process of YPAR, and further discussions emerged, it was clear that YPAR was not considered in many of the experiences that the research team members discussed my own, and evident in the state standards, which is very commonly understood (Kennedy, 2018), though it does have potential to make significant policy and systemic change (Coehn et al., 2020.) While research has discussed the importance of YPAR in critical engagement, and that it is not used, a school district study did not identify academic achievement as a positive increase, though engagement was (Voight & Velez, 2018.) However, while this was only briefly discussed, the level of just critical thinking, but also critical literacy, and improvement in writing and speaking and listening, which are written into the anchor standards in California, were all evidently improved, which does mean that there should be additional studies explored. In addition, this project was not merely YPAR, but YPAR with a sociological imagination embedded within its design. In this case, not just a sociological imagination, but ultimate a sociological reimagining.

A Sociological Reimagining

The research team discussed in detail how their sociological imaginations had change, grown, and were developed. Not just out loud in the dialogical settings but in their individual written responses, as well as my observations over time. What was interesting throughout the process was not just a sociological imagination, where they were able to identify their own positions and individual circumstances within the context of the structure, but, going back to the idea of praxis, they wanted to change it, dismantle it, and attempt to see and make change in society.

Research around a sociological imagination does exist, but has been limited, and even more in that it is often limited to the confines of post-secondary settings. This research was

slightly different, in that it sat between the secondary setting and the post-secondary setting, as it did not take place in an actual secondary classroom. However, I was intentional in recruiting individuals who had graduated high school in 2022 so that they had been closely connected to the secondary setting.

By the end of this, and interestingly connected to one of the research team members quotes explored in the findings section, we did find that we had developed a critical perspective, though perhaps seemingly appearing to be in despair, is also an attempt to challenge the structures that oppress groups of people. In addition, a sociological imagination allows us to not just see these systems, but as noted, a reimagining of them beyond the scope of what we think should be, clearly defined throughout the research team's interactions. Dalmage (2021) had noted that the historical roots of methods have upheld power, and this project was created to challenge power.

In addition, while the research team had all taken a social science course of some sort (such as sociology, an interdisciplinary course, or otherwise,) they had not been introduced to a sociological imagination, though it has been noted that it is generally introduced within introductory sociology courses (Grauerholz & Gibson, 2006; Wagenaar, 2004). The studies that exist are not focused on secondary settings, and often in the higher education setting and with "service-learning" (Ostrow et al., 1999.) But, the lack of research in the secondary setting highlights the necessity of further research. While this research does not necessarily close that gap, the recommendations, engagement with secondary education materials, and the pedagogical reflections *do* help with thinking about how we might be able to bridge that gap in the future. This is yet another example of a sociological reimagining.

Lastly, cultural capital was explored, and a centering of community cultural wealth, frameworks that are used in sociology, but the intention was to disrupt it with the development of curriculum that would center community cultural wealth. For Yosso (2005), community cultural wealth is an anti-racist approach, looking at the value and wealth that students bring with them, however, an additional consideration to add to this idea of cultural wealth is that culture can go beyond that, and as the research team discussed and explored, intersectionality means that we cannot break apart our identities or tease them apart, so to assume that *only* one component of our identities impact our understanding and navigation of the world does a disservice. The research team did actively challenge cultural capital, but perhaps not in the same way that we would think; they challenge the systemic and larger structural disparity around cultural capital by trying to educate future high school seniors, but also, the cultural capital within higher education. In this case, a space where researchers, academics, and professors typically have the power, and in turn, the cultural capital; meanwhile, the youth's community cultural wealth was presented instead, pushing the boundaries of what we understand academic research to be, and impacted the questions around power dynamics within research (Udas, 1998). This very act was not just a sociological imagination of what was in place causing despair, but a sociological reimagining of the possibilities. Moreover, the development of a sociological imagination, and transition into a sociological reimagination, was present from the beginning until the end, and developed, demonstrated, strengthened, and valued.

Epistemological and Pedagogical Musings

A major part of this study, though the focus was on the process of YPAR as praxis and a fostering of a sociological imagination, there were many research-oriented and pedagogical thoughts and processes that went into it. The roots of YPAR are

connected to participatory action research, and couple that with critical pedagogy, and then critical PAR, I was able to develop a deeper understanding of the research team, or “youth” because of the use of YPAR, they were able to better understand me, and then we as a whole team, which is an important cornerstone of critical PAR. Going back to the initial understanding of PAR and borrowing a quote from Kemmis et al., (2014) used earlier in this dissertation, the point of critical PAR is that, “... we are interested in what happens here—this single case—not what we are interested in what happens here—this single case—not what goes on anywhere or everywhere. (p. 67).

Academia often discusses the importance of innovation, so long as it conforms to the expectations. This is not to say that rigor, standards, and expectations are of no use, but we do need to be pushed to think outside of the box of what has always been the case. This project, the research practice, and my own pedagogical practices were pushed, challenged, and we all began to look at the world, teaching, education, and systems differently, which in many ways, is what needs to be done because of the historical roots of “traditional” research in its colonized perspectives (Swantz, 2008). In addition, our academic obsession over unbiased research, and empirical data, though vital, important, and necessary for scientific understanding, often disregards what we consider as empirical. In this case, our hope for objectivity will trample over the people who have been minoritized, marginalized, and oppressed within these systems; with this said, the practice of YPAR, and at minimum PAR, forces us to see the lived experiences as empirical data (Kemmis et al., 2014).

Reflexivity and reflection should not be limited to solely researcher positionality, nor should it be a prescribed approach, but also an active process in our teaching, too.

YPAR has three criteria according to Rodriguez and Brown (2009): students should be able to understand the sociopolitical landscape to meet goals and see a better future, be involved in the entire research process, and encourage activism for transformation. Due to the nature of a dissertation, there were some elements of the research design that the research team could not be part of, such as my initial research questions. *However*, the rest of the process they were, and I was intentional in how I did this. I was transparent, making sure that they were involved with the process from where they could realistically be involved, such as the purpose of the study, why I am engaged in YPAR, and how this will contribute to my dissertation. We discussed the sociohistorical and sociopolitical conditions of the world, such as sociological concepts, systems, institutions, and deeply important social issues, and we discuss the role of praxis. I aimed to disrupt the power dynamics already present, and share power, which did take time for all to settle into this, but did happen. And, this is not something that can be jumped into simply because of a simple article.

For the research team, we took several weeks to explore research methods, YPAR, and theoretical underpinnings. I also had experience in these approaches. However, teacher education often does not include YPAR (Rubin et. al., 2016). This is important to note because, if YPAR has academic, sociopolitical, and critical possibilities, there should be a consideration to include YPAR, especially if educators want to be involved I this process, and at bare minimum, to explore possibilities of using YPAR.

