Making a Social Change Agent: Perceptions, Predictors, and Profiles of Youth Social Change Involvement During Emerging Adulthood

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INTRODUCTION

In his 2012 book, *Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America*, the late John Lewis wrote, "nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society" (p. 12). However, what empowers young people to engage in social change activities? Much of my scholarly interests are rooted in young people's involvement in community and social change behaviors, given the presence of the youth voice in many social change movements. I can trace this interest back to numerous visits to my father's alma mater, North Carolina A&T State University. During these visits to campus, he would often discuss how the Greensboro sit-ins contributed to one of the most influential social change movements in the United States. In 1960, four A&T students refused to leave their seats at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina (Halberstam, 1999). Their actions inspired numerous nonviolent demonstrations across the southeastern United States to begin an important chapter in our nation's long journey of ensuring racial justice (Morgan & Davies, 2012).

Likewise, recent activism from young people who are part of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has encouraged a new generation to promote social change, specifically as it relates to the increasingly visible brutality that unarmed Black people continue to face at the hands of law enforcement (Clayton, 2018). From 20th century social change movements to continued contemporary efforts to address social injustices, adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes have greatly contributed to the political landscape of the United States through participation in social movements or involvement in electoral politics, despite representing a relatively small proportion of the American electorate. In fact, young people between the ages of 18 and 29 years old represented only 17% of the voters in the 2020

presidential election (Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2020).

However, not all young people engage in social change activities like the Greensboro Four, BLM activists, or other youth social change agents. Instead, some adolescents choose to participate in a range of behaviors that promote social change through volunteer efforts, such as donating to a food bank or reading to children at a homeless shelter, for example. Moreover, some young people are not engaged in social change endeavors at all. This lack of engagement could result from a range of factors such as a lack of awareness of sociopolitical issues, a general disinterest in social change behaviors, or even their acceptance and support of the status quo. Furthermore, some young people might not engage in social change behaviors due to perceived systemic efforts to discourage young people's involvement.

During a time in the life course when young people continue to make sense of their position and role in society, uncovering cognitive processes that lead some adolescents to act upon their emergent sociopolitical development illuminates underlying explanations for varying levels of youth social change involvement. Moreover, the dynamic relationship between these processes and young people's sociopolitical perspectives suggests a range of social change behavioral outcomes that might continue to evolve during a critical developmental stage of life. Therefore, this dissertation investigates young people's perceptions, predictors, and profiles of youth social change involvement during emergent adulthood through a sociopolitical development theoretical framework. This work conceptualizes young people's social change involvement as the result of dynamic and emergent processes over time by emphasizing young people's emergent understanding of society, and the extent to which they view themselves as efficacious agents in promoting social change as they transition into adulthood.

Several researchers have examined how young people are socialized to contribute to their community through adolescence into adulthood (Lenzi et al., 2014; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Given the concurrent identity developmental processes that occur during adolescence, scholars have drawn from several bodies of literature to discuss how personal experiences and meaning-making processes can lead some young people to engage in civic and social change behaviors. In addition to socialization practices related to racial, ethnic, and gender identities, young people begin to frame their worldview as they increase their awareness of unjust social structures (Diemer, 2012; Schlitz et al., 2010). Moreover, adolescents continue to make sense of their social positioning, which can vary based on demographic characteristics and social systems (Freire, 2004). For some adolescents, such reflection can influence the development of their civic identity (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Youniss & Yates, 1997), which includes the emergence of civic attitudes and resulting civic behaviors. In other words, most young people begin to form sociopolitical perspectives based on their personal experiences and identity development.

Schools have traditionally served an important role in preparing young people to become democratically engaged citizens (Hart & Atkins, 2002; Shiller, 2013). Previous research posits that attaining knowledge through civic education can contribute to adolescents' civic identity (Butler, 2017; Carlisle et al., 2006; Lenzi et al., 2014). In order to increase students' awareness of social issues affecting communities in high school settings, a growing number of educators have introduced social justice curricula to equip young people with applicable skills for promoting social change (Einfield & Collins, 2008; Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014). As an extension to the traditional civics curriculum, scholars suggest that social justice education in a classroom setting provides students with a more expansive understanding of what it means to be a productive and contributing citizen in society (Bell & Griffin, 2007; Cammarota, 2001; Finn &

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Checkoway, 1998). As a shared experience for many young people, educational settings can greatly impact young people's sociopolitical perspectives as they prepare to engage in a range of social change behaviors such as voting. However, behavioral manifestations of emergent sociopolitical perspectives often result from additional developmental processes.

Literature on youth development has also highlighted the importance of cognitive and developmental processes that move young people toward social change involvement. Scholars often draw upon Freire's (2004) work on critical consciousness to further explain the important role of meaning-making processes such as critical reflection for individuals interested in social change activities. Furthermore, empowerment theory has highlighted developmental processes that help people move from feeling powerless to developing a sense of efficacy and personal control (Kieffer, 1984; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Rappaport, 1987), which can result in a range of social change outcomes from inactivity to prolonged activism (Christens et al., 2013). Meaning-making processes related to self-efficacy can also influence the extent to which adolescents believe their involvement will significantly contribute to social change endeavors (O'Donoghue, 2006; Yeich & Levine, 1994), and can reflect young people's understanding of their role in society based on demographic characteristics, emotional responses to social issues, and systemic forces (Malin, Ballard, Damon, 2015). In other words, in addition to adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes can influence the extent to which young people engage in social change endeavors.

Several bodies of literature examine how young people are socialized to address social issues, in addition to cognitive processes that promote different social change behaviors. However, little research has highlighted the dynamic relationship between young people's sociopolitical perspectives, intrapersonal meaning-making processes, and varying forms of youth

social change involvement. Through a multidimensional approach to understanding contributing factors for the behavioral manifestations of young people's sociopolitical perspectives, much can be learned about the meaning-making processes that explain a range of youth sociopolitical involvement. For example, young people who develop an action-oriented response to social inequality and those who choose to refrain from such involvement could have different behavioral outcomes due to their different sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes. Recent scholarship has attempted to fill this gap by connecting various theoretical perspectives for youth engagement. Through a review of multiple disciplinary approaches to understanding youth social change involvement, Hollingsworth (2019) developed a multidimensional conceptual framework that examines the relationship between adolescents' understanding of social issues (i.e., unattached, emergent, and justice-oriented), their readiness for social change participation (e.g., no interest, contemplating action, etc.), and the nature of their social change behaviors (i.e., inactivity, service-centered activities, or systems-focused actions). This conceptual framework was created to address a significant gap in youth development scholarship by summarizing continuous and dynamic developmental processes related to youth social change behaviors. However, additional research is needed to explore the ways in which young people's social change involvement connects to contextual and intrapersonal influences for their emergent sociopolitical perspectives as they approach adulthood.

Therefore, the following chapters provide a multidimensional exploration of youth social change involvement through an expanded sociopolitical development theoretical framework. The first chapter offers a brief examination of the attitudinal and behavioral components highlighted by sociopolitical development theory, which examines critical thinking as the foundation for promoting social change by deepening one's understanding of systemic injustice (Watts et al.,

2003). By incorporating a multidimensional approach to explore the behavioral manifestations of young people's sociopolitical perspectives and intrapersonal meaning-making processes, the theoretical framework presented in the first chapter serves as a compass for the remainder of this dissertation. To address a scholarly gap in understanding the emergent nature of young people's sociopolitical perspectives as they transition from high school into adulthood, the first paper analyzes semi-structured interviews from the Stanford Civic Purpose Project to investigate young people's perceptions of their social change engagement during a critical stage of the life course. By drawing on the components of the dissertation's theoretical framework, this paper illuminates sociopolitical perspective shifts and the evolution of young people's efficacious attitudes as they conceptualize mechanisms for promoting social change before and after they have had the opportunity to vote in their first presidential election.

The second paper examines survey data from the Stanford Civic Purpose Project to further explore emergent sociopolitical perspectives and intrapersonal meaning-making processes as predictors of youth social change behaviors. Through multiple linear regressions, this paper investigates the predictive and interactional relationships between young people's experiences of discrimination, perceptions of fairness in society, efficacious attitudes, and their involvement in service-centered and systems-focused social change behaviors over time. By focusing on these contributions to adolescents' sociopolitical development as high school students and emerging adults, this paper provides evidence of the extent to which young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes predict engagement in different social change behaviors.

Next, the third paper builds upon findings from the previous analyses to observe the persistence of youth social change profiles based on contextual and ecological influences for

young people's sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes as they transition to postsecondary opportunities. Through latent profile analysis, this analysis incorporates all of the elements from the dissertation's theoretical framework to identify groups of young people with similar social change behaviors and intrapersonal factors such as efficacious attitudes and civic identity development over time. Furthermore, by incorporating adolescents' perceptions of their parents' and peers' social change involvement, this paper considers ecological factors as predictors of group membership in order to further examine contributing factors to young people's emergent sociopolitical development. Finally, this dissertation ends with a brief discussion of a subgroup of participants from the Stanford Civic Purpose Project. By using a mixed-methods approach to weave findings from each of the previous chapters, the final chapter represents a summative analysis that emphasizes the need for future research to incorporate the multidimensional components of the dissertation's theoretical framework.

It is important to note some of the terminology used in the following project to discuss the experiences of young people as they finish high school and transition into adulthood. Although terms such as youth, young people, and adolescents are used interchangeably, each analysis focuses on the experiences of young people over the span of two years, including before and after their first opportunity to vote. Therefore, this dissertation is centered on a specific civic milestone that has been previously linked to youth social change involvement (Strama, 1998). Social or community change is also used throughout the project as a comprehensive term to describe varying responses to social issues in the United States. This can include young people's desire to promote positive social outcomes through a wide range of community engagement activities including, but not limited to, volunteerism, advocacy efforts, research projects, and community organizing. Taken together, the following investigations of youth social change

participation provide a compelling narrative of the multidimensional and emergent nature of youth sociopolitical perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors over time. Through the exploration of young people's experiences as they transition into adulthood, this body of research provides a foundation for future work to examine additional ecological factors related to youth social change involvement and the dynamic relationships between context, intrapersonal development, and behavioral outcomes. In addition to expanding theoretical applications of youth sociopolitical development, the following project also includes practical implications for youth practitioners seeking to encourage and support young people who are interested in a range of community-focused activities. Overall, by focusing on cognitive processes related to community engagement, this dissertation seeks to advance previous theoretical and methodological approaches to examine young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement during emerging adulthood.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This dissertation project is framed through a sociopolitical development theoretical lens. As an extension of previous literature on psychological empowerment, sociopolitical development (SPD) theory emerged from a scholarly focus on how individuals' understanding of oppression and marginalization influence their perceptions and responses to social injustices (Watts et al., 1999). In their response to extant scholarship in the community psychology field, Watts et al. (2003) initially describe SPD as a "process of growth in a person's knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social systems" (p. 195). Based on this conceptualization, the authors suggest that SPD represents a multidimensional progression of cognitive processes that result in varying levels of critical awareness and action. Moreover, ecological influences can lead to different perceptions throughout the life course, which can result in a range of behavioral manifestations of social change attitudes. In this chapter, I begin with a brief overview of the five stages of the SPD model before presenting an expanded theoretical framework for examining reflective meaning-making processes that moderate social analysis and action for adolescents transitioning into adult roles. By drawing on previous applications of SPD theory exploring the social change involvement of young people, I also offer justifications for using this framework as a guiding model for each dissertation paper.

The Emergence of Sociopolitical Development Theory

Sociopolitical development theory has been conceptualized as a stage theory that captures five levels of sociopolitical analysis and action (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Cohen, 2005). Given the emergent nature of the cognitive processes inherent in some individuals' sociopolitical

perspectives, it is possible that some individuals exhibit attitudinal and behavioral outcomes that reflect multiple stages of this theoretical framework (Carmen et al., 2015; Lozada et al., 2017). For example, an individual who has a deep understanding of their racial identity might have a more critical conceptualization of sociopolitical matters related to race, while maintaining a less critical perspective of social issues they perceive as less salient to their overall identity (e.g., their religion). Therefore, although it is sometimes helpful to describe the stages of sociopolitical development as distinct categories of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, it is important to acknowledge the possibility that some individuals could be characterized as aligning with several sociopolitical perspectives at a specific time given the complexity of the human experience across the life course.

Based on the narratives of 24 Black activists from New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco, Watts et al. (1999) describe the *acritical* stage as the time when individuals exist within society with limited to no awareness of social inequality or systematic oppression. Most individuals at this stage are unaware of the causes and manifestations of unjust social structures that privilege some people while simultaneously marginalizing others. Several scholars have explored this cognitive dissonance for individuals of varying social identities such as race, gender, socioeconomic positioning, and ability status (Crocetti et al., 2012; Guillaume et al., 2015). As a result of ecological influences on social identity development (Neville & Mobley, 2001; Padilla & Perez, 2003), individuals within the acritical stage of SPD consider the world to be fair, with differences in well-being and socioeconomic prosperity resulting from individual motivations and abilities (Watts et al., 2003).

Beyond the acritical stage of the model where individuals are unaware of social injustices, each stage of SPD theory describes a developmental milestone for individuals'

understanding and response to inequitable and oppressive social structures as critical consciousness (i.e., acquiring skills for critical reflection in order to engage in social change) continues to evolve (Watts et al., 1999). At the *adaptive* stage, individuals begin to acknowledge that inequity exists within society, and that society adapts to or accommodates dominating social structures that lead to the marginalization for some populations (Fegley et al., 2006; Morrell, 2015). Although this stage represents a cognitive shift for individuals who are unable to recognize the impact of ecological and systemic influences on lived experiences, those in the adaptive stage of SPD are not moved to actively challenge such unjust systems. As critical consciousness develops, individuals first reflect on the world around them through an analytical lens by considering their own social positioning within social structures from a place of privilege or as part of a marginalized community (Howard, 2011; Nam, 2012). While continued reflective processes could eventually empower individuals in the adaptive stage to actively disrupt oppressive structures in society, additional sociopolitical developmental processes are necessary.

Reflective processes continue through the *precritical* stage, as individuals continue to deepen their consciousness of unjust social systems. Instead of simply existing within such structures, individuals at this stage begin to question the extent to which accommodating inequality further privileges those who benefit from the marginalization of certain communities (Clay, 2006; Diemer, 2012). Cognitive processes during this stage lead some individuals to formulate explanations for differences within society based on their lived experiences and observations of others. As these explanations begin to reveal potential systemic causes for such inequity, individuals can move towards the *critical* stage, where a sense of empowerment and agency encourages further exploration of the manifestation of sociopolitical events responsible for social injustice (Watts et al., 2003). During this stage, individuals move from a nascent

understanding of social inequity to what Freire (1973) described as praxis, which includes both critical reflection of and, eventually, action towards systems of inequality. In other words, the critical stage of SPD represents the materialization of an individual's understanding of systemic oppression that results from numerous sociopolitical factors. Furthermore, the ability to critically reflect at this stage of SPD theory represents an attitudinal precursor for imagining the social implications of either directly challenging unjust systems or continuing to indirectly support their existence due to inactivity.

Compared to the previous stages described by SPD theory, those with a critical perspective of the world center their lived experiences and sociopolitical understanding as foundational components to their consciousness (Diemer & Li, 2011; Ginwright & James, 2002). For example, individuals whose social identities have been privileged might begin to consider how they can use their social positioning to dismantle systems of oppression and marginalization (Howard, 2011). Moreover, those from communities that have been historically marginalized might consider various ways in which collective action can promote social change (Ginwright, 2007; Morris, 2019; Rapa et al., 2018). This could include increasing awareness of the killings of unarmed members of the Black community through online mechanisms such as the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag on Twitter and other social media sites (Freelon et al., 2016). Although some individuals might refrain from engaging in social change endeavors, the critical stage of SPD theory suggests that the cognitive developments inherent in this phase represent an empowering process that moves some people from reflecting on possible solutions for promoting social change to actively engaging in behaviors that challenge systems of oppression through activism and political participation, for example (Curtin et al., 2010). Given the range of potential behavioral outcomes at this stage of consciousness, some scholars have highlighted the

importance of programs and activities to help individuals act on their sense of efficacy, particularly for young people (Berman, 1997; Butler, 2017; Evans, 2007). Moreover, individuals considering action often seek additional knowledge and skills to promote social change as a result of their emergent sense of efficacy at this stage (Clay, 2006; Lakin & Mahoney, 2006; Leath & Chavous, 2017). In other words, individuals at the critical stage of SPD formulate a multitude of possible solutions for challenging systemic oppression. However, without a deeper understanding of specific actions necessary to promote such change, and the skills to implement and follow through with critical action, being situated within this stage simply represents a cognitive developmental process with limited behavioral outcomes.

The final stage of SPD theory suggests that cognitive processes such as critical reflection manifest through behaviors designated to promote social change. At the *liberation* stage, individuals possess a heightened level of sociopolitical awareness that is often reflected in extensive involvement in social change endeavors (Watts et al., 2003). Although the previous stages primarily describe changes in one's understanding of systems of injustice, SPD theory suggests that the salience of oppression within society empowers individuals to engage in behaviors that reject the adaptation or accommodation of unjust systems (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Morrell, 2015; Watts et al., 1999). Additionally, the liberation stage emphasizes individuals' awareness of long-term solutions to promote sustainable social change (Bobek et al., 2009; Clay, 2006; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). In other words, individuals at this stage acknowledge that social inequality exists, have a deep understanding of the causes and potential solutions to such inequality, have acquired the knowledge and skills to dismantle systems of inequality, and possess efficacious attitudes for engaging in liberation practices. In an effort to actively challenge or disrupt systems of oppression, liberation behaviors could include a number of

activities based on an individual's perception of efficacious actions to promote social change such as voting, community organizing, and engaging in critical methodologies to produce academic scholarship (Fegley et al., 2006). Furthermore, with the advancement of technology, mechanisms for engaging in liberation-based behaviors have evolved to include online activism, as seen in the BLM movement (Clayton, 2018; Freelon et al., 2016). Regardless of the types of behaviors individuals engage in during the liberation stage, SPD theory suggests that individuals at this stage are frequently involved in activities that seek to challenge systems of inequality and oppression as the result of developing a sociopolitical understanding of society that acknowledges how unequal structures impact the human experience.

As an example of how this final stage of SPD theory manifests, much can be learned from sociological research that highlights the important role of Black youth and white allies in the Civil Rights Movement. In a seminal piece on the Black student-led sit-in movements in the American South, Aldon Morris (1981) highlighted the important role of young people's relationships with other liberation-focused individuals to organize strategic actions to promote social change throughout the United States. By emphasizing that "collective action is rooted in organizational structures and carried out by rational actors attempting to realize their ends" (Morris, 1981, p. 746), the author's description of the ways in which some young people utilized their heightened sociopolitical awareness to skillfully challenge systems of oppression reflects the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of the liberation stage of the SPD theoretical framework.

Although the stages of SPD theory—acritical, adaptive, precritical, critical, liberation— are often presented as a linear process, it is important to acknowledge that individuals can participate in behaviors that mirror those with a liberation-focused perspective without

possessing the critical understanding suggested by the final stage of the theoretical framework. For example, individuals might be invited to participate in a demonstration to increase awareness of social injustice with little time to critically reflect on their individual social positioning or the sociopolitical factors that contribute to systemic oppression. Furthermore, involvement in such activities might not reflect the extent to which an individual perceives that their participation will directly challenge or dismantle unjust systems. Additionally, the stages of SPD theory have been conceptualized as a developmental process where individuals deepen their understanding of social systems and structural oppression by progressing towards a more critical or liberation-focused sociopolitical perspective. Although fewer scholars have examined the extent to which such critical analysis halts an individual's sociopolitical development, additional research is needed to determine the extent to which ecological and intrapersonal influences contribute to limited or stagnant development over time. Given the cognitive and behavioral aspects of the components of SPD theory, it is important to further explore the relationship between emerging attitudinal and behavioral outcomes as a reflection of young people's sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-making processes during an important stage of development.

Theoretical Framework for Varying Levels of Social Change Involvement

The five developmental stages of SPD theory (i.e., acritical, adaptive, precritical, critical, liberation) describe the ways in which individuals expand their understanding of social order and develop a sense of self-efficacy (Watts et al., 2003). Moreover, individuals' emergent sociopolitical perspectives, perceptions of self-efficacy, and involvement in a range of social change activities, if any, are theoretically linked to the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes from each of the SPD stages. Although the identified stages are often presented as a continuous spectrum, several scholars have suggested that SPD is not necessarily a linear process for all

individuals who are interested in various forms and levels of social change involvement. In order to address the dynamic relationship between individuals' sociopolitical perspective and varying levels of social change involvement, the current dissertation project expands sociopolitical development theory to consider key factors for a range of social change outcomes (Figure 1). The main components of the current theoretical framework reflect potential attitudinal and behavioral manifestations across all stages of the SPD theoretical framework, and seek to explain varying social change outcomes for young people based on their emergent sociopolitical development. The following section describes essential components of this dissertation theoretical framework to explore the extent to which SPD outcomes for emergent adults vary based on ecological and intrapersonal factors.

Figure 1. Theoretical Framework for Social Change Outcomes During Emerging Adulthood
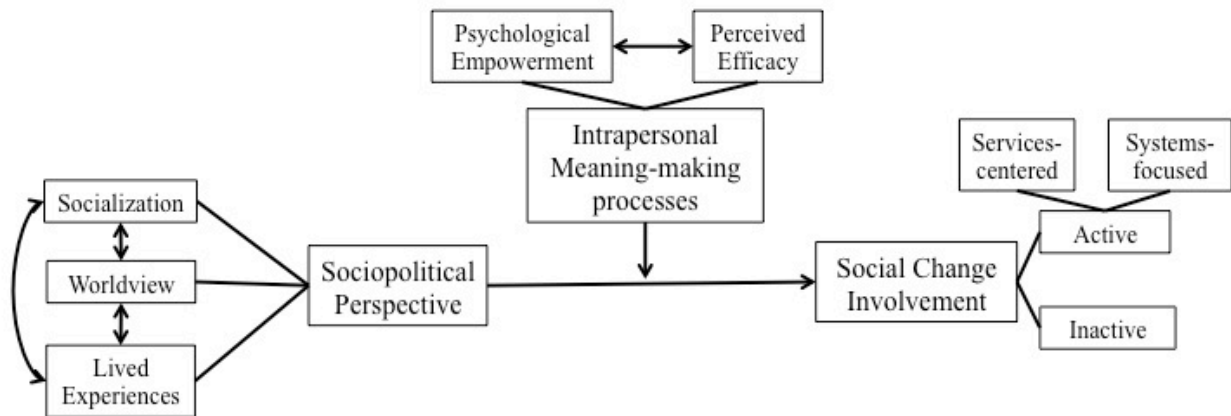
Ecological Influences for Sociopolitical Perspectives

SPD theory highlights individual cognitive processes that lead some people to engage in liberation behaviors for dismantling systems of oppression. Such processes are often influenced by ecological systems that impact one's understanding of social issues such as one's family,

formalized education, or societal norms. Similarly, such external factors can affect the extent to which individuals perceive critical action to be beneficial or efficacious for promoting social change. Therefore, this dissertation's theoretical framework highlights several contributing factors for emerging adults' observation and conceptualization of social problems including the relationship between lived experiences, socialization processes, and worldviews as they collectively contribute to emergent sociopolitical perspectives.

Scholarship from sociological literature often highlights socialization practices related to race, class, and gender as critical aspects of individuals' identity and social positioning (Bernard-Powers, 2008; Crocetti et al., 2012; Fine & Sirin, 2007). Social identifiers such as these often affect how individuals understand or interpret society. Furthermore, sociologists such as Charles Horton Cooley focus on the role of social interactions as individuals develop their concept of self. Often referred to as the *looking glass theory*, Cooley (1972) posited that individuals use social interactions to develop their judgments and values based on what they observe from others and their perception of others' opinions. Similarly, George Herbert Mead's theory of social behaviorism states that the development of self-awareness reflects the attitudes and norms of the *generalized other* through social experiences (Mead et al., 2015). Both of these theoretical explanations for socialization processes suggest how some individuals develop an acritical understanding of society, while others have a more critical sociopolitical perspective, as suggested by SPD theory.

For marginalized populations, direct interactions with systems of oppression can yield a different understanding of societal structures compared to someone with a privileged identity (Clay, 2006; Diemer, 2012). These differences in experiences are illuminated by Black feminist theory, which acknowledges the numerous systems of oppression Black women face based on

the intersectionality of multiple identifiers (Collins, 2000a; Crenshaw, 2018). The unique experiences of Black women have also inspired activism specific to elevating the voices of Black women such as the #SayHerName movement (Brown et al., 2017; Lindsey, 2018). As it relates to SPD theory, Black women would have distinct personal experiences to draw from at the adaptive stage, for example, while the absence of such experiences for white women would suggest that their sociopolitical development might be at the acritical stage. For both groups of women, reflective practices could result in similar behavioral manifestations of their emergent SPD, however, it is unreasonable to assume that their respective identities as either marginalized or privileged would not influence their understanding of social systems. Black feminist scholarship is also helpful to conceptualize the relationship between lived experiences and socialization, as Black women experience oppression at various levels, including individual experiences and the effects of systemic forces that attempt to marginalize and silence Black women (Collins, 2000b; Smith, 2013; Taylor, 1998). Moreover, scholars have also identified the influence of social settings that further contribute to Black women's emergent understanding of society and their social positioning throughout the life course, such as churches and women's organizations (Barnes, 2015; Barnes & Wimberly, 2016; Springer, 2005). In essence, this body of literature further explains how one's interactions with social structures influence the development of sociopolitical perspectives over time.

Community psychologists further explore multilevel societal influences on human development through Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theoretical framing. By highlighting the prominent role of context, community psychologists often identify systems that contribute to the ways in which individuals interpret the world, such as cultural, political, economic, and sociohistorical events (Antoniou & Dalla, 2015; Cote & Nightingale, 2012;

Leonard, 2011; Wilkenfeld et al., 2010). Similar to socialization processes associated with social identifiers, ecological influences can result from the transmission of cultural norms based on distinct lived experiences at micro- (i.e., individual experiences of oppression), meso- (i.e., influences from organizations, schools, and social settings), and macro-levels of influence (i.e., societal and political structures), which can inform an individual's sociopolitical perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Fivush & Merrill, 2016; Liu & Ali, 2008). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which such contextual elements impact an individual's cognitive processes, including how they develop a worldview and interpret sociopolitical matters as individuals of varying identities interact with social systems.

Developmental psychologists often acknowledge theoretical parallels between SPD theory and the development of one's worldview (Diemer, 2012; Schlitz et al., 2010), particularly during adolescence. As a critical stage in the human life course, adolescents start to form their personal identity and begin to understand who they are, the values they seek to live by, and their lifelong goals (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). This emergent identity development is often linked to socialization processes related to young people's racial, ethnic, gender, and religious identities (Diemer, 2012; Stevenson, 1995). Because of identity developmental processes occurring during adolescence, young people begin to acknowledge how interactions with others are influenced by their identity as a woman or as a Black teenager, for example (Bernard-Powers, 2008; Clay, 2006). These interactions can impact how young people interpret their lived experiences and, thus, how they make sense of the social systems that have fostered such experiences, as suggested by theories of social behaviorism (Cooley, 1972; Mead et al., 2015).

Schlitz et al. (2010) define worldview as a combination of "beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values, and ideas to form a comprehensive model of reality" (p. 19). As such, the

process of developing a worldview includes dynamic meaning-making processes including continuous engagement with one's lived experiences and identity development (Youniss & Yates, 1999). Cognitively, worldview development continues to evolve as an individual's interpretations of the world change throughout the life course, including the transition from high school into typical adult roles. As suggested by SPD theory, individuals might possess a worldview that aligns with any of the described stages of the framework given one's perspective based on their current lived experiences, which could differ from previous interpretations of society. For example, youth living in poverty as young children might draw upon their socioeconomic background as they deepen their understanding of unjust social systems from the adaptive to precritical stage of SPD, by continuing to reflect on systemic factors contributing to their well-being (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Likewise, individuals from privileged backgrounds with limited direct exposure to communities affected by systemic oppression might develop an acritical worldview based on their perspective of the world, which can ultimately influence their perceptions of society as emerging adults (Howard, 2011). However, while ecological factors can impact adolescents' understanding and analysis of social matters, it is important to further explore the meaning-making processes that result in varying behavioral manifestations of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives.

The Role of Reflective Meaning-Making Processes for Youth Sociopolitical Development

Based on the developmental changes described by SPD theory, the current theoretical model highlights the ways in which individuals make meaning and respond to their emergent sociopolitical awareness. In particular, the nexus of sociopolitical contextual factors can greatly impact the extent to which youth engage in critically reflective practices and social change endeavors as they transition from high school into emerging adulthood. The following section

briefly discusses two reflective meaning-making processes that help explain varying levels of social change involvement: perceptions of empowerment and efficacy.

Empowerment theory has emerged as a critical component to understanding the behavioral manifestations of sociopolitical development. Julian Rappaport initially described empowerment as a process in which "people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives" (1984, p. 3). Moreover, Kieffer (1984) described empowerment as a developmental process that helps people transition from feelings of powerlessness and socio-political illiteracy to participatory competence in various collective social movements. In other words, developing a sense of empowerment results from increased self-awareness, advanced critical thinking skills, and an emergent understanding of one's position in the world, including potential sociopolitical behaviors.

Furthermore, additional scholarship has specifically focused on psychological empowerment, which describes an individual's perception of personal control, action-oriented approach to life, and understanding of the complexity of sociopolitical issues (Kieffer, 1984; Zimmerman, 1995). Psychological empowerment is one intrapersonal response to an individual's sociopolitical perspective, and SPD scholars often present this meaning-making process alongside critical consciousness as important cognitive processes that move some individuals from critical reflection to action (Watts et al., 2011). Paulo Freire (1973) first introduced the critical consciousness construct through his work with impoverished Brazilian communities by theorizing critical reflection as an important component of challenging oppressive systems. Freire's (1973) conceptualization of praxis includes critical reflection or the awareness and analysis of one's social conditions. Such reflection can result from ecological influences such as socialization processes that help individuals understand how various systems impact individual

or community well-being (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Christens et al., 2016; Evans, 2007; Ginwright, 2007; Rogers et al., 2007). Scholars suggest that reflection is important to help individuals develop critical thinking skills, especially as they relate to their emergent worldview development (Silva & Langhout, 2011; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). However, there is a qualitative difference between one's empowered sociopolitical perspective and the development of efficacious attitudes for promoting social change. For example, although a young person might feel empowered to participate in social change behaviors as a response to personally experiencing racial discrimination, the young person might not feel confident that their individual actions will lead to social change. Therefore, the current theoretical framework also addresses the role of perceived efficacy as an important meaning-making process for varying levels of social change involvement.

Recent scholarship on SPD theory merges theoretical perspectives from empowerment theory and critical reflection to highlight the role of perceived self-efficacy or agency for individuals interested in promoting social change (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Leath & Chavous, 2017; Manganelli et al., 2014; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Albert Bandura's (1977) conceptualization of self-efficacy has been applied across disciplines to describe affective and cognitive processes involved in human behavior. In particular, perceived self-efficacy can be defined as an individual's perception of their capability to produce a particular outcome (Bandura, 1994). Several scholars have examined perceived self-efficacy as it relates to promoting social change, and often draw upon psychological empowerment processes and the development of critical consciousness to further explore the extent to which engaging in social change activities result from efficacious attitudes (Leath & Chavous, 2017; Zimmerman, 1995). For example, Kirshner (2008) found that as young people begin to reflect on the world around

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them, many adolescents also start to consider how they can utilize their knowledge and leadership skills to enact change by seeking opportunities to operationalize their perceptions of their self-efficacy.

Specifically, political efficacy has been identified as an additional meaning-making process that is important for moving young people from critical reflection to action (Watts et al., 2011). As an essential political science construct, political efficacy reflects an individual's belief that they can either promote change as a political actor or that specific political interests and activism will result in a government response (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982), which is related to a sense of sociopolitical control (Christens et al., 2013; Diemer & Li, 2011). Furthermore, youth development scholars conceptualize this meaning-making process as an important component for understanding adolescents' involvement in varying social change activities (Watts et al. 2011), by examining perceptions of one's ability to promote change through political activities (Zimmerman & Zahniser, 1991). In fact, evidence suggests that adolescents are more likely to engage in social action if they believe that their involvement will result in social change (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Checkoway, 2012; Jennings et al., 2006; Zimmerman & Zahniswe, 1991). Coupled with ecological influences for one's sociopolitical perspective, the intrapersonal meaning-making processes highlighted in the current theoretical framework illuminate the ways in which theoretical underpinnings of SPD describe an emergent process that leads to varying behavioral outcomes.

Varying Levels of Social Change Involvement

The final component of this dissertation's theoretical framework identifies a range of behavioral manifestations of emergent sociopolitical perspectives from noninvolvement to participation in systems-focused activities. According to SPD theory, cognitive aspects of

developing a critical sociopolitical perspective continue to emerge as individuals' begin to consider liberation practices. However, it is important to acknowledge varying levels of social change involvement given an individual's sociopolitical perspective and meaning-making processes. The following section briefly describes theoretical considerations for social change actions resulting from sociopolitical development.

Although the final stage of the SPD theoretical framework highlights individuals' engagement in activities that challenge oppressive systems, several scholars have examined the relationship between an individual's SPD and social change behaviors that do not necessarily address systemic forces, but instead, contribute to efforts that ensure the well-being of communities through goodwill activities such as volunteering at a food bank (Eisenberg et al., 2009; Wentzel et al., 2007). Civic engagement scholarship often describes such involvement as prosocial behaviors that emerge from the development of civic attitudes and individuals' sociopolitical perspective (Brittain & Humphries, 2015; Lozada et al., 2017; McMahon et al., 2006). Furthermore, several scholars have utilized the positive youth development framework to explore specific developmental and behavioral outcomes during the adolescence period including contributions to one's community and civil society (Lerner et al., 2011; Padilla-Walker & Carlo, 2015). These civic-minded behaviors align with what Seidman and Rappaport (1986) conceptualize as first-order change, or attempts to provide short-term responses to social problems, including traditional forms of civic engagement such as volunteerism. These types of behavior are often service-centered, meaning that individuals are engaged in behaviors that primarily promote the general well-being of other people (Hollingsworth, 2019; Seidman & Tseng, 2011). Although these behaviors might emerge from an individual's critical perspective of society, these types of activities help communities operate within systems that are inherently

unequal instead of attempting to challenge oppressive social systems (Seidman & Rappaport, 1986).

On the other hand, the liberation stage of SPD includes behaviors that Seidman and Rappaport (1986) would describe as second-order change, or involvement in efforts to dismantle social structures that create the need for service-centered endeavors. Participation in such behaviors aligns with the liberation practices of SPD theory and Freire's (1973) conceptualization of critical action, or one's engagement in civic and political behaviors in order to challenge oppressive systems and improve the conditions of marginalized people (Bobek et al., 2011; Fegley et al., 2006; Ginwright & James, 2002; Nam, 2012). As a result of one's critical reflection, critical action signifies the transition from simply acknowledging instances of social injustice to actively disrupting systems that have historically benefitted from the oppression of particular communities. By engaging in civic and political behaviors, such systems-focused behaviors challenge oppressive institutions in order to improve the conditions of marginalized people, as seen in the BLM and Civil Rights movements (Clayton, 2018; Freelon et al., 2016; Hollingsworth, 2019). Overall, the extent to which young people engage in either service-centered or systems-focused social change behaviors ultimately depends on their sociopolitical perspective and accompanying meaning-making processes.

The current theoretical framework also accounts for cognitive processes that do not result in any social change behaviors based on an individual's sociopolitical perspective. For example, a young person might consider how their involvement would personally benefit their well-being (Yates & Youniss, 1998) or if a particular social issue requires action, whether by the adolescent or others directly affected (O'Donoghue & Strobel, 2007). Moreover, an individual might also refrain from participating in social change endeavors because of meaning-making processes,

particularly if they feel disempowered (Laken & Mahoney, 2006) or have a decreased sense of social change efficacy (Leath & Chavous, 2017). As it stands, the original SPD theoretical framework offers few explanations for individuals who are not involved in social change behaviors but have varying sociopolitical perspectives, feelings of empowerment, or perceptions of their efficacy to promote social change. Although theories from other disciplines such as prevention science highlight additional cognitive processes to explain inaction (e.g., theory of planned behavior, theory of behavioral change), to my knowledge, fewer scholars have applied such frameworks to explore the ways in which sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes result in varying levels of social change involvement, particularly for young people transitioning into adult roles.

Applying Sociopolitical Development Theory to Youth Social Change Involvement

Attitudinal components of SPD theory align with previous scholarship that explores ecological influences for emergent sociopolitical perspectives and intrapersonal meaning-making processes, and resulting in specific sociopolitical behaviors. Developmental psychologists suggest cognitive processes such as perceived self-efficacy can evolve throughout the life course as individuals further reflect on their positioning in society and their sociopolitical perspective. Moreover, an individual's interest in social change endeavors can also adjust over time. In other words, as ecological influences for individuals' sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes vary, levels of social change involvement can also change. Therefore, SPD theory can be utilized to further reveal how these cognitive developments and behavioral manifestations differ over a certain period of time.

The current dissertation project draws upon an expanded SPD theoretical framework to explore social change involvement for adolescents entering adulthood. As a collective, the three

papers examine young people's emerging sociopolitical perspectives, contextual predictors for social change participation, and descriptive profiles of sociopolitical attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for adolescents engaging in similar sociopolitical meaning-making processes over time. In particular, each paper addresses a significant gap in SPD scholarship by examining a range of social change behaviors beyond liberation practices to include inactive, service-centered, and systems-focused engagement. The following section outlines the objectives of each paper as they incorporate SPD theory to further explore sociopolitical perspectives, reflective meaning-making processes and social change behaviors as young people transition into emerging adulthood.