In addition, my reflection as a teacher was ongoing, not just as a teacher, but as a teacher scholar, researcher, and practitioner. Reflexivity and reflection should be

ongoing, and not just discussed in a methods class, but an ongoing implementation both in teacher education and higher education. One cannot appropriate and authentically engage in YPAR without a deeply critical reflection, or in other words, a solid and established *praxis* (Freire, 2018).

Limitations

This study presented several limitations. First and foremost, while the research team was diverse in many ways, we lacked representation in other ways. For instance, we did not have participants or research partners who were Black, linguistically diverse (though some were multilingual), religion was not explored or discussed, so we did not discuss components of religion within the context of our team, and, because the study was focused on critical curriculum design as the tool, the lived experiences of the research partners were not deeply discussed, though it was explored indirectly through dialogical means during curriculum building. In addition, gender was not widely represented either, not having genderqueer or non-binary research team members, and only one male on the team. In addition, while we did have folks who were neurodivergent in different ways, physical disabilities and identity was not present. Because of this, various possibilities of community cultural wealth, and further disrupting of cultural capital may not have been explored.

Another limitation is that because it was a workshop format for data collection, and it was intended to replicate a classroom environment, there were only 9 participants, which is smaller than a typical secondary school classroom. In addition, because of COVID-19 in its current state as an endemic (but still arguably pandemic,) this meant that we had to be flexible with attendance, modality and format of workshops and data collection. This had potential to impact data collection as the insight, experiences, and viewpoints that were present in one workshop

may not have been present in another. It did impact engagement, as seen when we transitioned to smaller research teams, though this could have also been due to the nature of smaller teams rather than a larger setting. In addition, the labor that was involved on my end was very similar to that of a classroom setting; I had to lesson plan, reflect on the responses, and I utilized many of my own pedagogical practices in the sessions. While this may not be a limitation in many ways, it did impact the workshops because I was engaging heavily with the planning, and because I did not anticipate this or think about this before the study, my approach may have been different.

It is important to understand that this study was not designed to be generalizable, but indeed transferrable to other settings. This transferability is also a limitation as participants and demographics are not the same across all the K-12 public schooling landscape in California or elsewhere and these research partners had all taken a sociology or social science related course. My goal, again, was not generalizability, which in some settings, may be seen as a limitation because of the nature of student demographics, geographic location, and implementation of something like YPAR. However, while this is true, the intentionality of this framework and study is not to assume a heterogenous group of students, but rather recognize how to utilize diverse cultural backgrounds to redesign curriculum and other pedagogical needs.

Though, there is another major limitation that this study faces, and that is, of course, in the event that states, districts, schools, and teachers are not aligned with the philosophical frameworks presented here nor the underpinnings of YPAR. This is a reality, especially with the mounting number of states that are rejecting factual historical occurrences, and the dismissal of identities that students have in our sociopolitical world. In this event, there are ways to utilize a

YPAR project, which I will expand on below, but will not be able to be as critical or critically in-depth as this project has had the ability to do.

Obstacles and Hurdles

There were several things to note in my own YPAR study. While overall the study was valuable, insightful, and useful, there were obstacles that I faced and things that I did not consider. First and foremost, I did consider how much lesson planning I was going to engage in within this project. This is not to say I did not want to, but because of the nature of the project, I did not consider this prior. Lesson planning would absolutely need to be considered especially because there is a lot of frontloading of materials and concepts that would need to take place, which I logically knew, but did not think about logistically.

Next, there were times that I had to be clearer, revisit concepts, and because a research study has a specific set of meetings and time period, unlike a classroom that does require time management, but can adjust to pacing depending on lesson plans, there were absolutely constraints I faced with this. I felt rushed at times because I had to revisit concepts or ideas, or did not have time to explore, so I had to postpone to another meeting. This means that there were times that I would even feel overwhelmed because I was worried about covering all of the topics, giving the research team enough time to explore the concepts, learn, and apply, and yet make sure that I was able provide adequate time for data collection. I wanted to honor the research team members' experiences and voices, and I was worried I would not be able to do that well enough.

One last major struggle with YPAR are the ethical implications. Because there were so many components of research and findings that the research team provided, I wanted to attribute their work and words, but I also wanted to ensure this maintain a level of rigor aligned with a

PhD dissertation. Being able to find the line between attributing their words, maintaining confidentiality of their identities, but also making sure that I uphold the academic rigor I needed to complete a dissertation was something that I mulled over often in my mind, and continue to do so. Discussing ethical implications for this study and beyond is important, as I will publish from this research, but, to what degree should I publish and explore? These are all important questions to consider now and in the future, and something I will likely continue thinking about for many years beyond.

Recommendations and Implications

These recommendations are based on literature and the findings from this dissertation. These recommendations are brief but should not only be seen as pedagogical and research-oriented recommendations, but also as implications for future research. While there were many findings from this research with the abundance of data, these findings and the process allowed for additional questions and ponderings to occur, both on my own as well as part of the research team. Therefore, this section will explore both brief recommendations and then implications for future research.

Teacher Education

While teacher education is beginning to consider YPAR, it is doing so only in its beginning stages (Rubin et al., 2016). However, I would go so far as to note that administrative credentialing is also missing this, as well. Literature has noted the lack of YPAR in teacher education as well as its possibilities for policy and institutional decisions making, but that despite this, there is a need for it based on the studies that have been conducted (Rubin et al., 2016). With that said, I would recommend that teacher education *and* administrative credentialing consider implementation, at minimum, participatory action research to understand pedagogical

and institutional change. This is not intended to add more to the plates of teachers, but to find a way to merge together the pressures of teach, meeting standards, while centering community cultural wealth, and for administrators to do the same. Meeting standards is an important sociopolitical necessity, but to be critical in our approaches, we should consider how to use community voice and engagement in what we are doing to make change and imagine a better and more just world, at least within the confines of what we can do within education.

(Y)PAR Methodologies

Because of the resistance of community involvement as a valid research methodology, community-engaged, and more specifically, participatory action research (youth, or not), should be included in research-oriented degrees, including doctoral programs and potentially master's level coursework. Research methodology courses are a requirement already, with quantitative and qualitative, however, (Y)PAR can potentially include both of those approaches, as well as survey design, interviews, observations, etc. If we want to begin questioning structures and systems and going beyond the historical colonizing methods that have taken place, we need to begin thinking outside of what we have always held as truth. Therefore, a recommendation is to engage researchers with a PAR methodology, at least in their training, to understand the importance of it. This is not to assume that all involved will become PAR researchers, but at minimum, to understand the rigorous value of community-engaged methodologies and their contributions to the academic landscape.

Sociological Concepts in Secondary Education

I recommend considering implementing sociological concepts in secondary education (and, arguably, including teacher education). This may be difficult because of the resistant already in place toward critical race theory and other critical theories for that matter, but

sociological concepts look at systems and structures, and begin pushing students to think about their own individuality, but how circumstances are part of larger systems. Incorporating sociological concepts to encourage as sociological imaging in secondary education is one way to begin the process of critical inquiry. It does not need to take place *only* within social studies, as there are many instances where sociological concepts are applicable on an interdisciplinary level. This recommendation is for schools and teacher education programs that center critical perspective, justice, and equity due to the nature of sociological approaches and critical theory. Meanwhile, a sociological imagination can help think beyond typical understanding of reform, even for our students. This means that educational settings and schools that do not have a desire to approach things critically would unlikely be willing to engage in this approach.

Policy

Because the research has highlighted the potential for YPAR to make positive change, I recommend consideration the use of YPAR for policy decisions, at least ones that impact local areas and students. This policy could be classroom, organizational, institutional, district-wide, or state level policy.

However, beyond the implementation of YPAR as a methodology for research for decisions, I also recommend a policy change around social studies standards. The research team had identified some significant issues around the California State 12th grade Social Studies Standards, and even if there is a goal of neutrality (though I argue we cannot be neutral), there are large systemic and structural concepts that are missing in the understanding of government and economic processes. This requires not just curriculum that can be developed in a classroom or school, but to push those on the state level to rethink the standards and expectations for a future of justice and equity.

Adjusting When Not Appropriate

There are many instances where the framework I created for this study would not be applicable, not because it is not needed socio-politically, but rather because the state or district is not willing to accommodate equity and justice-oriented work. There are ways to circumvent this that may allow for a YPAR project that would be rather covert, but I would not recommend that as that may have very real, detrimental consequences. The largest benefit of YPAR, however, is that there is benefit to youth who want to engage in change that may not have to do with social identity. In an ideal world, one could say, well, these are the spaces where we *need* to engage critically, yet that may cause harm to individuals and especially minoritized individuals, who are already at risk for losing their jobs or worse.

In that case, recognizing how to craft a YPAR project that is guided by students is important, especially as many communities face struggles. For instance, in San Diego, the Clairemont area has historically been predominantly White, but was facing devastating rates of methamphetamine use. This was an issue that was cause great harm to the community, schools, and families. Therefore, while there may not necessarily have been a focus on identity, there was absolutely ways that one could center student guided needs, goals, and hopes for change in their smaller communities. That would be my first recommendation: focus on smaller scale change that may impact communities and provide literature, reading, and support around research design on those topics.

However, there may also be instances where a teacher or student would not want to engage in a YPAR project. This could be difficult to navigate, and in this case, this is where institutionally, support and guidance for YPAR would be beneficial. For instance, if it is embedded into the institutional expectations, with literature and support for projects that may not

be as deeply critical as this study, for instance, is a good starting point. These conversations can be difficult for some, and potentially harmful even if a teacher has not unpacked and practiced anti-oppressive pedagogy and unlearning. Therefore, looking at smaller-scale community oriented change is necessary. If, in the event a student is not interested in a YPAR project, providing opportunities to still be critical as it relates to foundational identity supports of students is important, and offering introductory alternatives, such as introductions to critical graphic novels might be useful (as only one suggestion.)

However, these may not be realities either, and because of that I am aware it may be difficult to navigate YPAR. In this case, this study can serve as empirical research to the value of a YPAR project, the importance of sociological thinking, and how to engage pedagogically with community cultural wealth centered to disrupt these issues in our society. This then, can serve as support and literature for those who *are* interested in YPAR, but perhaps do not know where to start or do not have enough support or research to make the case for a YPAR project in their classroom or school. In addition, these can be valuable research findings to display the importance of YPAR on an institutional and organizational level as well.

Future Research

There are several research implications that stem from this study. First is that a similar research study, or at minimum, the use of YPAR (leaving out a sociological concept) should be considered within the walls of an actual secondary classroom. While this study worked with college freshman because they had just finished 12th grade, future research could work backwards, so in this sense, a future study could conduct the same study with seniors in high school reflecting on 11th grade standards.

Teachers and pre-service teachers can provide important insight on the applicability of YPAR in a classroom, and administrators and teachers for schools. Research should be considered engaging various community members using YPAR, starting with needs of the school *starting* with conversations with youth, around how to create research-informed institutional change. Studies conducted on the development of YPAR methodologies in applied manner *with* teachers, and with administrators, should be a considered.

Research should be conducted on the development and demonstration of a sociological imagination within secondary settings as well. While this research team recently graduated, the development of a sociological imagination and how to foster that should be an ongoing research study as it allows for critical inquiry and personal development. Therefore, studies in secondary and post-secondary settings around a sociological imagination should be considered, but especially secondary. Another consideration within this theme is also the development of a sociological imagination for teachers and administrators as well.

Revisiting the Framework Once Again

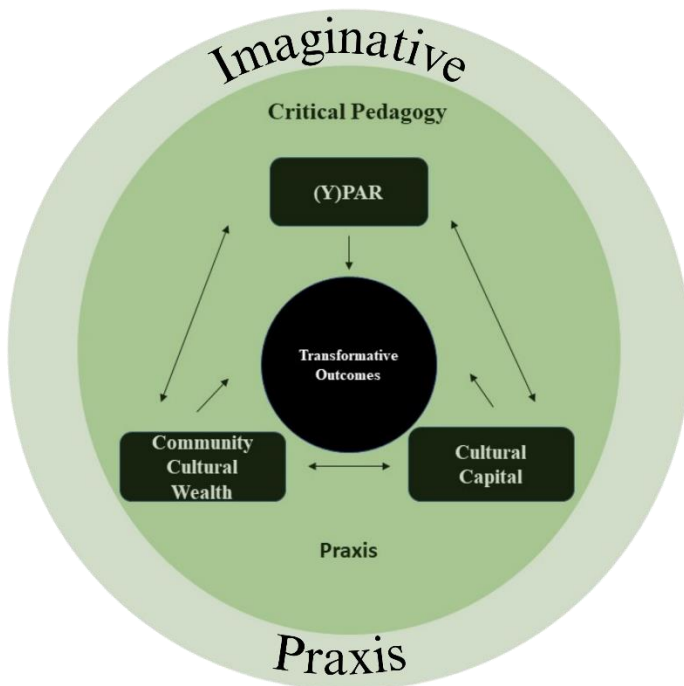
The initial framework essentially presented my ontological and epistemological approaches in how I would engage in my research. Because of the nature of my approach, I expected that the deductive manner would limit changes to the framework, especially as my philosophical approaches did not change. However, upon truly understanding and becoming familiar with the data, reviewing it several times, and engaging in reflexivity and reflection, there was a need to readjust the framework, and especially as it related to the data and findings of this study. This new figure has essentially reimagined the sociological imagination instead as imaginative praxis, which is a sociological imagination merged with praxis, where it is the critical awareness to see where “history meets biography” (Mills, 2000) and the ability to make

change, as embodied by Freire’s praxis. Meanwhile, the next tier allows for critical pedagogy and the foundational approaches of praxis to be another foundation of research approach. Lastly, transformative outcomes are at the center of the research framework, as the that should be the goal, where community cultural wealth, YPAR, and cultural capital work together, intertwined within the framework, aimed to disrupt dominant narratives through these deeply transformative approaches. This new visual can be found in Figure 3 and can be utilized for many different types of research designs that center participatory action research, and especially youth participatory action research. This also informs many additional future research projects and my future research trajectory. The term I have opted to use for this is *imaginative praxis*, embodying a sociological imagination with praxis.