"I Actually Have a Say Next Year": Perceptions of Youth Social Change Involvement

The first paper highlights the reflective meaning-making processes related to adolescents' sociopolitical and worldview development as youth transition away from high school and begin to engage in electoral politics as emerging adults. In particular, cognitive processes related to youth perceptions of self-efficacy and mechanisms for promoting social change reveal a range of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for adolescents' sociopolitical development. Few scholars have examined the emergence of young people's sociopolitical perspectives before and after their first opportunity to vote in a presidential election. Therefore, this study benefits from a SPD theoretical framing by considering how an adolescent's perception of their social change efficacy and understanding of sociopolitical issues are linked to the extent to which they feel empowered to incorporate an action-oriented approach to life (Zimmerman, 1995) by participating in one example of a social change activity (i.e., voting). This qualitative study builds upon extant scholarship by emphasizing a multidimensional approach to examine the ways in which socialization practices, worldview development, and lived experiences interact to inform changes

in adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives during a specific stage of the life course. Moreover, analysis illuminates ecological and contextual factors that impact how young people perceive opportunities for social change involvement over time.

Behavioral Manifestations of Sociopolitical Perspectives and Reflective Meaning-Making Processes: Predictors of Youth Social Change Involvement

The second paper explores the meaning-making processes that predict youth involvement in specific social change activities as a reflection of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspective. Although a number of studies have examined sociopolitical predictors for adult political participation (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Cohen, 2005; Flanagan & Levine, 2010), there is much to be learned about young people's involvement in a range of social change endeavors based on their understanding of social structures and perceptions of their role in promoting social change. In particular, this paper examines participation in two types of behaviors: service-centered actions (e.g., community service, goodwill) and systems-focused activities (e.g., political, expressive). Overall, analysis illuminates predictive relationships between specific contributors to young people's emergent sociopolitical perspective, meaning-making processes such as efficacious sociopolitical attitudes, and a range of social change behaviors as high school students transition into adult roles. Through linear regression analysis, findings from this study support future investigations of the ways in which behavioral manifestations of adolescents' sociopolitical perspective are influenced by perceptions of efficacy over time.

The Emergence of Sociopolitical Clusters: Profiles of Youth Social Change Involvement

The third paper profiles behavioral manifestations of young people's shared meaning-making processes and ecological influences as they transition to adulthood. In particular, this study highlights groupings of young people who share similar sociopolitical perspectives,

efficacious attitudes, and social change involvement during a specific developmental time. Through latent profile analysis, this study examines the extent to which groups of young people with similar sociopolitical influences in high school continue to share the same similarities over time. In other words, behavioral patterns for young people are identified based on their involvement in political and volunteer activities, their sense of social change and political efficacy, their emergent moral and civic identity development, and ecological influences from their parents and peers. Findings from the third paper illuminate patterns of social change involvement over time. Additionally, the emergence of additional behavioral profiles reflect young people's emergent sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors as suggested by the developmental nature of SPD theory. By acknowledging behavior shifts as young people continue to make sense of their role in promoting social change, this paper challenges fixed or static categorizations of the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of youth sociopolitical development.

CHAPTER 2

"I ACTUALLY HAVE A SAY NEXT YEAR": PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTH SOCIAL

CHANGE INVOLVEMENT

Abstract

Existing literature on youth sociopolitical development (SPD) describes the ways in which civic attitudes formed during adolescence influence youth engagement in civic behaviors such as voting or volunteerism. However, few scholars have examined the extent to which the emergence of young people's sociopolitical perspectives and perceptions of self-efficacy change as they approach a civic-related milestone such as the first opportunity to exercise their voting rights. By examining the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of young people's emerging sociopolitical perspectives as described by SPD theory, this qualitative paper explores the extent to which socialization practices, worldview development, lived experiences, and reflective meaning-making processes contribute to adolescents' conceptualization of youth social change involvement, particularly as they transition out of high school into postsecondary experiences. Using longitudinal data from the Stanford Civic Purpose Project, semi-structured interviews with 25 participants were analyzed. Findings suggest that sociopolitical perspectives continue to evolve as young people transition into adulthood and participate in electoral politics. In particular, ecological factors such as lived experiences and efficacious attitudes related to age influence proximal and distal perceptions of voting, youth social change efficacy, and alternative mechanisms for promoting change. Theoretical implications for examining SPD theory through a multidimensional developmental lens are discussed.

Existing literature on youth sociopolitical development (SPD) describes how adolescents begin to consider their role and positionality within society (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Schlitz et al., 2010). In particular, civic attitudes formed during adolescence can greatly influence the extent to which youth engage in civic behaviors such as voting or volunteerism (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Yates & Youniss, 1998). However, despite previous explorations of adolescent predictors for adult civic engagement, fewer scholars have examined the extent to which young people's sociopolitical perspectives and perceptions of self-efficacy evolve based on a specific life experience, such as the first opportunity to participate in electoral politics. Furthermore, much can be learned from the mechanisms through which young people believe social change can occur as they transition into adulthood. By examining the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of young people's emerging sociopolitical perspectives, this qualitative paper explores the extent to which meaning-making processes contribute to adolescents' conceptualization of youth social change involvement before and after their first voting experience. Specifically, the study examines youth SPD by acknowledging shifts in sociopolitical perspectives as young people transition out of high school into postsecondary experiences.

Adolescent Developmental Processes

Adolescence represents a critical time for SPD. For many young people, their understanding of the world results from socialization processes and lived experiences (Stevenson, 1995). Multiple components of young people's identity can also influence how they view the world, including race, gender, sexual orientation, and religion (Bernard-Powers, 2008; Crocetti et al., 2012; Fine & Sirin, 2007; Guillaume et al., 2015). As adolescents increase their awareness of local, national, and global politics, they begin to consider their role in society through school and community settings (Morrell, 2015; Picower, 2012). For some young people,

this can include civic behaviors such as volunteerism (Yates & Youniss, 1998) or participating in advocacy efforts to promote social change (Einfeld & Collins, 2008). Moreover, the development of critical thinking skills during this life stage leads some youth to begin to question or challenge normative ideals of society, which can lead to the emergence of youth prosocial behaviors (Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). For example, Malin, Tirri, and Liauw (2015) found that moral identity development contributes to adolescents' motivations to engage in society-oriented actions instead of self-oriented endeavors.

Moreover, the extent to which adolescents feel empowered to participate in such activities can vary based on their social positioning, as well as systemic factors that either encourage or dissuade participation (Anyiwo et al., 2018). For example, some youth of color face institutionalized attempts to limit or reduce their perspectives in settings such as schools (Alim, 2005; Fine, 2018). On the other hand, some school settings have embraced the youth voice by encouraging young people to identify and promote social matters that are relevant to their unique experiences through social justice curricula (Carlisle et al., 2006; Einfield & Collins, 2008; Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014). Youth development scholarship suggests that these factors can have long-term effects on how young people understand their role in promoting social change (Hamilton & Flanagan, 2007; Lerner et al., 2011). Although some scholars have previously examined such processes amongst youth populations, fewer researchers have investigated the extent to which social change perspectives change as young people transition from high school into typical adult roles, such as participating in electoral politics.

Existing research suggests that social change behaviors during adolescence can continue into adulthood. For example, Youniss & Yates (1999) posit that youth community service helps young people share a common humanity with others, as they develop a moral identity that

encourages adult prosocial behaviors such as voting and philanthropy. On the other hand, Hart et al. (2007) found that limited involvement in social change activities during these formative years can contribute to lower levels of civic engagement throughout the life course. Although several scholars have examined the predictive role of youth community involvement for adult civic participation, there is little explanation for the meaning-making processes responsible for varying levels of involvement before young people are eligible to vote, and how these processes continue to develop into adulthood.

Social Change Meaning-Making Processes

Scholars have highlighted several meaning-making processes associated with social change involvement as the result of emergent sociopolitical perspectives. As young people begin to form their civic identity, they often draw upon their sociopolitical understanding to develop perceptions of community-focused activities (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Yates & Youniss, 1998). Socialization practices related to young people's race or gender could impact the development of adolescents' civic identity, as well as the types of community engagement they pursue (Curtin et al., 2010). As predispositions for action, youth civic attitudes emerge from meaning-making processes such as understanding one's socioeconomic status (McMahon et al., 2006) or young people's perception of their social change efficacy (Evans, 2007). Such attitudes can materialize from adolescents' SPD, specifically as young people increase their understanding of oppressive political and social systems (Watts et al., 2003). However, SPD theory also suggests that meaning-making processes such as self-awareness and reflective practices can result in varying attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for individuals based on their social positioning (Watts et al., 1999). For example, direct experiences with inequitable policies can influence young people's perceptions of social systems compared to their more affluent peers with limited awareness of

systemic oppression (O'Donoghue, 2006). By examining the experiences of young people transitioning from high school to postsecondary experiences, this study expands existing theory on youth sociopolitical development during the transition into adulthood by emphasizing young people's perceptions of their own social change involvement.

Several scholars have examined such meaning-making processes amongst young people, including an extensive body of literature focused on the extent to which lived experiences such as racial or gender identity development contribute to young people's SPD (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Cohen, 2005). Links between such processes and young people's perceptions of self-efficacy also illuminate attitudinal precursors for youth social change behaviors, such as political participation (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Cohen, 2005; Flanagan & Levine, 2010). Additionally, scholarship on social change efficacy often draws from critical consciousness literature, which highlights the movement from critical reflection to action as young people increase their knowledge of sociopolitical systems in order to promote social justice (Cammarota, 2011; Diemer & Li, 2011; Freire, 1973; Ginwright & James, 2002). Moreover, by considering the extent to which young people recognize opportunities for promoting social change, behavioral manifestations of their perceptions of self-efficacy can reflect meaning-making processes that ultimately lead to varying levels of social change involvement (Ballard & Ozer, 2016; Gullan et al., 2013; Hope & Jagers, 2014). Despite scholarly connections between efficacious attitudes and behavioral outcomes, little research has examined how such sociopolitical perspectives change as young people transition into postsecondary experiences. By incorporating a multidimensional SPD theoretical approach to examine young people's perceptions of social change during a specific point in the life course, much can be learned from specific contextual factors and

reflective meaning-making processes contributing to longitudinal perceptions of youth social change involvement.

Current Study

Through qualitative analysis, this paper draws upon SPD theory to examine the extent to which contextual factors during a pivotal developmental period influence adolescents' perceptions of social change involvement, in addition to their perceived role—and appropriate mechanisms—for promoting social change. Specifically, this longitudinal study contributes to a scholarly gap in existing literature by exploring how young people conceptualize social change prior to engaging in a traditional form of social change involvement (i.e., voting), and after they have had the opportunity to participate in electoral politics. Although several scholars have highlighted the adolescence period as a critical time for preparing young people to participate in social change efforts, there is little evidence of the extent to which adolescents' perception of youth social change involvement varies as they enter adulthood, specifically, as it relates to a civic-related milestone such as voting. The concurring developmental changes during this time suggest that young people continue to make sense of the world around them and their position within society (Haddix et al., 2015; Howard, 2011). However, fewer scholars have examined how postsecondary experiences impact these meaning-making processes, as adolescents become members of the American electorate. Therefore, additional research is necessary to better understand the extent to which contextual factors contribute to variations of adolescents' perception of social change involvement given their eligibility to vote. Specific research questions for this qualitative inquiry include the following:

- How do adolescents' conceptualizations of youth social change involvement change before and after their first opportunity to vote?

o In what ways do adolescents describe their sense of social change efficacy as they transition into adulthood?

- To what extent do socialization practices, worldview development, and lived experiences impact adolescents' perception of opportunities to promote social change?

By answering these research questions, longitudinal evidence for variations in youth perceptions supports SPD theory-building efforts to conceptualize social change involvement as a dynamic process that results from young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives. For the current study, these perceptions are centered on the first opportunity to vote in a presidential election and adolescents' transition into adulthood after finishing high school. This developmental time period marks an important stage as young people continue to broaden their sociopolitical understanding by participating in civic behaviors that reflect their personal beliefs and values (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Schlitz et al., 2010). Therefore, the current study extends such literature to consider contextual factors impacting young people's perceptions of social change endeavors, in addition to emergent efficacious attitudes and behavioral outcomes that reflect their sociopolitical perspectives during their senior year of high school and one year into their postsecondary life. In other words, findings will provide context for young people's longitudinal sociopolitical development (i.e., emergent perspectives, meaning-making processes, and behaviors), as described by SPD theory.

Methods

This qualitative study analyzes data from the longitudinal Stanford Civic Purpose Project, which was conducted between 2011 and 2013 in the state of California. It was funded through the Spencer Foundation's New Civic Initiative, which was created to support researchers' work on motivations and influences for civic engagement (Damon, 2017). The data from this project

are publicly available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research's (ICPSR) Civic Learning, Engagement, and Action Data (CivicLEADS) website. Through this public database, all personal identifiers for participants were removed in order to protect the confidentiality of the young people involved. The project largely stems from previous work on moral identity development (e.g., Damon & Gregory, 1997). The current study builds upon extant analyses that focus on how adolescents articulate a "civic purpose" by exploring various manifestations of young people's sociopolitical perspectives over time through secondary data analysis.

Participants

This paper examines semi-structured interviews with high school students (*n* = 25) in November 2011 during their senior year and 21 months after their initial interview (see appendix for interview questions). Participants for the larger project were recruited from seven ethnically and racially diverse public high schools in California with middle and lower socioeconomic status (Ballard et al., 2015; Malin, Ballard, & Damon, 2015). Although 43 students were interviewed for the initial wave of data collection, only 25 participants completed a follow-up interview two years later. Therefore, the study sample only includes participants from both waves in order to document perspective changes over time. Participants' demographic information released by the ICPSR database can be found in Table 1. All students were approximately 17 years old at the beginning of the first wave of data collection, and in their final year of high school. Of the current study's sample, 57% identify as female and 84% of the participants identify as non-white. The sample has a relatively higher percentage of students who identify as female compared to the overall dataset (52%), and a slightly lower percentage of students who identify as Black, Latino, Asian, mixed race, or other (92%). Given the parameters

of the ICPSR public access database, little additional information about the participants is

available, such as the demographics of their school or even within which part of California they

live.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics.

Participant*	Gender	Ethnicity
Thuy	Female	Asian
Angela	Female	Mixed Race
Luz	Female	Latino
Ayanna	Female	Black
Kelsey	Female	White
Chase	Male	Mixed Race
Pia	Female	Other
Garrett	Male	White
Amelia	Female	White
Kiri	Female	Asian
Desi	Female	Mixed Race
Chen	Male	Asian
Rio	Male	Latino
Minh	Female	Asian
Manuel	Male	Latino
Elana	Female	Latino
Park	Female	Asian
Luis	Male	Latino
Carina	Female	Latino
Santos	Male	Latino
George	Male	Mixed Race
Mateo	Male	Latino
Noah	Male	White
Jamie**	--	--
Frankie**	--	--

Note: Pseudonyms were selected and appear in the results as code names for study participants
(*n = 25)*. Gender-neutral pronouns (i.e., they, their, theirs) will be used throughout the paper.
**Note:* Two participants did not provide demographic information regarding their ethnicity and
gender. Therefore, gender-neutral pseudonyms were assigned to these participants.

Data Analysis

Interview transcripts from both waves of data collection were downloaded from the ICPSR database, and then managed and analyzed using Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software program. In order to explore adolescents' perceptions of social change involvement over time, Feredy and Muir-Cochrane's (2006) method for inductive and deductive thematic analysis was used in the following way. First, each interview was read and summarized with a brief theoretical memorandum that included preliminary codes and themes relevant to the research questions and extant literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Next, a thematic codebook for participants' initial interviews was developed based on the five stages of the SPD theoretical framework to account for young people's sociopolitical perspectives, as expressed through their perceptions of social injustice and oppression in society (e.g., acritical, precritical). In other words, sociopolitical perspectives for each participant were determined by categorizing excerpts from each interview as acritical, adaptive, precritical, critical, or liberation-focused. The codebook also captured lived experiences that influenced participants' sociopolitical perspectives such as knowledge acquired from school and previous involvement in social change endeavors.

Coding reports from Dedoose were exported to Microsoft Excel, and themes were identified, reviewed, and defined through the use of concept maps according to best practices for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Theoretical memoranda for each interview were completed in order to note specific contextual influences for participants' sociopolitical perspectives and emergent themes. These initial themes operated as a starting point for adolescents' conceptualization of social change involvement prior to voting, and as they transitioned into adulthood after finishing high school.

The second wave of data, which were collected approximately two years after participants completed their initial interview, was also analyzed using inductive and deductive techniques. Follow-up interviews were treated as a separate dataset in order to illuminate thematic differences for the collective group of participants. While a person-centered approach would reveal specific meaning-making processes for each participant over time (Laursen & Hoff, 2006), the current study focuses on themes for all participants at two different time points in the life course. In order to identify themes for a shared human experience (i.e., emergent sociopolitical perspectives before and after the first opportunity to vote), an interpretative phenomenological approach was used to analyze interviews according to the steps outlined by Smith et al. (1999). This analytical approach helped to illuminate potential similarities for adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives (Eatough & Smith, 2008) by creating themes for the first participant's interview in order to further analyze remaining interviews. Additionally, theoretical memoranda for each follow-up interview acknowledged any contextual influences for sociopolitical perspective changes across the group (e.g., gender identity development, college courses, etc.). Overall, cross-sectional analyses captured participants' contemporaneous conceptualization of youth social change involvement, relevant lived experiences for their sociopolitical perspectives, and the extent to which their social change attitudes and perceptions manifest as behavioral outcomes over time.

Findings

Throughout the study, participants expressed sociopolitical perspectives across all five stages of the SPD theoretical framework before and after their first opportunity to vote. In fact, for many adolescents, conceptualizations of social problems reflected more critical or liberation-focused perspectives as participants entered adulthood. Although few participants demonstrated

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a deep understanding of dismantling systems of inequality and a commitment to engage in liberation behaviors during follow-up interviews, most of the participants expressed a more nuanced understanding of social inequity over time. For example, 17-year-old Garrett's previous acritical understanding of society evolved as they began to recognize that some populations are more privileged in society than others. During high school, Garrett mentioned that there were some political or social matters that piqued their interest, but nothing "really [seemed] worth it to follow up on and learn more about in the long term." However, in their follow-up interview, Garrett revealed that after high school, they began to realize that "the greatest power that [they] have is the simple political vote" when it comes to promoting change and addressing civil rights issues in America. Although this emergent understanding of social inequity does not directly align with the liberation stage of SPD theory, Garrett's movement from limited awareness of oppression to the acknowledgement of unjust systems suggests that the participant developed a more critical worldview.

On the other hand, some interviews revealed that transitioning from high school resulted in a more adaptive or acritical perspective over time. For example, 17-year-old Noah began to question the negative consequences of accommodating systems of inequality during the initial interview by saying that "there's a lot [of social matters] that need changing," but expressed a more adaptive understanding of social issues after postsecondary experiences when they acknowledged that they had "never noticed any outright acts of discrimination within [their] proximity." Despite movement towards a more acritical conceptualization of social inequity for some adolescents, few participants articulated a sociopolitical perspective that traversed more than one stage of SPD theory between the two interviews (e.g., from critical to adaptive perspectives).

Some students who expressed interest in engaging in liberation practices as high school seniors suggested in follow-up interviews that although still interested in challenging systems of oppression, they were primarily focused on further exploring potential causes for social injustice. For example, Angela shared that "there's a lot of people who their rights are taken away and their voices aren't heard." Similarly, George acknowledged that they had "seen a lot of people who have been bullied or harassed or discriminated against." Angela and George both discussed their understanding of endeavors directed towards challenging systems of oppression and preparation for promoting change in their community as high school students. After enrolling in college, they both maintained their sense of empowerment and agency but realized they needed to deepen their understanding of their personal role in liberation practices, including the most efficacious approach to address social injustice, with George saying that they "don't have to be a politician or a leader in [the] community…[to still] have an effect on how [their] community is run." This movement from a liberation-focused sociopolitical perspective to a more exploratory worldview suggests that postsecondary experiences encourage some adolescents to continue to expand their understanding of social structures prior to engaging in specific activities that promote social change.

Few students articulated sociopolitical perspectives that aligned with only one stage of SPD theory during high school and into their postsecondary experiences. Characterizations of participants' sociopolitical perspectives based on their articulated perceptions of social justice and oppression and society revealed that the majority of participants expressed sociopolitical perspectives that spanned across two or three stages of the SPD theoretical framework (e.g., adaptive, precritical, and critical conceptualizations) as they transitioned from high school into adulthood (see Table 2). This suggests that youth sociopolitical development can be multifaceted

for adolescents as they continue to develop their worldview. Furthermore, this finding demonstrates the need to further explore the ecological factors and meaning-making processes contributing to young people's emergent conceptualization of social change involvement before and after their first opportunity to vote. Based on the theoretical framework highlighted in Chapter 1, the remaining sections illuminate contributing factors (i.e., lived experiences) for the sociopolitical perspectives described above and meaning-making processes (i.e., perceived sense of social change efficacy) undergirding participants' conceptualizations of social change involvement as they transition into adulthood.

Table 2. Individual Sociopolitical Perspectives Across Waves

	Acritical	Adaptive	Precritical	Critical	Liberation		Acritical	Adaptive	Precritical	Critical	Liberation
Thuy						Minh					
Angela						Manuel					
Luz						Elana					
Ayanna						Park					
Kelsey						Luis					
Chase						Carina					
Pia						Santos					
Garrett						George					
Amelia						Mateo					
Kiri						Noah					
Desi						Jordan					
Chen						Alex					
Rio											
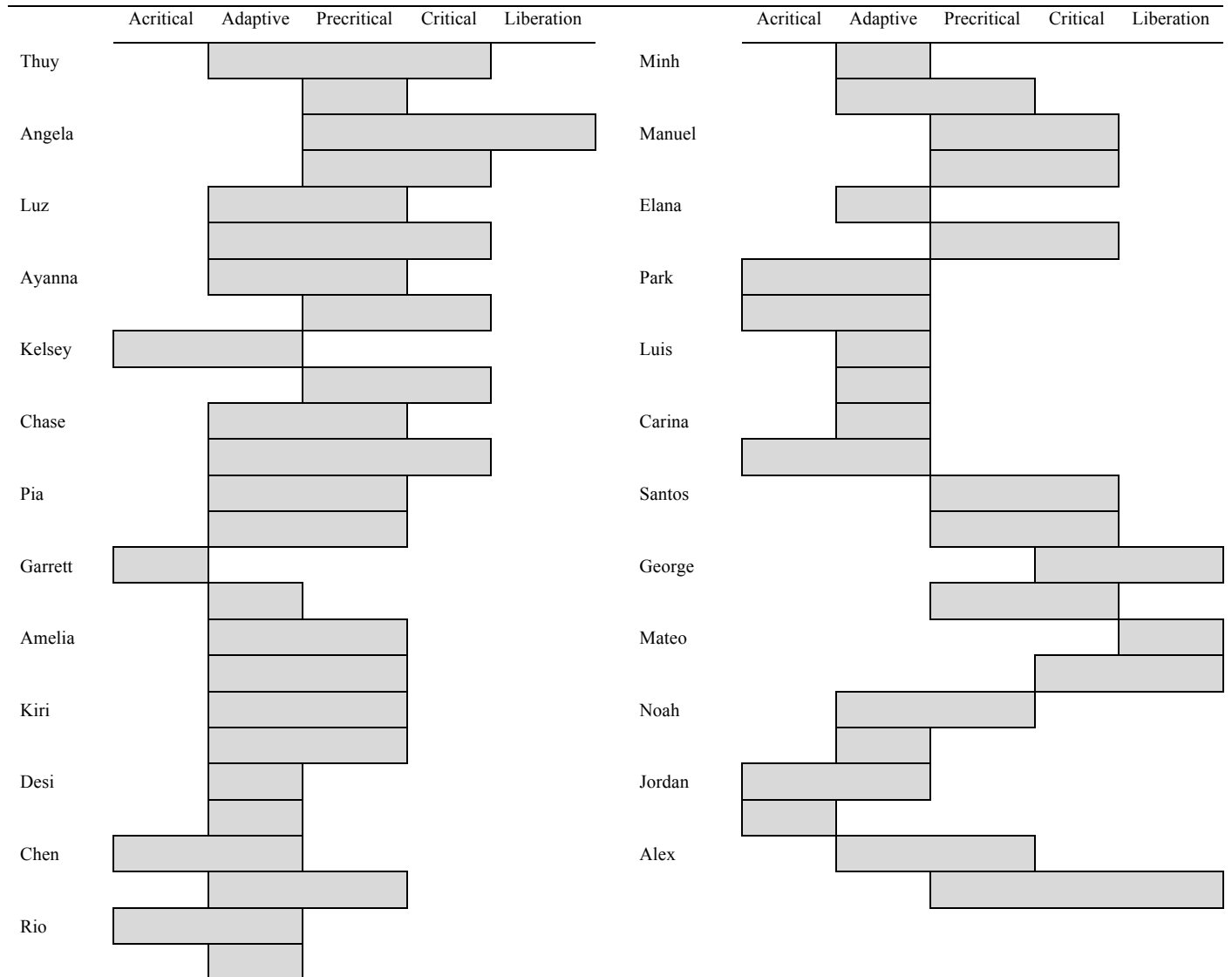
Ecological Contributing Factors for Youth Sociopolitical Perspectives

Several participants discussed ecological influences for their current understanding of social issues as high school students. In particular, adolescents explained the ways in which their family and peers contributed to their sociopolitical perspectives, including opportunities to engage in social change activities. For example, 17-year-old Desi—who maintained an adaptive sociopolitical perspective across interviews—shared that their mother was not supportive of their

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interest in attending local protests due to safety concerns, which limited their involvement in social change efforts as a high school student. On the other hand, 17-year-old Amelia's involvement in their school's gay-straight alliance was prompted by a family member's sexual orientation and greatly contributed to their understanding of other marginalized groups, and their sustained adaptive and precritical sociopolitical perspectives over time. When asked to share their interest in joining the gay-straight alliance, Amelia explained,

> Well, I'm not gay myself, but I feel…if I see an issue that I feel is wrong or I feel is being treated wrongly, I feel it's my responsibility to step up and say something about it. I'm never one to keep quiet about something. And my grandmother is actually gay, so she is the one that has kind of inspired me to take this issue so seriously. And I feel that it's treated very wrongly in America because I mean you know in the Civil Rights movement, black and white people weren't allowed to marry, but we got over that now and now we accept that as totally perfect in society. So why can't we see this – in the future, why can't we look forward and see that we're being ridiculous? That a man and a man can get married. It's proven to have to do with genetics. It's been going on since the beginning of time. I just feel like people are close-minded. And the gay-straight alliance is my little way of opening up minds through the youth.

In the above quote, Amelia acknowledges that they feel personally responsible for promoting social change due to their connection to their grandmother, and their understanding of historical shifts in social matters such as interracial marriage. This perspective from Amelia reflects their emergent sociopolitical understanding as they consider their personal role in opening the minds of others based on influences from their immediate social network (i.e., their grandmother). Ecological influences such as Amelia's peer network also prompted their involvement in social

change efforts related to immigrants' rights to attend college and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Moreover, 17-year-old Kelsey's opinion of immigration policy greatly contradicted the views held by their "very Republican family, where illegal immigrants [were] a very touchy subject," and contributed to their emergent critical perspective over time. Based on their exposure to the discrimination and harassment experienced by their peers and the SPD theoretical framework, Kelsey's equity-focused sociopolitical perspective reflected a more critical viewpoint compared to their family's position of enforcing a restrictive immigration policy that prohibits individuals from entering the United States. By reflecting on the experiences of their peers, Kelsey developed a worldview that systems should ensure equity and fairness for those interested in the "land of opportunity."

Findings from follow-up interviews suggest that ecological influences from family and peers were less salient for many participants' sociopolitical perspectives as participants transitioned out of high school. Instead, young people's emergent worldview greatly contributed to their sociopolitical perspectives as they approached adulthood. For most adolescents, the two years between interviews represented a time of exploration and uncertainty as they continued to make sense of their social positioning. For example, Thuy shared their interest in learning more about the marginalization of specific communities after reflecting on their racial and gender identity, which was reflected in more critical sociopolitical perspectives compared to their adaptive viewpoints from high school. When asked to explain how their understanding of social issues had changed since high school, 17-year-old Thuy explained,

> [I've started to think more about] like being a woman of color in a society that seems to favor white male – white, straight males. Things like that – just different things that I just never really noticed, but now I've become very aware of. And how these – how people

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who are kind of in a minority group can become marginalized through institutions. And I

think that's very interesting. And I, definitely, wanted to learn more about that.

This period of transition led other participants to think deeply about how overall society has

influenced their sociopolitical perspectives, particularly as it relates to perceived power

structures. As reflected by their sustained critical sociopolitical perspective between high school

and postsecondary experiences, Angela argued that the country is "ruled by those who have

power" and that "[the government wants] people to believe that they have a say so, but in reality,

whoever has the power in the end, they actually have the say so" when asked if it's important to

live in a democracy where the government is ruled by the people. Similarly, Thuy shared that "a

small percentage of the population has most of the power and it's hard for people who are

probably like the majority who don't have power to – to make sure that they're not being taken

advantage of," which reflects aspects of their precritical perspective of society. Other participants

also reflected on their understanding of power after having their first opportunity to participate in

electoral politics, while still grappling with ways to address social injustice. For example, Garrett

shared,

It concerns me somewhat that I feel America is slipping a bit and may not necessarily be

the country with the most civil rights anymore. It concerns me, even if, personally, I'm

not concerned enough to act yet – to join activists and whatnot.

In the above comment, Garrett developed a more critical sociopolitical perspective compared to

their previous acritical understanding of society during high school. Although their perspective

shift did not result in an action-oriented response to social injustice at the time of the follow-up

interview, their emergent sociopolitical perspective of American society after high school

mirrored other adolescents, including those who expressed more liberation-focused perspectives

across interviews, such as Mateo, who felt that "America has not lived up to [its] standards [of freedom and equality]." For many participants, transitioning from high school into more adult responsibilities led them to develop a more critical lens of social issues. In fact, adolescents described postsecondary experiences as key factors for their emergent worldview development. When asked to explain the extent to which their perspectives have changed since their initial interview, Chen posited,

> I think that to sum up, I think the biggest change has been an increasing awareness about society. And that has come through just maturing, and also talking with people who are from different parts of the country, different parts of the world, from different political orientation. I think that I still understand that society, or that people need to be responsible for themselves as individuals. But at the same time, I've come to understand that there are times when, even though people want to help themselves, they can, and we have to do something for them.

Chen's above comment reflects a transition from an acritical-adaptive sociopolitical perspective in high school to an adaptive-precritical understanding of society. By acknowledging their increased maturity between the initial and follow-up interviews, Chen's reflection underscores the intrapersonal development that occurs as young people transition from high school into postsecondary experiences. Furthermore, Chen's statement highlights the impact of ecological influences on participants' sociopolitical development. By transitioning to different settings such as community colleges, four-year universities, and workplace environments, many participants described a period of enlightenment as they encountered numerous postsecondary experiences. These findings suggest that approaching emergent adulthood represents a time when adolescents continue to develop their sociopolitical perspectives as they are exposed to different perspectives

based on their new setting. Additionally, such findings suggest that some young people can experience similar changes in their sociopolitical development during this specific period of the life course, regardless of their postsecondary trajectory (e.g., college, career).

Several participants mentioned the college experience as a contributing factor to their sociopolitical perspectives. In particular, adolescents often noted the differences in student demographics between their high school and college environments. For example, Mateo—who was one of a few participants to maintain a liberation-focused sociopolitical perspective across interviews—discussed the surprisingly low percentage of Black and Latino students at their university, and mentioned that such disparities made them think about potential causes for the few students of color at their school by saying,

> To me, I believe things happen for a reason. You know, I believe that nothing's spontaneous. So those numbers aren't a coincidence to me. I don't believe that those numbers just happen to be that. I believe that there's a group of people that are living in the system that's constantly oppressing them. It may not be blatant. But there is something that's working against them. I don't think it's a coincidence that across the board those two groups are always being represented in such low numbers. So to me, if I ever have the opportunity to, if the chance ever comes my way [to work] with admissions, and [work] to recruit people of ethnic backgrounds, I would definitely take it.

Although Mateo previously articulated a deep understanding of systemic social matters in high school, entering a college setting helped them to identify additional social inequities faced by communities of color. Moreover, Mateo expressed their understanding of subtle forms of systemic oppression, which reflects their more liberation-focused sociopolitical perspective over time. The college environment also helped participants to leave their comfort zone, and start to

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having a new perspective on life. As Kiri described, "when you're on your own you start to learn so much about yourself that you never knew." Although Kiri maintained an adaptive-precritical perspective over time based on their articulated understanding of systemic social matters, other adolescents developed a more critical perspective of society compared to their perceptions as high school students. For example, Kelsey shifted from an acritical-adaptive perspective to developing a precritical-critical understanding of society. When asked how their thinking about democracy and democratic ideals have changed since high school, Kelsey explained,

> I think that we aren't a perfect society, but we try to create those ideals. And I think when I was in high school, I was very starry-eyed about America. Like oh yeah, if you just – you know, everyone [has] good opportunities. This is America, la, la. And I think that being in college, I learned a little more through experience than just hearing it. I think it's become a lot more in my consciousness because [I'm actually seeing] it rather than just hearing about it. Where I think college is, you know, [that] first year, is [an opportunity] for you to get out of your nuclear family because there's so many experiences that you can create a more aware self.

Participants also discussed the ways in which being on a college campus increased their awareness of social issues due to the prevalence of political conversations with their peers. According to George—who expressed a sociopolitical perspective that was less liberation-focused than high school—few classmates wanted to talk about sociopolitical matters in high school. However, as a college student, George shared that such conversations occurred more often because "those things have a lot more effect now." Political discourse was also a part of many students' college coursework. In addition to philosophy courses that helped participants consider how society is ordered by a fixed set of ideals and norms, some participants

acknowledged course material that addressed the oppression of marginalized communities as contributions to their sociopolitical development. For example, Kelsey's class on the history of Asian Americans in the United States made them "a lot more aware about things [they] didn't previously know," and resulted in a shift from an acritical-adaptive perspective in high school to a precritical-critical understanding of society into adulthood.

Some adolescents also discussed their experiences in the workplace as additional settings that contributed to their emergent perceptions of society. For example, Minh's part-time position at a health clinic increased their awareness of the plight of uninsured patients, which stimulated their interest in pursuing a career in the medical field in order to promote equity in the healthcare system. Minh further explained their emergent precritical perspective by saying,

> I'm working with the patients now and because of that it helped me see, I guess the world in a different perspective because as a student you don't really see patients as much, but working in a clinic, I see where the patients live, like site patients and patients with certain illnesses and that. And because I work in the clinic, I'm able to be more…I'm more involved in the [medical] field, I guess.

Minh's comments illuminate their understanding of how various work settings can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges that different communities face. In other words, increased proximity to those who are deeply impacted by unjust systems contributed to Minh's sociopolitical perspective. For other participants, particularly those who did not pursue postsecondary educational opportunities, entering the workforce increased their awareness of many sociopolitical issues—such as access to affordable healthcare and finding stable employment—that often marginalize communities with limited resources. As Garrett explained,

[Thinking] selfishly I mean I think I'm trying – just want to look out for myself and not really look out for other people on a whole, but you know, everyone's responsible for themselves. My job is to, you know, go make money. Pay for my bills, you know?

Garrett's above reflection suggests that transitioning into the workforce can lead some adolescents to adopt a more self-oriented mindset that is based on survival, which could reflect Garrett's shift from an acritical perspective to an adaptive understanding of society. This is an important aspect of young people's sociopolitical perspectives, as Garrett's focus on self-preservation could limit the extent to which they recognize how the well-being of marginalized communities is negatively impacted by unjust systems. Additional participants acknowledged this shift in their mentality due to leaving home for school or work, which often resulted in little time being devoted to social causes that were once central to their high school social change participation. For example, when discussing their reluctance to advocate for reforming the justice system, Thuy shared that "people are really busy worrying about other things than being like very responsible citizens" despite having a precritical sociopolitical perspective during adulthood. In other words, for some participants, finding stability in their postsecondary life through working or pursuing a college degree was more essential than participating in social change efforts at the time for some participants.

Overall, adolescents shared a number of lived experiences that influenced their sociopolitical perspectives as they transitioned into adulthood. Although some participants articulated shifts in their sociopolitical understanding of society after their first opportunity to vote, others reaffirmed their previously held perspectives from high school. Findings suggest a number of contributing factors for young people's sociopolitical perspectives including lived experiences, ecological influences, and an emergent worldview as participants transitioned into

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postsecondary experiences. The following section details the ways in which many participants'

continue to make meaning of their sociopolitical perspective as they transition into adulthood.

Reflections of Age as a Meaning-Making Process for Efficacious Attitudes

Prior to their first voting experience, participants reflected on their age as an important

component for their sociopolitical perspective and social change involvement. At the time of the

initial interview, all of the participants were awaiting their 18th birthday, in addition to the

opportunity to participate in the upcoming presidential election. As a result, the majority of

participants engaged in meaning-making processes that reflected their emergent sociopolitical

perspectives and influenced their social change behaviors as minors, specifically. Essentially,

many participants discussed age-related limitations for youth social change involvement while

reflecting on the upcoming opportunity to vote in a presidential election and other mechanisms

for promoting social change. For example, 17-year-old Desi—who maintained an adaptive

sociopolitical perspective across interviews—claimed "if you're under 18 you really don't have

any rights, especially in school because you really don't have the freedom of speech, because

you'd be infringing somebody else's rights."

Additionally, some participants articulated as sense of disempowerment because of their

age and an acritical or adaptive perspective during high school, such as Kelsey who said, "I've

signed petitions and stuff…I'm not 18 yet so there's not [much] that I can do." Similarly, Luis—

who maintained an adaptive sociopolitical perspective across interviews—also acknowledged an

interest in future social change involvement by stating "I feel when I get older, I would like to

have a voice in the country…I would like to be able to have my thoughts and ideas shared with

the community and such," which they believed was possible in high school classroom

discussions but not for political matters outside of the school context.

As high school seniors, several participants expressed some concern for adolescent involvement in social change efforts. For example, as a reflection of their adaptive sociopolitical perspective at the time, Elana acknowledged young people's lack of maturity by saying,

> I don't think [younger kids should have a bigger role in the political process]. I think 18 is a good age because by 18, you should be mature enough to make good decisions. For under 18, we're just gonna make decisions based on what we feel about things or what we want. So, say they do change the law of the drinking age and they want change it to a higher age or a younger age. Of course the people that want to drink and stuff, they wouldn't wanna change it to a younger age so they could go and get it themselves. So they're just gonna make [misinformed] decisions, I guess.