Figure 3

Imaginative Praxis

Revised framework incorporating findings from this study.



A Final, Yet Personal, Reflection

I was working as a secondary humanities teacher when I first started thinking about my dissertation, starting with my pilot study. I taught history and English to grades 8-12 through a global pandemic, and I saw hope throughout all those diverse grades and ages, their imaginations active and engaged, but slowly being squashed between standardized tests, restrictive curriculum, the trauma of systemic oppression, and of course personal conditions we could not alleviate as teachers. I knew that because of my dialogic practices as both a secondary teacher and college instructor, collaboration and participatory methods would be at the center of what I would research. Even before this dissertation, though, I knew; my personal statement for my application to the joint doctoral program, in 2017, stated my desire to use community-engaged research, specifically participatory action research, well before this dissertation was conceptualized. It just so happened that the trajectory of my career changed while in the program, which resulted in adding “youth” before my initial plan. It is interesting how, when you do not waver in your philosophical identity, one’s ontological truths, and in turn epistemological foundation, things seem to come around “full circle,” which leads me to my final thoughts. My educational journey has played a significant role in the reclaiming of my identity, which is ironic considering my early educational journey was a huge factor in the shattering of it. I bring this up because many of the research team members discussed how they discovered more about themselves in this study than they had in other educational settings, so it is only fitting that I bring up my own self-discovery, to be as vulnerable as they were and connected in the same way my research members were. One thing I touched upon briefly in the prologue is my identity as a white, Korean woman and how I have grappled with this throughout my life.

In the Korean culture, there are these two concepts, *han* and *jeong*. There is no direct translation of *han*, but the closest idea that can be equated to it is that of resentment, sorrow, anger, and other deeply intense negative emotions like these, feelings that are believed to run deep and in our hearts and veins. This is not something surprising of a people who have faced the major consequences and attempts at stripping of their collective cultural identities due to imperialism, and centuries of colonization and occupation, (and are still experiencing tremendous heartache and turmoil in 2023, like many other minoritized peoples nationally and globally). I have felt *han* to my core for as long as I can remember, whether it was as a child having my identity shaken, my brain aneurysm caused by a genetic mutation dominant in Korean and Japanese people, or just knowing that my grandmother, and mother, have navigated the murky waters of being “American” in a country that did not see them as such. I also believe *han* has contributed to the way I question the systems and structures that resulted in my existence but also attempted to take the small part of “Korean-ness” I still maintain, and why I hope for my students to question things in similar, yet personal ways.

But, there is a big push to recognize that *han* should not define the entire Korean people, even with the years of occupation and anguish, so there is another concept that is just as important to discuss, that of *jeong*. *Jeong* can best be understood as loyalty, connection, a deep emotional bond with others, solidarity, and camaraderie between people. These two concepts have been embodied through this research, something that I did not realize until later in my personal reflections. My structural analysis and systemic thinking absolutely stem from those feelings of *han* and influence my drive for critical analysis. Meanwhile, *jeong* is at the core of how, and more importantly, why, I engage dialogically and connect with people as deeply as I do, including my students and in this case, my research team. In many ways, this study allowed

me to process and use those feelings of *han* to design this study and emerge instead with an intense feeling of *jeong* through the findings, goals, and outcomes.

With that said, I designed this research with hope in mind, and to push educational initiatives beyond reform, but toward a transformation, so we can hopefully dismantle oppressive systems through collaborative and dialogical means for a more just and liberated world. I did this to use similar feelings, individually and collectively, of *han* to challenge systems, to eventually develop and foster a collective and systemic *jeong*. While perhaps idealistic, we can realize that only through progressive and big ideas, we can make change and hold onto hope.

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Appendix A.

Recruitment Flyer and Language



Did you graduate high school in 2022 or know somebody who did? We are currently recruiting for a research study that will create curriculum for future institutional practice and socially justice teaching. The goal of this study is to focus on students' lived experiences and cultural backgrounds as a way for teachers to help students meet the state standards.

The only requirement for this study is that you are in the San Diego area and you're a high school graduate of 2022.

As of now, this study will take place at San Diego State University, on Fridays from 2:00pm-3:30pm for a total of 8 sessions. We'd love your input on this journey for more socially justice education. For more information, check out this link: www.tinyurl.com/DLPYPAR

Appendix B.

Knowledge Check Questions and Protocol

Protocol [for the study]: I will share these questions on my computer. I will also give them several pieces of lined paper. I will read this out loud to the participants.

One of the key things that we will discuss in this set of workshops will be sociology and ideas connected to sociology. Because one of the goals of this research study is to help you develop what's called a sociological imagination, I would like to see how you understand some big ideas that we will talk about, both before and after the workshops. At the end, we all, collaboratively, will be analyzing the responses to see what we've learned. Please remember that I do not expect you to know all of these ideas, and consider these questions and some general prompts and guiding words for ideas around these concepts that are discussed in sociology, meaning that this is not a test, but I want you to be open and honest with your responses as they relate to the ideas here. If you are unsure of something, that's okay! Just answer it the best you can *if* you can.

Questions:

When you think of the word systems (or systemic) how do you understand that? This can be the word itself, how it relates to the world around us, your own identity, etc.

If you read the words structure and agency, what do these words mean to you? If you know what they are, how would you define them or explain them?

How would you explain the idea of social identity?

Thinking about social identity, how would you explain the ideas of:

- Race
- Gender
- Culture
- Sexual orientation
- Gender
- Disability
- Socioeconomic status?

Are there any other social identities not listed here that you think we should consider? If so, what are they?

What do you think about the word representation? What does this mean to you? How do you see it show up in different parts of your life, like school, TV, films, music, etc.

Appendix C.

Sociological Imagination Exercise

Sociological Imagination:

In small groups, begin jotting down ideas related to this imagine:



And this one:



Appendix D.

Graphic Organizer Activity

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to provide you with a graphic organizer for important information that we will be covering in today's workshop. It is not required that you fill it out, but rather it provides an outline for you so you know what we have covered. You can absolutely use it for notetaking if you would like.

These ideas are important to sociological thinking and in turn, the strengthening of a sociological imagination.

Some of these ideas you may already be familiar with, which is great, and I encourage you to participate in the discussion around these ideas.