Elana's above comment suggests that young people's decision-making skills might not have developed to the point where their involvement in social change activities would result in other-oriented outcomes. Instead, according to Elana, if young people are in involved in the political process, specifically, their participation would be based on promoting outcomes that might align with individual interests. However, a number of high school seniors argued that young people should be more involved in promoting social change as minors in preparation for future activity in political issues throughout adulthood. In particular, Manuel highlighted the importance of beginning to develop a worldview and learning about social issues as adolescents. As an example of their sustained precritical-critical sociopolitical perspective across interviews, Manuel stated,

> I just think that the more that we can, as students, get involved, the easier it is for us to figure out things as we grow older, 'cause I know that once we're older we're like "oh, no, we're already too smart and we really have nothing else to learn, we're the smart ones here." So then we don't wanna learn any more. I see that with my parents. They're like

"oh, no, we're smart." So I think that the more we learn younger when we're still

developing in our minds the easier we can start developing and looking at other things, be

more open minded.

Manuel's reflection highlights the importance of young people beginning their social change

involvement during adolescence in order to prepare for their transition into adulthood. By

discussing the connection between young people's development and their awareness of social

matters, Manuel suggests that youth social change participation could lead young people to

become more open-minded as they get older, unlike what Manuel has observed from their

parents. Similarly, Frankie—who shifted from a adaptive-precritical perspective to a more

liberation-focused understanding of society—argued that regardless of young people's age, they

should be aware of who their parents are electing because of the influence young people can

have on future generations. Frankie continued to say,

We're the next voice coming up. We've gotta take charge, get in tune – think, the new

generation, what's going to happen 'cause right now the older people thinking for

themselves. We've got to plan our steps ahead and for our future generations.

Frankie's assertion that young people need to pay attention to the actions of older generations

highlights the potential impact of social change efforts on the lived experiences of young people.

Frankie perceived older people as having self-oriented intentions by "thinking for themselves,"

and although they also posited that young people have to prepare for promoting their own well-

being, planning for future generations reflects an other-oriented sociopolitical perspective.

As participants transitioned into postsecondary experiences, they continued to reflect on

their age and the extent to which they felt empowered to participate in social change activities.

Some participants acknowledged a greater sense of freedom to explore social issues after turning

18 years old, such as Minh who believed that they had "become more independent and aware of [their] surroundings" after living on their own, which correlated with a slightly more critical sociopolitical perspective than their initial adaptive viewpoint. Similarly, Kelsey discussed increasing their involvement in advocating for homeless populations after graduating from high school by claiming,

> I've gotten more involved because now that I'm an adult, I have more freedom to do things on my own. I don't have to rely on my mom to drive me here or do this for me. Whereas now that I'm an adult, I have more of a freedom to do what I need to do and take care of what I need to take care of sort of thing… I think just the freedom that I have to – and also that I can find papers, I can find petitions, I can do those things now, I think I am more involved.

Kelsey's reflection of their increased independence during the transition from high school into adulthood is an example of typical characteristics of this developmental stage in the life course. According to Kelsey, this time also resulted in a decreased reliance on their parent, which might have previously limited Kelsey's involvement in social change activities. Despite having a new sense of independence and freedom after finishing high school, some participants continued to consider their age as a barrier for participating in social change endeavors. When asked to describe their perceived role in society, George shared that they believed they would have a role to play one day. However, George's shift from a liberation-focused perspective to a precritical-critical approach to social change participation emerged as George stated,

> I don't think that I have too strong a role to play right now because I'm young. I guess I would say "uneducated." I'm not very – I guess the term I would say is specialized. I don't have any sort of special purpose. I'm not employed; I don't participate in very

much because of that. I'm not responsible for anything professionally or socially, really. I don't have any children. If I did I would say that I would be responsible for raising them and making sure that they become productive members of society. But I don't – I'm just a kid. I'm not a kid, but someone not really responsible for others or responsible for providing for other people. So I think right now my role is to finish – I suppose my role is to finish my education and become useful. Until that happens, not cause too much trouble.

George's focus on age and perceptions of what it means to be a "kid" highlights the multifaceted identity development that occurs as young people transition away from high school into typical adult roles. Within these adult roles, as George mentioned, some young people might not be responsible for others but still feel that they must acquire certain accomplishments in order to feel that they have a role in contributing to society. Across interviews, participants exhibited a range of sociopolitical perspectives, with many adolescents referencing their age as a motivator or barrier for social change involvement. For many, these perceived age-related barriers revealed meaning-making processes that left participants feeling disempowered as they transitioned from high school. However, for others, this time represented a period of growth and development for their sociopolitical perspective and their emergent understanding of their role in social change endeavors. Overall, findings suggest that many young people make meaning of their perceived efficacy to promote social change as they approach adulthood, in addition to their perceptions of their generation's collective efficacy. The following section further explores adolescents' perceptions of social change efficacy as a reflection of their emergent sociopolitical understandings and underlying meaning-making processes.

Emergent Perceptions of Social Change Efficacy as a Meaning-Making Process

Almost all of the participants addressed their perceived sense of social change efficacy as high school seniors. For some students, previous experiences working in community settings led them to consider their role in promoting positive outcomes. For example, Kiri's involvement in numerous community service organizations during high school increased their confidence to "have a voice" and "make a difference," which contributed to their sustained adaptive-precritical perspective across interviews. Kiri continued to say "I know there's so little I can do [as a high school senior] but I just wanna make a difference," which reflects their desire to eventually contribute to social change efforts while simultaneously acknowledging their perception of limited opportunities to do so as a high school student. Similarly, an advocacy experience with local policymakers inspired Mateo to reflect on their perception of government officials and meaning-making processes linking their sociopolitical perspective and emergent sense of efficacy. Mateo shared,

> [Government officials] seem like they're not being fair. And for me, that's what kind of drove my outspokenness. It's like wait, wait, why are we all being quiet about this? If we're not getting what we deserve as Americans, I mean equity is one of the things we value the most in this country, being equal, having the same rights. Then why does it seem that some people are trying to hide that from us? And that's what drove my outspokenness because if you do look around, a lot of people just seem to be – they seem to be happy with that. Oh, it's fine, it's normal, let's just stay quiet or why bother? But to me, I don't conform with that. I don't like just staying quiet and just – okay, that's fine. I'd rather speak my opinion because I feel like once you really speak, people will listen.

And once people will listen, they'll start to say, "hey why are we just sitting here and doing nothing? Why can't we question this, question that?"

In the above comment, Mateo acknowledges that their social change involvement is a response to government officials' perceived silence on issues of equity and civil rights. According to Mateo, social change participation or "outspokenness" is essential to increase awareness for other and promoting change. In other words, Mateo posits that remaining quiet will continue to reaffirm the status quo. In contrast to Mateo's liberation-focused perceptions, many high school seniors expressed doubts that their actions would promote change, revealing inefficacious attitudes at times. In particular, these perspectives emerged as some participants discussed instances of racial discrimination they chose to "brush off." For example, Luis argued that they could have addressed previous discriminatory and prejudiced remarks, but they personally chose to not let those experiences affect them, which reflected their sustained adaptive perspective over time. Prior to participating in electoral politics, other participants also perceived that they could contribute to social change efforts but lacked the knowledge to effectively promote social change. For example, Rio—who maintained an acritical-adaptive sociopolitical perspective—reflected on their perceived sense of efficacy in high school by explaining,

I'm young and I have opinions, but I really don't know how to back them up with a good position to be able to change things about communities or whatever. But that's because I'm young and I'm still inexperienced, I guess. And I wanna get – to be more involved, I wanna get more experienced, I wanna go to college and get a great education and I wanna have more knowledge and be able to back my opinions up.

Rio's comments capture many participants' interest in participating in social change activities, although they believed that their efficacy required legitimacy through education or other

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experiences to support their opinions. Similar to several participants, Rio sociopolitical perspective reflects developmental changes as many young people of transition away from high school and approach emerging adulthood. For Rio and others, this developmental transition influenced the extent to which they felt that their participation in social change efforts would be efficacious. However, for some participants, their sense of efficacy was rooted in their lack of interest in social change behaviors. For example, when asked if there were advocacy efforts they could participate in as a minor, Garrett stated "there probably are things, but none that I'm interested in acting out. I suppose it would just be too much work." Similarly, Park expressed a general disinterest in political issues and claimed, "I don't really see myself doing anything," which illuminates their acritical-adaptive sociopolitical perspective over time. Overall, young people expressed efficacious attitudes that were rooted in varying levels of interest and commitment prior to their first voting experience as a result of their sociopolitical perspective and concurrent meaning-making processes.

Postsecondary interviews suggested that adolescents continued to grapple with their perceived sense of social change efficacy as they entered adulthood. For some participants, graduating from high school resulted in feeling that their actions contribute to social change efforts. For example, despite expressing an adaptive sociopolitical perspective throughout their follow-up interview, Desi stated, "I think [I'm] more active in the sense that I – if I see something, I feel very strongly about stopping that action. If I see something bad, I feel that I should stop them." Moreover, as an example of their more critical sociopolitical perspective as an emerging adult, Chase explained, "when I see things like when people's rights are violated or you know, someone is being intimidated or harassed when they shouldn't be, I have a hard time keeping my mouth shut." In essence, postsecondary sociopolitical perspectives helped some

participants develop a deeper understanding of their impact on social issues as a result of efficacy-related meaning-making processes. For example, Manuel acknowledged, "I know my voice isn't as much as everybody's voice put together, but hopefully…that one voice can make a difference" while maintaining a precritical-critical sociopolitical perspective over time. On the other hand, Angela—who expressed a liberation-focused perspective as a high school but a slightly less critical viewpoint during postsecondary interviews—argued that one's impact might be limited, regardless of efficacious attitudes. Angela asserted,

> You can always try to voice your opinion, but you can only be heard by those who want to listen. I don't know what you can really do. Like I said, the people who have power, have the power and if they don't want to listen to you, then you're not gonna be heard.

In the above comment, Angela acknowledges the role of power when discussing the efficacy of social change behaviors such as voicing one's opinion. In other words, Angela highlights the need for people to share their perspective, but also recognizes that the efficacy of these actions are dependent on the willingness of those with power to acknowledge different opinions. Angela's multifaceted sense of social change efficacy mirrors sentiments held by other participants such as Kiri, who discussed some reluctance to engage in social change conversations with other people, potentially due to their sustained adaptive-precritical sociopolitical perspective. When asked about their role in changing people's minds, Kiri stated, "even though I'm all about the idea of [voicing my opinions] it's just like I think sometimes…just stay quiet." Feelings such as this led some participants to further question their individual efficacy, even for those with future political aspirations. For example, Luz discussed their perceived role in the political process less than two years after voting in 2012 by saying,

I do [feel that I have role in the political process], and then sometimes, I don't. I feel like

if I, I, sometimes I feel like I'm not even going to make a difference, just because I'm one

person. But then, sometimes like, "No, I can." I just need to work really hard for it… I

guess sometimes, I just get discouraged by it because I see sometimes how people are

working extremely hard and not really going anywhere, but I guess in the long run, it

does help. It does pay off.

Luz continued to acknowledge that their interest in a political career led them to pursue a

political science degree in college in order to deepen their knowledge about social issues, thus,

contributing to a more critical sociopolitical perspective compared to their previous adaptive-

precritical understanding of society. Likewise, other participants connected their perceived sense

of efficacy to a desire to expand their emergent sociopolitical understanding. When discussing

their role in promoting social change, Luis stated,

I want to find what's already going on, and try to help to fix that, to make that [better]. I

believe if I'm able to help with that and make a difference that will ultimately be carried

on to other areas. Maybe in that way, I'd be able to affect something in the world, I guess.

Just if people would be – if I'm able to make the change that I want to happen for my

community, and if that gets recognized then, maybe that will make a difference.

The above reflection from Luis illuminates their efficacious attitudes and perceived impact on

the community. By discussing the residual effect of their involvement in social change activities,

Luis acknowledges that others might recognize their involvement and contribute to larger

community change. In addition to seeking more knowledge, other adolescents shared how

meaning-making processes such as their emergent sense of efficacy and feelings of

empowerment influenced the extent to which they engaged in efforts to address social issues.

While Noah admitted that their lack of involvement was due to not having the initiative to find local organizations focused on community work (i.e., adaptive-precritical sociopolitical perspective), Ayanna drew upon their emergent sense of empowerment and more critical perspective to engage in college campus efforts primarily because of their belief that they "have a say, too." Furthermore, Kelsey explained the importance of social change behaviors that manifest from meaning-making processes such as the development of efficacious and empowered sociopolitical perspectives by saying,

> I feel like if you are seeking knowledge about what's going on in politics and in the world, you can have a part to play [in social change efforts] because there are ways that you can speak out, other than just talking to somebody. You can really get engaged, and you really get into the political system. You can have a voice.

Kelsey's emergent efficacious attitudes—and a developmental shift from acritical-adaptive to precritical-critical sociopolitical perspectives—suggest that underlying meaning-making processes are an important component of young people's involvement in social change behaviors. By emphasizing the relationship between increasing knowledge of sociopolitical matters and utilizing one's voice to engage in social change endeavors, some adolescents like Kelsey acknowledged how meaning-making processes such as one's perceived sense of self-efficacy contributes to social change involvement.

Given the nature of the interview protocol, many adolescents' discussed participation in the political system through voting as one important social change behavior. However, participants expressed a range of efficacious attitudes based on their perceived role as voters. The following section specifically examines emergent perceptions of voting as an effective mechanism for social change. By exploring participants' opinions of one type of social change

involvement before and after their participation in that activity, the findings described below reveal the ways in which adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes impact young people's conceptualization of their role in promoting social change.

Perceptions of Voting and Alternative Social Change Mechanisms

As high school students, almost all of the participants referenced their future involvement in electoral politics as an important step for their social change involvement. For example, when asked to discuss their perceived role in the political process, George explained,

> I don't feel like I have a really big role. I mean I think I have a personal investment in it, but not necessarily a role because I'm not really looking to influence other people's views and I can't vote yet. So I think once I vote, I will definitely play a big role, because I do have a lot of investment, I wanna see changes made in my society.

George's plan to engage in social change activities by voting suggests that this specific civic behavior would be the first opportunity for their efficacious attitudes to manifest as change-related behaviors, despite expressing liberation-focused sociopolitical perspectives in high school. In other words, findings suggest that some high school seniors connect their sense of social change efficacy with voting. This relationship, as described by many participants in the sample, implies that adolescents perceive they have a limited role in promoting social change until they are old enough to contribute to the democratic political process as voters. According to Mateo, who consistently articulated a liberation-focused perspective across interviews, it is difficult to challenge this perception of youth involvement in political issues for their peers. Mateo continued to say,

> It's [made] me laugh at times, it's made me frustrated at times. But I understand that a lot of young people – politics are not the most exciting thing, it's not the most interesting

thing, but even if you can't vote, you have to be just as attentive as older people, because even though you're not actively participating, you're not actually voting, you're part of that political system, whether you're 10, whether you're 12, whether you're 13. You're encompassed into that system so you have to be educated on what's going on around you because if you don't know what's going on around you, how are you gonna be able to change it if it's wrong? Because if you're not aware of what's going on around you, how are you gonna say, "hey, that's not right?"

As a high school senior, Mateo's sociopolitical perspective contributed to their understanding of youth engagement in social and political issues. By acknowledging that some young people are not energized by politics and are unaware of political issues that might directly impact young people's experiences, Mateo's reflection highlights the connection between emergent sociopolitical perspectives and having the awareness to recognize when social change efforts might be necessary through actions such as voting. Likewise, other participants connected their perception of voting to additional components of their sociopolitical understanding and underlying meaning-making processes for social change involvement. For example, Ayanna recognized that through voting, they could finally exercise a right that was not always available to everyone. As an example of their emergent precritical-critical sociopolitical perspective, they shared,

Well, 'cause I'm an African-American woman, I think it's very important [to engage in the political process]. 'Cause I remember there was a time where African-Americans couldn't vote. And then women couldn't vote. So now, I'm very glad that we moved on up and that I can actually vote. I actually have a say next year.

Ayanna's reflection of what it means for African Americans and women, in particular, to have the opportunity to vote illuminates the role of socialization processes and worldview development on youth social change involvement. Ayanna's reference of the extension of voting rights to historically marginalized communities suggests that engaging in this specific form of social change involvement reflects Ayanna's sociopolitical perspective that their social change involvement through voting will be efficacious. Several participants also discussed alternative mechanisms of social change outside of electoral politics prior to their first voting experience. For example, Park believed that by writing the mayor or other officials about social issues, "maybe they could pay attention" to their opinion as a minor, despite maintaining an acritical-adaptive perspective over time. On the other hand, some participants doubted the efficacy of directly reaching out to politicians as a form of promoting social change. For example, Santos—who maintained a precritical-critical perspective across interviews—perceived that policymakers would not be interested in their opinion due to their Mexican heritage. Santos explained,

> I don't think they'd really view what I have to say. I think they would just make claims,
> "oh, it's because he's Mexican." They would try and find a way to make a spin, they'd
> spin it off and they wouldn't want my message to be conveyed. They would probably do
> something to defend it.

For participants like Santos, lived experiences contributing to adolescents' sociopolitical perspective impacted the development of efficacious attitudes for specific social change mechanisms. As participants transitioned to postsecondary experiences, perceptions of the importance and efficacy of voting shifted as some young people continued to adjust their sociopolitical perspective and make meaning of their role in social change endeavors. For example, when asked if young people have a role to play in the political process as a high school

student, Jamie said that society "makes [young people] think [we have a role], as in, once you turn 18, you [can finally] register to vote." Jamie's reflection suggests that it does not always appear that the youth voice matters, which reflected Jamie's sociopolitical shift from their acritical-adaptive perspective as a high school student to an acritical viewpoint. Some participants continued to express doubt in the importance of their individual vote, particularly for the 2012 presidential election. When asked if they had voted since turning 18 years old, Pia—who maintained an adaptive-precritical perspective over time—said that their vote "wouldn't have made a difference given the majority votes of the state [of California]." In fact, remaining in California after high school led some participants to question their individual efficacy based on their perception of the state's political leanings.

However, for participants who attended out-of-state schools, they recognized that their sociopolitical perspectives expanded by interacting with others holding different political ideologies, which ultimately shaped their perceptions of voting as a mechanism for social change. For example, Park explained that after encountering "a lot more Republicans [than they were] used to" after moving to another state for college, they thought, "maybe voting does count." For someone who once believed that their vote would have little impact on social issues in California because of historical statewide political leanings, Park's overall perceptions of voting shifted based on their proximity to communities with opposing political philosophies, while acknowledging new opportunities for their vote to impact social change after they transitioned from high school.

Some adolescents developed a more cynical view of their personal role in participating in social change efforts as they transitioned into adulthood, while others drew upon their emergent sociopolitical perspectives to make meaning of their ability to promote change through voting.

Yet, several participants discussed methods for promoting social change outside of electoral politics based on their perceived self-efficacy, like Chen who believed they could be "a person who can impact health and medicine more than being a politician." This reflected Chen's transition from an acritical-adaptive perspective to a viewpoint that incorporated a more precritical-critical understanding of society. Likewise, Pia connected their interest in journalism to informing the community about social issues as a mechanism for promoting social change.

Some adolescents also discussed their interest in activism efforts as a result of their emergent sociopolitical perspective after finishing high school. For example, several participants mentioned protests resulting from the 2012 murder of Trayvon Martin as a pivotal moment in their sociopolitical development. Santos—who consistently articulated a critical sociopolitical perspective—mentioned that "sometimes you have to do stuff like that" to draw attention to communities who face systemic oppression. Kelsey similarly expressed that organizing efforts can bridge the communication gap between the public and government officials by stating, "if you get enough voices behind you and your cause, there's no way [policymakers] can ignore you," which reflected their sustained critical sociopolitical perspective over time. Overall, postsecondary interviews suggest that most participants developed a more nuanced understanding of sociopolitical issues in their community as a result of lived experiences since finishing high school. In other words, participants' perceptions of social change involvement expanded over time as they continued to deepen their sociopolitical perspective, resulting in meaning-making processes related to empowerment and efficacy. Adolescents' emerging sociopolitical perspectives ultimately influenced their overall perception of social change involvement, including their role in social change endeavors, their generation's collective efficacy, and the most effective mechanisms for promoting social change.

Discussion

Participants from this study demonstrated varying levels of sociopolitical understanding before and after a specific civic-related experience. As a result, findings suggest a range of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for adolescents based on the ways in which they interpreted internalized, and responded to their lived experiences. Although participants named specific critical incidents for their emergent sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., transitioning from high school and their first opportunity to vote in a presidential election), cross-sectional data reveal that youth SPD is largely dependent on the ways in which adolescents continue to make sense of society at different points in the life course, including their perceived personal role in promoting social change. In other words, young people draw upon their individual lived experiences and meaning-making processes as part of a dynamic process to shape their worldview and sociopolitical perspectives as they transition out of high school into various postsecondary experiences as expected. However, as described during participants' initial interviews, meaning-making processes and perceptions of efficacy appeared to be influenced by family, peers, and an emergent understanding of the democratic underpinnings of the United States of America, whereas follow-up responses were mostly the result of young people's continued conceptualization of their individual social positioning within society. The following section briefly discusses the ways in which ecological influences contribute to adolescents' conceptualization of social change involvement as they transition into adulthood.

A System of Influences for Emergent Sociopolitical Perspectives

Meaning-making processes related to youth social change involvement reflected specific lived experiences for participants, and illuminated a range of perceptions of empowerment and efficacy across interviews. As SPD theory suggests, understanding one's social positioning can

greatly influence the extent to which an individual begins to hold a more critical viewpoint of social issues (Schlitz et al., 2010). Moreover, many participants acknowledged the role of their social network (i.e., family and peers) as influential factors for their sociopolitical perspectives and the behavioral manifestations of their efficacious attitudes as they transitioned into postsecondary experiences. Therefore, examining ecological influences can further highlight the ways in which young people's sociopolitical perceptions continue to evolve as their settings and environments change over time.

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory, an individual's microsystem can impact behavioral manifestations of human cognition. As participants transitioned from high school, many adolescents described changes in their microsystem that helped foster their emergent perspectives of social change endeavors, with many admitting that their level of community engagement changed as they entered emergent adulthood. For some participants, their involvement increased because of experiences from their new microsystem, such as college coursework or participation in student organizations. Other participants attributed an increase in social change behaviors to new opportunities away from high school and family settings that resulted in an expanded sociopolitical perspective. By entering new ecological systems such as college campuses and the workplace, some adolescents shifted their thinking based on the norms of their new environment, such as continuous political discourse amongst peers. However, for several participants, entering new microsystems also led to an increase of adult responsibilities, which ultimately resulted in a lack of social change participation. In other words, while transitioning into new settings allowed some adolescents to expand their social change involvement, the same experience led others to redirect their attention to self-oriented obligations that did not necessarily contribute to social change efforts. As a result, microsystem

influences on youth perceptions of social change varied based on participants' lived experiences, and ultimately, the extent to which young people engaged in social change activities.

It is also important to acknowledge the role of society and its impact on youth perceptions of social change. Bronfenbrenner's (1977) conceptualization of the macro- and chronosystems appear to have greatly influenced the sociopolitical perspectives of study participants. First, several participants such as Amelia and Kelsey acknowledged the political leanings of California—and regular discussions of immigration and LGBTQ policies—as key elements of their perceptions of social change, particularly for mechanisms such as voting. Additionally, some students such as Pia and Park recognized the ways in which growing up in California influenced their sociopolitical development, which they acknowledged as they transitioned to new ecological settings away from high school. Such macro-level influences represent additional lived experiences that contribute to young people's understanding of social issues, in addition to their sense of social change efficacy (Berk, 2000; Neal & Neal, 2013).

Furthermore, macro-level influences during a specific period of time can also impact adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives of social change, based on what Bronfenbrenner (1977) calls the chronosystem. Since the current study was centered on the re-election campaign of President Barack Obama—the nation's first Black president—ecological systems theory suggests that social norms and political narratives of that particular time could have influenced young people's SPD. Previous research has explored the impact of President Obama's election in 2008 for young people and their engagement with social movements (Fernandes et al., 2010; Fisher, 2012; Garcia-Castañon et al., 2011; Xenos et al., 2014). Additionally, for many populations in the United States (e.g., young people, people of color), his election represented a monumental shift towards political leadership that was more representative of communities that have been

historically marginalized (Cohen, 2010). Because of participants' preparation to participate in an election that would result in President Obama's historic reelection, chronosystemic influences for young people during this time could result in generation-specific sociopolitical perspectives, perceptions of social change efficacy, and varying behavioral manifestations of sociopolitical meaning-making processes. Overall, though few adolescents shared whom they supported in the 2012 election, it is difficult to ignore the impact of the country's political climate on young people's perceptions of what it means to promote social change and their personal role in such efforts at the time of their initial and follow-up interviews.

Developmental Considerations for Youth Social Change Involvement

As suggested by the study's findings, sociopolitical perspectives continue to develop as adolescents' understanding of their perceived sense of empowerment and social change efficacy crystallizes. In fact, previous literature suggests that perceptions of the youth voice can impact the extent to which young people choose to engage in or refrain from social change endeavors (Evans, 2007; Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; O'Donoghue & Strobel, 2007). During initial interviews, some participants expressed doubt in the role young people can have in promoting social change as minors. Furthermore, many young people continued to share some uncertainty of their individual and collective role in addressing social issues in their community as they approached adulthood, even if they developed a more critical sociopolitical perspective over time.

Such reluctant attitudes to engage in social change activities suggest an additional meaning-making process contributed to young people's emergent self-perceived sense of empowerment and social change efficacy. For example, findings revealed that despite developing a more critical postsecondary understanding of society, few adolescents described

behavioral manifestations of their emergent sense of empowerment. In other words, most adolescents who were aware of sociopolitical issues did not operationalize their knowledge into behaviors targeting systems of inequality and oppression, as described by the liberation stage of the SPD framework. Instead, participants—if involved in social change behaviors, at all— primarily participated in activities that were service-centered. Possible explanations for serviced-centered involvement for young people who articulated liberation- or systems-focused sociopolitical perspectives include discouraging influences from family and peers to participate in activities such as protests due to safety concerns, as suggested in Desi's initial interview. Additionally, meaning-making processes connecting young people's sociopolitical perspectives to their social change involvement could have impacted the types of activities young people participated in as a result of their emergent sociopolitical perspectives. Overall, these findings suggest that there is much to be learned about the cognitive processes necessary to move young people towards participation in liberation practices.

Proschaska and DiClimente's (1983) stages of change framework provides guidance for further exploring underlying cognitive processes that link adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes to social change involvement (i.e., liberation-focused behaviors). Although the original model for behavior change emerged from research seeking to develop interventions for risky health behaviors such as smoking (Proschaska & DiClimente, 1983), several parallels can be made to the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of SPD theory. First, the precontemplation stage (i.e., no plans for involvement in the foreseeable future) suggests that adolescents do not see a need for addressing or challenging social structures. This aligns with an acritical sociopolitical perspective that results from individuals having limited or no awareness of social inequality or systematic oppression. Study participants who held an

acritical sociopolitical perspective had difficulty articulating their awareness of social issues and often described volunteer experiences, if any, without acknowledging larger social matters addressed through their participation.

For individuals beginning to consider a behavioral change, Proschaska and DiClimente (1983) would argue that they are in the contemplation stage, which suggests that there is some level of interest or motivation to act but engagement in the target behavior (e.g., liberation-focused social change endeavors) remains uncertain. As high school students, almost all of the participants expressed a desire to vote in order to promote social change. In follow-up interviews, several participants planned to engage in a range of possible social change behaviors (e.g., community work, service-minded careers). SPD theorists would argue that individuals at this stage would at least have an adaptive sociopolitical perspective in order to acknowledge that social inequity exists, even if meaning-making processes such as their perceived self-efficacy limit their commitment to engage in liberation behaviors (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Leath & Chavous, 2017). Despite possessing a more critical sociopolitical perspective and an emergent sense of empowerment or self-efficacy, cognitive processes within the contemplation stage could help explain limited youth involvement in social change activities.

The preparation stage of the behavioral change model aligns with the cognitive processes essential to developing a critical sociopolitical perspective that is action-oriented. Across both models, individuals at this stage typically intend to act in the near future, and are taking necessary steps to engage in a specific behavior, such as liberation-focused endeavors. Previous scholars have examined meaning-making processes that lead young people from critical reflection to critical action such as pursuing educational experiences rooted in social justice (Fegley et al., 2006; Rogers et al., 2007) or seeking opportunities to participate in community

change efforts (Pancer et al., 2007). However, as the preparation stage of the behavioral model and SPD theory's critical perspective suggest, before some young people can engage in action, they must be empowered to do so (Christens et al., 2013; Diemer & Li, 2011; Evans, 2007), in addition to believing in the efficacy of their participation (Ginwright, 2007; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Leath & Chavous, 2017). Many participants articulated their interest in—and for some young people, their commitment to—engaging in future social change behaviors after increasing their knowledge of social matters and developing skills to promote social change. As such, findings revealed that preparation for future actions appeared to strengthen as adolescents entered emerging adulthood.

Finally, Proschaska & DiClemente's (1983) action stage describes individuals who have engaged in activities or steps that represent a significant change in behavior (e.g., non-involvement to involvement in social change behaviors). According to this theory of behavioral change, adolescents could engage in social change behaviors regardless of their sociopolitical perspective. In fact, findings reveal that several adolescents engaged in behaviors that could be considered liberation practices (e.g., attending protests or marches, engaging with policymakers) based on their perceived sense of efficacy without a deep understanding of the causes of and potential solutions to sociopolitical issues.

Furthermore, few participants exhibited a sociopolitical perspective that suggested that their involvement in such behaviors reflected extensive knowledge of social injustice, as suggested by SPD theory's liberation stage. This suggests that there are additional cognitive processes involved in the behavioral manifestations of adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes. In other words, while adolescents might engage in behaviors that appear to promote social change through liberation practices, it can be difficult to ascertain the

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extent to which such actions are the result of a critical or liberation-focused understanding of society or other action-oriented cognitive processes. Possible explanations for this include some young people at this stage of the life course lacking the sociopolitical terminology to articulate how their social change behaviors reflect their sociopolitical perspective, or understanding the difference between first-order change or service-centered behaviors and second-order or systems-focused social change (Hollingsworth, 2019; Seidman & Rappaport, 1986). Future research should further explore young people's understanding and explanation of why they engage in different types of social change behaviors in order to clarify the theoretical links between adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and resulting social change participation.

Overall, findings from this study reveal the multidimensional components of emergent perceptions of social change as young people enter adulthood. Similar to existing youth SPD scholarship, analyses suggest that for many participants, meaning-making processes related to ecological influences and lived experiences contribute to emergent sociopolitical perspectives and perceptions of social change involvement, such as voting. As adolescents approach adulthood and reach an important civic-related milestone, these contributing factors continue to shape some young people's sociopolitical development with varying behavioral outcomes that at times, might not reflect young people's articulated emergent sociopolitical perspectives. In other words, the pivotal developmental transition into adulthood represents a time when young people's sociopolitical perspectives continue to crystallize as the result of ecological shifts after high school, and as young people continue to reflect on their role in promoting social change through activities such as voting.

Although this analysis revealed the role of subsequent meaning-making processes (i.e., emergent sense of empowerment and self-efficacy) for the behavioral manifestations of young people's sociopolitical perspectives, it is important to further explore additional explanations for engagement in service-centered and systems-focused behaviors, particularly if young people's social change behaviors do not reflect their articulated sociopolitical perspectives. Moreover, additional research will help to further illuminate the extent to which specific aspects of young people's lived experiences (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) contribute to the relationship between young people's sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and resulting social change behaviors. By continuing to bridge interdisciplinary scholarship to examine the dynamic components of young people's perceptions of social change involvement during this specific developmental time, findings from this analysis and future studies will contribute to current theory-building efforts for youth SPD scholarship.

Strengths

This study addresses a significant gap in existing literature that examines the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for adolescents' emergent sociopolitical development, particularly as it relates to a specific civic-related milestone such as the first opportunity to vote. Previous scholars have explored contextual factors that contribute to young people's sociopolitical perspectives by focusing on civic behaviors, particularly as predictors for adult political participation. However, little scholarship has addressed the ways in which meaning-making processes such as an emergent sense of empowerment and self-efficacy results in varying perceptions of social change participation for adolescents transitioning into adulthood. Findings from this study offer additional evidence of the multifaceted components (e.g., ecological factors, efficacious attitudes, perceptions of voting and alternative social change mechanisms)

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that influence youth sociopolitical development, and the extent to which perceptions of social change involvement further develop over the life course.

Additionally, given the overrepresentation of adolescents of color, the dataset used for this analysis further contributes to extant literature on youth SPD that has often centered on the experiences of young people of color. Although the SPD theoretical framework emerged from the experiences of Black activists from New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco (Watts et al., 1999), to my knowledge, fewer SPD scholars have explored the extent to which the emergent sociopolitical perspectives of youth of color are influenced by a specific civic-related milestone (i.e., first opportunity to vote in a presidential election) during the transition into adulthood. Findings highlight the experience of young people who are more likely to experience social injustice within the United States based on the country's sociopolitical history of marginalizing specific communities. Although the current analysis is not centered on specific experiences of oppression or discrimination young people might have faced during their upbringing, elevating the voices of adolescents from communities that have been marginalized or silenced contributes to theory-building efforts to link young people's sociopolitical perspectives to specific social change behaviors. By understanding the perceptions of young people with more to gain—and possibly, lose—from participating in social change efforts, future research can consider how youth from affluent or privileged backgrounds might have different perspectives, in addition to further exploring the range of youth experiences related to traditional forms of social change activities such as voting. Moreover, interview transcripts captured many nuances that are often lost through survey instruments, where young people cannot clarify their responses. As a result, this study provides a more person-centered examination of adolescents' experiences as they transitioned out of high school compared to quantitative analyses.

Finally, this secondary data analysis is strengthened by multiple waves of data collection, which allows for two datasets to reflect how adolescent sociopolitical perspectives evolve before and after a significant civic-related milestone. Because of this cross-sectional data, findings capture the extent to which ecological influences and meaning-making processes differed for participants as they transitioned into various postsecondary experiences (e.g., college, workforce). Furthermore, using the SPD theoretical framework to identify participants' range of sociopolitical perspectives during each interview revealed the complexity of characterizing one's sociopolitical development as a fixed trait, as highlighted by previous research. Through multiple layers of data analysis, findings reflect the role of multiple meaning-making processes in the development of young people's attitudinal and behavioral social change perspectives and outcomes.

Limitations

There are several notable limitations for this study's findings. First, although the sample includes adolescents from diverse backgrounds, it is important to note that the sample is not representative of all adolescents in California, nor is it representative of young people throughout the United States. Because of this, findings are not generalizable across various settings and populations. California has been viewed as one of the more progressive states in the country, given the emergence of numerous social movements dating back to the mid-twentieth century (Ginwright, 2007). Therefore, findings do not reflect patterns that necessarily apply to adolescents in other parts of the country. Future research should account for contextual factors for adolescents' sociopolitical environment and explore young people's perceptions of social change involvement across the United States.

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Next, there are several methodological limitations associated with utilizing a publicly accessible dataset. Given the secondary analysis of existing data, findings were limited to the interview protocol used by the study's principal investigators. As a result, data analysis was completed based on the responses to the original study's research questions instead of the current study's focus. Although responses address the research questions guiding the current study, secondary data analysis prohibits the possibility to probe participants in order to clarify responses to interview questions. As a result, the findings do not represent an exhaustive narrative for youth perceptions of social change involvement and should serve as a starting point for future studies examining similar topics.

Finally, the ICPSR's de-identification process for providing access to the dataset limits the amount of contextual information that can be included in the data analysis (e.g., demographics of participants' hometown or school). Therefore, information about participants' background is restricted to what is provided through ICPSR, which reduces the extent to which contextual factors for youth perceptions were captured through data analysis, in addition to potential patterns for participants of similar backgrounds. Despite these constraints, this study provides a baseline for future studies to further explore meaning-making processes that influence young people's perceptions of social change involvement.

CHAPTER 3

BEHAVIORAL MANIFESTATIONS OF SOCIOPOLITICAL PERSPECTIVES AND

REFLECTIVE MEANING-MAKING PROCESSES: PREDICTORS OF YOUTH SOCIAL

CHANGE INVOLVEMENT

Abstract

Sociopolitical development (SPD) scholars have previously acknowledged youth lived experiences, emergent worldview and efficacious attitudes as contributing factors for a range of social change behaviors. However, little research has considered the extent to which specific sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes impact young people's social change involvement as high school students transitioning into adulthood. Through multiple linear regressions, this paper draws upon SPD theory to examine predictive relationships between adolescents' specific sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., experiences of discrimination and perceptions of fairness in the United States), meaning-making processes (i.e., perceptions of social change and political efficacy) and social change activities (i.e., service, goodwill, political, and expressive) over time. Findings reveal that both sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes contribute to adolescent expressive behaviors. Additionally, perceptions of social change efficacy predict participation in service-centered and systems-focused behaviors. Furthermore, previous experiences of discrimination and political efficacious attitudes predict involvement in all adult social change activities, but perceptions of fairness only predict adult goodwill involvement. Finally, longitudinal models suggest a predictive relationship between adolescent perceptions of social change efficacy and adult participation in service-centered activities. Discussion includes expanding SPD theoretical considerations for liberation-focused behaviors by examining expressive behaviors as a mechanism for social change.

Scholars have previously identified adolescents' emergent sociopolitical development as a contributing factor to young people's community involvement into adulthood (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Hart et al., 2007). Moreover, lived experiences such as racial discrimination or living in poverty can shape the ways in which young people understand their position in society, as well as how they interact with others (Silva & Langhout, 2011; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2001; Youniss & Yates, 1999). As precursory attitudinal components of young people's emergent sociopolitical development, these perspectives can result in a range of behavioral outcomes that can promote service-centered and systems-focused social change (Bobek at al., 2009; Hollingsworth, 2019; Malin, Tirri, Liauw, 2015). However, fewer scholars have considered the extent to which sociopolitical perspectives, lived experiences, and efficacious attitudes predict youth involvement in a variety of social change activities as high school students into emerging adulthood, specifically during an era in American history when many adolescents were inspired by the election of the nation's first Black president (Fernandes et al., 2010; Fisher, 2012; Garcia-Castañon et al., 2011).