In addition, some of these ideas and concepts are integral to conducting research, and from a critical perspective. We will discuss in our workshop what a critical perspective might look like, pitfalls of research in the past (and arguably today) and how we will be using some of these ideas and concepts in our future workshops. Today is more about reviewing and engaging in dialogue around important ideas so that we are better prepared for the data collection stages which begin at our next meeting. This session will be recorded as well in the event you would like to go back and review it or you were unable to attend the session on 12.9.22.

Concept	Definition	Notes/Ideas/Thoughts
Systems/systemic		

Structure		
Agency		
Race		
Culture		
Ethnicity		

Gender		
Sex		
Sexuality		
Disability		
Intersectionality		

Qualitative Methods		
Quantitative Methods		
Participatory Research Methods		
Sociological Imagination		
Representation		

Equity		
Equality		
Liberatory Practices		
Pedagogy		

Appendix E.

Lesson Plan Example

This was a real lesson that I had surrounding the unit of Reconstruction and race in an 8th grade U.S. History class. We had in-class dialogues, read through the materials together, and then broke them down. They took notes in class while we reviewed the materials, and then they had to write the essay as an assessment for the unit.

Lesson: Reconstruction

Standard(s):

- ❖ HSS-8.11: Students analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction.
- ❖ HSS-8.11.1: List the original aims of Reconstruction and describe its effects on the political and social structures of different regions
- ❖ HSS-8.11.3: Understand the effects of the Freedmen’s Bureau and the restrictions placed on the rights and opportunities of freedmen, including racial segregation and “Jim Crow” laws.
- ❖ HSS-8.12: Students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution.

What you should learn and be able to do by the end of this lesson:

After our class discussions, reviewing of the videos and readings, and activities in the class, you should be able to:

1. Explain the idea of race and how its impacted social and political situations of the past
2. Explain how the past has influenced our present day situations
3. Be able to identify major events during and after Reconstruction
 - a. Be able to think about how Reconstruction and the events after have influenced our understanding of race relations in the United States

4. Explain how past injustices have influenced current injustices as part of political systems and how we might be able to tackle these issues
5. Connect specific events to your arguments and writing

Instruction: Below you will find a list of materials that we will discuss and review so you can complete your final essay.

Please use the chart to take notes as you read or watch the videos so that you have all of the materials for your final. You'll also see that you will begin writing your paper paragraph-by-paragraph in the organizer, which is found at the end of these instructions.

We will discuss these in class so that you can take more notes if necessary.

Videos:

[Race, The House We Live In](#)

[The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow](#)

[The Legacy of Reconstruction](#)

Readings:

[The Origins of Race](#)

[We Need to Talk about an Injustice](#)

Instructions: Please fill out this graphic organizer. There are two sections. *Section A* is for only your notes as you watch the videos. Please make sure you are taking detailed notes so you can use this later to go back to. *Section B* is for your reflection. Please be sure to fill out *both* sections.

Section A: Notes

Please fill out these boxes as you watch the videos and complete the reading. (This also means that if you are doing this during class time, that you should be working on this while we are logged into the call.)

For material, that is the title of the video or reading.

For notes, you will write down ideas, concepts, and important information that pops up. This is active *note taking*, which means it happens as you watch and listen to it, during the time.

For summary, you will write an explanation, using your notes, about what the video was about. So, your notes happen while you are watching or listening, and your summary is afterward.

Material	Notes	Summary
<i>Race, The House We Live In</i>		
<i>Race: The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow</i>		
<i>Origins of Race</i>		

<i>The Legacy of Reconstruction</i>		
<i>We Need to Talk About Injustice</i>		

Section B. Reflection

For this section, please answer the question in written format and complete sentences after you've organized your thoughts in the table. Fill out the table below *only for organization*. You *must* do this for full credit. The goal is for you to fill out the boxes so that you can complete and essay for history class. After you've completed this, I will give you feedback and responses and then you will begin turning it into a paper. You should aim for at least 8 sentences *per box*.

The question/prompt is:

What is the reconstruction? How does understanding the origins of race, how race has been viewed throughout our history, including our recent history help us to make sense of what we see today? Why should we learn about Reconstruction and how it connects to our current history? How does our understanding of race connect to our history (and lack of learning of) the Reconstruction?

In other words, why is learning about history and the Reconstruction so important to understand the injustices we see today?

<p>Introduction</p> <p>For this introduction, you should include what you're writing about. So, you are going to include a thesis statement. This is a single statement, or a couple sentences, that explain exactly what will be in your mini-paper.</p>	
<p>Summarize the videos.</p> <p>What are the videos about? Do not write, "The videos are about..." but write about the topics instead. Basically, you aren't telling me about the videos, but the ideas that were in the videos. How does it support what you're discussing based on your introduction?</p>	
<p>How are these connected to race and current history?</p> <p>Now, you're going to really use your notes to explain how this is all connected. Explain how you can connect all the ideas together - how have these parts of history connected to current day issues we are seeing?</p>	

Conclusion

Now, you will want to tell me about what you wrote in the paragraphs above.

Why are these ideas important? How can we use our understanding of these ideas to help make change? How and why should we learn about Reconstruction more than what we do? How was it connected to the Civil War and why is it just as important to learn about it?

This was a real lesson that I had surrounding a unit on magical realism, personal narratives, and reading. The intention behind this was to understand concepts of magical realism, develop personal narrative writing skills, and to understand the importance of reading and how it is a political act. This was also to bring together students' cultural backgrounds into the work they're doing and find overlap between our reading and our lives.

Lesson: Magical Realism and the Political

Standard(s):

SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

RL.9–10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9–10.3: Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL.9–10.5: Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

RL.9–10.6: Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

RI.9–10.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.9–10.3: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

RI.9–10.7: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

W.9–10.3a: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

W.9–10.3b: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

W.9–10.3c: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

W.9–10.3d: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters

W.9–10.3e: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

L.9–10.5a: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.

What you should learn and be able to do by the end of this lesson:

After our class discussions, reviewing of the videos and readings, and activities in the class, you should be able to:

1. Identify elements of magical realism within a text
2. Explain what structure and agency are
3. Summarize and analyze magical realism texts and its relationship to structure and agency
4. Critically imagine the societal structure according to character agency
 - a. Address character choice and agency based on what you can infer about the structure, using evidence from the text
5. Apply magical realism to a particular event or situation in your life
6. Engage in dialogue around the social and political elements of reading as it relates to the texts

7. Creatively express and present your own story and how it depicts your agency related to the social structure of our society now

Instruction:

We will discuss these in class so that you can take more notes if necessary.

Readings:

Americca by Amy Bender

The Paper Menagerie by Ken Liu

Assessment:

- In-class small group discussion
- Whole class dialogue
- Final creative visual art, representing your own magical realism within your life
- Mini presentation discussing structure, agency, and your own lived experience with your visual representation

Appendix F.

Final Reflections

Instructions: Please write a reflection to the overall project. There are no right or wrong answers and this is genuinely about how you feel about the use of YPAR in the classroom, this particular study, and for you to reflect on your own journey during this project.