Through multiple linear regression analyses of survey data from the Stanford Civic Purpose Project, this paper examines predictive relationships between adolescents' specific lived experiences and emergent sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., perceptions of fairness in the United States and experiences of discrimination), reflective meaning-making processes (i.e., perceptions of social change and political efficacy), and four types of social change activities (i.e., service, goodwill, political, and expressive). Specifically, this paper explores predictors for social change activities prior to and following a presidential election, as young people transition from high school into adulthood. By examining the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of sociopolitical development (SPD) theory during this particular stage in the life course, findings from this study

help illuminate specific contextual predictors of different types of youth social change involvement.

Adolescent Worldview Development and Efficacious Meaning-Making Processes

Throughout adolescence, young people typically begin to question or challenge normative ideals in order to understand their role in society (Morrell, 2015; Picower, 2012; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). Furthermore, this pivotal time for young people often includes the development of critical thinking skills and understanding one's worldview, which can impact their involvement in different types of social change activities, if any. Schlitz et al. (2010) define worldview as a combination of "beliefs, assumptions, attitudes, values, and ideas to form a comprehensive model of reality" (p. 19). In other words, the process of developing a worldview includes dynamic meaning-making processes related to one's lived experiences and identity development (Youniss & Yates, 1999). By drawing upon their evolving interpretations of the world, many adolescents begin to formulate their identity in relation to the world within which they are situated. For example, constant exposure to police killings of unarmed Black men and women can influence the ways in which Black adolescents understand how society views them (Haddix et al., 2015).

Although worldview development has been identified as a prominent component of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, fewer scholars have examined the relationship between young people's interpretation of the world and past experiences of discrimination as contributors to adolescents' sociopolitical development (SPD), in addition to their future involvement in social change activities. Previous scholarship on SPD theory suggests that these sociopolitical perspectives—along with efficacious meaning-making processes—relate to young people's involvement in a range of social change activities as they transition out of high

school. However, it is unclear the extent to which the behavioral manifestations of adolescents'

emergent sociopolitical perspectives and attitudes predict social change participation during an

important developmental stage when young people transition from high school into adulthood.

Literature on positive youth development (PYD) has also suggested adolescence as an

important time for young people to cultivate a sense of their perceived role in social change

endeavors. In particular, PYD scholars have focused on developmental aspects such as character

and confidence as they relate to identity and worldview development (Hamilton & Flanagan,

2007; Lerner et al., 2003; O'Donoghue & Strobel, 2007) through youth settings that foster and

support young people's participation in social change efforts (e.g., community service and

extracurricular activities). As a result of such experiences, young people can develop a sense of

psychological empowerment, perceived competence, and self-efficacy as they make meaning of

their role in promoting change in their community (Leath & Chavous, 2017; Manganelli et al.,

2014; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). Although these findings reveal the emergence of

efficacious attitudes in adolescents' community involvement, it is important to examine how

such perspectives evolve as young people continue to cultivate their sociopolitical perspectives

and approach emerging adulthood.

Some scholars have posited that demographic and systemic factors can influence the

extent to which young people feel empowered to challenge systems of injustice through micro-

and macro-level socialization factors by exploring the role of efficacious attitudes in youth

community involvement (O'Donoghue, 2006; Yeich & Levine, 1994). These factors can

continue to impact how young people view their role in promoting social change throughout the

life course (Leath & Chavous, 2017). However, to my knowledge, little evidence has suggested

that such attitudes—as the result of adolescents' emergent worldview development, specific

lived experiences, and efficacious meaning-making processes—help predict youth participation in various social change activities over time. Furthermore, few studies have captured the extent to which the relationship between adolescent meaning-making processes and social change involvement evolves from adolescence into adulthood.

Sociopolitical Attitudes as Precursors for Social Change Engagement

Sociopolitical development theory helps to explain the attitudinal aspects responsible for fostering a more critical perspective of society (Watts et al., 1999), including an individual's emergent worldview. Previous research suggests that direct interactions with systems of oppression (e.g., experiences of discrimination) can result in some adolescents developing a more nuanced sociopolitical understanding compared to those who are privileged by unjust social structures, leading to a range of proximal and distal civic outcomes through adulthood (Cohen, 2005; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). For example, Anyiwo et al.'s (2018) model for testing key components of SPD theory highlights the role of sociocultural processes such as racial identity, racial socialization, and experiences of racial discrimination. Based on the formation of young people's worldview and sociopolitical perspectives, findings suggested that adolescents expressed varying levels of critical social analysis or their awareness of systems of inequality. Although the authors' model is centered on the experiences of African American youth and their sociopolitical perspectives, there is much to be learned about young people's involvement in various social change activities as a result of their SPD. Such behavioral manifestations can vary as a result of meaning-making processes related to young people's understanding of social structures (i.e., sociopolitical perspectives) and their perception of their role in promoting different types of social change (i.e., reflective meaning-making processes).

To further conceptualize the role of sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes as precursors for social change involvement, scholars often draw upon work on critical consciousness development (Christens et al., 2016; Diemer & Li, 2011; Evans, 2007; Fegley et al., 2006). First introduced by Freire (1973), critical consciousness has been described as increasing individuals' awareness of the daily manifestations of oppressive structures in society, while also identifying possible actions for challenging unjust systems. Some youth practitioners have incorporated critical consciousness in positive youth development programs to help young people learn how to reflect critically before engaging in social change activities (Fegley et al., 2006; Nam, 2012). By reflecting on their positionality within society, adolescents can use such meaning-making processes to identify the types of social change they wish to promote, and ultimately, better define their perceived role in their community.

Although numerous scholars have considered how developmental processes such as sociopolitical development and critical consciousness help young people think critically of society, there is still much to be learned about the range of behavioral outcomes that emerge from adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives and resulting meaning-making processes as young people approach emerging adulthood. In essence, there is a need to explore relationships between young people's perception of society, their perceived role in promoting social change, and their involvement in a range of social change activities. Therefore, the current study examines this dynamic relationship through multiple linear regression analyses as young people transition away from high school into adulthood. By examining links between specific aspects of adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives and their involvement in different social change activities, this investigation further contributes to theory-building efforts to understand youth SPD during a specific stage of the life course.

Behavioral Manifestations of Sociopolitical Perspectives and Reflective Meaning-Making

Processes

Previous research has explored the ways in which social change behaviors reflect individuals' efficacious attitudes and sociopolitical perspectives. In particular, many of these behaviors have been classified as forms of civic engagement. For example, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) posit three kinds of citizens that embody diverse goals for civic participation, which also reflect the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of SPD theory. First, the authors identify *personally-responsible* citizens as individuals who build on lessons of character such as integrity to contribute to the community through service-based activities (e.g., supporting food or clothing drives, donating blood, volunteering at a homeless shelter). These behaviors mostly align with the adaptive stage of SPD theory, where individuals recognize that inequities exist but continue to accommodate social structures that currently exist (Watts et al., 1999). Such alignment suggests that personally-responsible citizens engage in activities that help those who are marginalized without challenging oppressive systems. The second and more advanced type of citizen in Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) typology is the *participatory citizen*, who not only contributes to various civic initiatives, but also organizes community efforts to meet the needs of marginalized communities. These behaviors reflect the emergent attitudes of individuals at the precritical stage of SPD theory, given their acknowledgement that social change efforts are needed to address inequalities, along with their empowered and efficacious approach to providing services for communities in need.

Individuals at SPD theory's critical stage could be characterized as *justice-oriented citizens,* who engage in the actions of a participatory citizen with a critical lens of social, economic, and political causes for social inequities, as suggested by previous scholarship on

youth activism in the Civil Rights Movement (Ginwright & James, 2002; Morris, 1981; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Depending on the extent to which such individuals exhibit behaviors that directly challenge systems of oppression, justice-oriented citizens could also represent the liberation-focused stage of SPD theory (Watts et al., 1999). Similar to the emergent nature of young people's sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-making processes, behavioral manifestations of adolescents' SPD continue to evolve as they make sense of the world over time. Although several studies on youth social change behaviors explore young people's interest in such activities as a result of their sociopolitical perspectives, fewer scholars have explored the extent to which adolescents' specific lived experiences, worldview, and emergent efficacious attitudes relate to young people's participation in specific social change endeavors, particularly as they prepare to enter adulthood.

Behavioral manifestations of sociopolitical perspectives and subsequent meaning-making processes through specific activities can also be categorized based on the extent to which such activities accommodate or challenge systems of inequality, as suggested by SPD theory. Similar to traditional forms of civic engagement such as volunteerism, social change involvement that is service-centered attempts to provide short-term responses to social problems based on an individual's moral decision to help others (Malin, Tirri, Liauw, 2015). For example, young people might organize a school-wide food drive for families with limited access to nutrient-dense food. This type of activity aligns with Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) descriptions of personally-responsible and participatory citizens given actions that demonstrate young people's sense of social responsibility and acknowledgement of their role in promoting the well-being of other people (Berman, 1997). Service-centered involvement primarily addresses first-order

change by helping communities operate within systems that are inherently unequal instead of attempting to challenge oppressive social structures (Seidman & Rappaport, 1986).

On the other hand, systems-focused endeavors include activities that promote equity and prolonged change. Similar to Seidman and Rappaport's (1986) definition for second-order change, this type of involvement incorporates strategies to dismantle social structures responsible for creating the need for service-centered activities. For example, in addition to organizing a food drive for communities in need, young people could meet with local policymakers to advocate for subsidies to help build affordable grocery stores in communities with limited healthy food establishments. Regardless of the type of social change activity young people choose, their involvement can vary based on the relationship between their emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacy-related meaning-making processes during adolescence and into adulthood. To date, there is little empirical evidence based on quantitative analyses of the extent to which such perspectives and processes interact to predict participation in specific activities during the emergent adulthood developmental stage. Therefore, additional research is necessary to uncover relationships between these predictors and young people's participation in a range of social change behaviors.

Current Study

In order to explore the relationships between young people's sociopolitical perspectives, reflective meaning-making processes, and their participation in different social change activities as they transition from adolescence into emerging adulthood, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent do emergent sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-making processes predict youth participation in service-centered and systems-focused social change activities as young people transition out of high school into adult roles?

2. Is the relationship between adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives and service-centered involvement affected by young people's perceptions of social change and political self-efficacy before and after high school graduation?

3. Do adolescents' perceived social change and political efficacy affect the relationship between their specific lived experiences, worldview development, and participation in systems-focused activities as high school students and emerging adults?

4. To what extent does the relationship between emergent sociopolitical perspectives, reflective meaning-making processes, and social change participation change as young people transition into adulthood?

   a. Do sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes during high school predict social change involvement during emerging adulthood?

   b. To what extent do perceptions of social change and political efficacy moderate the relationship between sociopolitical perspectives during high school and postsecondary social change participation?

Based on previous research (e.g., Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Yates & Youniss, 1998), the hypothesis for the first research question is that specific components of young people's sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., experiences of discrimination and perceptions of fairness), and reflective meaning-making processes such as their perceptions of social change and political efficacy will predict high school and postsecondary participation in service-centered (i.e., community service and goodwill) and systems-focused (i.e., political and expressive) social

change activities (Figure 1). The linear relationships guiding the hypothesis of the first question examines whether young people's sociopolitical perspectives and intrapersonal meaning-making processes are directly related to involvement in each type of social change activity.

Figure 1. Sociopolitical Perspectives and Reflective Meaning-Making Processes in Relation to Social Change Activities.
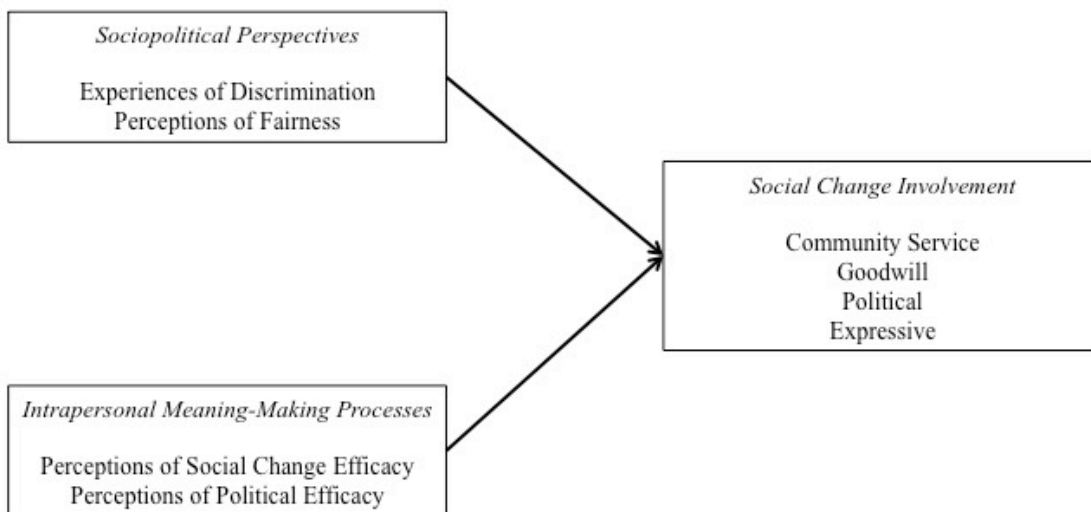
Moderation Effects and Interaction Terms

To account for the range of adolescents' reflective responses to experiences of discrimination and perceptions of fairness, the remaining research questions examine the relationship between sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes as attitudinal precursors for social change behaviors as young people transition out of high school into adult roles. As described in the SPD theoretical framework, varying perceptions of efficacy—as reactions to specific lived experiences and an emergent worldview—are key components to determining the extent to which individuals participate in social change activities (Laken & Mahoney, 2006; O'Donoghue & Strobel, 2007). By examining the interaction between meaning-

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making processes (i.e., moderating variable) and sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., independent variable), the remaining research questions test whether young people's experiences of discrimination and beliefs of fairness in society become more salient predictors of social change participation (i.e., dependent variable) for adolescents with differing levels of social change and political efficacy perceptions.

The current study also examines the specific interaction between adolescents' efficacy-related meaning-making processes (i.e., perceptions of social change efficacy and perceived political efficacy) to predict involvement in service-centered and systems-focused social change behaviors. In other words, in addition to capturing the relationship between varying sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes, the remaining research questions also consider if adolescents' perceptions for their social change efficacy moderate their perceived political efficacy, which represents one specific mechanism for promoting social change (Hope & Jagers, 2014; Leath & Chavous, 2017).

The hypothesis for the second research question is that perceptions of social change and political efficacy—as reflective meaning-making processes—will specifically have a moderating effect on the association between sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., experiences of discrimination and perceptions of fairness) and involvement in service and goodwill activities during high school and the transition into adulthood (Figure 2). Perceptions of self-efficacy can reflect an individual's response to a critical incident such as an experience of discrimination (Clay 2006; Ginwright, 2007). Furthermore, an emergent worldview can result in a range of efficacious attitudes (Silva & Langhout, 2011; Watts et al., 2003). By extending theoretical considerations for youth sociopolitical development, this research question further explores the behavioral manifestations of the sociopolitical perspectives possibly strengthened by perceptions of self-

efficacy. In other words, findings will reveal the extent to which service-centered social change behaviors are the result of efficacious attitudes emerging from young people's previous experiences of discrimination and their worldview development. The specific examination of service-centered involvement aligns with characteristics of the acritical, adaptive, precritical, and critical stages of SPD theory, which typically suggest sociopolitical perspectives that do not emphasize behaviors that challenge or dismantle systems of oppression (Howard, 2011; Watts et al., 1999). This research question contributes to SPD theory by further exploring these perspectives and resulting efficacy-related perceptions as predictors of social change behaviors that often result in limited long-term or systemic change.

Figure 2. Service-Centered Involvement with Perceived Social Change and Political Efficacy as Moderators.
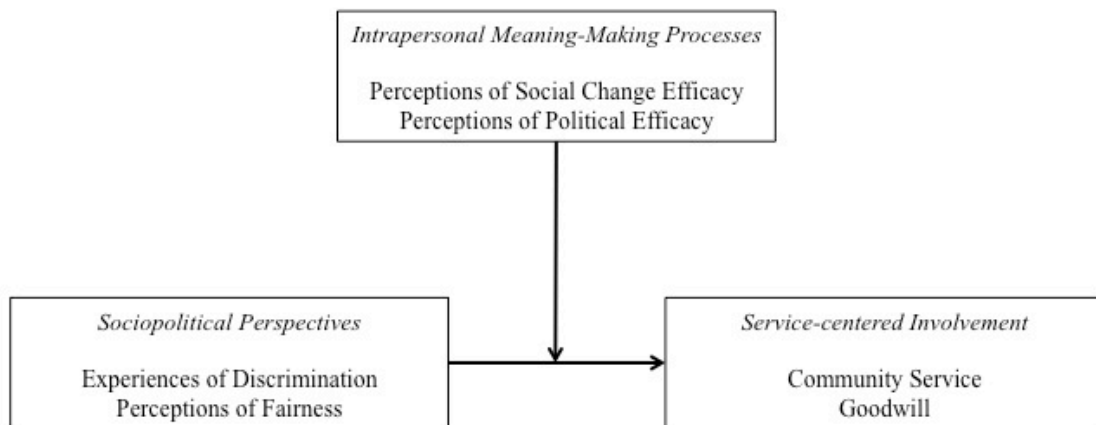
Similarly, the hypothesis of the third research question extends SPD theory by exploring if young people's perceptions of social change and political efficacy moderate the relationship between emergent sociopolitical perspectives and youth participation in systems-focused social change activities, such as political and expressive behaviors (Figure 3). In essence, findings will

illuminate the extent to which varying levels of efficacy-related perceptions—that result from a range of sociopolitical perspectives—predict youth involvement in systems-focused behaviors as high school students and as emerging adults. By specifically exploring social change behaviors that are more aligned with the liberation stage of SPD theory, this inquiry contributes to existing literature by revealing the dynamic processes reflected in social change behaviors intended to promote long-term or systemic change. Furthermore, this research question considers a range of sociopolitical perspectives and perceptions of social change efficacy associated with system-focused behaviors, instead of assuming that participation in such behaviors occurs only if young people have reached the liberation stage of the SPD framework.

Figure 3. Systems-Focused Involvement with Perceived Social Change and Political Efficacy as Moderators.
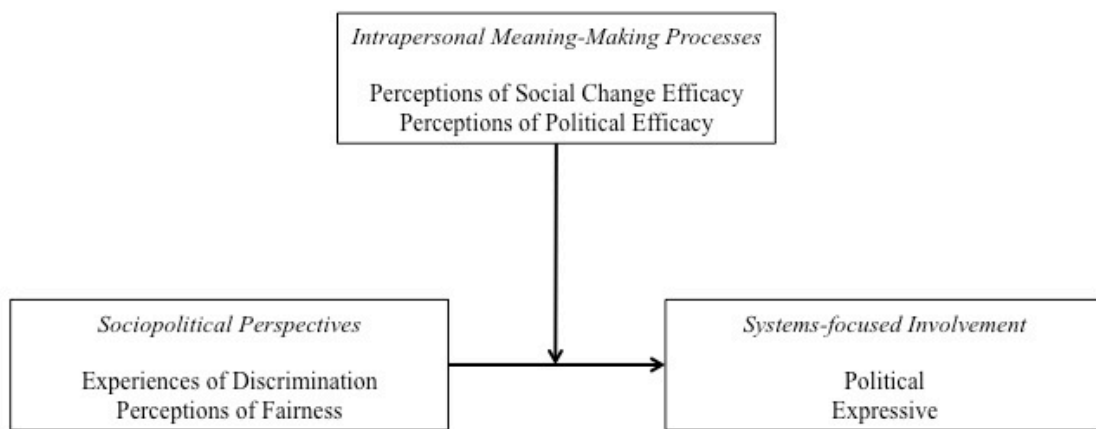
Finally, the hypothesis of the fourth research question is that efficacy-related meaning-making processes during high school will predict participation in service-centered and systems-focused social change activities for young people as they transition into adulthood (Figure 4). According to previous scholarship predicting adult participation in civic activities, worldview development during adolescence contributes to young people's civic identity and other

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predispositions for civic engagement (Hart et al., 2007; Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013). However, few scholars have the examined distal behavioral manifestations of emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacy-related meaning-making processes during adolescence. The final research question for this paper explores the longitudinal and developmental nature of SPD theory for adolescents by testing if adult social change behaviors can be predicted from young people's previous sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes.

Figure 4. Time 2 Social Change Involvement in Relation to Time 1 Sociopolitical Perspectives and Efficacious Meaning-Making Processes.
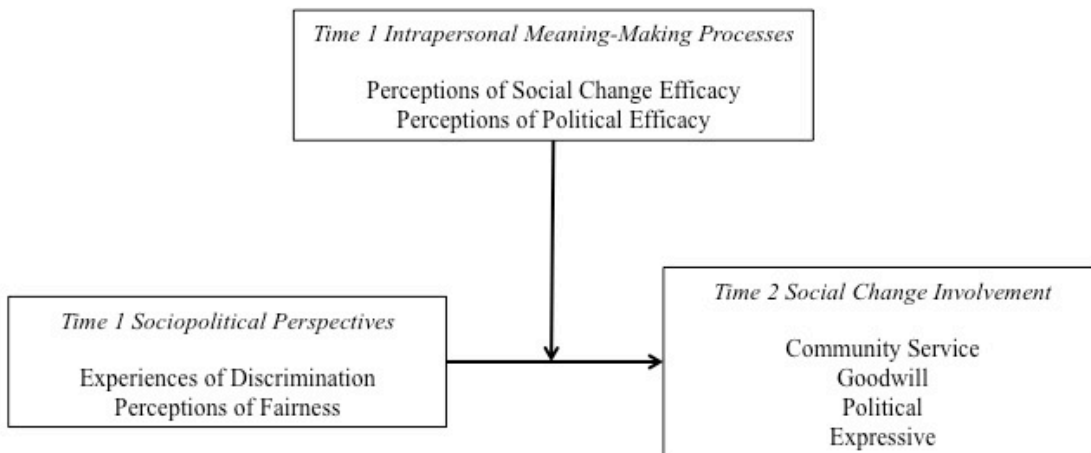
Methods

Survey data for this analysis come from the Stanford Civic Purpose Project, a longitudinal study conducted between 2011 and 2013 in the state of California (Damon, 2017). Funded by the Spencer Foundation, William Damon and colleagues sought to explore various motivations for young people's involvement in civic and political action, particularly within populations that have exhibited relatively lower levels of participation in traditional civic behaviors such as voting. Survey data were collected from high school seniors of diverse backgrounds in three different regions of California. Students were initially surveyed about their

school and neighborhoods, future goals and plans, civic and political attitudes and engagement, and components of their ethnic identity as high school students. Approximately two years after the initial survey, participants were invited to complete a follow-up survey that included repeated measures for social change behaviors, civic identity development, and future goals for community involvement. Through the availability of longitudinal data, much can be learned about the range of social change behaviors that reflect young people's sociopolitical meaning-making processes at two specific periods of the life course (i.e., before and after the first opportunity to vote) through multiple linear regression analyses.

Participants

Over 1,500 high school seniors completed surveys in school during the first wave of data collection in 2011. However, approximately two-thirds of the original sample did not complete a follow-up survey in 2013. Previous analyses have discussed barriers for increasing retention across data collection waves such as inaccurate contact information after participants completed high school (e.g., Ballard et al., 2015; Malin, Han, Liauw, 2017). Given the longitudinal approach to exploring this paper's research questions through multiple linear regression analyses, the current sample includes only participants who completed a survey during both waves of data collection ($n = 476$). Demographic information for the selected sample (see Table 1) reveals a higher percentage of female respondents (60.5%) compared to the larger sample (52%), as well as more students who identify as Asian (34.2%) and fewer students who identify as Latino (40.8%). Students identifying with remaining ethnic groups are relatively representative of the larger sample at Time 1. Overall, the diversity of the sample provides the opportunity to explore the longitudinal sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors of adolescents from various backgrounds.

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Table 1. Demographic Information.

	Percentage	M	SD
Age		16.83	0.52
Gender			
Male ($n = 188$)	39.50%		
Female ($n = 288$)	60.50%		
Ethnicity			
Asian ($n = 163$)	34.20%		
Black ($n = 22$)	4.60%		
Latino ($n = 194$)	40.80%		
White ($n = 29$)	6.10%		
Mixed Race ($n = 43$)	9%		
Other ($n = 25$)	5.30%		

Measures

Based on the attitudinal and behavioral components of SPD theory, select measures were identified from the questionnaire administered during both waves of data collection. In addition to self-reported demographic variables for gender and ethnicity, additional measures were chosen to explore relationships between young people's efficacious attitudes for social and political change and two specific contributors to their emergent sociopolitical perspectives: perceptions of fairness and justice in the United States, and personal experiences of discrimination. These dependent variables were selected given their alignment to the attitudinal components of SPD theory. Furthermore, independent variables represent various behavioral manifestations of youth sociopolitical perspectives that either promote service-centered (i.e., community service and goodwill activities) or systems-focused change (i.e., political and expressive activities). The following section describes the items selected for analysis.

Experiences of discrimination. In order to account for specific personal experiences with injustice, respondents indicated on a 4-point Likert scale how often they felt they had been discriminated against for any reason. Responses included "never," "once or twice," "a few times," or "regularly."

Perceptions of fairness in the United States. To assess how youth perceived the sociopolitical climate, students were asked to indicate their perception of fairness in the United States based on a 5-point Likert scale with the following three questionnaire items: "Basically, people get fair treatment in America, no matter who they are," "In America, you have an equal chance no matter where you come from or what race you are," and "America is a fair society where everyone has an equal chance to get ahead." Responses ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Perceptions of social change efficacy. In order to examine the extent to which young people believe their future actions will contribute to social change efforts, students answered five questions that assessed their civic intent. These items comprised a subscale of a larger measures that asked participants to indicate how meaningful the following goals were for their future: "being involved in politics," "making a difference through volunteering," "helping others in need," "becoming a leader in the community," "making positive changes in the community," and "having an impact on a social cause or issue they find personally important." Responses on a 5-point Likert scale included "not at all meaningful," "not very meaningful," "somewhat meaningful," "meaningful," and "extremely meaningful."

Perceptions of political efficacy. Participants were also asked to share their perceptions of their individual efficacy for promoting policy changes. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for the following statements:

"I have a pretty good understanding of the political issues facing our country," "I have a role to play in the political process," "When policy issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say," "I'm better informed about policies and government than most people my age," and "I'm well qualified to participate in the political process."

Social change activities. As part of a measure for civic action, youth indicated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from "never" to "regularly," how often they were involved in 22 different activities since starting high school. Three validated subscales were previously identified for social change activities (i.e., political, expressive, service). Items for *political activities* include the following: "holding a leadership position in a school club," "attending a protest, march, meeting, or demonstration," "running for a position in student government," "representing students at a city council or school board meeting," "interacting with people or groups about political issues," and "documenting or discussing political or social issues through the Internet." Activities such as writing a letter to a "school or community newspaper," "contacting a political representative to tell him/her about a particular issue," "using art, music, or digital media to express views about political or social issues," and "expressing opinions or beliefs about issues through clothing, buttons, or bumper stickers" are considered *expressive activities*. As suggested by existing literature on second-order change and the current study's research questions, political and expressive activities are considered to be **systems-focused** social change behaviors.

Service-centered activities include survey items from a third validated subscale from the civic action measure for *service activities*, which include "helping with a fund-raising project," "giving help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides) to friends or classmates who needed it," "volunteering at a school event," "giving money to a cause," and "volunteering with a

community service organization." The principal investigators did not validate the remaining items from the civic action measure as a fourth subscale, but they describe additional examples of how young people might contribute to their community (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2012). The actions include "visiting or helping out people who are sick," "doing things to help improve the neighborhood," "helping people who were new to the country," and "earning money to support my family" and are considered *goodwill activities* for the current study.

Data Analysis

Data from this study are publicly available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research's (ICPSR) Civic Learning, Engagement and Action Data (CivicLEADS) website. Through this public database, all personal identifiers for participants (i.e., place of residence, high school attended) were removed in order to ensure confidentiality. Additional details of the data cleaning and management process can be found in the user guide (Damon, 2017). All phases of data analysis were completed using SPSS Version 26.

Missing Data Analysis. Prior to exploring relationships between selected variables, a missing data analysis was performed to determine how to appropriately handle missing data in order to retain as much of the sample as possible and reduce bias while maximizing statistical power. This is particularly important given the variable-centered approach of the present study to identify parsimonious models with good fit, by balancing the simplicity of each model while also ensuring that resulting models best explain the data (Cohen et al., 2003). The analysis revealed that 79.72% of all cases at Time 1 had complete data. Additionally, 85.21% of Time 2 cases were complete. For both waves, all of the items had missing data, however, no items had more than 10% of values missing. The largest percent of missing values was 8% for one item for both survey administrations. In order to determine the best approach to handle missing data, several

techniques were implemented. Patterns of missingness suggested that Time 1 data were missing completely at random (MCAR), based on results from Little's MCAR test (χ^2= 2935.538, *df* =2861, *p* = .162). Since the result from Little's test was not significant, I utilized expectation-maximization imputation techniques to create a complete dataset for Time 1 responses (Graham, 2012). The expectation-maximization algorithm includes using parameters from observed data to create random values for missing data points in order to estimate a complete set of data.

However, for Time 2 data, Little's MCAR test was significant (χ^2= 1815.512, *df* = 1594, *p* =0.000), which suggests that data were not missing completely at random (MCAR), but were instead either missing at random (MAR) or missing not at random (MNAR) (Sinharay et al., 2001). Of the participants who completed the Time 2 survey, 6% of respondents had more than 10% of values missing. Furthermore, 3% of cases were missing at least 30% of survey items, which could potentially lead to biased results if listwise deletion methods were employed (Graham, 2009; Soley-Bori, 2013). Given the nature of the missing values in the Time 2 responses, multiple imputations—or sets of estimated values for missing data—were used to create a full dataset for analysis. Previous literature has identified this technique as a practical approach to handling missing data due to the method's consideration of observed variance and predictive distributions to create a likely set of replacement values (Raghunathan, 2004; Sinharay et al., 2001).

Preliminary analyses. After compiling a full dataset for both waves of data, composite scores for independent and dependent variables with multiple scale items were created for further analysis. Descriptive statistics including means (*M)* and standard deviations (*SD*) for independent and dependent variables can be found in Table 2. With the exception of perceptions of fairness in the United States (*M* = 2.77, *SD* = 0.99 [Time 1]; *M* = 2.52, *SD* = 0.97 [Time 2]), variables for

sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-making processes remained relatively consistent during both survey administrations. Participation in social change behaviors decreased across waves of data collection, with the exception of several specific goodwill and political activities such as taking care of other families' children ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.069$ [Time 1]; $M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.05$ [Time 2]), earning money to support participants' family ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 1.00$ [Time 1]; $M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.20$ [Time 2]), and political activities such as interacting with people or groups about political issues ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 0.97$ [Time 1]; $M = 1.86$, $SD = 0.99$ [Time 2]). Respondents also reported the same level of involvement over time for the goodwill activity of signing a petition ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 0.92$ [Time 1]; $M = 2.08$, $SD = 0.92$ [Time 2]), and political activities such as representing the students at their school at a public meeting ($M = 1.34$, $SD = 0.75$ [Time 1]; $M = 1.34$, $SD = 0.72$ [Time 2]) and documenting or discussing political and social issues through the internet ($M = 1.94$, $SD = 1.10$ [Time 1]; $M = 1.94$, $SD = 1.05$ [Time 2]). On average, participants engaged in similar levels of social change activities across waves, with a higher average for service activities ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.74$ [Time 1]; $M = 2.30$, $SD = 0.75$ [Time 2]) compared to involvement in political activities ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.61$ [Time 1]; $M = 1.61$, $SD = 0.61$ [Time 2]).

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Meaning-Making Processes and Social Change Involvement.

	Time 1		Time 2	
	M	SD	M	SD
Independent Variables				
Experiences of Discrimination	2.45	0.89	2.46	0.88
Perceptions of US Fairness	2.77	0.99	2.52	0.97
Social Change Efficacy	3.66	0.70	3.59	0.75
Political Efficacy	2.97	0.79	2.98	0.85
Service Activities	2.82	0.74	2.30	0.75
Helped with a fundraising project	2.84	0.89	2.15	0.94
Gave help (e.g., money, food, clothing, rides) to friends or classmates who needed it	2.95	0.86	2.75	0.90
Volunteered at a school event	2.89	1.02	2.15	1.02
Gave money to a cause	2.68	0.93	2.37	0.95
Volunteered with a community service organization	2.77	1.10	2.08	1.06
Goodwill Activities	2.24	0.56	2.28	0.64
Visited or helped out people who were sick	2.29	0.91	2.26	0.94
Took care of other families' children (unpaid)	2.39	1.07	2.45	1.05
Did things to help improve the neighborhood (e.g., helped clean neighborhood)	2.15	0.99	2.04	0.92
Signed a petition	2.08	0.90	2.08	0.92
Helped people who were new to the country	2.03	0.92	2.03	0.98
Earned money to support my family	1.75	1.00	2.35	1.20
Provided care for younger siblings, disabled, or elderly members of my family	2.97	1.04	2.77	1.11
Political Activities	1.71	0.61	1.61	0.61
Held a leadership position in a school club	2.13	1.24	1.71	1.00
Attended a protest march, meeting or demonstration	1.60	0.82	1.54	0.83
Ran for a position in student government	1.41	0.84	1.29	0.71
Represented the students at my school at a city council or school board meeting	1.34	0.75	1.34	0.72
Interacted with people or groups about political issues	1.83	0.97	1.86	0.99
Documented or discussed political and social issues through the Internet (Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Myspace, Youtube)	1.94	1.07	1.94	1.05
Expressive Activities	1.78	0.67	1.65	0.68
Wrote a letter to a school or community newspaper or publication	1.46	0.79	1.36	0.72

Contacted a political representative to tell him/her how you felt about a particular issue	1.34	0.68	1.33	0.70
Expressed my own opinions or beliefs about issues through clothing, buttons, or bumper stickers	2.22	1.08	1.98	1.05
Used art, music or digital media (art/graffiti/music/spoken word/dance/video/rap) to express my views about political or social issues	2.08	1.07	1.92	1.06

Mean differences by gender and ethnicity across waves can be found in Table 3. Overall, female respondents reported higher levels of involvement in social change behaviors, with the exception of expressive activities at Time 1 ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 0.04$ [female]; $M = 1.79$, $SD = 0.71$ [male]) and goodwill activities at Time 2 ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 0.62$ [female]; $M = 2.29$, $SD = 0.66$ [male]). This is consistent with previous research that has revealed some gender differences in civic engagement (Malin, Tirri, Liauw, 2015). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed significant differences between male and female respondents for service activities ($p = .017$), perceptions of social change efficacy ($p = .004$) and fairness in the United States ($p = .012$) during the first wave of data collection.

Table 3. Mean Differences By Gender and Ethnicity for Meaning-Making Processes and Social Change Activities.

	Gender M(SD)		Ethnicity M(SD)					
	Male	Female	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Mixed	Other
Time 1 Meaning-Making Processes								
Experiences of Discrimination	2.48 (0.90)	2.43 (0.88)	2.38 (0.87)	2.64 (0.90)	2.54 (0.86)	2.48 (1.06)	2.49 (0.96)	1.94 (0.74)
Perception of US Fairness	2.95* (1.00)	2.65* (0.98)	2.99 (0.93)	2.15 (0.99)	2.63 (0.98)	2.78 (1.12)	2.67 (1.02)	2.93 (0.97)
Social Change Efficacy	3.53** (0.74)	3.75** (0.66)	3.63 (0.65)	3.48 (0.93)	3.68 (0.71)	3.80 (0.60)	3.62 (0.73)	3.85 (0.77)
Political Efficacy	3.00 (0.87)	2.96 (0.73)	2.82 (0.74)	2.93 (0.73)	2.89 (0.76)	3.68 (0.80)	3.28 (0.79)	3.25 (0.79)
Time 2 Meaning-Making Processes								
Experiences of Discrimination	2.38 (0.88)	2.51 (0.88)	2.40 (0.86)	2.86 (0.77)	2.49 (0.91)	2.38 (0.82)	2.53 (0.83)	2.16 (0.85)
Perception of US Fairness	2.61 (0.97)	2.45 (0.98)	2.62 (0.94)	2.00 (0.91)	2.50 (0.99)	2.38 (0.84)	2.47 (1.13)	2.49 (0.83)
Social Change Efficacy	3.49 (0.77)	3.65 (0.75)	3.49 (0.69)	3.49 (0.89)	3.64 (0.79)	3.64 (0.86)	3.72 (0.77)	3.66 (0.69)
Political Efficacy	3.02 (0.88)	2.96 (0.82)	2.86 (0.76)	2.93 (0.62)	2.98 (0.90)	3.44 (0.77)	3.29 (0.84)	2.76 (0.96)
Time 1 Social Change Activities								
Service	2.70* (0.76)	2.91* (0.72)	2.98* (0.69)	2.58* (0.68)	2.74 (0.74)	2.79 (0.75)	2.80 (0.80)	2.78 (0.83)
Goodwill	2.15 (0.59)	2.30 (0.53)	2.26 (0.53)	2.07 (0.50)	2.28 (0.55)	2.15 (0.65)	2.17 (0.64)	2.17 (0.58)
Political	1.68 (0.63)	1.73 (0.60)	1.67 (0.56)	1.72 (0.68)	1.64 (0.60)	1.99 (0.65)	1.93 (0.63)	1.77 (0.75)
Expressive	1.79 (0.71)	1.76 (0.64)	1.62 (0.61)	1.92 (0.55)	1.84 (0.71)	1.88 (0.66)	1.77 (0.70)	2.00 (0.58)

Time 2 Social Change Activities

Service	2.30	2.30	2.33	2.41	2.28	2.49	2.17	2.23
	(0.78)	(0.74)	(0.76)	(0.68)	(0.76)	(0.83)	(0.72)	(0.74)
Goodwill	2.29	2.28	2.34	2.32	2.37	2.11	2.26	2.21
	(0.66)	(0.62)	(0.63)	(0.64)	(0.61)	(0.68)	(0.72)	(0.63)
Political	1.61	1.62	1.54	1.76	1.60	1.80	1.76	1.58
	(0.66)	(0.59)	(0.56)	(0.86)	(0.65)	(0.56)	(0.60)	(0.52)
Expressive	1.63	1.66	1.46	1.96	1.77	1.71	1.63	1.57
	(0.68)	(0.69)	(0.54)	(0.75)	(0.75)	(0.61)	(0.73)	(0.62)

Note: *p <0.05, **<0.01

Based on participants' self-reported ethnic backgrounds, Asian respondents had the most favorable perception of fairness in the United States across waves, yet, the average declined during the follow-up survey ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.93$ [Time 1]; $M = 2.62$, $SD = 0.94$ [Time 2]). Participants who identified as white reported the strongest feelings of political efficacy compared to other ethnic groups ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.80$ [Time 1]; $M = 3.44$, $SD = 0.77$ [Time 2]). Moreover, despite an overall increase across all ethnic groups except Latino respondents, Black participants experienced higher levels of discrimination for both survey administrations ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.90$ [Time 1]; $M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.77$ [Time 2]). Through ANOVA, significant differences between ethnic groups were observed for service, political and expressive activities at Time 1, and political, goodwill, and expressive activities at Time 2. Furthermore, significant differences for all sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-marking processes were detected across waves amongst ethnic groups, with the exception of perceptions of social change efficacy.