The questions below are guiding ideas to help organize your thoughts, but feel free to write as much or as little as you feel is necessary to provide a reflection of the YPAR project.

1. Reflect your thinking, learning, and engagement in this project. Did you notice any shifts in your thinking? Any changes from workshop to workshop? Or maybe changes in how you see things outside of this study? If so, how?
2. What do you think is the biggest strength of a YPAR project? What about the biggest weakness? It can be around this particular study, YPAR as a whole, etc.
3. Do you think YPAR could be transformative for the K-12 setting? If so, please explain.
4. Are there any things that you see differently in the world after engaging in this YPAR project?
5. What do you think is your own personal biggest take away from this project?
6. We wrote positionality statements, but now I want you to think about the positionality that you hold - how do you think this may have impacted how you interacted with the project, your analysis, what you felt was important, and how you interacted with your research team members? (You do not need to write out your positionality or identities, but just reflect on how it impacted these things to consider.)
7. What are some recommendations/suggestions/insight you have for educators who would want to engage in a YPAR project with their K-12 students?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add as it relates to this research study?

Again, use these as some guiding questions for you to reflect on your overall process throughout the duration of the workshops. You can choose to answer them directly after the questions (question/answer) or to craft a general statement in “essay” format below. It is entirely up to you.

Please do not put your name directly on the document, but do please create a document and share it with me at charlenehm@thedignifiedlearningproject.org

11. 12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.
 - a. Analyze the influence of ancient Greek, Roman, English, and leading European political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Niccolò Machiavelli, and William Blackstone on the development of American government.
 - b. Discuss the character of American democracy and its promise and perils as articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville.
 - c. Explain how the U.S. Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as "self-evident truths."
 - d. Explain how the Founding Fathers' realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in the Federalist Papers.
 - e. Describe the systems of separated and shared powers, the role of organized interests (Federalist Paper Number 10), checks and balances (Federalist Paper Number 51), the importance of an independent judiciary (Federalist Paper Number 78), enumerated powers, rule of law, federalism, and civilian control of the military.

- f. Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.
12. 12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.
- a. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).
 - b. Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one's work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).
 - c. Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.
 - d. Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.
 - e. Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations; that is, why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others.
 - f. Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States, including the process of naturalization (e.g., literacy, language, and other requirements).
13. 12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal,

social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

- a. Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.
 - b. Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.
 - c. Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.
 - d. Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.
14. 12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.
- a. Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch, including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.
 - b. Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.
 - c. Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.

- d. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.
 - e. Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
 - f. Explain the processes of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.
15. 12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.
- a. Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal-protection-of-the-law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.
 - b. Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades (e.g., the Warren and Rehnquist courts).
 - c. Evaluate the effects of the Court's interpretations of the Constitution in *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, and *United States v. Nixon*, with emphasis on the arguments espoused by each side in these cases.
 - d. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, and *United States v. Virginia (VMI)*.
16. 12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.

- a. Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or were more than two major parties.
 - b. Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections.
 - c. Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding.
 - d. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).
 - e. Discuss the features of direct democracy in numerous states (e.g., the process of referendums, recall elections).
 - f. Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.
17. 12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.
- a. Explain how conflicts between levels of government and branches of government are resolved.
 - b. Identify the major responsibilities and sources of revenue for state and local governments.
 - c. Discuss reserved powers and concurrent powers of state governments.

- d. Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.
 - e. Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders.
 - f. Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.
 - g. Identify the organization and jurisdiction of federal, state, and local (e.g., California) courts and the interrelationships among them.
 - h. Understand the scope of presidential power and decision making through examination of case studies such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, passage of Great Society legislation, War Powers Act, Gulf War, and Bosnia.
18. 12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.
- a. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.
 - b. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.
 - c. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.
19. 12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.
- a. Explain how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and

constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.

- b. Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).
- c. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.
- d. Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods (e.g., Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, Cambodia).
- e. Identify the forms of illegitimate power that twentieth-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.
- f. Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- g. Describe the ideologies that give rise to Communism, methods of maintaining control, and the movements to overthrow such governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, including the roles of individuals (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel).
- h. Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the ideas, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.

20. 12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

Economics

7. 12.1 Students understand common economic terms and concepts and economic reasoning.
- Examine the causal relationship between scarcity and the need for choices.
 - Explain opportunity cost and marginal benefit and marginal cost.
 - Identify the difference between monetary and nonmonetary incentives and how changes in incentives cause changes in behavior.
 - Evaluate the role of private property as an incentive in conserving and improving scarce resources, including renewable and nonrenewable natural resources.
 - Analyze the role of a market economy in establishing and preserving political and personal liberty (e.g., through the works of Adam Smith).
8. 12.2 Students analyze the elements of America's market economy in a global setting.
- Understand the relationship of the concept of incentives to the law of supply and the relationship of the concept of incentives and substitutes to the law of demand.
 - Discuss the effects of changes in supply and/ or demand on the relative scarcity, price, and quantity of particular products.
 - Explain the roles of property rights, competition, and profit in a market economy.

- d. Explain how prices reflect the relative scarcity of goods and services and perform the allocative function in a market economy.
 - e. Understand the process by which competition among buyers and sellers determines a market price.
 - f. Describe the effect of price controls on buyers and sellers.
 - g. Analyze how domestic and international competition in a market economy affects goods and services produced and the quality, quantity, and price of those products.
 - h. Explain the role of profit as the incentive to entrepreneurs in a market economy.
 - i. Describe the functions of the financial markets.
 - j. Discuss the economic principles that guide the location of agricultural production and industry and the spatial distribution of transportation and retail facilities.
9. 12.3 Students analyze the influence of the federal government on the American economy.
- a. Understand how the role of government in a market economy often includes providing for national defense, addressing environmental concerns, defining and enforcing property rights, attempting to make markets more competitive, and protecting consumers' rights.
 - b. Identify the factors that may cause the costs of government actions to outweigh the benefits.
 - c. Describe the aims of government fiscal policies (taxation, borrowing, spending) and their influence on production, employment, and price levels.
 - d. Understand the aims and tools of monetary policy and their influence on economic activity (e.g., the Federal Reserve).

10. 12.4 Students analyze the elements of the U.S. labor market in a global setting.
- a. Understand the operations of the labor market, including the circumstances surrounding the establishment of principal American labor unions, procedures that unions use to gain benefits for their members, the effects of unionization, the mini-mum wage, and unemployment insurance.
 - b. Describe the current economy and labor market, including the types of goods and services produced, the types of skills workers need, the effects of rapid technological change, and the impact of international competition.
 - c. Discuss wage differences among jobs and professions, using the laws of demand and supply and the concept of productivity.
 - d. Explain the effects of international mobility of capital and labor on the U.S. economy.
11. 12.5 Students analyze the aggregate economic behavior of the U.S. economy.
- a. Distinguish between nominal and real data.
 - b. Define, calculate, and explain the significance of an unemployment rate, the number of new jobs created monthly, an inflation or deflation rate, and a rate of economic growth.
 - c. Distinguish between short-term and long-term interest rates and explain their relative significance.
12. 12.6 Students analyze issues of international trade and explain how the U.S. economy affects, and is affected by, economic forces beyond the United States's borders.

- a. Identify the gains in consumption and production efficiency from trade, with emphasis on the main products and changing geographic patterns of twentieth-century trade among countries in the Western Hemisphere.
- b. Compare the reasons for and the effects of trade restrictions during the Great Depression compared with present-day arguments among labor, business, and political leaders over the effects of free trade on the economic and social interests of various groups of Americans.
- c. Understand the changing role of international political borders and territorial sovereignty in a global economy.
- d. Explain foreign exchange, the manner in which exchange rates are determined, and the effects of the dollar's gaining (or losing) value relative to other currencies.

Appendix G.

Survey and Survey Redesign

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. For these scaled questions, 1 means not at all, 2 means a little important, 3 means somewhat important, 4 means important, and 5 means very important.

Please reflect on your high school experiences.

Using a Likert scale, 1 to 5, I asked:

- 1) How important was graduating high school for you?
- 2) How important was/is going to college for you?
- 3) How important was it to you to read books with diverse characters?
- 4) How important was it to you to learn about social issues, such as poverty, hunger, and racism in your classes?
- 5) How important was it to you to learn about equality and equity in your classes?
- 6) How important was it to you that your teachers recognized and supported identity, like race, gender, or other backgrounds?

Using a Likert scale, 1 to 3, 1 being not well supported, 2 meaning supported, and 3 meaning well supported, I asked:

- 1) How well did you feel supported as a whole person (as opposed to your academic well-being) by your school?
- 2) How well do you feel supported by your school to pursue your goals?
- 3) How well do you feel your school supports you mentally and emotionally as a person?
- 4) How well do you feel you are taught about making positive change in your school and/or community?

5) How well do you feel the teachers are representing your identity in the course materials?

I asked the following questions using yes, no, or sometimes multiple-choice options.

1) Do you feel if you had an issue, concern, or frustration your school would listen to you?

2) Do you feel your school made efforts to consider your voice in school changes?

3) Do you feel like your identity was represented in the classroom materials you learned?

(For example: Characters, readings, or histories that align with your culture, race, language, gender, and other parts of what make up who you are.)

Then the following questions had different options, listed under the questions:

1) How prepared did you feel to advance to the next grade level? (For instance, when you were in 9th grade transition to 10th grade? Or when you were in 12th grade, progressing to your next steps after high school graduation?)

- a. Very prepared
- b. Prepared
- c. Only a little prepared
- d. Not prepared at all

2) What do you feel best describes the goals of your high school upon graduation?

- a. To receive a high school diploma
- b. To make positive contributions to the community
- c. To prepare students for better jobs after graduation
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

3) What was your number one goal for after high school graduation?

- a. To go to college

- b. To get a job
- c. To go to a trade school/training program
- d. Other
- e. Unsure

The next section instructed the following:

The for the following questions, please select true or false based on the statement provided.

Please remember to respond to these based on your high school experiences.

- 1) Because of my high school experience, I feel prepared to be a creative problem solved in and out of my school community.
- 2) I felt comfortable sharing my school related concerns with adults at my high school.
- 3) The adults I lived with during high school wanted me to continue to college after graduation.
- 4) I feel I had enough resources provided by my school to be successful in my education.
- 5) I feel my teachers inspired me to pursue or develop new goals.

I then asked demographic questions:

- 1) My racial/ethnic demographic is:
 - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African-American
 - d. Hispanic or Latino
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. White
 - g. More than one race

- h. Decline to state
- 2) My gender is:
- a. Girl
 - b. Boy
 - c. Trans
 - d. Gender non-conforming
 - e. Other
 - f. Prefer not to say
- 3) I graduate high school in:
- a. 2020
 - b. 2021
- 4) Please provide any comments on what made your learning experiences and preparation for positive social change better in your educational journey during high school.

This is the redesigned survey.

Demographics:

- 1) My racial/ethnic demographic is:
- a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African-American
 - d. Hispanic or Latino
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. White
 - g. More than one race

- h. Decline to state
- 2) My gender is:
- a. Cis Female
 - b. Cis Male
 - c. Trans Female
 - d. Trans Male
 - e. Non-Binary/Genderqueer
 - f. Other
 - g. Prefer not to say

High School Experiences:

Section 1 [Using a Likert scale of 1 to 5]:

- 1) How important was/is going to college for you?
- 2) To what extent did your high school experience help you determine your future goals?
- 3) To what extent did you feel supported by your school in pursuing your goals?
- 4) To what extent did you feel social pressure to go to school (ex: friends, family)?

Section 2 [Using Likert scale of 1 to 3]:

- 1) How important was it to you to read books with diverse characters?
- 2) How important was it to you to be exposed to other in-school materials with diverse people?
- 3) How important was it to you to understand the depth of social issues, such as poverty, hunger, racism, and other issues in your classes?
- 4) How important was it to you to learn about and the difference between equality and equity in your classes?

Section 3 [Using Likert scale of 1 to 3, 1 means not well supported, 2 means supported, and 3 means well supported]

- 1) How supported did you feel in your racial and ethnic identity while at school?
- 2) How supported did you feel in your gender identity while at school?
- 3) How supported did you feel in your sexual orientation identity while at school?
- 4) How supported did you feel in your religious identity while at school?
- 5) How well did you feel supported by your school to pursue your goals?
- 6) How well do you feel your school supported you mentally and emotionally as a person?
- 7) How well do you feel your school supported your learning style in the classroom?
- 8) How well do you feel your school connects you to your community and other source resources and opportunities?
- 9) How well supported do you feel about making a positive change in your school and/or community?

Section 4 [Multiple choice]

- 1) How often you feel if you had a school related issue, concern, or frustration your teachers would listen to you?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
- 2) How often you feel if you had a personal related issue, concern, or frustration your teachers would listen to you?

- a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
- 3) How often do you feel your voice as a student was equally valued compared to other students?
- a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
- 4) How often do you feel your identities were represented in the classroom materials you learned? (For example, characters, readings, or histories that align with your culture, race, language, gender, and other parts of what make up who you are)?
- a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

Section 5

- 1) How prepared did you feel to advance to the next grade level? (For instance, when you were in 9th grade transition to 10th grade? Or when you were in 12th grade, progressing to your next steps after high school graduation?)
- a. Very prepared
 - b. Prepared

- c. Only a little prepared
 - d. Not prepared at all
- 2) What do you feel best describes the goals of your high school for its students/graduates upon graduation?
- a. To receive a high school diploma
 - b. To make positive contributions to the community
 - c. To prepare students for better jobs after graduation
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
 - f. Other
- 3) What was your number one goal for after high school graduation?
- a. To go to college
 - b. To get a job
 - c. To go to a trade school/training program
 - d. Other
 - e. Unsure

For this section, please select true or false.