Finally, bivariate relationships among the study variables were examined through correlation analysis (Table 4). Social change efficacy at Time 1 was positively correlated with experiences of discrimination, political efficacy, and social change behaviors across waves, except for a negative correlation with perceptions of fairness in the United States at Time 2

(r = -0.099; p < 0.05). Time 1 perceptions of fairness were negatively correlated with experiences of discrimination at Time 1 (r = -0.32; p < 0.01) and Time 2 (r = -1.77; p < 0.05), and positively correlated with perceptions of fairness at Time 2 (r = 0.34; p < 0.01). Time 1 perceptions of political efficacy were positively correlated with all social change behaviors. However, the same perceptions at Time 2 were only positively correlated with goodwill activities at Time 2 (r = 0.09; p < 0.05). Experiences of discrimination at Time 1 were positively correlated with all social change behaviors across waves except for goodwill activities at Time 2. Moreover, Time 2 experiences of discrimination suggested low positive correlations between social change behaviors for Time 1 and Time 2, with the exception of service and expressive activities at Time 1. Overall, social change behaviors across waves were all positively correlated, with the highest correlation observed between Time 2 service activities and Time 2 goodwill activities (r = 0.61; p < 0.01), and the lowest correlation observed between Time 1 service activities and Time 2 expressive activities (r = 0.23; p < 0.01).

Table 4. Bivariate Correlation Coefficients for Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. T1 Experiences of Discrimination	-															
2. T1 Perceptions of US Fairness	-.32**	-														
3. T1 Social Change Efficacy	.17**	.10	-													
4. T1 Political Efficacy	.10*	.00	.36**	-												
5. T2 Experiences of Discrimination	.47**	-.18**	.18**	.05	-											
6. T2 Perceptions of US Fairness	-.21**	.34**	-.10*	-.04	-.22**	-										
7. T2 Social Change Efficacy	.09*	.07	.48**	.29**	.12**	.05	-									
8. T2 Political Efficacy	.07	.01	.27**	.52**	.05	.06	.44**	-								
9. T1 Service	.16**	-.04	.49**	.25**	.05	-.10*	.35**	.18**	-							
10. T1 Goodwill	.15**	-.07	.44**	.26**	.16**	-.03	.32**	.16**	.59**	-						
11. T1 Political	.13**	-.02	.46**	.47**	.12**	-.05	.31**	.29**	.56**	.48**	-					
12. T1 Expressive	.16**	-.01	.28**	.35**	.06	-.02	.23**	.18**	.39*	.45**	.44**	-				
13. T2 Service	.10*	-.01	.27**	.20**	.22**	-.03	.37**	.31**	.45**	.40**	.34**	.26**	-			
14. T2 Goodwill	.04	-.001	.21**	.20**	.21**	.09*	.32**	.27**	.25**	.53**	.25**	.26**	.61**	-		
15. T2 Political	.10*	-.01	.21**	.39**	.17**	-.01	.31**	.46**	.27**	.27**	.43**	.32**	.53**	.55**	-	
16. T2 Expressive	.11*	-.05	.18**	.24**	.25**	-.06	.34**	.37**	.23**	.27**	.29**	.37**	.55**	.48**	.58**	-

*p<0.05, **p<0.01

Results

Multiple linear regression analyses were used to examine relationships between sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., experiences of discrimination and perceptions of fairness in the United States), reflective meaning-making processes for such perspectives (i.e., perceptions of social change and political efficacy), and social change behaviors (i.e., service-centered and systems-focused social change activities). Based on General Linear Modeling (GLM) procedures, I tested whether sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes account for a significant portion of the variance found in young people's participation across both waves of data collection in service-centered (i.e., service and goodwill) and systems-focused (i.e., political and expressive) activities. Demographic variables (i.e., gender and ethnicity) were included in all models to determine their potential predictive power for social change behaviors. Additionally, I examined interaction effects of perceived social change and political efficacy for all independent variables through hierarchical regression analyses. For all models, significance tests using F-values and p-values to were used to assess the significance of each regression model and to test null hypotheses for each of the research questions (e.g., sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes do not predict high school and postsecondary participation in service-centered and systems-focused social change activities). Moreover, values for R^2 and adjusted R^2 were observed as additional independent variables were added to the models, as well as changes in predicted R^2 values to determine how well the model predicted additional data points.

Sociopolitical Perspectives and Reflective Meaning-making Processes in Relation to Social Change Activities at Time 1

Using GLM procedures, I conducted linear regression analysis to test the extent to which experiences of discrimination, perceptions of fairness, and perceptions of social change and political efficacy account for a significant portion of the variance in youth participation in service-centered and systems-focused activities during high school (Time 1). The analysis also included gender and ethnicity as potential predictors of young people's high school social change involvement. Separate models were run for each of the social change activities (i.e., service, goodwill, political expressive) to account for differences within service-centered or systems-focused endeavors (Table 5).

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Analyses Predicting Time 1 Social Change Involvement

	Service			Goodwill			Political			Expressive		
	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta
Predictor												
Step 1												
T1 Experiences of Discrimination	.05	.04	.06	.03	.03	.05	.02	.03	.03	.09	.03	.12*
T1 Perceptions of US Fairness	-.02	.03	-.03	-.03	.02	-.05	-.01	.03	-.02	.02	.03	.03
T1 Social Change Efficacy	.46	.05	.43***	.30	.04	.38***	.29	.04	.33***	.16	.05	.17***
T1 Political Efficacy	.11	.04	.12**	.10	.03	.14**	.27	.03	.35***	.22	.04	.26***
Gender	.12	.06	.08	.08	.05	.07	-.004	.05	-.003	-.05	.06	-.04
Ethnicity	-.06	.02	-.14**	-.03	.01	-.10*	.01	.01	.01	.03	.02	.08
Step 2												
T1 Experiences of Discrimination X T1 Social Change Efficacy	.06	.05	.05	.02	.04	.03	.03	.04	.04	-.10	.05	-.09*
T1 Experiences of Discrimination X T1 Political Efficacy	.06	.04	.05	.06	.03	.07	.05	.03	.05	-.01	.04	-.02
T1 Perceptions of US Fairness X T1 Social Change Efficacy	-.01	.04	-.01	-.01	.03	-.01	-.21	.03	-.03	.01	.04	.01
T1 Perceptions of US Fairness X T1 Political Efficacy	.02	.04	.02	.03	.03	.05	-.03	.03	-.05	.04	.03	.05
T1 Social Change Efficacy x T1 Political Efficacy	.08	.05	.06	.02	.04	.02	.10	.04	.11**	.10	0.05	.10*

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

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Service activities. The overall model for service activities was significant (R^2 = 0.28, adjusted R^2 = 0.27, F(6, 475), p < 0.001). Social change efficacy was a moderate predictor of young people's involvement in service activities (b = 0.46, p < 0.001). Ethnicity was also a significant predictor with a negative association with service behaviors (b = -0.06, p < 0.01). Previous experiences of discrimination, and perceptions of fairness in the United States and political efficacy were not significantly related to previous service activities, which means neither young people's sociopolitical perspectives nor perceptions of their political efficacy predicted high school service behaviors. Moreover, gender was not a significant predictor of these activities.

Goodwill activities. For participants' engagement in goodwill activities, the overall model was significant (R^2 = 0.23, adjusted R^2 = 0.22, F(6, 475), p < 0.001). Social change efficacy was a moderate predictor of involvement in goodwill activities (b = 0.30, p < 0.001), in addition to perceptions of political efficacy (b = 0.14, p < 0.001). Moreover, ethnicity was also a significant predictor with a negative association with goodwill behaviors (b = -0.10, p < 0.01). Gender, experiences of discrimination, and perceptions of fairness in the United States were not significantly related to participation in goodwill activities, which means that neither young people' sociopolitical perspectives nor their gender predicted goodwill behaviors during high school.

Political activities. When considering political activities, the overall model was significant (R^2 = 0.32, adjusted R^2 = 0.31, F(6, 475), p < 0.001). Social change efficacy was a moderate predictor of involvement in political activities (b = 0.29, p < 0.001), in addition to perceptions of political efficacy (b = 0.27, p < 0.001). Ethnicity, gender, experiences of discrimination, and perceptions of fairness in the United States were not significantly related to

participation in political activities. This means that of the independent variables tested, young people's perceptions of their social change and political efficacy were the only predictors of their high school political behaviors.

Expressive activities. The overall model for expressive activities was significant ($R^2 =$ 0.16, adjusted $R^2 = 0.15$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Political efficacy was a moderate predictor of expressive activities ($b = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$). Social change efficacy presented a slightly lower association ($b = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, experiences of discrimination were also related to participation in expressive activities ($b = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$). However, ethnicity, gender, and perceptions of fairness in the United States were not significantly related to previous expressive activities, which means that neither demographic characteristics nor young people's perceptions of fairness predicted high school expressive behaviors.

Perceived social change efficacy as a moderator at Time 1. To address whether adolescents' perceptions of their social change efficacy strengthens the relationship between the sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., perceptions of fairness in the United States, experiences of discrimination) and perceived political efficacy, I used GLM testing to examine the interaction between each of the independent variables and perceptions of social change efficacy. The overall models for each of the social change activities were significant. However, the interactions for service and goodwill activities were not significant, which means that varying levels of social change efficacy did not strengthen the relationship between young people's sociopolitical perspectives and their service-centered behaviors. The model predicting political activities included a significant interaction between social change efficacy and political efficacy ($b = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, two significant interactions were observed for participation in expressive activities including the relationship between experiences of discrimination and social change

efficacy (b = -0.09, p < 0.05), and social change and political efficacy (b = 0.10, p < 0.05). This means that the relationship between young people's previous experiences of discrimination and their high school expressive behaviors was strengthened based on young people's level of social change efficacy. Likewise, varying levels of young people's perceived social change efficacy strengthened the relationship between adolescents' high school perceptions of their political efficacy and involvement in expressive activities.

Perceived political efficacy as a moderator at Time 1. Interaction effects between perceptions of political efficacy and sociopolitical perspectives for each type of social change participation were conducted. Although the overall models were significant, none of the interactions suggested a significant relationship for predicting social change involvement. In other words, young people's varying levels of perceived political efficacy did not strengthen the relationship between their sociopolitical perspectives and their involvement in service-centered or systems-focused activities. This suggests that young people's perceptions of their political efficacy do not help to explain the predictive relationship between young people's sociopolitical perspectives and high school social change involvement.

Sociopolitical Perspectives and Reflective Meaning-making Processes in Relation to Social Change Activities at Time 2

Models for sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-making processes and social change involvement during follow-up surveys were also examined using linear regression analysis. Similar to the first phase of analysis, significant predictors for serviced-centered and systems-focused activities were observed (Table 6).

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analyses Predicting Time 2 Social Change Involvement

	Service			Goodwill			Political			Expressive		
	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta
Predictor												
Step 1												
T2 Experiences of Discrimination	.15	.04	.17***	.14	.03	.20***	.10	.03	.14**	.16	.03	.21***
T2 Perceptions of US Fairness	-.01	.03	-.02	.07	.03	.11*	-.002	.03	-.003	-.02	.03	-.03
T2 Social Change Efficacy	.27	.05	.27	.19	.04	.23***	.09	.04	.11*	017	.04	.19***
T2 Political Efficacy	.17	.04	.19***	.12	.04	.16**	.29	.03	.40***	.22	.04	.27***
Gender	-.05	.07	-.03	-.04	.06	-.03	-.01	.05	-.004	-.01	.06	-.004
Ethnicity	-.04	.02	-.09*	-.01	.02	-.03	.01	.01	.03	.02	.02	.04
Step 2												
T2 Experiences of Discrimination X T2 Social Change Efficacy	.01	.05	.01	-.03	.04	-.03	-.02	.04	-.03	.07	.04	.07
T2 Experiences of Discrimination X T2 Political Efficacy	-.002	.04	-.002	.01	.04	.01	.02	.03	.02	.03	.04	.03
T2 Perceptions of US Fairness X T2 Social Change Efficacy	-.05	.04	-.05	-.05	.04	-.06	-.03	.03	-.04	-.04	.04	.07
T2 Perceptions of US Fairness X T2 Political Efficacy	.03	.04	.04	.03	.03	.04	-.30	.03	.04	.05	.03	.03
T2 Social Efficacy x T2 Political Efficacy	.15	.04	.15***	.10	.04	.13**	.11	.03	.13**	.13	.04	.14**

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Service activities. The overall model for service activities was significant ($R^2 = 0.20$ adjusted $R^2 = 0.19$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Perceptions of political efficacy ($b = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$) and experiences of discrimination ($b = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$) had a positive association with service activities. Moreover, ethnicity continued to hold a negative relationship with service forms of social change involvement ($b = -0.04$, $p < 0.001$). Gender, perceptions of fairness in the United States, and social change efficacy were not significantly related to postsecondary service involvement. This means that similar to young people's experiences in high school, neither gender nor their perceptions of fairness predicted service behaviors during emerging adulthood. However, unlike their high school service activities, previous experiences of discrimination and perceptions of political efficacy were predictive of such behaviors as young people transitioned away from high school.

Goodwill activities. For young peoples' engagement in goodwill activities, the overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.16$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.15$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Demographic variables (i.e. gender, ethnicity) were not significantly related to participation in goodwill activities. However, all sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes suggested positive predictive relationships including perceptions of social change ($b = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$) and political efficacy ($b = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$), in addition to experiences of discrimination ($b = 0.14$, $p < 0.001$) and perceptions of fairness in the United States ($b = 0.07$, $p < 0.05$). This differs from young people's high school involvement in goodwill activities, which was predicted only by meaning-making processes (i.e., perceptions of social change and political efficacy). These findings suggest that as young people transition away from high school, their emergent sociopolitical perspectives are more predictive of goodwill activities compared to efficacy-related meaning-making processes.

Political activities. When considering political activities, the overall model was significant, ($R^2 = 0.24$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.23$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Social change efficacy was a positive predictor of involvement in political activities ($b = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$), in addition to perceptions of political efficacy ($b = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$) and experiences of discrimination ($b = 0.10$, $p < 0.001$). Ethnicity, gender, and perceptions of fairness in the United States were not significantly related to participation in political activities. With the exception of the predictive relationship between young people's previous experiences of discrimination and their postsecondary engagement in political activities, these results mirror what was reported for participants' high school political behaviors.

Expressive activities. The overall model for expressive activities was significant ($R^2 = 0.22$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.21$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Political efficacy had a similar relationship as seen at Time 1 ($b = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, social change efficacy presented a slightly lower association ($b = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, experiences of discrimination demonstrated a slightly stronger relationship with participation in expressive activities compared to the first wave of data collection ($b = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$). However, ethnicity, gender, and perceptions of fairness in the United States were not significantly related to involvement in expressive activities. These results reflect the relationships between young people's sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and expressive behaviors during high school.

Perceived social change efficacy as a moderator at Time 2. Interactions between social change efficacy, sociopolitical perspectives, and perceived political efficacy were also examined for Time 2 variables using GLM testing. Similar to results from the first wave of data collection, overall models for each of the social change activities were significant. However, the only significant interactions observed were between perceptions of social change efficacy and

political efficacy for each of type of social change involvement. All of the predictors were relatively low across activities as follows: service ($b = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$), goodwill ($b = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$), political ($b = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$), and expressive ($b = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$). This means that varying levels of young people's perceived social change efficacy after high school strengthened the relationship between their postsecondary political efficacy and all of the social change behaviors observed. These results differ from what was observed in the first survey administration, where perceptions of social change efficacy strengthened only the relationship between high school experiences of discrimination and expressive behaviors.

Perceived political efficacy as a moderator at Time 2. Interaction effects between perceptions of political efficacy, sociopolitical perspectives, and social change efficacy for each type of postsecondary social change participation were also examined. Although the overall models were significant, none of the interactions suggested a significant relationship for predicting social change involvement. These results mirror what was observed at Time 1, and suggest that varying levels of young people's perceived political efficacy do not strengthen the relationship between their sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change behaviors.

Time 1 Meaning-making Processes in Relation to Social Change Activities at Time 2

In order to examine the relationship between Time 1 predictors and social change involvement at Time 2, additional models were run across waves. These models were examined in order to determine the extent to which young people's sociopolitical perspectives and efficacy-related meaning-making processes from high school predicted their involvement in social change behaviors as they entered emerging adulthood. Linear regression analysis was used to identify statistically significant associations between high school sociopolitical perspectives,

reflective meaning-making processes, and postsecondary participation in each of the social change activities (Table 7).

Table 7. Time 1 Meaning-Making Processes Predicting T2 Social Change Involvement

	Service			Goodwill			Political			Expressive		
	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta	b	SE_b	Beta
Predictor												
Step 1												
T1 Experiences of Discrimination	.04	.04	.05	-.01	.04	-.01	.04	.03	.05	.06	.04	.07
T1 Perceptions of US Fairness	-.01	.04	-.01	-.01	.03	-.01	.00	.03	.00	-.01	.03	-.02
T1 Social Change Efficacy	.24	.05	.23***	.15	.05	.17**	.07	.04	.07	.09	.05	.10
T1 Political Efficacy	.13	.05	.14**	.12	.04	.15**	.28	.04	.36***	.16	.04	.19***
Gender	-.05	.07	-.03	-.04	.06	-.03	.01	.06	.01	.02	.06	.01
Ethnicity	-.04	.02	-.09	-.02	.02	-.04	.00	.02	.00	.01	.02	.04
Step 2												
T2 Experiences of Discrimination X T1 Social Change Efficacy	-.06	.05	-.06	-.06	.05	-.06	-.03	.04	-.03	-.02	.05	-.02
T2 Experiences of Discrimination X T1 Political Efficacy	.01	.05	.01	.01	.04	.01	.04	.04	.04	.01	.04	.01
T2 Perceptions of US Fairness X T1 Social Change Efficacy	-.01	.05	-.01	-.03	.04	-.04	-.05	.04	-.06	-.06	.05	-.06
T2 Perceptions of US Fairness X T1 Political Efficacy	.06	.04	.06	.06	.04	.07	-.01	.04	-.01	.04	.04	.04

**p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Service activities. The overall model for Time 2 service activities was significant with Time 1 predictors ($R^2 = 0.10$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.10$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Social change efficacy ($b = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$) and political efficacy ($b = 0.13$, $p < 0.001$) were both predictors of involvement in service activities. However, all other Time 1 predictors including demographic variables and sociopolitical perspectives were not significantly related to postsecondary service activities. This means that young people's high school perceptions of their social change and political efficacy predicted their involvement in service behaviors as they transitioned into adulthood, but other independent variables did not have the same relationship.

Goodwill activities. For young people's engagement in goodwill activities, the overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.07$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.05$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Similar to the model for service activities, social change efficacy ($b = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$) and political efficacy ($b = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$) were the only Time 1 variables that predicted a significant relationship with participation in goodwill activities at Time 2. These results suggest that young people's postsecondary goodwill behaviors are related to their high school meaning-making processes such as their perceived social change and political efficacy, however, the same goodwill behaviors during adulthoods are not predicted by young people's previous sociopolitical perspectives.

Political activities. When considering political activities, the overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.16$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.15$, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). However, political efficacy was the only significant Time 1 predictor for postsecondary involvement in political activities ($b = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$). None of the remaining demographic variables, sociopolitical perspectives, or meaning-making processes suggested a significant predictive relationship during the second wave of data collection. This means that young people's perceived political efficacy from high

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school was the only variable related to political activities as they transitioned into emerging adulthood.

Expressive activities. The overall model for expressive activities was significant (R^2 = 0.07, adjusted R^2 = 0.06, $F(6, 475)$, $p < 0.001$). Similar to the model for political activities, political efficacy was the only significant Time 1 predictor for participation in expressive activities after high school ($b = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$). All of the other independent variables from the first wave of data collection did not significantly predict involvement in postsecondary expressive social change behaviors. These results suggest that young people's political efficacy continues to predict their participation in expressive activities over time.

Perceived social change and political efficacy as a moderator across waves. Several models were run to test interactions between Time 1 perceptions of social change and political efficacy and Time 2 sociopolitical perspectives, reflective meaning-making processes, and behavioral outcomes through linear regression analysis. Although overall models were significant such as the interaction between experiences of discrimination at Time 2 and perceptions of social change efficacy at Time 1, none of the interactions across waves were significant for service, goodwill, political, or expressive social change behaviors. These findings mean that varying levels of young people's social change and political efficacy did not strengthen the relationship between high school sociopolitical perspectives and postsecondary involvement in social change activities.

Overall, findings reveal low to moderate predictive relationships for select sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-making processes during both waves of data collection. Neither gender nor ethnicity significantly predicted adolescents' participation in social change endeavors, which means that young people's involvement in service-centered and systems-

focused social change activities were not related to their identity as a Black woman, for example. Regression models suggest that sociopolitical perspectives such as experiences of discrimination and perceptions of fairness in the United States have varying relationships with service, goodwill, political, and expressive social change behaviors. Moreover, results from interaction effect models indicate that adolescents' perceptions of social change and political efficacy strengthen predictive relationships with social change behaviors.

Discussion

As a response to the attitudinal and behavioral components of SPD theory, this paper investigated how sociopolitical perspectives (i.e., previous experiences of discrimination and perceptions of fairness in the United Stated) and reflective meaning-making processes such as perceptions of social change and political efficacy relate to adolescents' involvement in a range of social change activities into adulthood. The current study also explored the extent to which efficacious attitudes strengthen the relationships between sociopolitical perspectives and social change involvement. Based on previous theoretical investigations of predictors for service-centered and systems-focused behaviors, findings illuminate the dynamic relationship between the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes suggested by SPD theory (Watts et al., 1999). Specifically, analyses reveal the behavioral manifestations of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives as they transition away from high school and approach typical adult roles.

Specific Lived Experiences as Predictors of Social Change Behaviors

Previous experiences of discrimination marginally predicted high school students' participation in expressive behaviors, in addition to predictive relationship with all four types of social change activities after participants transitioned into adult roles. This aligns with previous

sociopolitical development research that has examined lived experiences such as experiences of oppression and marginalization as contributors to individuals' development of critical consciousness (Clay, 2006; Diemer, 2012; Watts et al., 1999). Furthermore, scholars have highlighted reflective practices related to one's social positioning as important factors for worldview development (Howard, 2011; Schlitz et al., 2010). However, it is somewhat surprising that demographic variables such as gender and ethnicity did not predict youth participation in systems-focused social change behaviors during high school or as young people transitioned into adulthood as suggested by existing scholarship (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Haddix et al., 2015; Hope & Jagers, 2014). Black feminist theory, for example, illuminates mechanisms through which Black women express their unique positionality and draw attention to historically marginalizing and oppressive systems (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2018; Smith, 2013). Additionally, several scholars have noted the role of gender, racial, and ethnic identity as important components of young people's socialization (Diemer, 2012; Stevenson, 1995), worldview development (Crocetti et al., 2012; Guillaume et al., 2015), and engagement in various civic activities (Malin, Tirri, Liauw, 2015). Despite limited evidence of young people's gender and ethnic identity as predictors for political and expressive behaviors over time, findings from this study suggest that sociopolitical perspectives based on instances of discrimination specifically predict expressive social change behaviors for high school students, which could result from adolescents' identifying mechanisms for sharing their experiences with others.

Moreover, findings reveal that previous experiences of discrimination continue to predict young people's participation in service, goodwill, political, and expressive activities after they graduate from high school. This suggests that sociopolitical perspectives emerging from specific lived experiences result in a range of social change behaviors as adolescents enter adulthood,

including both service-centered and systems-focused activities. According to the stages of SPD theory, recognizing experiences of discrimination reflects at least an adaptive understanding of social inequality (Anyiwo et al., 2018). In other words, such lived experiences could result in a young person responding to an instance of discrimination by adapting to unjust systems and participating in service-centered behaviors, for example. On the other hand, young people with similar experiences could hold a precritical, critical, or liberation-focused sociopolitical perspective and thus, seek participation in systems-focused activities to challenge systems of oppression.

The salience of previous instances of discrimination as a predictor of social change involvement suggests that as young people enter adulthood, their lived experiences—and possibly how they make meaning of those specific experiences—impact the types of social behaviors they exhibit, especially compared to their participation in the same behaviors as high school students. These findings were expected given existing literature on the development of more critical sociopolitical perspectives, as suggested by the SPD theoretical framework (Ginwright, 2007; Haddix et al., 2015; Watts et al., 1999). However, additional research is necessary to determine other components of young people's sociopolitical perspectives that further help to predict their engagement in social change behaviors, and particularly, liberation-focused behaviors as described by SPD theory. For example, perceptions of fairness in the United States were predictive only of adult goodwill behaviors for the current study. Further investigations could illuminate additional contributing factors that better explain the behavioral manifestations of adolescents' emergent sociopolitical understandings.

The Role of Efficacy-Related Meaning Making Processes

As high school students and emergent adults, perceptions of social change efficacy moderately predicted service-centered and systems-focused behaviors. Furthermore, with the exception of service activities during high school, youth perceptions of political efficacy were also related to a range of social change behaviors as adolescents transitioned into adulthood. These results were expected since efficacious attitudes are considered an important component for individuals moving from critical reflection to action as previously discussed in SPD and critical consciousness literature (Fegley et al., 2006; Watts et al., 2011). Furthermore, the interaction of social change and political efficacy-related perceptions (i.e., perceptions of political efficacy become more salient based on varying levels of perceived social change efficacy) throughout the current study revealed the role of meaning-making processes in social change involvement, particularly after young people graduated from high school.

For example, in addition to predicting youth involvement in systems-focused behaviors (i.e., political and expressive), findings revealed that as adults, participants' perceptions of social change efficacy strengthened the relationship between perceived political efficacy and participation in all forms of social change behaviors observed in the study. This expected finding suggests that these meaning-making processes continue to develop as young people enter into adult roles and further expand their sociopolitical perspectives. Therefore, it is important to consider the dynamic processes embedded within SPD theory, and recognize that an individual's sociopolitical perspectives at one point might yield a range of proximal and distal behavioral outcomes as highlighted in previous literature (Cohen, 2005; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011).

Cross-sectional findings from the current study suggest that adolescents' perceptions of social change and political efficacy have predictive relationships with service-centered and

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systems-focused social change activities. When observing adult behaviors resulting from participants' efficacious attitudes as high school students, perceptions of political efficacy predicted adult participation in all forms of social change activities. However, youth social change efficacious beliefs only predicted service-centered behaviors as adults. In other words, adolescents' previous self-perceived impact on promoting political change as minors continued to influence their involvement in all observed social change behaviors, but previous social change efficacy-related meaning-making processes were predictive only of service-centered involvement during adulthood. This unexpected finding illustrates the need to further explore how young people's previous efficacious attitudes for promoting social change impact the extent to which they engage in systems-focused behaviors. Additional research could reveal other intrapersonal meaning-making processes that impact young people's perspective of which activities will promote social change, and if their individual actions will contribute systems-level change.

Moreover, these findings suggest differing behavioral manifestations of adolescents' efficacious attitudes for political and social change as they continue to develop their sociopolitical perspective into adulthood. This multidimensional approach to understanding the relationship between young people's understanding of the world and resulting behaviors aligns with previous literature on youth worldview development, and the dynamic relationship between sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change behaviors at a particular point in an individual's life (Haddix et al., 2015; Youniss & Yates, 1999). For example, perceptions of political efficacy did not predict youth participation in service activities in high school, but the same previously held political efficacious attitudes were predictive of adult service engagement. Although this finding aligns with previous scholarship on young

people's understanding of political systems and their engagement in political behaviors (Fegley et al., 2006; Pancer et al., 2007; Yates & Youniss, 1998), these results also suggest that the attitudinal and behavioral components of SPD theory should be observed longitudinally, as sociopolitical perspectives and social change involvement continue to evolve through meaning-making processes.

Expressive Behaviors as a Mechanism for Social Change

Findings reveal that efficacious attitudes related to social change and political involvement predicted youth participation in service-centered and systems-focused behaviors. Specifically, adolescents' perceptions of social change efficacy were strong predictors of involvement in expressive activities prior to high school graduation. This suggests that young people believe that communicating their opinions about issues through clothing or buttons, for example, can promote change before they are eligible to participate in more traditional political activities such as voting. Such involvement from young people is expected, as previous research has highlighted the ways in which young people begin to consider how they can express their sociopolitical perspectives during adolescence (Bobek et al., 2009; Silva & Langhout, 2011). Furthermore, it is possible that through such activities, young people consider their social change involvement as an opportunity to share their emergent sociopolitical perspective with those who are familiar with their lived experiences.

Unsurprisingly, of all of the observed social change behaviors, expressive behaviors were the only activities predicted by experiences of discrimination before and after high school graduation. For communities that have been historically marginalized from political systems, some communities have been drawn to alternative mechanisms for social change such as expressive activities (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Ginwright, 2007). For young people, who are

excluded from electoral politics until they turn 18, such expressive activities reflect one way that adolescents can continue to be engaged.

However, the interaction between youth experiences of discrimination and perceptions of social change efficacy revealed a marginal—but negative—relationship with expressive behaviors during high school. This suggests that adolescents' perceptions of their social change efficacy did not strengthen the relationship between their sociopolitical perspectives and involvement in expressive social change activities. In other words, young people's previous experiences of discrimination were less salient for expressive behaviors based on different efficacious beliefs. This finding aligns with previous literature that illuminates how oppressive systems impact perceptions of efficacy by suggesting that for adolescents who participated in expressive behaviors, as experiences of discrimination increased, levels of efficacious attitudes decreased. Such findings reflect the dynamic nuances of the critical stage of the SPD theoretical framework, where individuals continue to engage in cognitive processes centered on building knowledge and developing skills to promote social change as a response to specific lived experiences (Clay, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011; Ginwright & James, 2002). If such cognitive processes include making meaning of previous experiences of discrimination, findings suggest a predictive relationship between adolescents with lower perceived self-efficacy and participation in expressive social change behaviors. In essence, some young people with previous experiences of discrimination would unlikely feel that their participation in expressive activities would promote social change.

Given the previous finding, the relationship between young people's lived experiences and perceptions of their social change efficacy during high school did not appear to predict expressive behaviors into adulthood. Instead, findings reveal that youth perceptions of political

efficacy significantly predicted adult participation in expressive activities, which was also observed for adult involvement in political activities. Previous research has highlighted political involvement of youth participation in spoken word and other forms of expression (Clay, 2006; Haddix et al., 2015), and the current findings reflect the developmental nature of young people's understanding of their role in political mechanisms for promoting social change, specifically. In other words, as participants transitioned into adult roles, previous experiences of discrimination were no longer salient for adult expressive behaviors, and such behaviors were instead best predicted by emergent perceptions of political efficacy from high school. This is somewhat surprising because regardless of how young people internally processed previous experiences of discrimination, these findings suggest that such experiences had limited long-term effects on young people's involvement in expressive activities in adulthood. Additional research is needed to further explore the role of such lived experiences and how they impact longitudinal social change involvement.

As a systems-focused behavior, participation in expressive activities (e.g., writing a letter to a school or community newspaper, contacting a political representative to discuss opinions about a particular issue, using digital media to express views) aligns with the liberation stage of the SPD theoretical framework, where empowered individuals actively draw upon their sociopolitical perspectives and perception of political efficacy to challenge unjust systems (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Morrell, 2015; Watts et al., 1999). However, additional research is necessary to determine components of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives from high school that continue to impact their adult involvement in liberation-focused behaviors, as neither youth perceptions of fairness nor previous experiences of discrimination were significant predictors of adult participation in any of the behaviors observed for the current study. These

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unexpected findings underscore the need to further explore the dynamic relationships between sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change behaviors as described in the SPD theoretical framework, specifically during this state of the life course.

Overall, the current study extends prior research by considering specific predictors for youth involvement in service-centered and systems-focused social change behaviors as they enter adulthood. Specifically, findings reveal some predictive relationships between young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, efficacy-related meaning-making processes, and resulting behaviors as adolescents and adults, as suggested by previous literature on youth social change involvement (e.g., Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Pancer et al., 2007). However, connections between specific lived experiences, young people's efficacious attitudes, and particular social change behaviors such as expressive activities illuminate the need to further explore how these components continue to interact as young people transition away from high school. By drawing on SPD theory to conceptualize and explore these efficacious attitudes and behavioral outcomes, findings demonstrate the dynamic nature of youth sociopolitical development as an evolving process that continues to change over time.

Strengths

The current study has several theoretical and methodological strengths. First, the variables selected align with the attitudinal and behavioral components SPD theory, in addition to existing scholarship on youth civic and social change involvement (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Ginwright, 2007; Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013). Moreover, tested models expand previous youth development work and contribute to an emergent body of literature on sociopolitical perspectives and reflective meaning-making processes as predictors of youth social change involvement into adulthood. By considering multiple variables for a range of youth and adult

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social change behavioral outcomes, findings extend previous investigations of youth participation in civic activities as adult voters by capturing the developmental nature of emergent sociopolitical perspectives during a pivotal stage for adolescents.

Additionally, the ethnic diversity of study participants allowed for the exploration of sociopolitical perspectives and behavioral outcomes of young people whose ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the United States likely result in reflective meaning-making processes. The inclusion of young people from different ethnicities contributes to existing work on socialization processes related to identity development and civic outcomes, specifically as they link experiences of marginalization and oppression, perceptions of their role in addressing such instances, and the behavioral manifestations of young people's emergent worldview. By centering these experiences as key factors in young people's development of efficacious attitudes, this study provided evidence from a diverse sample of the predictive relationships between young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, how they make meaning of that perspective, and their social change involvement.

Moreover, analyses from the current study provide a statistical foundation for future work to further examine additional components of young people's emerging sociopolitical development, other perceptions of efficacy and empowerment, and alternative mechanisms for promoting social change. For example, future longitudinal investigations can examine the degree to which participation in each social change activity changes as adolescents enter later stages of adulthood. Moreover, scholars could explore earlier developmental periods in order to examine the impetus of young people's sociopolitical development. In other words, longitudinal studies could reveal the role of sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-meaning processes in social

change activities throughout the life course to further illuminate the developmental nature of SPD theory.

Limitations

Despite the theoretical and methodological strengths of the project, there are a few important limitations to note. First, the survey instrument did not account for specific experiences of discrimination, which could result in varying sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes. As a result, findings provide limited evidence of such experiences as predictors of youth social change involvement. Future research should include measures for identity-based experiences of discrimination (e.g., gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status) and additional factors related to young people's emergent perspectives, particularly since perceptions of fairness in the United States did not significantly predict social change behaviors. By further conceptualizing additional experiences that contribute to the ways in which young people make meaning of their position in society, future research can produce a more comprehensive understanding of the role of meaning-making processes in predicting social change participation.

Moreover, as an analysis of secondary data, findings are limited based on available variables in this dataset. In essence, the analysis can examine only those survey items that were included in the original questionnaire and cannot account for other measures for sociopolitical perspectives or meaning-meaning processes that might help predict youth involvement in social change activities. Future work should include a more comprehensive list of possible predictors, in addition to an expanded range of activities that promote social change through service-centered and systems-focused behaviors. As recent scholarship has suggested, young people continue to find innovative ways to share their sociopolitical perspectives such as boycotting businesses based on unethical practices, for example. Therefore, incorporating a more exhaustive

list of the mechanisms through which young people seek to promote change will further extend the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of young people's sociopolitical development, particularly as they relate to the cultural and political climate within society.

Finally, there are several limitations for the generalizability of the study's findings. Specifically, the population from the dataset is not representative of adolescents throughout the United States, or even the entire state of California. Therefore, analyses provide a setting-specific understanding of predictors for youth social change involvement, and future research should include a larger sample to capture a range of sociopolitical perspectives, efficacy-related meaning-making processes, and social change outcomes. However, despite these limitations, findings from the current study offer several theoretical pathways for future scholarship to continue to expand SPD theory to explain the perspectives and processes related to adolescents' participation in community activities.

CHAPTER 4

THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIOPOLITICAL CLUSTERS: PROFILES OF YOUTH SOCIAL

CHANGE INVOLVEMENT

Abstract

Social change behavioral outcomes can vary for adolescents based on emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes. Although previous literature on sociopolitical development (SPD) theory has focused on reflective meaning-making processes influencing social change involvement, fewer scholars have examined the extent to which such processes— along with adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives and ecological influences—result in social change behavioral groupings of young people as they approach adulthood. Through latent profile analysis, this paper draws upon SPD theory to identify longitudinal clusters of social change involvement based on young people's participation in political and volunteer activities, sense of social change and political efficacy, emergent political and moral identity, and ecological contributions to their sociopolitical perspectives. Findings reveal three profiles of social change involvement during high school that are predicted by young people's perceptions of their parents' and peers' social change behaviors. An additional profile emerged as adolescents approached adulthood, as some young people shifted from a more critical to adaptive characterization of their sociopolitical development and social change involvement. Discussion includes theoretical implications for identifying shifts in youth social change profiles over time, as well as conceptualizing SPD theory as a dynamic developmental and cognitive process for young people with emergent sociopolitical perspectives.

Sociopolitical development (SPD) theory highlights the reflective meaning-making processes responsible for acritical to liberation-focused perspectives of society (Watts et al., 2003). Similar to findings from Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, existing literature has examined multidimensional contributions to adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives, the behavioral manifestation of such perspectives, and potential shifts of such perspectives as adolescents transition into adulthood (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Bernard-Powers, 2008; Flanagan & Levine, 2010). In particular, scholars have explored the ways in which civic attitudes and predispositions encourage some youth to participate in a range of social change activities (Ballard et al., 2015; Guillaume et al., 2015). Moreover, processes related to gender and ethnic identity have also been identified as key influences for young people's sociopolitical development and resulting civic behaviors (Ginwright, 2007). As an extension of SPD theory, several typologies of civic engagement have identified similar youth outcomes based on specific attitudes about community involvement (Godfrey et al., 2019; Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), which capture many of the distinct stages of the sociopolitical development theoretical framework. However, fewer scholars have considered the extent to which young people's social change involvement persists before and after their opportunity to vote given their emergent sociopolitical perspectives.

The current study examines profiles of contextual influences of adolescents' sociopolitical development and social change involvement as they transition away from high school and into emerging adulthood. Using longitudinal survey data from the Stanford Civic Purpose Project, this paper includes a latent profile analysis to identify clusters of young people with shared meaning-making processes and ecological factors for high school and adult sociopolitical groups. Such profiles will contribute to SPD theory by identifying the extent to

which intrapersonal and ecological influences of young people's social change involvement reflect stages of the SPD theoretical framework during a specific developmental stage in life.

Youth Social Change Meaning-Making Processes and Identity Development

Throughout adolescence, many young people engage in several reflective meaning-making processes that help shape their identity as they transition into adulthood. For many young people, their emergent identity development is often linked to socialization processes that can influence how they begin to develop their worldview as they draw upon their lived experiences (Diemer, 2012; Stevenson, 1995). Furthermore, these processes also help shape young people's sociopolitical development, which can intersect with other social identifiers such as race and gender (Crocetti et al., 2012; Guillaume et al., 2015). For example, due to conversations with family and peers, participation in political or volunteer activities, or general observations of society, young people typically begin to form specific sociopolitical perspectives that include a range of attitudinal and behavioral manifestations of their emergent worldview (Ginwright, 2007; Howard, 2011; Schlitz et al., 2010).

According to scholarship on critical consciousness, meaning-making processes such as critical reflection and action often reveal a dynamic cognitive process that contributes to young people's emergent awareness of social issues as they encounter different settings and perspectives (Carlisle et al., 2006; McMahon et al., 2006). These meaning-making processes contribute to varying levels of social awareness and analysis as described by SPD theory. However, fewer scholars have explicitly examined additional context for young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives and resulting behaviors during the transition from high school into typical adult roles. By conceptualizing sociopolitical development as a dynamic—rather than static—process for adolescents, it is theoretically plausible to explore the behavioral

manifestations of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives during a key developmental period in the life course. In other words, given the cognitive changes occurring during adolescence and emerging adulthood, additional research is necessary to further investigate the extent to which youth sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement persist during a specific developmental transition.

Scholarship on sociopolitical attitudes has often highlighted the emergence of civic perspectives during adolescence and into adulthood by investigating young people's civic identity development, civic attitudes (Yates & Youniss, 1998) and civic behaviors (Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013). Previous literature suggests that sociopolitical predispositions can predict adult civic engagement and political participation, and scholars often underscore youth involvement in civic or social change activities as an important component of individuals' overall civic identity (Hart et al., 2007). Similar to the emergence of young people's sociopolitical perspectives, such dispositions are often influenced by adolescents' lived experiences and other meaning-making processes related to the formation of civic attitudes and resulting behaviors. In fact, scholars have found evidence of young people's socioeconomic status (McMahon et al., 2006; Nam, 2012) and perceptions of youth involvement (Evans, 2007; Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; O'Donoghue & Strobel, 2007) as factors many young people consider when choosing to engage in or refrain from civic behaviors, including activities promoting social change.

For example, Fisher's (2012) examination of youth political participation in Barack Obama's 2008 presidential election campaign revealed that adolescents were exposed to networks of activists through online social movements, which encouraged some young people to participate in social change efforts such as youth organizing initiatives that promoted voting.

This exposure to community activists impacted young people's civic identity and contributed to more critical sociopolitical perspectives, as described by SPD theory, by increasing their awareness of poignant social issues, influencing their perceptions of their social change efficacy, and suggesting mechanisms for promoting social change through voting. However, it is unclear the extent to which participation in such activities continues as young people transition into adulthood.

Moral identity development has also been identified as a key component of young people's sociopolitical perspectives during adolescence, and aligns with attitudinal components of the SPD theoretical framework. Youth development scholars often bridge civic and moral identity as developmental outcomes resulting from an emergent worldview that emphasizes the importance of relationships with other people (Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Youniss & Yates, 1999). In particular, moral identity development typically focuses on sharing a common humanity with others and considering how individual actions affect members of society (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Damon & Gregory, 1997; Hart et al., 1998). Resulting behaviors from other-oriented sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes related to empowerment and efficacy can include participation in a range of social change activities such as volunteering and additional service-centered endeavors (Youniss, 1999).

For example, Hardy et al. (2014) found that sociopolitical perspectives related to adolescents' moral identity development and reflective meaning-making processes mediate youth engagement in a number of social change activities. The authors also found gender differences for moral purpose, with girls reporting higher levels of internalized reflection of their moral self-perceptions compared to boys. By acknowledging opportunities to help others, the development of one's moral identity reflects a range of sociopolitical perspectives according to

SPD theory, including individuals with an adaptive understanding of society, as well as those with a more critical—and perhaps, liberation-based—worldview.

Similar to moral identity development, sociopolitical perspectives often reflect individuals' emergent sense of social responsibility. As highlighted by positive youth development scholarship, adolescents' sense of social responsibility can reveal the ways in which they consider their role in promoting the well-being of others (Lerner et al., 2003). Often considered as a feeling of obligation to help the common good, developing a sense of social responsibility can lead to a variety of sociopolitical behavioral outcomes during adolescence (Hamilton & Flanagan, 2007; O'Donoghue & Strobel, 2007). For some young people, such behaviors reflect the extent to which adolescents feel that their involvement in social issues is efficacious, which relates to their sense of empowerment. As a distinct marker between the precritical and critical stages of the SPD theoretical framework, feeling empowered to address social issues is an important developmental step for young people with emergent sociopolitical perspectives (Watts et al., 2003).

For example, Evans (2007) found through a qualitative study of Black adolescents that their increased awareness of oppressive conditions in their neighborhood stimulated a collective sense of agency to promote change in their community. Furthermore, by identifying opportunities to engage in social change activities, youth were able to act upon their emergent perceptions of efficacy as a result of their sociopolitical attitudes. Like many concurrent meaning-making processes during adolescence, perceptions of social change and political efficacy continue to develop as young people reflect on their social positioning and interest in social change involvement (Fegley et al., 2006; Ginwright, 2007; Wilson et al., 2008). Although young people's emergent sociopolitical development and accompanying meaning-making

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processes might result in certain social change behaviors at a specific time, it is unclear the extent to which such behaviors persist as young people transition into adulthood. By utilizing SPD theory to examine social change behavioral patterns based on young people's emergent civic and moral identity development, additional evidence can illuminate the ways in which the dynamic relationship between sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes results in varying levels of social change involvement as young people transition into adulthood.

Ecological Socialization Influences for Youth Social Change Involvement

By drawing on ecological approaches to explore the development of youth sociopolitical perspectives and behavioral outcomes, scholars have previously emphasized the direct impact of parental and peer influences for adolescents' development (Diemer, 2012; Guillaume et al., 2015). In addition to systemic factors such as messages and perceptions of civic engagement from educators and the media, youth perceptions of their immediate social network's involvement in social change endeavors can also impact the formation of youth sociopolitical perspectives, the development of efficacious attitudes, and future participation in similar activities (Gordon, 2008; Larson & Hansen, 2005; Lee et al., 2013). For example, Matthews et al. (2010) examined the role of the household as a central socializing force for sociopolitical activity, particularly around issues of race and social class. Using data from the 1996 National Household Education Survey, the authors presented a theoretical model for potential pathways through which parents transmit civic engagement modeling, and found a significant relationship between parents' educational status and civic activity for adolescent females. Such findings illuminate the influential role of parental socialization for young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives. Further examining the ways in which young people's perceptions of their parents' involvement in social change activities impact adolescents' sociopolitical development will

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provide additional context for conceptualizing attitudes and behaviors described in the stages of SPD theory. Capturing parental influences for youth social change involvement over time may also reveal the extent to which the impact of such influences persists as young people transition into typical adult roles.

Adolescent peer groups have also been identified as potential ecological influences for youth sociopolitical development. Through a critical consciousness framework, Diemer and Li (2011) examined the extent to which sociopolitical support from parents and peers predicted youth sociopolitical control and action (i.e., voting behavior). The authors found that such support facilitated young people's perceived efficacy towards promoting social change and their involvement in sociopolitical activities. Moreover, Charmaraman (2013)'s qualitative study of young people developing a sense of collective action through school-based projects found that collaborating with peers to promote social change contributed to the development of adolescents' sociopolitical voice.

Although existing research has investigated the sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors of young people through cross-sectional analyses, fewer scholars have considered the extent to which changes in ecological settings (i.e., transitioning from high school into postsecondary experiences) impact the stability of young people's sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement. Furthermore, it is unclear how adolescents' perceptions of their peers' involvement in social change activities continue to impact attitudinal and behavioral outcomes given such setting changes. Overall, incorporating peer and parental involvement as contextual contributions to young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors will extend current applications of SPD theory by exploring youth sociopolitical development as a dynamic process that requires acknowledging external factors for

young people's understanding of society and their involvement in social change behaviors before and after their first opportunity to vote.

Typologies of Civic and Social Change Behaviors

The SPD theoretical framework includes several stages of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for individuals with varying levels of critical sociopolitical perspectives (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Watts et al., 1999). Likewise, behavioral manifestations for adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives can also vary given differing socialization influences, lived experiences, worldview, and intrapersonal meaning-making processes. Existing literature has examined how differing levels of civic and political efficacy (Manganelli et al., 2014; O'Donoghue, 2006; Yeich & Levine, 1994), sociopolitical control (Christens & Peterson, 2012), and political distrust (Nam, 2012) contribute to behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, some scholars have begun to investigate how adolescents acquire a generative worldview through their perceived self-efficacy for non-political efforts to promote change (Leath & Chavous, 2017). Although scholars have examined the behavioral manifestations of young people's sociopolitical attitudes and efficacy-related meaning-making processes, previous literature has only offered a snapshot of the ways in which young people engage in social change activities. By exploring behavioral patterns of young people with shared sociopolitical perspectives and perceptions of efficacy, much can be learned about the dynamic cognitive processes inherent in SPD theory and the extent to which such processes and behaviors persist as young people transition into adulthood.

Several researchers have identified various characterizations of social change behaviors, specifically, as they relate to civic outcomes. First, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) theorized three profiles with varying civic goals and orientations: personally-responsible citizens who tend to focus on service-centered activities, participatory citizens who organize efforts to meet the

needs of marginalized communities, and justice-oriented citizens who seek to challenge systems of inequity and oppression. The authors' distinction between these behavioral outcomes appears to reflect the different sociopolitical perspectives described by SPD theory. For example, individuals with an adaptive understanding of society could engage in the behaviors of a personally-responsible or participatory citizen, while those with a more critical or liberation-focused perspective might mirror the actions of a justice-oriented citizen. Although Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) work is helpful for linking specific attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of an individual's sociopolitical development, their typology offers little insight of the ways in which such perspectives—and resulting behaviors—persist over time. Second, Pancer et al.'s (2007) longitudinal study of parental and peer influences on high school students' identity development revealed four specific groups for young people involved in community and political endeavors, including activists, helpers, responders, and those who are not involved in such activities. Similar to Westheimer and Kahne's typology, these four profiles align with SPD theory's stages of sociopolitical critical perspectives (e.g., activism resulting from liberation-focused sociopolitical development), but there is little attention given to possible behavioral changes as adolescents continue to develop their worldview and efficacious attitudes as they transition out of high school.

Voight and Torney-Purta (2013)'s study of middle school students' civic engagement revealed three distinct classes of involvement based on varying levels of social change attitudes. For example, some youth exhibited strong social change behaviors and attitudes, while others with strong attitudes were not actively involved in social change activities. Findings illuminated the dynamic relationship between sociopolitical perspectives and the ways in which behavioral manifestations reflect adolescents' current social change attitudes and behaviors, which aligns

with the SPD theoretical framework. Finally, findings from Godfrey et al.'s (2019) latent class analysis of middle school students in New York reveal the role of critical consciousness and other meaning-making processes as predictors of sociopolitical outcomes. Specifically, the authors identified four behavioral classes of adolescents of color that were differentiated by varying levels of young people's critical reflections, efficacious attitudes, and beliefs about the fairness of United States. However, these findings provide little evidence of the ecological factors (i.e., perceptions of parental and peer social change involvement) contributing to young people's social change behaviors as they transition into typical adult roles.

Overall, previous work has helped expand theoretical considerations for understanding the ways in which young people with similar sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes engage in similar community activities. Yet, much can be learned about how such perspectives, meaning-making processes, and behaviors are influenced by ecological factors, in addition to exploring the extent to which social change involvement persists over time during a specific developmental stage such as the transition away from high school. By considering these important influences for young people's sociopolitical development, the stages of the SPD theoretical framework can be conceptualized as dynamic—rather than static—representation of young adolescents' emergent sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes.

Current Study

In order to explore the stability of behavioral manifestations of young people's shared sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes, the present study will address the following research questions:

1. How do youth social change behavioral profiles reflect young people's political and moral identity development, perceptions of social change and political efficacy, and involvement in political and volunteer activities?

2. Within identified profiles of involvement, to what extent, if any, do contextual and ecological factors predict profile membership?

3. In what ways, if any, does profile group membership shift as young people transition from high school into postsecondary experiences?

    a. To what extent, if any, do contextual and ecological factors explain differences in adolescents' membership in social change behavioral groups as emerging adults?

Based on evidence drawn from previous typologies of civic engagement and the attitudinal and behavioral components of SPD theory, the hypothesis for the first research question is that profiles of youth social change involvement are based on varying levels of political and volunteer involvement, young people's efficacious attitudes for social change and political endeavors, and the centrality of their political and moral identity. However, without empirical evidence for the ways in which these specific components contribute to the formation of social change behavioral clusters, there is no *a priori* hypothesis for the number of profiles present in the study sample. Given the role of ecological influences on youth development, the hypothesis for the second research question is that shared contextual factors such as perceptions of parental and peer engagement in social change endeavors and parents' educational background will predict profile membership. Because of changes in ecological settings and the potential expansion of young people's sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes over time, the hypothesis for the third research question is that some, but not all, profile memberships will shift as young people transition out of high school settings into postsecondary experiences.

In essence, this question explores the extent to which young people's alignment with the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of any given stage from the SPD theoretical framework persists before and after their first opportunity to vote.

Methods

In order to capture patterns in youth social change behaviors, the current paper utilizes latent profile analysis to group participants into different profiles based on similar characteristics (i.e., sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes) and social change behaviors. Survey data from the longitudinal Stanford Civic Purpose Project was used for the current analysis due to the inclusion of measures assessing a range of contributions to young people's sociopolitical perspectives and intrapersonal meaning-making processes such as civic and moral identity, social change and political efficacy, and plans to engage in political or volunteer social change activities. Furthermore, survey items capture adolescents' perceptions of parental and peer engagement in social change efforts, which reflect ecological characteristics that young people might share. Similar to longitudinal analysis from the multiple linear regression analyses discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, selected measures from this dataset align with a multidimensional approach to understanding how attitudinal and behavioral aspects of youth sociopolitical development continue to evolve as young people transition into emerging adulthood. Overall, latent profile analysis explores the ways in which distinct groups of young people can be identified as a profile of shared sociopolitical perspectives, intrapersonal meaning-making processes, and influences from young people's closest network over time.

Participants

A subset of participants from the overall Stanford Civic Purpose Project was used for this analysis. In order to explore potential changes in youth sociopolitical perspectives over time, the

current analysis examines shared characteristics between participants who completed both waves of data collection in 2011 and 2013 (*n* = 476). Although this selected sample represents approximately one-third of the original sample of approximately 1,500 high school seniors during the first wave of data collection, previous analyses have determined limited statistical differences in power between the larger sample and the current subset of participants (Han et al., 2019). The current sample remains relatively representative of the original sample at Time 1, with a higher percentage of female respondents (60.5%) compared to the larger sample (52%), as well as more students who identify as Asian (34.2%) and fewer students who identify as Latino (40.8%).

Measures

The measures described below were selected to capture attitudinal, behavioral, and ecological aspects of adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement. All measures for the current analysis were observed during both waves of data collection, which allowed for exploration of perspective and profile membership changes as participants continued to engage in sociopolitical developmental processes. By incorporating contextual factors such as parental education and the perceived social change involvement of parents and peers, additional predictors for profile membership were assessed beyond adolescents' intrapersonal sociopolitical development.

Measures of youth social change involvement. In order to differentiate groupings based on social change behaviors, two survey items were selected to address the extent to which young people were involved in two specific social change activities.

Political involvement. Youth were asked, "How involved in political activities are you?" and indicated their involvement on a 4-point scale. Responses included "very involved in

political activities," "somewhat involved in political activities," "not involved in political activities, but interested in getting involved in the next 6 months," and "not involved in political activities and don't want to get involved in the next 6 months." Responses were reverse coded with higher scores indicating more involvement in political activities.

Volunteer involvement. Participants also responded to, "How involved in volunteering are you?" on a 4-point scale. Similar to political involvement, responses ranged from "very involved in volunteer activities" to "not involved in volunteer activities and don't want to get involved in the next 6 months." A higher score for this measure represents more volunteer involvement.

Measures of social change meaning-making processes. The following items were selected because they assessed attitudinal components of young people's sociopolitical development, including their perceptions of efficacy in promoting political and social change, and their emergent understanding of their political and moral identity as they transition from high school into emerging adulthood.

Political efficacy. Adolescents indicated on a 5-point Likert scale the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following five items: "I have a pretty good understanding of the political issues facing our country," "I have a role to play in the political process," "When policy issues or problems are being discussed, I usually have something to say," "I'm better informed about politics and government than most people my age," and "I'm well qualified to participate in the political process." A composite score was calculated to represent participants' sense of political efficacy, as an average of each participant's responses to the five questions related to political efficacy. Composites scores for this measure ranged from one to five.

Social change efficacy. Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they believe their future actions will contribute to social change efforts, as part of a subscale that assessed civic intent. Youth were asked to indicate how meaningful the following five goals were for their future: "being involved in politics," "making a difference through volunteering," "helping others in need," "becoming a leader in the community," "making positive changes in the community," and "having an impact on a social cause or issue they find personally important." Composite scores—ranging between one and five—were computed to measure social change efficacy based on responses to the previous five items. Reponses were based on a 5-point Likert scale with the following options: "not at all meaningful," "not very meaningful," "somewhat meaningful," "meaningful," and "extremely meaningful."

Political identity. In order to assess adolescents' perception of their political identity, three items were selected from a larger civic identity measure. These items considered the centrality of the following factors to participants' overall identity by asking, "How central are each of the following to your identity?" These items included "being concerned about international matters," "political involvement," and "concerns about governmental policies and decisions." Composite scores between one and four were computed for each youth participant based on responses from a 4-point scale ranging from "not at all central to my identity" to "very central to my identity."

Moral identity. Items measuring participants' moral identity were also part of a larger 4-point scale. Youth participants were asked, "How central are the following items to your identity?" The six items related to young people's moral identity included: "ensuring fairness," "willingness to stand up for what is believed to be right," "having compassion and concern for all kinds of people," "being honest," "having concerns about justice and human rights," and

"being a responsible person or someone others can depend on." Composite scores were calculated in order to measure participants' moral identity, ranging from one to four.

Measures of contextual variables. In order to examine ecological factors influencing youth intrapersonal meaning-making processes related to social change, several variables were selected to account for contextual aspects central to young people's sociopolitical perspectives. Demographic variables and perceptions of their parents' and peers' social change involvement were used as covariates to predict group membership. With the exception of peer social change involvement which was measured longitudinally, the following variables were measured during the first wave of data collection, and were not part of the follow-up questionnaire after young people transitioned away from high school.

Student and family background. Students reported their gender (0 = male, 1 = female) and their ethnicity. Responses for ethnicity included five categories plus an option to enter an additional ethnicity not listed. Respondents were also asked to report their mother and father's highest level of education.

Parental involvement. On a 5-point Likert scale, youth reported the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following three items regarding their parents' civic engagement: "My parents/guardians are active in the community," "My parents/guardians are active in local politics," "My parents/guardians do volunteer work in the community," and "I talk to my parents/guardians about problems in society and political issues." A composite score between one and five was calculated, with higher scores indicating perceptions of more frequent parental participation.

Peer involvement. Students were also asked to report perceptions of their peers' civic engagement involvement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly

agree". Survey items included: "I talk to my friends about problems in society and political issues," "I have close friends who participate in political activities," and "I have close friends who do volunteer work in the community." In order to capture participants' perceptions during both waves of data collection, a composite score for each survey administration was computed as a time-specific covariate, ranging between one and five.

Data Analysis

As described in the previous chapter, data for the current study are publicly available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research's (ICPSR) Civic Learning, Engagement and Action Data (CivicLEADS) website. In order to ensure confidentiality while maximizing accessibility, key identifiers for participants were removed according to ICPSR guidelines. The user guide details data cleaning processes and other procedures that prepared this dataset for public accessibility (Damon, 2017).

Preliminary analyses. Initial phases of data analysis were completed using SPSS Version 26. Preliminary analysis strategies from Chapter 3 were used to examine the extent to which data for the current data were missing completely at random (MCAR) through Little's (1988) MCAR test, which was significant for Time 1 and Time 2 variables (χ^2= 3529.551, df = 3314, p =0.005). This suggests that data were not missing completely at random (MCAR), but were instead either missing at random (MAR) or missing not at random (MNAR) (Sinharay et al., 2001). None of the variables had more than 5% missing values, but 6.7% of respondents had more than 10% of values missing. Furthermore, approximately 2% of respondents were missing at least 30% of survey items during the first wave of data collection. In an attempt to avoid biased results through listwise deletion methods, multiple imputations were used to create a full dataset for analysis (Graham, 2009; Soley-Bori, 2013). By creating a likely set of replacement values based

on existing responses, this technique has been identified as a practical approach to handling missing data through the consideration of observed variance and predictive distributions (Raghunathan, 2004). Compiling a complete dataset helps support a person-centered approach for the current analysis. Previous studies on youth civic engagement have also utilized a person-centered approach to create typologies for behavioral profiles (e.g., Godfrey et al., 2019; Pancer et al., 2007; Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013), which focuses on the behavioral patterns of groups instead of the relationships between survey items (Schreiber, 2017).

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the variables selected for the current paper, including means and standard deviations for dependent variables and covariates. Across waves, there were slight decreases for all dependent variables except political efficacy ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.80$ [Time 1]; $M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.84$ [Time 2]), and moral identity ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.54$ [Time 1]; $M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.59$ [Time 2]), which remained relatively constant as participants transitioned out of high school. For political involvement, participants at Time 1 were not involved in politics but interested in getting involved in the next 6 months, on average ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 0.85$). However, responses from the second survey administration suggest that there was a decrease in adolescents' interest in political participation in the next 6 months ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 0.87$). Although respondents reported they were somewhat involved in volunteer activities during the initial survey ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.86$), participation in volunteer experiences decreased at Time 2 ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 0.89$). Three of the four covariates were measured only during the first wave of data collection (i.e., mother's education, father's education, and perceptions of parental involvement in social change efforts). On average, respondents' mothers' were high school graduates (($M = 2.9$, $SD = 1.70$), while their fathers had some college or vocational school ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.76$). Participants' perceptions of their parental social change involvement ($M = 2.57$,

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SD = 0.90) was lower than that of their peers, which slightly declined across waves ((M = 3.11,

SD = 0.90 [Time 1]; M = 3.09, *SD* = 0.96 [Time 2]).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

	Time 1				Time 2			
Dependent Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Political Involvement	2.01	0.85	1	4	1.81	0.87	1	4
Volunteer Involvement	3.02	0.86	1	4	2.69	0.89	1	4
Social Change Efficacy	3.66	0.71	1	5	3.58	0.77	1	5
Political Efficacy	2.97	0.80	1	5	2.97	0.84	1	5
Political Identity	2.16	0.75	1	4	2.05	0.77	1	4
Moral Identity	3.25	0.54	1	4	3.21	0.59	1	4
Covariates								
Mother's Highest Education	2.90	1.70	1	6	-	-	-	-
Father's Highest Education	3.10	1.76	1	6	-	-	-	-
Parental Civic Involvement	2.57	0.90	1	5	-	-	-	-
Peer Civic Involvement	3.11	0.90	1	5	3.09	0.96	1	5

In order to observe the degree of collinearity between selected variables, correlational analyses between study variables can be found in Table 2. Overall, all dependent variables were positively correlated with one another. The highest correlational relationships were observed across both waves for political efficacy and political identity (r = 0.61; $p < 0.01$ [Time 1]; r = .55; $p < 0.01$ [Time 2]), political involvement and political efficacy (r = 0.54; $p < 0.01$ [Time 1]; r = 0.54; $p < 0.01$ [Time 2]), political involvement and political identity (r = 0.52; $p < 0.01$ [Time 1]; r = 0.50; $p < 0.01$ [Time 2]), and political efficacy and perceptions of peer social change involvement (r = 0.51; $p < 0.01$ [Time 1]; r = 0.50; $p < 0.01$ [Time 2]). As covariates, mothers' and fathers' highest level of education was negatively correlated with several dependent variables. For example, mothers' highest level of education had a low correlation with participants' sense of social change efficacy across waves (r = -0.11; $p < 0.05$ [Time 1]; r = -

0.10; $p < 0.05$ [Time 2]), in addition to volunteer involvement ($r = -0.13$; $p < 0.01$) and moral identity ($r = -0.11$; $p < 0.05$) at Time 2. Fathers' highest level of education was correlated only with participants' sense of political efficacy at T2 ($r = -0.10$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Bivariate Correlation Coefficients of Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. T1 Political Involvement	-															
2. T1 Volunteer Involvement	.20**	-														
3. T1 Social Change Efficacy	.36**	.39**	-													
4. T1 Political Efficacy	.54**	.12*	.38**	-												
5. T1 Political Identity	.52**	.10*	.46**	.61**	-											
6. T1 Moral Identity	.19**	.20**	.49**	.30**	.45**	-										
7. T1 Mother's Highest Education	-.05	-.03	-.11*	-.01	-.08	-.06	-									
8. T1 Father's Highest Education	-.04	-.03	-.07	-.01	-.07	-.07	.63	-								
9. T1 Parental Social Change Involvement[+]	.29**	.16**	.19**	.36**	.30**	.14**	.09	.05	-							
10. T1 Peer Social Change Involvement	.37**	.33**	.43**	.51**	.38**	.32**	.03	.02	.34**	-						
11. T2 Political Involvement	.34**	.13**	.20**	.40**	.40**	.20**	-.04	-.07	.21**	.24**	-					
12. T2 Volunteer Involvement	.21**	.47**	.35**	.14**	.15**	.24**	-.13**	-.09	.14**	.27**	.25**	-				
13. T2 Social Change Efficacy	.33**	.29**	.49**	.30**	.37**	.32**	-.10*	-.09	.17**	.29**	.38**	.43**	-			
14. T2 Political Efficacy	.29**	.14**	.29**	.54**	.40**	.23**	.02	-.03	.21**	.32**	.54**	.26**	.43**	-		
15. T2 Political Identity	.25**	.01	.23**	.37**	.46**	.23**	-.03	-.10*	.15**	.18**	.50**	.20**	.44**	.55**	-	
16. T2 Moral Identity	.16**	.13**	.30**	.15**	.25**	.41**	-.11*	-.09	.06	.16**	.13**	.23**	.45**	.25**	0.37**	-
17. T2 Peer Social Change Involvement	.34**	.32**	.32**	.39**	.32**	.22**	-.06	-.001	.27**	.44**	.39**	.42**	.45**	.50**	0.35**	0.24**

*p<0.05, **p<0.01
[+]*Note:* Parental social change involvement only measured at Time 1

Latent profile analysis. For the latent profile analysis (LPA), profile models were assessed using Mplus version 7 statistical software (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2013). Through this technique, the current paper identifies and characterizes typologies of young people with varying sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and behaviors. In other words, LPA uncovers the ways in which youth with similar survey responses exhibit specific behaviors as a group, and how membership in an identified profile differs from other groups of young people in the sample. Although other analyses such as cluster analysis can identify distinct categories for similar respondents, LPA utilizes statistical techniques to compare models that maximize differences between groups, while minimizing within-group differences (Schreiber, 2017). LPA also identifies latent variables that align with membership in a particular group of homogenous participants (Magidson & Vermunt, 2004). Although LPA is similar to what is commonly called "latent class analysis," the current research questions require the use of multivariate normal mixture models given the normal distributions of the observed variables (Lazarsfeld & Henry, 1968; Lubke & Neale, 2006). Through this model, multiple indicator variables of various types can be considered to approximate the primary features of the groups identified in the dataset (Bauer & Curran, 2004). Moreover, the analysis for this paper incorporates the person-centered approach utilized by previous literature on youth involvement in social change activities to unveil shared characteristics between group members, instead of simply highlighting relationships between variables (Bauer & Shanahan, 2007; Gibson, 1959). The first phase of the analysis uses respondents' sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and behaviors to determine distinct profiles of their social change involvement, and the second phase considers contextual and ecological characteristics that predict membership in identified profiles.

Model specification. Distributions for each of the selected variables were evaluated to determine the best estimation procedure for each wave of survey data. Due to the relative normality of each variable, a maximum likelihood estimation technique was implemented, which seeks to identify model solutions that are most consistent with the observed dataset (Lubke & Neale, 2006). As a result, membership in specific clusters or profiles was suggested by probability estimates for each adolescent based on group means for indicator variables in the model. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the overall mixture model for the first phase of analysis, with 6 indicators for profile identification: political involvement, volunteer involvement, perceptions of social change and political efficacy, and young people's perception of their political and moral identity. For multivariate normal finite mixture models, the number of parameters can increase rapidly depending on the number of indicator variables and clusters identified (Everitt et al., 2001; Raftery & Dean, 2006; Steinley & Brusco, 2011). Therefore, several constraints were implemented in order to estimate the number of theoretically based profiles present in the dataset with the fewest number of parameters to reduce model complexity.

As a result, homoscedastic components for the model were specified in order to create a more parsimonious model (Bauer & Shanahan, 2007; Steinley & Brusco, 2011). In other words, by allowing group means to vary but constraining variances to zero, results from the analysis highlight mean differences between profiles, as suggested by the current paper's research questions. Through this restriction, indicator variables are considered independent within each profile (Bauer & Curran, 2004; Gibson, 1959; Lazarsfeld & Henry, 1968), which allows for the identification for the best-fitting model that emerges from theoretical relationships between selected variables.

Figure 1. Normal Mixture Model with Six Indicators
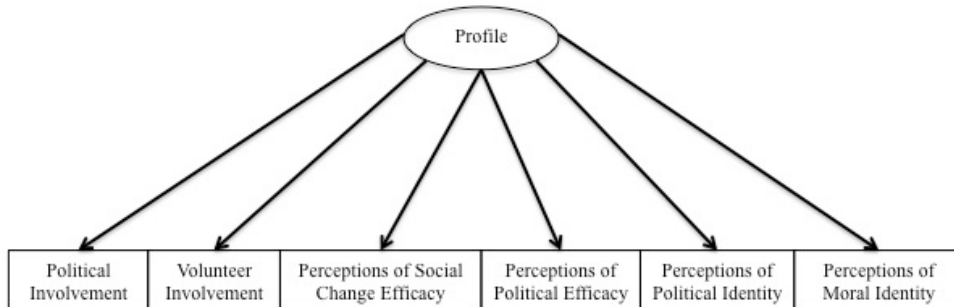
Profile enumeration. Given the absence of an *a priori* theory for the expected number of clusters or profiles for this dataset, multiple mixture models were tested based on several parsimony and fit indices in order to determine the most appropriate, yet theoretically meaningful, number of subgroups within the dataset for each wave of data collection. Based on overall performance, the Bayesian Information Criteria (BIC), sample size adjusted BIC (ssBIC), and bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT) were prioritized during the cluster enumeration process (Hensen et al., 2007; McLachlan & Peel, 2000). For both BIC and ssBIC, lower values suggest better balance between fit and parsimony, but BIC applies a higher penalty for model complexity by favoring fewer classes (Vrieze, 2012). Additionally, BLRT provides a significant test statistic based on differences between classes within a model (McLachlan, 1987). Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) was also included as a fit index, even though it tends to favor more classes based on model complexity (Collins & Lanza, 2010). Additional fit criteria analyzed included Lo-Mendell-Rubin (Lo, Mendell & Rubin, 2001) LRT, which can exhibit a higher Type I error rate for some models or an increased likelihood that the best-fitting number of identified groups is falsely rejected. Finally, values for the entropy index were assessed in order to

determine how well clusters were separated based on the increase of the entropy value as the number of classes increased (Celeux & Soromenho, 1996).

Although these fit indices sometimes do not suggest the same number of clusters for the model of best fit, they all contributed to the overall decision to select the best-fitting model for theoretical and practical interpretability (Langeheine et al., 1996). Overall, by comparing the suggested number of clusters from each of the indices, resulting profiles were evaluated to determine the number of clusters that best fit the data and align with previous theoretical perspectives.

Profile predictors. After the most appropriate model was selected, the second phase of analysis considered contextual and ecological factors as predictors for profile membership during both survey administrations. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the 6 predictor variables considered for analysis: gender, ethnicity, mother's highest level of education, father's highest level of education, and perceptions of parental and peer involvement in social change activities. These covariates were evaluated through Vermunt's (2010) three-step approach for classifying and analyzing the effects of class predictors. As an extension to previous techniques that incorporated predictors directly within the creation of profiles identified through mixture models, the three-step approach addresses issues with possible shifts in profile membership (Bakk et al., 2013). The first step includes the analysis conducted during profile enumeration procedures based on indicator variables. The second step assigns cases to groups based on membership probabilities. Finally, the third step estimates the likelihood of profile membership through multinomial logistic regression and a reference group, which allows predictor values to be considered after groups are identified, instead of the simultaneous estimations inherent in previous techniques (Bolck et al., 2004). In addition to parameter estimates and standard errors

for each covariate, odds ratios and confidence intervals were also computed in order to examine the shared ecological influences of young people (i.e., student and family background, parental and peer involvement in social change activities) with similar sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors.

Figure 2. Class Membership Model with Six Predictors
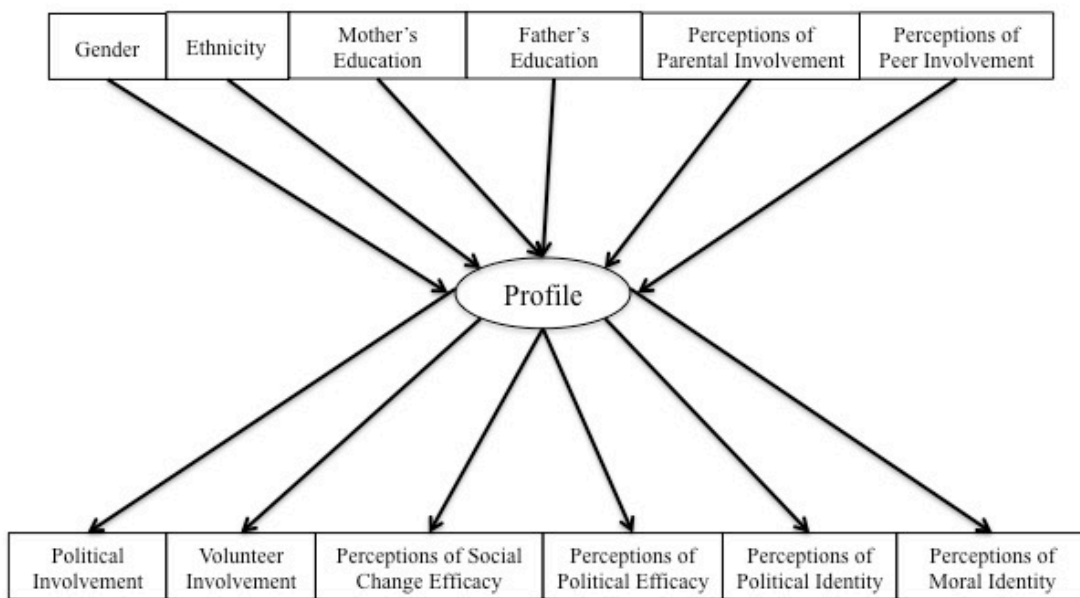
Group membership shifts. Given the longitudinal approach to exploring young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement as they transition into postsecondary experiences, the final stage of analysis compares participants' profile membership across waves of data collection. In particular, this comparative analysis examined the percentage of respondents within Time 1 profiles that join each Time 2 cluster. Through this assessment, longitudinal shifts for group membership were considered. The current analysis does not include growth mixture models, which are typically used to identify individual trajectories over time (Bauer & Reyes, 2010). Because best practices suggest at least

three repeated measures in order to fully examine developmental changes (Bauer, 2007; Muthén & Muthén, 2000), results from the current analysis illuminate potential shifts around a specific civic milestone (i.e., voting) and do not reflect the culmination of young people's sociopolitical development. Instead, the descriptive and exploratory nature of this investigation provides foundational evidence for the extent to which the behavioral manifestations of young people's sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making process continue to emerge as they approach adulthood.