- 1) While at my high school, I felt a separation between myself as a student and my internal/personal identity.
- 2) I felt comfortable sharing my school related concerns with adults at my high school.
- 3) The adults I lived with during high school wanted me to continue to college.
- 4) I had enough resources provided by my school to be successful in my education.
- 5) My teachers inspired me to pursue or develop new goals.

- 6) My career goals were fueled more by my personal time than my in-class time.
- 7) Because of my high school experience, I feel equipped with the critical problem-solving skills to solve issues in my day-to-day life.

Please share anything else you would like to add that impacted your educational experience in high school.

Appendix H.

Co-Researcher Lesson Plan 1

Title: Understanding systems of government and how the power of these systems compares to each other.

Standard(s):

- ❖ HSS-PoAD.12.1.4: Explain how the U.S. Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as “self-evident truths.”
- ❖ HSS-PoAD.12.3.4: Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes
- ❖ HSS-PoAD.12.9.1: Explain how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.
- ❖ HSS-PoAD.12.9.2: Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).
- ❖ HSS-PoAD.12.9.3: Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students gain an understanding of different systems of government (Feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, monarchy, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies) (representative vs direct)
2. Students understand how these systems give power and who the power goes to

- a. Students can compare and contrast different and be able to compare how this affects the citizens of that cultural community
3. Students can describe how government powers affect society and individuals

Assessments and Activities

1. Students will be put into groups and assigned a government system to enact in their group.
This system will be used during a month-long game. Normal class functions will be treated by each group in the way they think their government system would. This will help students become more familiar with the workings of the different government systems.
 - a. Eg. the communism group must divide all work evenly as well as all extra credit, the representative democracy group agrees on one representative who must advocate for them to the teacher or present in front of class, etc
 - b. Occasionally, the groups will partake in a game where certain ‘events’ may happen and the groups need to decide what to do according to their government system. Eg, rolling a dice to determine if something good or bad happens to your country and acting accordingly. Then the groups discuss their actions and what their government would do in that situation, then present to the class.
 - i. Some of the situations may include students assessing the way their government systems have historically treated people of different classes, races, backgrounds. Did your government system have aspects that supported people of color, people with low income, etc.? Who benefited most from the laws, rules, beliefs of your government system? If your government system allows opportunities to make changes to support these people, how and what changes would you make?

2. Socratic Seminar discussing the systems of government, what worked and what didn't during the game. What would you adopt for your system, what would you definitely not do. What would you change about the US government system, and what would you keep the same.
 - a. Did you feel your government would listen to you as an individual? How do you think your government would treat people based on race, immigration status, gender, sexuality disability, etc? Looking at countries that adopt this system, how do they treat their citizen based on the categories listed above. Do you feel valued as a person in the US government? How would you try and change that (if answered no)?

Resources

Capitalism, Socialism, and Communism Compared:

Every Type of Government Explained

What did democracy really mean in Athens?

10 Types of Government: This reading gives brief definitions of different types of government and brief examples of these types of government throughout history. This will give students basic knowledge of their government systems and the examples tell students what to look deeper into to give them better understanding of their systems.

Different Types of Government Around the World

Appendix I.
Co-Researcher Lesson Plan 2

Title: The Historical Struggles Between Tribal and Federal Government

Description: In class, students will read Andrew Jackson’s “Letter to the Cherokee”. They will then read an article on the Dakota Access Pipeline. Both of these sources provide examples of how power has historically and currently been distributed by tribal and federal government. Students will then engage in a discussion, talking about what this historical information means about power dynamics between the US federal government and tribal governments. For example, they might take note that in Jackson’s letter, the US government appears hostile and oversteps tribal government rule and might argue that this attitude is still held today.

Materials:

Andrew Jackson’s “Letter to the Cherokee”

Article on Dakota Access Pipeline (as it relates to government powers)

List of the standards:

HSS-PoAD.12.2: Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

HSS-PoAD.12.2.5: Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations; that is, why enjoyment of one’s rights entails respect for the rights of others.

HSS-PoAD.12.7: Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

Student learning outcomes

- Students should develop a broader historical understanding of the power dynamic that exists between the US federal government and tribal governments.

- Students should be able to differentiate the structure and agency of tribal governments compared to that of the federal government.
- Students should develop their ability to relate current-day indigenous issues related to power back to their roots.
- Students will learn how to build and defend arguments surrounding the duties of democratic citizens.
- Students will better understand the concept of power and how power affects social dynamics.

Then, students will be assigned a position paper based on this background information surrounding the following questions:

- Give your own definition of power. How is power different than authority? Why is power so valuable in our society? To whom?
- Have power relations between the US national government and tribal governments changed or remained the same throughout US history? Why?
- Does this power relation still impact indigenous people today?
- How does power relate to cultural wealth?

For extra credit, students can contact a local tribal government leader and include an attached interview at the end of their paper.

Appendix J.

Co-Researcher Lesson Plan 3

Title: Comparing the powers of different levels of government

Standards:

- HSS-PoAD.12.4.3: Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.
- HSS-PoAD.12.7.6: Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.

Students will be able to:

1. Explain the basics of lawmaking
2. Compare the lawmaking processes between the three levels of government, showing they know how these processes differ
3. Understand the outside influences coming from the media and lobbying on these processes
4. Identify their current representatives
5. Define power as it relates to each of the three levels of government
 - a. Understand the power dynamics between the 3 levels of government
6. Think about the ways other power dynamics can work their way into government
 - a. E.g. How do the sociological factors of a bill relate to the process of it being passed (or not passed?)

Assessments and Activities:

Lawmaking game

- To review: Students will be asked to identify their current representatives in both levels of Congress:
 - Their two senators, and the representative from their district
 - Students will be given a link to find their members of U.S. Congress:

<https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>
- Students are assigned different roles within the three levels of government - local, state, and federal
- Students go through the process of making a law starting at the local government
 - what exactly that law is, is up to students
 - Example ideas: climate, education, gender rights, etc.
- Students will interact with each other showing they understand the steps of the process as well as the importance of power relations
 - Students will understand the role that lobbyists and journalists play in lawmaking
- Students will showcase their understanding of the differing amounts of power each level of government has, and why
- Students will understand the concept of agenda-setting in media
 - Students will then reflect on how many people may not know this bill is being passed until it is law, and how this affects citizens

Materials:

Review how passing a bill works: [7 Steps: How a Bill Becomes Law](#)

Define lobbying: [What is Lobbying and Can It Be Good?](#)

Article about power dynamics: [Power](#)

Video about agenda-setting : [Agenda Setting Theory: Media Theories](#)

Finding representatives: Finding representatives