Results

For both survey administrations, several mixture models were evaluated to determine the most appropriate number of profiles for each wave of data collection through previously described fit indices (Table 3). Since most datasets contain at least two subgroups, the range for plausible grouping ranged from two to six, which represents the number of indicator variables present in the model. Previous literature suggests that considering more clusters than indicator variables present can lead to over fitting data and biased results (Everitt et al., 2001; Raftery & Dean, 2006). Therefore, the most plausible and interpretable solutions with the fewest number of profiles were considered.

Table 3. Model Fit Indices for Normal Mixture Model

Time 1

	AIC	BIC	ssBIC	LRT	aLRT	BLRT	E
2 profiles	5888.22	5967.37	5907.06	0.0011	0.0012	0.00	0.731
3 profiles	5722.3	5830.6	5748.08	0.0005	0.0006	0.00	0.784
4 profiles	5672.08	5809.54	5704.81	0.4908	0.4998	0.00	0.761

Time 2

	AIC	BIC	ssBIC	LRT	aLRT	BLRT	E
2 profiles	6182.55	6261.69	6201.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.775
3 profiles	6063.01	6171.31	6088.79	0.0218	0.0234	0.00	0.79
4 profiles	5971.94	6109.4	6004.66	0.0001	0.0001	0.00	0.948
5 profiles	5895.64	6062.25	5935.3	0.0399	0.0426	0.00	0.795

Note: Boxed models note the number of profiles selected based on model-fit indices, entropy and parsimony

Determining the Number of Profiles at Time 1 and Time 2

Mixture models did not terminate normally after 4 classes for Time 1 data. This means that based on each dataset, no more than 4 statistically distinct groups were identified for young people during high school. Similarly, mixture models for Time 2 data suggest that more than 5 identifies profiles could lead to groups of young people that are not clearly distinguishable based on similar sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement. As a result, fit indices for the first wave of data collection during high school were considered for three possible groupings, and four plausible profiles were considered for young people's responses after they transitioned into postsecondary experiences. For Time 1, the three-profile solution was selected after comparing differences between three and four profiles. Although fit indices such as AIC, BIC, and ssBIC suggested that four profiles are more appropriate, values for LRT and entropy reached their optimal threshold for this specific dataset with three profiles. Likewise, fit indices for Time 2 data suggested either four or five possible groupings. However, in order to identify the best-fitting model with an appropriate balance of fit

and parsimony, the four-profile solution was identified as the best solution for the second wave of data collection.

Describing Latent Profiles Observed at Time 1

Figure 3 displays the means for the indicator variables for the three-profile solution selected for analysis at Time 1. Profiles were named based on relative mean levels for social change involvement (i.e., political and volunteer), efficacious attitudes (i.e., social change and political), and centrality of social change identity (i.e., political and moral) in order to distinguish between group characteristics.

Figure 3. Means for Adolescents by Time 1 Latent Profile, with Proportion of Adolescents in Each Profile.
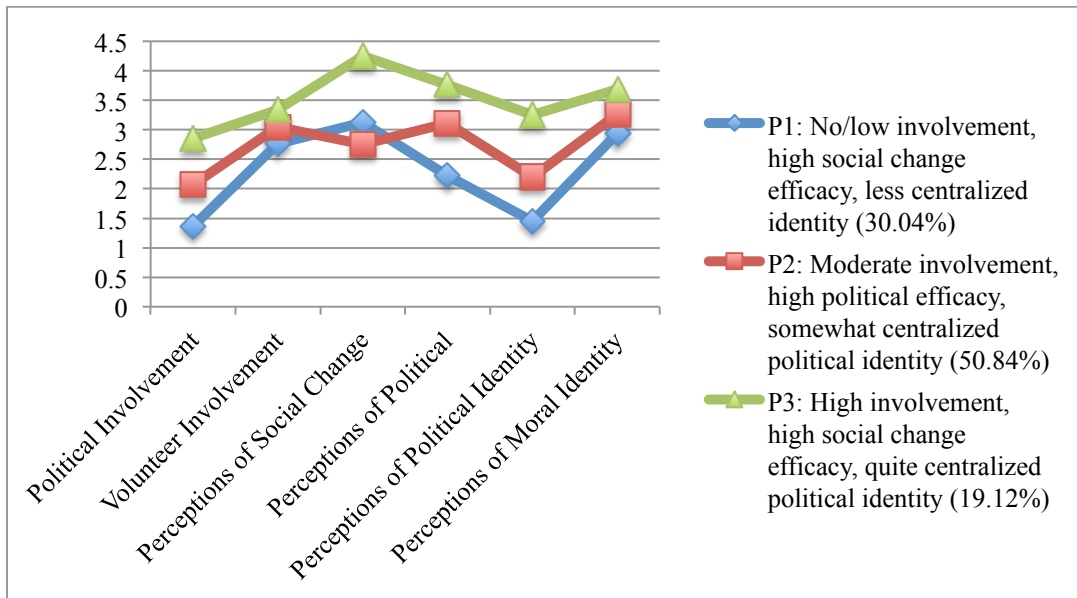
Across profiles, adolescents reported higher scores for volunteer involvement compared to political involvement, which includes youth who were interested in such endeavors but had not yet participated. This is expected since many young people might be more likely to

participate in volunteerism prior to their eligibility to vote. However, participants in only two of the three profiles were somewhat involved in volunteer activities. Furthermore, the profiles with the lowest and highest level of political and volunteer involvement reported higher scores for efficacious social change attitudes compared to perceptions of their political efficacy. This suggests that young people with the lowest and highest engagement in political or volunteer involvement, surprisingly, believe that they can have more impact on social change outcomes than political outcomes. On the other hand, the group reporting moderate involvement in social change activities felt stronger about their political efficacy. This finding indicates that for young people who occasionally engage in social change behaviors, they might feel that their involvement will have more impact on political outcomes than efforts contributing to social change. Finally, adolescents in all profiles indicated a more centralized moral identity compared to their political identity with varying levels of centrality. Thus, on average, young people's moral identity might have a more important role in their sociopolitical development during high school compared to their political identity.

Overall, approximately 30% of the sample were considered to have no or low social change involvement, high social change efficacy, and a less central political identity. More than half of participants demonstrated moderate involvement, high political efficacy, and a somewhat centralized political identity. The remaining 29% of adolescents indicated the highest level of political and volunteer involvement, social change efficacy, and centralized political identity. Demographic information for each profile at Time 1 is described in Table 4,which shows that participants who identified as female represented the majority of members in each profile, and ethnic backgrounds were relatively proportional across groups.

Table 4. Demographic Information for Each Time 1 Profile.

	P1		P2		P3	
	N	Percentage	*N*	Percentage	*N*	Percentage
Male	60	41.96	94	38.84	35	38.46
Female	83	58.04	148	61.16	46	50.55
Asian	57	39.86	88	36.36	18	19.78
Black	8	5.59	10	4.13	4	4.40
Latino	62	43.36	96	39.67	36	39.56
White	4	2.80	12	4.96	13	14.29
Mixed	9	6.29	23	9.50	11	12.09
Other	3	2.10	13	5.37	9	9.89
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Mother's Education	3.10	1.75	2.81	1.70	2.81	1.58
Father's Education	3.21	1.79	3.07	1.76	2.98	1.74
Parent Involvement	2.16	0.82	2.64	0.81	3.04	0.97
Peer Involvement	2.49	0.85	3.25	0.75	3.70	0.79

Describing Latent Profiles Observed at Time 2

Results from model fit indices suggest that an additional profile emerged as adolescents transitioned into emerging adulthood (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Means for Adolescents by Time 2 Latent Profile, with Proportion of Adolescents in Each Profile.
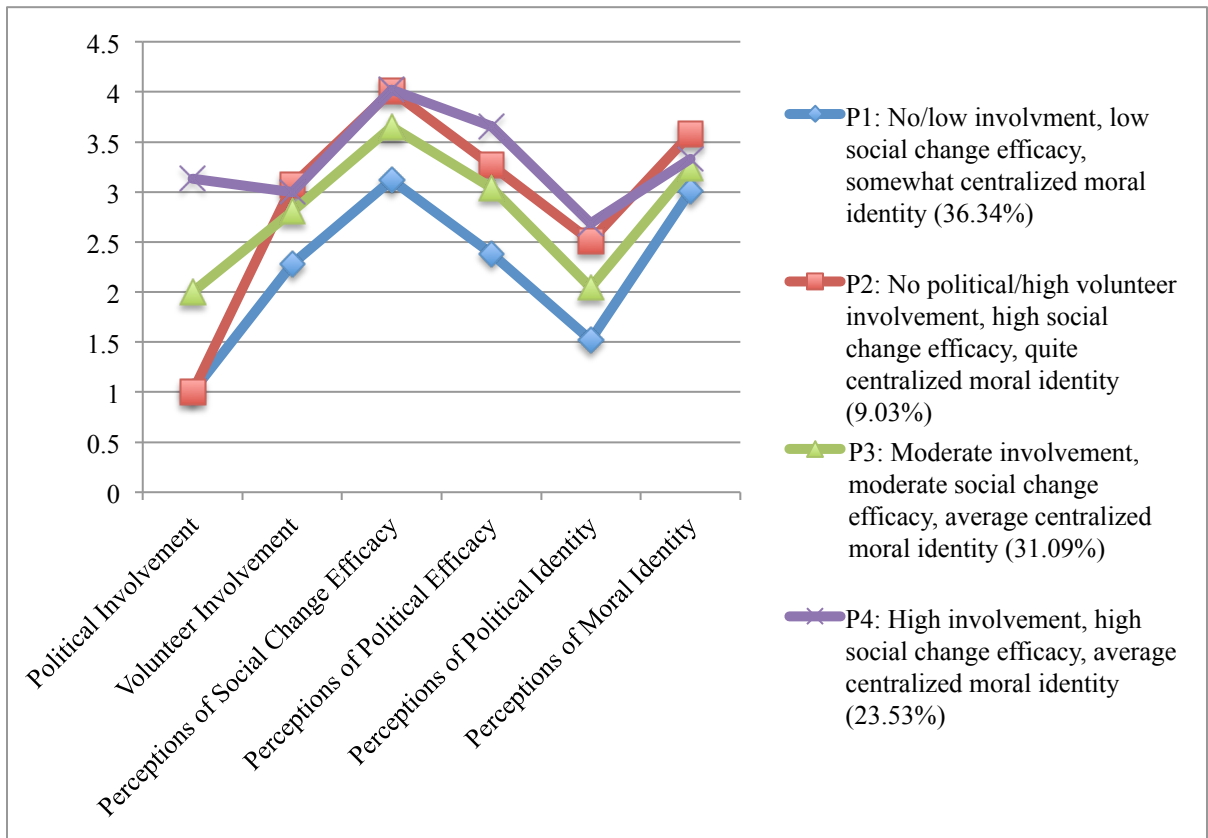
In particular, the two profiles with the lowest level of political and volunteer involvement reported varying levels of adolescents' perceptions of social change efficacy and centrality of their moral identity. For example, the largest group (36.34% of participants) had little to no social change involvement, low social efficacy, and a somewhat centralized moral identity at Time 2. However, the smallest group (9.03% of respondents)—which also reported no political or volunteer involvement—indicated the highest level of social change efficacy and centralized moral identity compared to all other profiles. The emergence of this new profile suggests that some adolescents developed strong sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes that did not necessarily manifest as political and volunteer behaviors. This finding indicates that there

might be additional factors impacting the relationship between young people's emergent sociopolitical development and their social change involvement.

The remaining two profiles are consistent with profiles identified during Time 1, with 31% of participants reporting moderate involvement, moderate perceptions of social change efficacy, and average centrality for their moral identity. The last group, which included 23.53% of the sample engaged in the highest level of political and volunteer engagement based on their high efficacious attitudes towards social change, and a quite centralized moral identity. Demographic information for each Time 2 profile (Table 5) reveals that male participants represented the majority of members in one of the identified profiles, unlike the groups from Time 1, which were all majority female. Furthermore, three of the four profiles were majority Latino, with the exception of Profile 2, which was 40.46% Asian.

Table 5. Demographic Information for Each Time 2 Profile.

	P1		P2		P3		P4	
	N	Percentage	*N*	Percentage	*N*	Percentage	*N*	Percentage
Male	70	40.46	24	55.81	53	35.81	42	37.50
Female	103	59.54	19	44.19	95	64.19	70	62.50
Asian	70	40.46	15	34.88	52	35.14	26	23.21
Black	11	6.36	1	2.33	6	4.05	4	3.57
Latino	63	36.42	20	46.51	63	42.57	48	42.86
White	6	3.47	2	4.65	8	5.41	13	11.61
Mixed	12	6.94	4	9.30	13	8.78	14	12.50
Other	11	6.36	1	2.33	6	4.05	7	6.25
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Mother's Education	3.03	1.75	2.93	1.64	2.80	1.70	2.81	1.65
Father's Education	3.29	1.76	3.12	1.76	3.01	1.76	2.88	1.76
Parent Involvement	2.34	0.85	2.60	0.83	2.62	0.90	2.86	0.91
Peer Involvement	2.63	0.94	3.42	0.87	3.06	0.84	3.73	0.75

Predicting Profile Membership with Contextual Covariates

In order to explore shared ecological factors that predicted group membership, odds ratios and confidence intervals for contextual variables were calculated (Table 6). Odds ratios are interpreted as the probability of being a member of one group in relation to another. Therefore, the reference group utilized for the analysis is also reported. Overall, participants' perceptions of peer social change involvement ($p < 0.001$) were the only significant predictor for all profiles across survey administrations, and the only predictor for group membership for Time 2 clusters. This suggests that young people's perceptions of their peers' involvement in social change activities was the only ecological factor that distinguished young people from being members of

one profile than another as participants transitioned away from high school. For Time 1 profiles, parental social change involvement ($p < 0.01$), Asian ethnicity ($p < 0.01$) and Latino ethnicity ($p < 0.05$) were also predictive of participants' group membership. Moreover, mother's highest level of education ($p < 0.001$) significantly predicted membership in P3 (high involvement, high social change efficacy, quite centralized political identity) compared to P1 (no/low involvement, high social change efficacy, less centralized political identity). Additional contextual variables such as gender, father's highest level of education, and other ethnic identities were not significant predictor variables. This means that when predicting which profile participants would be assigned in high school, young people's perception of their parents' engagement in social change activities, Asian or Latino ethnicity, and their mother's level of education were more likely to be distinguishing ecological factors for high school group membership, in addition to young people's perceptions of their peer's involvement in social change behaviors.

Table 6. Odds Ratios and Confidence Intervals for Covariates Predicting Time 1 Profile Membership.

	Estimate	SE	Odds Ratio	Lower CI	Upper CI	p-value
P2 vs. P1						
Gender	0.44	0.40	1.56	0.71	3.42	0.27
Mother's Education	-0.31	0.16	0.74	0.53	1.01	0.06
Father's Education	0.02	0.16	1.02	0.75	1.39	0.90
Parental Involvement	1.05	0.26	2.85	1.72	4.72	0.00*
Peer Involvement	2.38	0.37	10.75	5.17	22.35	0.00*
Asian	-3.85	1.25	0.02	0.00	0.24	0.00*
Black	-1.89	1.40	0.15	0.01	2.34	0.18
Latino	-2.83	1.19	0.06	0.01	0.61	0.02*
White	-1.98	1.44	0.14	0.01	2.31	0.17
Mixed	-1.72	1.36	0.18	0.01	2.59	0.21
P3 vs. P1						
Gender	0.29	0.33	1.33	0.70	2.52	0.38
Mother's Education	-.26	0.12	0.77	0.61	0.98	0.03*
Father's Education	0.08	0.11	1.08	0.87	1.35	0.48
Parental Involvement	0.67	0.21	1.95	1.30	2.92	0.00*
Peer Involvement	1.40	0.24	4.04	2.53	6.47	0.00*
Asian	3.85	1.25	0.11	0.01	0.94	0.00*
Black	1.89	1.40	0.20	0.02	2.02	0.18
Latino	2.83	1.19	0.14	0.02	1.14	0.02*
White	1.98	1.44	0.15	0.01	2.28	0.17
Mixed	1.72	1.36	0.31	0.02	3.97	0.21

*$p<0.05$

Overall, results unveiled the extent to which peer social change involvement predicts membership in different group profiles. At Time 1, peer social change involvement significantly increased the odds of being in P2 (moderate involvement, high political efficacy, somewhat

centralized political identity) versus being in the first profile (no/low involvement, high social change efficacy, less centralized political identity) with an odds ratio of 10.75 (95% CI [5.17, 22.35]). This means that in addition to the similarities young people in each group might have regarding their emergent sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement, adolescents are more likely to be grouped with other young people based on their shared perceptions of the peers' social change involvement compared to other ecological factors.

Similar results emerged for Time 2 clusters when considering adolescents' perceptions of their peers' social change involvement, with the highest odds ratio (OR=5.44, 95% CI [3.59, 8.25]) predicting membership in P4 (high involvement, high social change efficacy, average centralized moral identity) versus P1 (no/low involvement, low social change efficacy, somewhat centralized moral identity). In other words, young people's perceptions of their peers' social change behaviors were five times more likely to predict membership in a high involvement group compared to the group with limited social change participation. Expectedly, this suggests that there is an important connection between young people's involvement in social change activities and ecological influences such as their perceptions of their peers' involvement. Moreover, the odds of group membership based on perceptions of parental social change involvement also varied, particularly for Time 1 clusters. Although such involvement increased the chances of being assigned to each profile, the odds ratios differed slightly when compared to the reference group. Membership in the second profile (moderate involvement, high political efficacy, somewhat centralized political identity) was marginally more likely (OR=2.85, 95% CI [1.72, 4.72]) due to adolescents' perceptions of their parents' involvement in social change activities compared to those assigned to profile 3 (high involvement, high social change efficacy,

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quite centralized political identity). The odds for membership in third profile were 1.95 (95% CI [1.3, 2.92]), which is lower than the odds observed for young people's perceptions of their peers' social change involvement.

Additional significant predictors suggest a decreased likelihood of group membership at Time 1. For example, participants reporting an Asian ethnic background were less likely to be members of either profile 2 (OR=0.02, 95% CI [0.00, 0.24] or profile 3 [OR=0.11, 95% CI [0.01, 0.94] compared to the reference group. Similar patterns were found for Latino participants. None of the other ethnic identities suggested significant predictive qualities for group membership for either survey administration. This means that young people's Asian or Latino ethnicity was the only aspect of their background that predicted if they would be part of the groups with moderate or higher social change involvement during high school.

Describing Longitudinal Changes in Profile Membership

In general, young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes reflected longitudinal shifts in profile membership compared to changes in their social change outcomes as they transitioned from high school. Although some profile shifts were expected as some young people expanded their sociopolitical perspectives after high school, results from the latent profile analysis reveal that some participants' group membership moved to an additional cluster that emerged during the second survey administration. The presence of this new profile suggests that enough young people experienced a developmental shift in their sociopolitical development to represent a new characterization of their sociopolitical perspectives and outcomes as they transitioned into adulthood.

Figure 5 illustrates these membership shifts by showing the percentage of members in Time 1 groups that were assigned to each of the Time 2 profiles. For example, of the adolescents

who were part of profile 1 during the first wave of data collection (no/low political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, less centralized political identity), 65% ended up in profile 1 at Time 2 (no/low political and volunteer involvement, low social change efficacy, somewhat centralized moral identity). Furthermore, approximately half of the members from the third profile at Time 1 (high political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, quite centralized political identity) were part of Profile 4 during the second wave of data collection (high political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, average centralized moral identity). Profile trajectories for Profile 2 (moderate political and volunteer involvement, high political efficacy, somewhat centralized political identity) during the initial survey administration included a range of clustering patterns, with 28% of respondents indicating a decrease in political and volunteer involvement and social change efficacy over time as members of the first profile at Time 2. Overall, most young people continued to engage in similar levels of social change involvement, with some changes in their sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes.

Figure 5. Profile Membership Shifts Across Waves
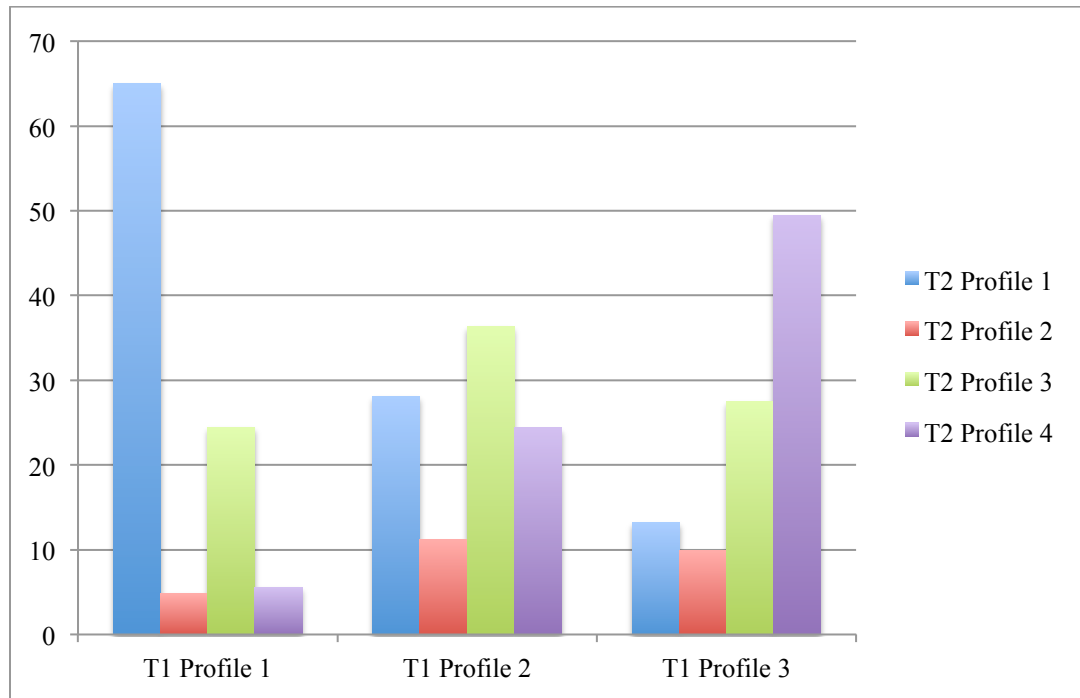
Table 7 includes descriptive statistics for membership shifts across survey administrations. Male respondents represented the majority of youth (66.67%) who shifted from the third profile at Time 1 (high involvement, high social change efficacy, quite centralized political identity) to profile 2 (no political/high volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, quite centralized moral identity) during the follow-up survey. However, none of the Black participants exhibited this specific trajectory. This suggests that for Black youth in this sample, high levels of social change involvement and centralized political identity persisted as they transitioned away from high school. Asian (28.57%) and Latino (71.43 %) respondents were the only participants to shift from the first profile at Time 1 (no/low political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, less centralized political identity) to profile 2. Moreover, profile shifts from profile 1 at Time 1 (no/low political and volunteer involvement,

high social change efficacy, less centralized political identity) to the fourth profile identified during the second survey administration (high political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, average centralized moral identity) were observed across genders, but only occurred with Asian (37.5%), Black (12.5%), and Latino (50%) participants. This suggests that for some young people of various ethnic backgrounds who were not involved in social change behaviors in high school, their social change efficacy over time was related to an increase in social change involvement as they transitioned into adulthood.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Profile Membership Shifts.

Time 1 Membership	Profile 1				Profile 2				Profile 3			
Time 2 Membership	P1	P2	P3	P4	P1	P2	P3	P4	P1	P2	P3	P4
N	93	7	35	8	68	27	88	59	12	9	25	45
					Profile Percentage							
Male	45.16	28.57	34.29	50.00	35.29	59.26	35.23	38.98	33.33	66.67	40.00	33.33
Female	55.91	71.43	65.71	50.00	64.71	40.74	64.77	61.02	66.67	33.33	60.00	66.67
Asian	36.56	28.57	51.43	37.50	45.59	44.44	31.82	28.81	41.67	11.11	24.00	13.33
Black	6.45	0.00	2.86	12.50	5.88	3.70	4.55	1.69	8.33	0.00	4.00	4.44
Latino	43.01	71.43	37.14	50.00	29.41	40.74	44.32	44.07	25.00	44.44	44.00	40.00
White	3.23	0.00	2.86	0.00	2.94	3.70	4.55	8.47	8.33	11.11	12.00	17.78
Mixed	8.60	0.00	2.86	0.00	5.88	7.41	11.36	11.86	0.00	22.22	8.00	15.56
Other	2.15	0.00	2.86	0.00	10.29	0.00	3.41	5.08	16.67	11.11	8.00	8.89
					Mean (SD)							
Mother's Education	3.04 (1.76)	3 (0.82)	3.34 (1.92)	2.75 (1.67)	3.1 (1.74)	2.78 (1.78)	2.6 (1.65)	2.81 (1.70)	2.58 (1.78)	3.33 (1.73)	2.72 (1.43)	2.82 (1.61)
Father's Education	3.19 (1.78)	2.29 (1.25)	3.66 (1.78)	2.25 (1.83)	3.37 (1.73)	3.33 (1.82)	2.83 (1.74)	2.95 (1.79)	3.67 (1.87)	3.11 (1.90)	2.72 (1.67)	2.91 (1.72)
Parent Involvement	2.12 (0.81)	2.11 (0.80)	2.31 (0.86)	1.97 (0.76)	2.53 (0.78)	2.65 (0.74)	2.66 (0.87)	2.75 (0.79)	3.04 (1.00)	2.82 (1.02)	2.91 (0.97)	3.16 (0.96)
T1 Peer Involvement	2.44 (0.81)	2.24 (0.90)	2.74 (0.95)	2.25 (0.81)	3.14 (0.78)	3.32 (0.63)	3.23 (0.69)	3.37 (0.86)	3.75 (1.25)	3.67 (0.95)	3.72 (0.69)	3.67 (0.67)
T2 Peer Involvement	2.42 (0.92)	3.19 (0.81)	2.85 (0.79)	3.17 (0.85)	2.81 (0.89)	3.44 (0.88)	3.09 (0.84)	3.59 (0.73)	3.25 (0.89)	3.52 (0.96)	3.21 (0.89)	4.03 (0.65)

Contextual and ecological components were also observed when examining profile shifts over time. The group that reported the highest average of mother's education level (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 1.92) shifted from profile 1 (no/low political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, less centralized political identity) at Time 1 to the third profile (moderate political and volunteer involvement, moderate social change efficacy, average centralized moral identity) that emerged during Time 2. This suggests that young people's social change involvement over time might be related their mother's educational level, in addition to the dynamic relationship between

young people's sociopolitical perspectives and meaning-making processes. Moreover, the lowest average for mother's highest level of education ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.65$) also shifted to the third profile from their previous membership in profile 2 during the initial survey (moderate political and volunteer involvement, high political efficacy, somewhat centralized political identity).

Interestingly, the group with the highest reported average for father's educational attainment ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.87$) moved from profile 3 at Time 1 (high political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, quite centralized political identity) to the first group identified based on Time 2 experiences (no/low political and volunteer involvement, low social change efficacy, somewhat centralized moral identity). This indicates a possible relationship between young people's decrease in social change behaviors, less salient efficacious attitudes, and their father's educational background as young people approach adulthood.

Youth perceptions of their parents' engagement in social change activities also appear to characterize profile shifts over time. The highest reported mean for parental involvement (($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.96$) was observed in the group of students who were members of clusters with the most political and volunteer involvement. Surprisingly, the adolescents who made one of the more notable shifts in profile membership reported the lowest level of parental social change involvement ($M = 1.97$, $SD = 0.76$). These students were initially identified as members of the first profile (no/low political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, less centralized political identity), but transitioned to profile 4 at Time 2 (high involvement, high social change efficacy, average centralized moral identity). This shift suggests that despite perceiving low engagement from their parents' social change activity as high school students, members in this group manifested their relatively higher sense of social change efficacy into the most political and volunteer involvement of all respondents at Time 2. Thus, for some young

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people, ecological influences such as their perceptions of their parents' involvement in social change activities continue to impact young people's social change involvement during the transition into emerging adulthood.

Finally, participants' perceptions of their peers' social change involvement varied across profile trajectories. Though it was somewhat expected for adolescents within peer networks to engage in similar behaviors (e.g., transitioning from the third profile at Time 1 to profile 4 as emerging adults), this was not the case when considering youth perception of their peers at Time 1. In fact, the group with the highest mean for peer social change involvement as high school students ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.25$) shifted from an initial membership in profile 3 (high political and volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, quite centralized political identity) to the first profile of Time 2 clusters (no/low political and volunteer involvement, low social change, somewhat centralized moral identity). Unlike the profile changes observed based on perceptions of parental social change involvement, this trajectory suggests that peer network influences do not necessarily lead to prolonged involvement in social change endeavors.

Overall, findings from this paper illuminate the extent to which various sociopolitical perspectives relate to contextual and ecological factors as young people transition into postsecondary experiences. Latent profiles identified across each survey administration reveal several similarities across all profiles such as more involvement in volunteer activities compared to political endeavors as high school students and a more centralized moral identity than political identity as young people approach emerging adulthood. Ecological influences such as young people's perceptions of their peers' social change involvement were also significant predictors for membership in specific profiles based on the continued development of young people's sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors over time. Furthermore, longitudinal findings suggest that

shifts in profile membership for some adolescents result in varying levels of sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, and participation in social change activities as they entered adulthood.

Discussion

By examining the persistence of youth sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change involvement over time, much can be learned about the ways in which young people exhibit similar social change attitudinal and behavioral outcomes described by SPD theory. Findings illuminate the impact of the dynamic relationship between ecological influences (e.g., perceptions of parental and peer social change involvement) and intrapersonal processes on youth social change behavior. Specifically, in addition to the influence of high school perceptions of peer social change involvement on adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change behaviors, young peoples' peer networks after high school continues to contribute to adolescents' sociopolitical development and resulting behavioral outcomes.

Literature suggests that new social contexts—and new people— can increase adolescents' awareness of social issues and contribute to their emerging worldview and understanding of systemic issues (Charmaraman, 2013; Wilkenfeld et al., 2010). Similarly, SPD theory suggests that a more critical sociopolitical perspective is often the result of having a more nuanced understanding of social inequities within society (Cohen, 2005; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). However, findings from this study provide evidence of the ways in which peer influence continues to impact varying behavioral manifestations of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives as they transition away from high school. Moreover, the emergence of additional behavioral profiles over time demonstrate that although peer perceptions continue to

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impact the extent to which young people participate in social change behaviors, the transition into adulthood could result in an increase or—and for some young people— a decrease in their social change participation. Additional research is needed to further explore the relationship between young people's emergent sociopolitical development and their perceptions of their high school peers' social change involvement compared to the involvement of their postsecondary peer network.

Shifting Youth Social Change Profiles Over Time

Previous research has highlighted sociopolitical perspective and behavioral changes over time for adolescents (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). Similarly, findings from the current study reveal that profile membership shifts for some adolescents reflected varying behavioral manifestations of meaning-making processes as they transitioned away from high school, as expected. However, existing conceptualizations of SPD theory that emphasize current sociopolitical attitudes of young people do little to theorize how such perspectives persist over time, as ecological factors such as youth perceptions of their peers' social change involvement influences the relationship between young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and social change outcomes. Often times, scholars link youth civic attitudes with distal civic outcomes without accounting for the extent to which such behavioral outcomes reflect either emergent or persistent sociopolitical perspectives as young people transition into new settings (Hart et al., 2007; Watts & Flanagan, 2007). The profiles identified in this paper not only reflect the sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors of young people with shared similar experiences at a specific developmental time, but findings also provide some evidence of how shifts in perspectives are related to ecological factors and coinciding variations in social change participation.

Perhaps, for example, some social justice actors from Voight and Torney-Purta's (2013) typology of middle school civic engagement ultimately become social justice sympathizers as adults due to their emergent sociopolitical development, which might be based on specific lived experiences and perceptions of their peers' social change involvement. Findings from the current paper help to contextualize this shift and challenge existing conceptualizations of sociopolitical development as a persistent characterization of an individual's perspective of society and accompanying social change behaviors. In other words, the SPD theoretical framework should be considered as a dynamic representation of individuals' understanding of society, as behavioral manifestations for even liberation-focused perspectives can vary over time.

Some scholars have questioned the stability of the stages of the SPD theoretical framework over the life course, particularly given the cognitive processes inherent in developing a critical understanding of society (Alwin & Krosnik, 1991; O'Donoghue & Strobel, 2007). Given possible shifts in young people's sociopolitical perspectives as they transition into postsecondary experiences, it is important to highlight the resulting behaviors from young people's changes in their sociopolitical perspectives. Membership shifts observed in the findings suggest that there is much to be learned about the ongoing meaning-making processes occurring during adolescence that promote behavioral changes over time, including involvement in social change activities. Scholars have previously used cross-sectional data to identify profiles of civic behaviors during adolescence (Godfrey et al., 2019; Pancer et al., 2007; Voight & Torney-Purta, 2013). By classifying students based on their current civic involvement or sociopolitical perspectives, educators and youth development practitioners could support young people's perceptions of their role in social change efforts at the time (Fegley et al., 2006; Nam, 2012). However, findings from the current study reveal that for some young people, levels of social

change engagement can decrease as they approach adulthood and continue to make meaning of their perceived efficacy and their emergent civic and moral identity (Leath & Chavous, 2017). Therefore, findings suggest that youth programs designed to support and foster young people's participation in social change endeavors should account for emergent meaning-making processes that lead to varying attitudinal and behavioral outcomes during adolescence.

Furthermore, incorporating contextual factors related to youth social change involvement (e.g., perceptions of peers' social change involvement) reflect a more ecological approach to supporting young people's emergent sociopolitical development (Neville & Mobley, 2001; Prilleltensky et al., 2001; Wray-Lake & Sloper, 2016). In other words, practitioners and educators can consider the extent to which parents and peers can be included in programming for young people interested in social change activities. By designing more comprehensive initiatives for promoting youth social change involvement, the sociopolitical perspectives of adolescents, their family members, and peers can continue develop—collectively—over time, instead of focusing on an individualized developmental process as suggested by SPD theory.

Sociopolitical Orientations for Social Change Outcomes

The profiles identified in the current paper considered varying relationships between young people's involvement in particular social change activities and intrapersonal meaning-making processes such as the emergence of adolescents' moral and political identity and perceptions of their self-efficacy. The dynamic relationship between these components illuminates the impact of sociopolitical perspectives on youth social change involvement (Ballard & Ozer, 2016; Hope & Jagers, 2014). For example, some adolescents might perceive political activities as the best mechanism for promoting systemic change, and thus, seek opportunities for political engagement rather than volunteer activities. Similarly, having a more

centralized moral identity could result in participation in volunteer endeavors that contribute to first-order change (Seidman & Rappaport, 1986). In other words, young people's orientation for promoting social change can reflect emergent meaning-making processes and sociopolitical perspectives, as well as young people's perceptions of their peers' social change involvement, and thus, result in a range of behavioral outcomes as adolescents approach adulthood. Although, such orientations align with components of SPD theory, shifts in behavioral profiles over time suggest that young people's sociopolitical development—and concurrent intrapersonal development—does not always persist over time. Instead, characterizations of young people's social change involvement should be considered as current snapshots of their emergent sociopolitical orientations.

In particular, findings reveal during this specific developmental period, most young people indicated a more non-political orientation to social change involvement before and after transitioning from high school. For example, over 80% of youth participants were members of P1 and P2 during high school, which reported high social change efficacy and no/low involvement in political activities. Likewise, for nearly all of the profiles identified across waves, young people expressed a stronger sense of social change efficacy compared to their role in political efforts to challenge and dismantle unjust systems, possibly due to young people's perception that they have limited influence on the political system prior to voting. These findings do not reflect meaning-making processes that typically lead to liberation behaviors as described by the SPD theoretical framework (Watts et al., 2003). For example, adolescents from all profiles reported a more centralized moral identity and higher levels of volunteer involvement compared to political activities across survey administrations, which could reflect a more adaptive sociopolitical perspective.

Based on the initial profiles identified, one could expect young people to possess a range of efficacious attitudes around political involvement before having the chance to vote. For example, some high school seniors might consider their forthcoming voting eligibility as the first opportunity to engage in political activities, while others have had previous experiences interacting with lawmakers. These differing perspectives of what it means to be politically involved as a minor can reflect adolescents' sense of political efficacy, and lead some young people to have a stronger sense of their social change efficacy (Ginwright, 2007; Nam, 2012). According to SPD theory, such efficacious attitudes would reflect a less critical sociopolitical perspective given a limited emphasis on liberation-focused behaviors (Watts et al., 2003). Furthermore, one's knowledge of unjust social structures—perhaps during a developmental stage such as the transition from high school into adulthood—could result in a more nuanced understanding of society, stronger perceptions of social change and political efficacy, and increased participation in social change activities. This was evident in the higher levels in young people's political efficacy compared to their political identity and political involvement across all high school profiles.

However, Time 2 profiles did not reveal a shift toward more political involvement, an increase sense of political activity, or a more centralized political identity for participants after the opportunity to participate in local and national elections. In fact, some participants moved from profiles reflecting more critical sociopolitical perspectives to groups that suggest a more adaptive sociopolitical perspective or decreased social change involvement, as suggested by SPD theory (Watts et al., 1999). These shifts reveal the dynamic relationship between adolescents' emergent efficacious attitudes and their perceived role in promoting social change as adults by

revealing that for some young people, stronger efficacious attitudes might not result in an increase social change behaviors during adulthood, as seen in the emergence of P2.

Additionally, a less critical perspective might reflect young people's perceptions of specific social change mechanisms such as voting, and the extent to which their participation in such mechanisms will result in meaningful change (Fegley et al., 2006; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Yates & Youniss, 1998). Furthermore, adolescents' distal sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors represent additional meaning-making processes as young people continue to deepen their understanding of society and solidify their sociopolitical perspectives (Cohen, 2005; Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). Therefore, young people's emergent sociopolitical development could reflect movement between the stages of the SPD theoretical framework, with Time 2 profiles illuminating one sociopolitical perspective shift—potentially, of many—as they transition into adulthood. This suggests that applications of SPD theory for adolescents should highlight the dynamic meaning-making processes that contribute to young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives and resulting social change involvement over time. Without this emphasis, attempts to characterize young people's sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, and social change involvement might misrepresent their overall sociopolitical development at any given time.

Strengths

Although previous literature has identified typologies of civic engagement, the current study expands existing theoretical understandings of youth social change involvement by examining both intrapersonal and ecological factors that characterize youth profiles of social change involvement over time. By drawing upon existing literature and the SPD theoretical framework, this paper highlighted the limitations of characterizing young people's sociopolitical

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development based on emergent sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, and social change involvement given ecological influences from young people's peer network, for example. This is particularly important as youth development scholars continue to consider ways to encourage community and civic involvement during adolescence into emerging adulthood, as settings typically change for young people after high school. This is an important contribution to existing SPD literature that does not characterize young people's sociopolitical development as a continual process that coincides with typical transitions across the life course, such as transitioning away from high school.

Furthermore, the multiple phases of analysis accounted for contextual factors in a way that is often missing through traditional regression analyses by identifying attitudinal and behavioral shifts over time. Through latent profile analysis, findings not only identified patterns between groups of young people based on their emergent sociopolitical perspectives, but shifts in profile membership were also observed as a contribution to existing SPD literature and additional theoretical approaches examining youth social change involvement. Furthermore, these shifts reflected the dynamic relationship between young people's sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors that can deviate from the stages included in the SPD theoretical framework over time. Thus, profile shifts observed in the current study challenge linear conceptualization of social change behaviors that result from efficacious attitudes and critical sociopolitical perspectives. Moreover, this analysis draws attention to the need for future youth sociopolitical development scholarship to further explore the profiles identified across waves, and continue to study the ways in which young people with shared attitudes and experiences engage in similar activities during emerging adulthood.

Limitations

Despite the theoretical and methodological strengths of the current study, there are several limitations to consider for this secondary analysis. First, profiles were identified based on the Stanford research team's selective survey measures for youth sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors, such as political and volunteer involvement. Furthermore, measures for ecological influences were limited to young people's perceptions of their parents' and peers' involvement in social change activities. Because of this limitation, the subgroups identified through profile analysis reflect specific behaviors and influences do not reflect a wide range of contributing factors to young people's social change involvement over time, including macro-level influences such as the political climate of one's community. Thus, findings represent a subset of aspects related to adolescent profiles for youth social change involvement as they approach emerging adulthood. Incorporating additional measures for youth sociopolitical development in future scholarship will provide a more exhaustive narrative for the multitude of factors influencing adolescents' longitudinal social change involvement, particularly as young people transition away from high school and continue to develop their sociopolitical perspectives.

Moreover, results do not fully represent the extent to which youth sociopolitical perspectives develop as young people transition from high school into emerging adulthood. Concurrent meaning-making processes simultaneously contributed to adolescents' understanding of society during the developmental period highlighted in this study. As a result, it is inaccurate to conclude that study participants solidified their sociopolitical perspectives within two years of the initial survey. Therefore, findings from the current study do not provide a comprehensive explanation of numerous profile membership shifts that might occur during emerging adulthood. Instead, identified profiles reflect a snapshot of how a developmental approach to understanding

the ways in which youth sociopolitical perspectives can evolve due to a range of meaning-making processes.

CHAPTER 5:

TOWARDS A MIXED-METHODS UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH SOCIAL CHANGE

INVOLVEMENT

Findings from the previous three chapters provide qualitative and quantitative explanations of some of the behavioral manifestations of young people's sociopolitical perspectives during emerging adulthood. Separately, each chapter provides an additional layer of analysis to contextualize the dynamic cognitive processes inherent in SPD theory during a specific developmental period of the life course. As a collective, these findings contribute to scholarly efforts to conceptualize adolescents' understanding of social issues as a reflection of their emergent sociopolitical development over time. While extant literature has typically examined selective components of the SPD theoretical framework guiding this dissertation project, each paper contributes to a growing body of literature by exploring youth sociopolitical development through a mixed methods approach. After linking findings from each study to demonstrate how qualitative and quantitative methods can examine aspects of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives over time, the following chapter includes a brief discussion of implications and future directions for advancing SPD scholarship.

Emergent Sociopolitical Perspectives

Findings from Chapter 2's qualitative analysis revealed that many adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives as high school students reflected numerous stages from the SPD theoretical framework, with most participants expressing perspectives across multiple stages (Table 1). These results demonstrated the difficulty of characterizing young people's sociopolitical development during a specific period of the life course, and the need to contextualize sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, and resulting behavioral outcomes

as components of a dynamic and emergent process during adolescence and into adulthood (Anyiwo et al., 2018; Curtin et al., 2010).

Figure 1. Qualitative Participants' Sociopolitical Perspectives Across Waves as Described by Sociopolitical Development Theory
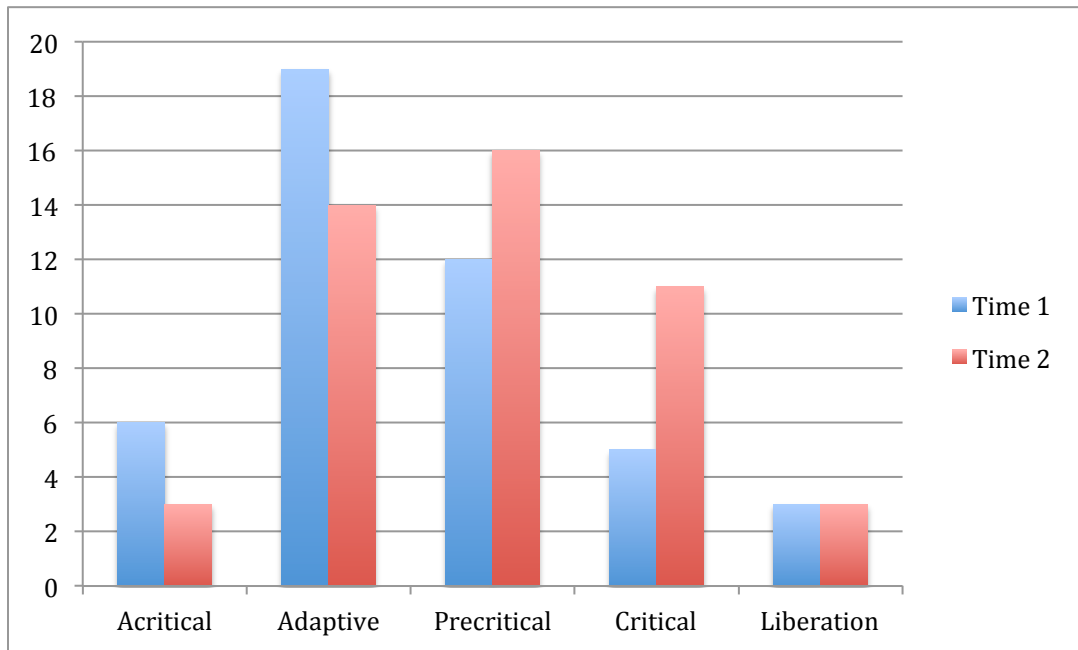
When comparing these results to subsequent analyses throughout this dissertation, qualitative findings interestingly coincide with responses to survey items regarding their perceptions of fairness in the United States as high school students, as evident in the regression analyses from Chapter 3. For example, on average, the subset of participants who completed interviews reported a somewhat neutral view of fairness in the United States ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.04$), and acknowledged that they disagreed with statements such as "Basically, people get a fair treatment in America, no matter who they are." This aligns with the adaptive-precritical sociopolitical perspectives that many youth participants articulated during their interviews. Although participants might not have explicitly articulated their opinion of fairness during their

interview, the alignment between qualitative and quantities findings suggest that some young people maintained a sociopolitical perspective that acknowledged the existence of unjust outcomes in the United States (Clay, 2006; Watts et al., 2003). For example, interviewed participants also reported feeling discriminated against at times ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.08$), which suggests some familiarity with inequality in America, or an adaptive-precritical understanding of social issues. These findings from Chapter 3 further support the experiences of the young people interviewed in Chapter 2, and demonstrates how qualitative and regression analyses contribute to further contextualizing young people's sociopolitical perspectives as they transition away from high school.   Furthermore, latent profiles identified at Time 1 in Chapter 4 showed that half of the interviewed participants were assigned to the third profile (Table 1), which indicated the highest centrality of adolescents' political identity ($M = 3.26$) based on their concern about international issues and government policies. This group also exhibited a quite centralized moral identity ($M = 3.69$) when asked about their willingness to stand up for what is right and their concern for about justice and human rights. Another 40% of interviewed participants were assigned to profile 2, where youth expressed a somewhat centralized political ($M = 2.20$) and moral identity ($M = 3.27$). Based on these profile assignments, findings suggest that adolescents expressed a more critical sociopolitical perspective through their survey responses compared to their interviews as high school students, which highlights the importance of examining SPD theory during the transition into adulthood through mixed methods. Given the dynamic processes inherent in the formation of sociopolitical perspectives during this developmental stage, incorporating theoretical considerations for the emergent nature of SPD theory through mixed methods would capture the many factors that inform young people's understanding of society,

and the extent to which their social change involvement is reflective of their intrapersonal meaning-making processes.

Table 1. Profile Assignments for Interviewed Participants Across Waves

T1 Profiles*				T2 Profiles**			
P1 (9.09%)	P2 (40.91%)	P3 (50%)		P1 (13.64%)	P2 (9.09%)	P3 (36.36%)	P4 (40.91%)
Garrett	Thuy	Angela		Garrett	Thuy	Luz	Angela
Minh	Luz	Ayanna		Kiri	Chen	Desi	Ayanna
	Chase	Kelsey		Park		Minh	Kelsey
	Desi	Pia				Manuel	Chase
	Chen	Kiri				Elana	Pia
	Rio	Elana				Luis	Rio
	Manuel	Park				Mateo	Carina
	Luis	Santos				Noah	Santos
	Carina	George					George
		Mateo					
		Noah					

Note: Profile 1 describes young people with no/low involvement, high social change efficacy, and a less centralized political identity. Profile 2 suggests moderate involvement, high political efficacy, and a somewhat centralized political identity. Profile 3 reflects high involvement, high social change efficacy, and a quite centralized political identity **Note:* At Time 2, Profile 1 describes young people with no/low involvement, low social change efficacy, and a somewhat centralized moral identity. Profile 2 suggests no political/high volunteer involvement, high social change efficacy, and a quite centralized moral identity. Profile 3 reflects moderate involvement, moderate social change efficacy, and an average centralized moral identity. Profile 4 consists of high involvement, high social change efficacy, and an average centralized moral identity.

Postsecondary Sociopolitical Perspectives for Interviewed Participants

After transitioning from high school, most participants expressed a more critical sociopolitical perspective of society during follow-up interviews. Fewer adolescents presented an acritical viewpoint during this time, and almost all of the participants articulated a deeper understanding of social issues. Although some youth continued to primarily discuss social issues through an adaptive lens, more participants acknowledged lived experiences that empowered

them to further explore the manifestation of social injustices at Time 2. This evolution of young people's sociopolitical perspective reflects a more critical understanding of society that begins to question how inequality further privileges some communities while marginalizing others through further exploration of sociopolitical systems (Diemer, 2012; Watts et al., 2003).

These findings correspond with results from the regression analysis in Chapter 3, where interview participants were representative of the larger study sample by indicating a slight decrease in their perception of fairness in the United States as emerging adults ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 1.22$). In other words, participants acknowledged more instances of inequity in society based on their stronger disagreement with statements such as "America is a fair society where everyone has an equal chance to get ahead." However, unlike the larger sample, interviewed participants reported fewer experiences of discrimination as they transitioned into emerging adulthood ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.93$). When coupled with qualitative findings from Chapter 2, this result suggests that as emergent adults, their critical perspectives of society were not directly related to personal experiences of discrimination, but instead reflected their increasing awareness of social issues. This is an important theoretical consideration for SPD scholarship because it highlights the emergent nature of contributing factors for young people's sociopolitical perspectives during a specific developmental time. As some young people transition away from high school into new settings, qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that they might draw upon different components of their worldview, which is to be expected during this point in the life course (Schlitz et al., 2010; Youniss & Yates, 1999).

Shifts in sociopolitical perspectives were also observed through the latent profile analysis described in Chapter 4. Notably, only two of the interviewed participants were members of a group that was less critical than their initial assignment. These two participants were initially

members of profile 3 at Time 1 (quite centralized political and moral identity) and shifted to the first profile at Time 2 (somewhat centralized moral identity). On the other hand, the remaining participants either maintained their membership in a similar profile over time, or were clustered with adolescents who reported a more centralized moral identity, as reflected by their reported compassion and concern for all kinds of people, for example. These findings further illuminate the intrapersonal meaning-making processes contributing to young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives over time, as suggested by SPD theory (Christens & Peterson, 2012; Manganelli et al., 2014; O'Donoghue, 2006). Furthermore, findings support existing conceptualizations of the dynamic relationship between young people's sociopolitical perspectives, meaning-making processes, and behavioral outcomes. However, without the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods, theoretical applications of the SPD framework offer a limited scope of young people's sociopolitical perspectives during this important developmental stage. Therefore, given the concurrent developmental processes that typically occur as young people approach emerging adulthood, it is important to consider multiple mechanisms for understanding young people's' emergent SPD, particularly as young people align with multiple stages of the SPD theoretical framework over time. This will further efforts that consider the extent to which young people's participation in more critical or liberation-focused activities results from their emergent sociopolitical perspectives and their perceived efficacy in social change endeavors over time.

Similar to qualitative and quantitative evidence for young people's sociopolitical perspectives throughout the dissertation, findings from these methodological approaches also explain how some young people's sense of social change efficacy developed over time, including the development of efficacious attitudes and feeling empowered to explore social issues.

Moreover, exploring youth social change involvement across qualitative, regression, and profile analyses supports a more nuanced conceptualization of the behavioral manifestations of young people's emergent sociopolitical development during a stage in the life course that prompts concurrent cognitive processes, such SPD and worldview development (Fegley et al., 2006; Ginwright, 2007; Wilson et al., 2008).

Findings across all chapters suggest that few adolescents express sociopolitical perspectives at either ends of the SPD theoretical framework as high school students and as emerging adults (i.e., acritical and liberation-focused understanding of society). Instead, analyses reveal that most young people's understanding of society reflects a combination of emergent sociopolitical perspectives that are linked to intrapersonal meaning-making processes that can become more critical, more adaptive, or persist over time as their worldview crystallizes during a pivotal developmental stage in life. Given the role of families, schools, and youth practitioners in the overall development of adolescents, it is important to consider how the findings from this dissertation contribute to theoretical understandings of SPD theory and its use in youth programming. The following section briefly describes the implications for each of the analyses, as well as future directions for further exploring youth social change involvement.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Each analysis described in this dissertation provides evidence of the dynamic relationship between young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, intrapersonal meaning-making processes, and social change behavioral outcomes during a specific developmental time in the life course. Through the use of multiple methodological approaches, findings contribute to the continued advancement of SPD theory, particularly for young people transitioning into adulthood. Although the entire project represents a larger examination of youth social change

involvement, it is important to examine the unique theoretical and practical implications of each chapter and how findings extend current perspectives on youth sociopolitical attitudes and behaviors.

Chapter 2's qualitative findings revealed that as high school students, most adolescents had a somewhat narrow conceptualization of what it means to promote social change (i.e., voting). However, as they transitioned into new contexts and settings as emerging adults, many young people continued to make meaning of their positioning in society and their perceived role in social change endeavors (i.e., pursuing specific careers to address inequality in their community). This has several theoretical and practical implications. First, this chapter highlighted the contextual factors that influence young people's sociopolitical perspectives and accompanying intrapersonal meaning-making processes as they enter postsecondary experiences. Although previous scholarship has explored youth sociopolitical perspectives throughout adolescence (e.g., Hart et al., 2007; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Youniss & Yates, 1999), findings from this analysis further examined the ways in which setting and context influence how young people view society over a specific developmental time such as the transition away from high school into typical adult roles. Second, instead of characterizing participants based on the individual stages of the SPD theoretical framework, this longitudinal analysis of participants' provided evidence that individuals can articulate a range of sociopolitical perspectives that might shift over time. This helps further theoretical arguments for conceptualizing SPD theory as a spectrum for young people that often incorporates dynamic relationships between emergent sociopolitical perspectives and intrapersonal reflective processes.

Practical implications from Chapter 2's findings include developing programmatic efforts to support young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes as they

transition into adulthood. This could include providing adolescents resources or mentors to help identify future opportunities to help promote social change in their community. As educators and youth practitioners acknowledge young people's interest in social change involvement during high school, intentional support can cultivate pathways for adolescents considering a range of social change mechanisms based on emergent meaning-making processes and their sociopolitical development. Since many participants articulated limited involvement in social change efforts as they entered adulthood, connecting young people to organizations or individuals who can help adolescents continue their engagement could further contribute to their overall sociopolitical development, and possibly move them towards more critical or liberation-focused behaviors described by SPD theory.

Findings from Chapter 3's longitudinal multivariate regression analysis also have implications towards theory building and practice. By extending existing conceptualizations of SPD theory, predictive models illuminated the relationship between young people's efficacy-related meaning-making processes and a range of service-centered and systems-focused social change behaviors as they approached adulthood. This extends current youth social change literature by highlighting the role of adolescents' efficacious attitudes as moderators for their involvement as high school students and as they transition into typical adult roles. Instead of simply identifying linear relationships between intrapersonal sociopolitical attitudes and behavioral manifestations, findings from this analysis help conceptualize the interactions between such meaning-making processes and resulting social change involvement over time. Moreover, by classifying social change behaviors as service-centered and systems-focused, findings from Chapter 3 further conceptualized sociopolitical meaning-making processes as predictors for specific social change behaviors that reflect young people's emergent

sociopolitical perspectives as described by SPD theory (e.g., adaptive, critical, liberation-focused). Previous scholarship has primarily emphasized the frequency of young people's civic engagement behavior such as voting or volunteering as predictors of adult behaviors (e.g., Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Yates & Youniss, 1998). However, this chapter illuminated predictive relationships between young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, and varying behavioral manifestations of such meaning-making processes. Finally, the longitudinal analysis captured the dynamic and emergent nature of SPD theory by examining future behavioral manifestations of adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes. By investigating the relationships between perspectives previously held, the evolution of such attitudes, and current social change involvement, findings contribute to existing SPD theoretical approaches for identifying predictors for youth social change involvement during a specific stage in the life course.

In addition to the practical implications from Chapter 2, youth practitioners can draw upon Chapter 3's analysis to incorporate reflective practices for young people interested in or engaged in social change activities in high school and postsecondary experiences (i.e., college). As often seen in service-learning courses, for example, self-reflection can help adolescents make sense of their social change involvement by reflecting on their emergent self-awareness and intrapersonal development (O'Donoghue, 2006; Yeich & Levine, 1994). As such, findings from this analysis can help educators to further support young people as they engage in a range of social change activities and prepare to transition away from high school. For example, many educational institutions require students to volunteer or document their civic engagement in order to meet civic-related graduation requirements. By drawing upon Chapter 3's analysis of the predictive relationships between emergent sociopolitical perspectives, intrapersonal meaning-

making processes, and social change involvement, practitioners and educators can guide young people to identify social change activities that align with their current understanding of society, or perhaps, challenge them to engage in social change behaviors that will strengthen their efficacious attitudes and develop a more critical worldview, as described by SPD theory. Furthermore, such reflections will help young people continue to understand their role in promoting social change, which can influence their long-term social change involvement.

The latent profile analysis presented in Chapter 4 extends theoretical contributions from the previous two chapters by bridging SPD theory and ecological systems theory. In particular, the profiles identified in Chapter 4 captured the dynamic relationship between young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, social change involvement, and ecological influences over time. Theoretically, findings from this analysis extend previous SPD scholarship by capturing the ways in which young people's sociopolitical intrapersonal meaning-making processes are impacted by their perceptions of their social network's (i.e., parents and peers) social change involvement. In other words, the perceived actions of others can influence the extent to which young people feel efficacious about their involvement in social change behaviors. This is important to consider during the transition from high school into postsecondary experiences as young people's network typically change in new settings.

To date, fewer scholars have examined the behavioral manifestations of this specific relationship, and Chapter 4's findings contribute to future conceptualizations of SPD theory as an intrapersonal process with ecological influences. Additionally, the shifts in profile membership observed over time also have theoretical implications for SPD literature on youth sociopolitical development. Although previous profile analyses have identified cross-sectional groups of similar civic attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Godfrey et al., 2019; Pancer et al., 2007; Voight &

Torney-Purta, 2013), few have explored the extent to which these groups change as young people transition away from high school and approach adulthood. In particular, findings demonstrate the emergent nature of young people's sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, ecological influences, and social change involvement during a specific stage of the life course. As a result, characterizations based on existing SPD theoretical frameworks might not persist, as seen in profile shifts over time. Therefore, findings from the chapter reveal the importance of examining sociopolitical development longitudinally.

Observed shifts within social change group membership over time have several practical implications for youth practitioners. First, by identifying young people with similar proclivities for varying levels of social change involvement, practitioners can implement differential curricula and other activities that speak to young people's specific sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes, as described by SPD theory. For example, adolescents who express a stronger sense of social change efficacy and a more centralized moral identity might be interested in social change endeavors that are non-political in nature. With the appropriate resources and guidance, differentiated sociopolitical support could ultimately lead to sustained social change involvement if young people are able to better identify the ways in which they wish to promote social change in their community during their transition away from high school. Furthermore, such differential learning could help young people connect with other adolescents who share similar sociopolitical perspectives attitudes as thought partners for their continued involvement in community activities. As social network analysis suggests, young people typically interact with peers who are most similar to them (Schaefer et al., 2011). Therefore, by helping adolescents understand their sociopolitical profile (i.e., emergent sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes) and identify peers with similar worldviews, practitioners

can help young people develop a supportive network of individuals who are interested in engaging in similar social change behaviors, which could impact long-term engagement into adulthood and beyond.

Future Directions

Based on findings from each paper, there are several lines of inquiry that should be explored in future investigations of SPD theory and youth social change involvement. First, it is important to acknowledge that the current project examined sociopolitical perspective changes, intrapersonal meaning-making processes, and social change involvement during a specific time in the life course. Although findings revealed that perspective, attitudinal, and behavioral shifts could occur within two years (i.e., as young people transition out of high school and pursue postsecondary opportunities), future work should investigate the extent to which perspectives evolve throughout childhood, in addition to various stages of adulthood. Through longitudinal research, much can be learned about the multiple shifts in sociopolitical perspectives and the emergent nature of SPD theory across the life course, in addition to contextual factors that influence such changes.

Second, future research should include a more diverse sample in order to generalize findings. As previously mentioned, participants in the Stanford Civic Purpose Project were Californian adolescents who were finishing high school within a specific sociopolitical climate, which potentially had a significant influence on their emergent sociopolitical perspectives during the course of the study. In addition to exploring the experiences of young people across the country, national and local political environments should also be taken into consideration for future examinations of the analyses presented here. For example, findings might differ if young people completed interviews and surveys during a mid-term election year, for example. By

accounting for such ecological factors, future research should explore systemic influences for youth sociopolitical perspectives, intrapersonal meaning-making processes and social change behaviors.

Next, additional research is needed to examine the role of parents and peers for youth social change involvement, as it relates to the emergent nature of SPD theory. As a supplement to the variables observed in the current project, future work should continue to incorporate additional influences from parental and peer social change involvement beyond adolescents' perceptions. For example, a network study could examine the sociopolitical perspectives, efficacious attitudes, and social change behaviors of adolescents' microsystem as additional influences on youth involvement. Through this approach, scholars would be able to further contextualize the dynamic processes described in the SPD theoretical framework by illuminating the extent to which other people's sociopolitical development has a direct influence on young people's understanding of society and accompanying behaviors over time. Additional settings could also be explored as conduits for young people's development such as schools, churches, community organizations, and social clubs.

Finally, future research is necessary to continue exploring the behavioral manifestations of young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives and intrapersonal meaning-making processes, particularly as it relates to the liberation-focused behaviors described in SPD theory. The current project examined a somewhat narrow definition of social change involvement by focusing on activities characterized as service-centered (e.g., volunteerism) and systems-focused (e.g., political involvement). However, with the advancement of social media as an innovative form of civic engagement, for example, it is important to consider the multitude of pathways young people can take in order to promote social change as they transition into adulthood. Just as

adolescents' sociopolitical perspectives and efficacious attitudes continue to evolve over time, so do definitions and examples of social change involvement. Therefore, findings from this dissertation should provide a framework for further research investigating what social change involvement means for young people in many years to come.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this dissertation has examined longitudinal perceptions, predictors, and profiles of youth social change involvement during emerging adulthood. By assuming a dynamic relationship between individual meaning-making processes and social change behaviors, the main goal of this research was to further expand the SPD theoretical framework to consider ecological and intrapersonal components of young people's social change behaviors as they transition from high school into typical adult roles. Although findings from this project should not be generalized across communities, it is important to develop a working understanding of contributing factors for young people's sociopolitical development as they approach adulthood. Each analysis contributes to further conceptualizing SPD theory as a multidimensional emergent process that encompasses a dynamic relationship between young people's sociopolitical perspectives, intrapersonal meaning-making processes, and social change behaviors over time, in addition to contextual and ecological influences for such outcomes.

Previous scholars have used cross-sectional data to examine specific components of the current project, however, the three analyses contribute to existing SPD theoretical considerations by providing a more comprehensive and nuanced explanation of the ways in which social change behaviors reflect ongoing meaning-making processes during a specific developmental stage in the life course. Furthermore, although each paper is grounded in SPD theory, findings from this dissertation have theoretical implications for additional bodies of literature focused on youth and adolescent development. By considering contextual factors for young people's participation in social change activities, scholars drawing upon ecological systems theory to further contextualize young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives can continue to explore specific social change-related narratives adolescents receive from their social networks that influence their

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efficacious attitudes and social change involvement over time. Through a multidimensional approach to explore SPD theory during a significant developmental period, findings from the overall dissertation illuminated the complex nature of behavioral manifestations resulting from young people's intrapersonal meaning-making processes as they deepen their understanding of society and their perceived role in promoting social change. By utilizing longitudinal data, repeated measures and follow-up interview questions helped to reveal how young people's thinking about their perceived efficacy for social change involvement adjusted over time. As a result, these meaning-making processes and resulting social change behaviors could reflect adolescents' emergent worldview, which continues to develop as they engage with new contexts and perspectives. Therefore, the current project advances SPD theory by emphasizing the dynamic processes inherent in developing a more critical perspective of social inequality and systems of oppression during a specific time during the life course when setting changes typically occur (i.e., transition from high school environments).

Although this dissertation illuminated several findings with theoretical and practical implications for expanding current applications of SPD theory, much is to be learned about the dynamic relationship between young people's emergent sociopolitical perspectives, intrapersonal meaning-making processes, and varying levels of youth social change involvement. Findings sparked new lines of inquiry to help continue investigations of the extent to which—and the ways in which—young people engage in social change activities as they transition from high school towards emerging adulthood. Continued multidimensional explorations of SPD theory across the life course will hopefully lead to productive discourse that further improves our understanding and conceptualization of what it means to support the sociopolitical development of young people and their interest in promoting social change.

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APPENDIX A: Wave One Interview Protocol

The following interview questions were provided in the user guide for the Stanford Civic Purpose Project (Damon, 2017). The study was funded through the Spencer Foundation's New Civic Initiative, and supporting materials including interview transcripts are publicly available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research's (ICPSR) Civic Learning, Engagement, and Action Data (CivicLEADS) website.

Identity
To get started, can you tell me a little bit about yourself? What are some things that are really important to you? What are some things you really care about?

Civic Action and Motivations
Do you feel that people in society need to be responsible for each other? **If YES,** Can you tell me more about that? **If NO,** Why do you say that? How do you act on that belief in your life?

Has there ever been anything about your school or community that you were concerned about or thought should be changed? Or anything you thought was missing and wanted to add? Did you ever have the opportunity to do something about it?
- **If YES,** what did you do? Can you tell me more about that? Why was that important to you? What connection, if any, do you see between that and the things that are most important in your life?
- **If NO,** what do you think prevents you from doing something about it?
  - o **If needed:** Have you had other opportunities to be involved in having an impact in your school or community? What did you do?

Have there been any other times when you were concerned about something in or thought something should be changed in society, or in the world? Did you ever have the opportunity to do something about it?
- **If YES,** what did you do? Can you tell me more about that? Why was that important to you? What connection, if any, do you see between that and the things that are most important in your life?
- **If NO,** what do you think prevents you from doing something about it?
- Are there things you could do in the future to contribute to these issues? **If YES,** what?

Social and Political Awareness and Responsibility
Some people argue that because young people cannot vote, they don't need to be concerned about political issues and events. What do you think about that?
- Do you feel that you have a role to play in the political process? **If YES,** how do you get involved in the political process? **If NO,** are there any particular reasons that you don't see yourself having a role in the political process?
- Do you think that political decisions affect your life and the things you care about?
- Do you feel that anyone making those decisions cares how it affects you?

Have you heard about any political or social problems in your town that you wanted to learn more about? (**For example**, probe for events current to the interview).

- **If YES,** what about that seems important?
  - o Do you think that issues like that have an impact on your life? Can you tell me more about that?
- Do you think there is anything you can do to have an impact on (issue)?
  - o **If YES,** have you ever done anything about (that issue)? Can you tell me more about that?
  - o **If NO,** why do you think you can't have an impact on that issue?

Are you concerned about any other political or social issues? (**If needed**: Such as things you might have heard about in the news. If still needed, list a few examples, such as the environment, health care, poverty, immigration).
- **If YES,** what is the issue? Why do you think that's important?
  - o Do you think that issues like that have an impact on your life? Can you tell me more about that?
  - o Do you think there is anything you can do to have an impact on (issue named above)?
- **If YES,** have you ever done anything about (that issue)? Can you tell me more about that?
- **If NO,** why do you think you can't have an impact on that issue?

Based on what you know about the government at any level—local, state, or national—what do you think about how the government is working at any of these levels?
- Do you think that things the government does have an impact on your life? **If YES,** can you tell me more about that? **If NO**, why do you think that?
- Do you think that there are things you can do to have an impact on the government? Can you tell me more about that?
- Have you ever taken action based on your feelings or ideas about the government? **If YES,** Can you tell me more about that?

If needed: There has been a lot of talk in the news lately about (current political issue xyz). Do you think that political events like xyz have any impact in your life?
- Do you think that issues like that have an impact on your life? Can you tell me more about that?
- Do you think there is anything you can do to have an impact on (issue named above)? **If YES,** have you ever done anything about (that issue)? Can you tell me more about that? **If NO,** why do you think you can't have an impact on that issue?

If needed: Is learning about things going on in the world, like political events or social causes something that interests you?
- **If YES,** what interests you? Are there things you do to pursue your interest in_____? What do you do?
- **If NO,** are there any particular reasons that you're not interested in learning about things like political events and social causes?

Are there any other issues in your school, community or in society that are more important to you?

Citizenship
What does it mean to be a "good citizen"?

What does "US citizenship" mean to you? Is there anything meaningful about being a US citizen? **If YES,** what would you say is meaningful about it? **If NO,** why do you say that?
- **If needed:** Are there particular rights that go along with being a US citizen? What do those rights mean to you?
- **If needed:** Are there any particular responsibilities that go along with being a US citizen? What do those responsibilities mean to you?

Among the ways that you describe yourself, how important is the idea of being an American? Tell me more about that.
- Do you feel proud to be American? **If YES,** what are you most proud of? **If NO,** are there things about being American you are not proud of?

Democratic Values
America was founded as a democracy, which means, "ruled by the people." Is it important to you that you live in a democracy?
- **If YES,** what aspects of US democracy are most important to you?
- **If NO,** what makes you say that?

Do you feel that the US is living up to its Democratic ideals? **If YES,** are there things you do to help maintain those ideals? **If NO,** why do you say that? Are there things you could do to try to change that?

American democracy was founded on the ideas of freedom, equality, and rights for all people. Are any of these ideas important in your own life? How so?
- Have you had any experiences with things like inequality, discrimination, or being denied your rights? **If YES,** Can you tell me more about that?
- What roles do you think American citizens have in making these ideals a reality?

What do the words "American dream" mean to you?

Democratic Participation Recap
We've been talking about democracy, freedom, equality, and justice, things that might be thought of as the American way of life. Do you think that these things should stay as they are in the US, or do you think that things need to change?

- **If things should stay the same:** Is there anything you can do to help these things stay as they are in the US? Have you had the opportunity to do something like that? **If YES,** what are some of the things you do? Are there things you could do in the future that you aren't doing now?
- **If things should be different:** Is there anything you can do to make those changes? Have you had the opportunity to do anything like that? **If YES,** what are some of the things you do? **If NO,** is there any particular reason that you don't do anything? Are there things you could do in the future that you aren't doing now?

APPENDIX B: Wave Two Interview Protocol

The following interview questions were also provided in the user guide for the Stanford Civic Purpose Project (Damon, 2017) and are publicly available through the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research's (ICPSR) Civic Learning, Engagement, and Action Data (CivicLEADS) website.

Identity
To get started, can you tell me a little bit about yourself? What are some things that are really important to you? What are some things you really care about?

Group Affiliation
Last time, we talked about your nationality and ethnicity and how you identify yourself in terms of your ethnicity – American, Chinese-American and so on. Has your sense of your own ethnic identity and connection changed since you left high school? How would you identify yourself now in terms of your ethnicity? If you feel this has changed – how has it changed and why?

Are there any groups and communities that you feel connected with? Can you tell me more about that? Has college (or working) changed the ways that you connect with particular groups or communities or the nature of the groups you are connected with? Why is that?

Civic Action and Motivations
Do you feel that people in society need to be responsible for each other? Can you tell me more about that? What do you see as your role in society? Have you experienced anything in the past couple of years that has affected your thinking about this?

Has there been anything about your [workplace or college] that you were concerned about or thought should be changed? Or anything you thought was missing and wanted to add? Did you ever have the opportunity to do something about it?
- **If YES,** what did you do? Can you tell me more about that? Why was that important to you? What connection, if any, do you see between that and the things that are most important in your life?
- **If NO,** what do you think prevents you from doing something about it?

Has there been anything about your community outside of [workplace or college] that you were concerned about or thought should be changed? Did you ever have the opportunity to do something about it?
- **If YES,** what did you do? Can you tell me more about that? Why was that important to you? What connection, if any, do you see between that and the things that are most important in your life?
- **If NO,** what do you think prevents you from doing something about it?

Have there been any other times in the past couple of years when you've wanted to change something about society or the world? Did you ever have the opportunity to do something about it?
- **If YES,** what did you do? Can you tell me more about that? Why was that important to you? What connection, if any, do you see between that and the things that are most important in your life?

- **If NO,** what do you think prevents you from doing something about it?

Citizenship

What does it mean to be a "good citizen"? Is it important to you that you be a good citizen? Can you tell me more about that?

What does "US citizenship" mean to you? Is there anything meaningful about being a US citizen? (probe)
- **If needed:** Are there particular rights that go along with being a US citizen? What do those rights mean to you?
- **If needed:** Are there any particular responsibilities that go along with being a US citizen? What do those responsibilities mean to you?

Among the ways that you describe yourself, how important is the idea of being an American? (probe)
- Do you feel proud to be American? **If YES,** what are you most proud of? **If NO,** are there things about being American you are not proud of?

How has your thinking about citizenship and being American changed since high school? Have you had any experiences since then that have changed how you think about these things?

Social and Political Awareness and Responsibility

Do you feel that you have a role to play in the political process? **If YES,** how do you get involved in the political process? **If NO,** are there any particular reasons that you don't see yourself having a role in the political process?

Do you think that political decisions affect your life and the things you care about? Do you feel that anyone making those decisions cares how it affects you?

Have you heard about any political or social problems in your town that you wanted to learn more about? (**For example**, probe for events current to the interview).
- **If YES,** what about that seems important?
- Do you think that issues like that have an impact on your life? Can you tell me more about that?
- Do you think there is anything you can do to have an impact on (issue)?
  - **If YES,** have you ever done anything about (that issue)? Can you tell me more about that?
  - **If NO,** why do you think you can't have an impact on that issue?

Are you concerned about any other political or social issues? (Provide examples if needed).
- **If YES,** what is the issue? Why do you think that's important?
- Do you think that issues like that have an impact on your life? Can you tell me more about that?
- Do you think there is anything you can do to have an impact on (issue named above)?
  - **If YES,** have you ever done anything about (that issue)? Can you tell me more about that?
  - **If NO,** why do you think you can't have an impact on that issue?

Thinking about the government—local, state, or national—how do you think the government is doing?

- Do you think that things the government does have an impact on your life? Can you tell me more about that?
- Do you think that there are things you can do to have an impact on the government? Can you tell me more about that?
- Have you ever taken action based on your feelings or ideas about the government? **If YES,** Can you tell me more about that?

How has your thinking about the government changed since high school? Have you had any experiences since then that have changed how you think about these things?

Democratic Values

America was founded as a democracy, which means "ruled by the people." Is it important to you that you live in a democracy?
- **If YES,** what aspects of US democracy are most important to you?
- **If NO,** what makes you say that?

American democracy was founded on the ideas of freedom, equality, and rights for all people. Are any of these ideas important in your own life? How so?
- Have you had any experiences with things like inequality, discrimination, or being denied your rights? **If YES,** Can you tell me more about that?
- What roles do you think American citizens have in making these ideals a reality?

Do you feel that the US is living up to its ideals? **If YES,** are there things you do to help maintain those ideals? **If NO,** why do you say that? Are there things you could do to try to change that?

How has your thinking about democracy changed since high school? Have you had any experiences since then that have changed how you think about these things?

What do the words "American dream" mean to you?
- Does the idea of American dream have any meaning in your own life? Can you tell me more about that?

Democratic Participation Recap

We've been talking about democracy, freedom, equality, and justice, things that might be thought of as the American way of life. Do you think that these things should stay as they are in the US, or do you think that things need to change?
- **If things should stay the same:** Is there anything you can do to help these things stay as they are in the US? Have you had the opportunity to do something like that? **If YES,** what are some of the things you do? Are there things you could do in the future that you aren't doing now?
- **If things should be different:** Is there anything you can do to make those changes? Have you had the opportunity to do anything like that? **If YES,** what are some of the things you do? **If NO,** is there any particular reason that you don't do anything? Are there things you could do in the future that you aren't doing now?