Fostering the Sociopolitical Development of African American and Latinx Adolescents to Analyze and Challenge Racial and Economic Inequality

Racial and economic inequality are longstanding and pernicious problems in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Piketty & Saez, 2003). The wealth gap between the most affluent and poorest Americans now represents the widest gap among the world's wealthiest nations (Sherman, 2015); unemployment rates for Black Americans are currently twice as high as that for White Americans (Irwin, Cain Miller, & Sanger-Katz, 2014); and White families in the United States now possess, on average, ten times the wealth of Black and Latinx families (Kochhar & Fry, 2014). Importantly, a growing body of scholarship suggests that sociopolitical development can serve as a protective factor for youth marginalized by these inequities in race and economic status (e.g. Cammarota, 2007; Diemer & Hsieh, 2008; Ginwright, 2010).

Sociopolitical development (SPD) refers to the processes by which an individual acquires the knowledge, skills, emotional faculties, and commitment to analyze and challenge oppressive social forces (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). A growing body of research has found that high levels of SPD are predictive in marginalized adolescents of a number of key outcomes including resilience (Ginwright, 2010; O'Leary & Romero, 2011), academic engagement (O'Connor, 1997; Ramos-Zayas, 2003), academic achievement (Cammarota, 2007; Dee & Penner, 2017), enrollment in higher education (Rogers & Terriquez, 2013), professional aspirations (Diemer & Hsieh, 2008), and civic and political engagement (Diemer & Li, 2011; Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011). In explaining these relationships, scholars have suggested that consciousness of oppressive social forces can replace youth's feelings of isolation and self-blame for their challenges with a sense of engagement in a broader collective struggle for social justice (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2014; Ginwright, 2010; Perry, 2003). This sense of engagement (or,

alternatively, isolation) may be particularly salient to adolescents, who are actively seeking to understand their role in the broader world (Erikson, 1968; Parks, 2011).

Although scholars have long argued that schools have a central role to play in preparing marginalized adolescents to analyze and challenge inequity (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 1992; Perry, 2003), relatively few empirical studies have investigated the schooling practices that contribute to such sociopolitical development (e.g. Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014). The present study contributes to this scholarship by comparing the SPD of adolescents attending two popular but "most different" schooling models in terms of their ability to analyze and challenge racism and poverty (Ragin, 1989).

The two schooling models— progressive and no-excuses— are described in greater detail below; however, each represents approximately 10% of the 6,500 charter schools in the United States (McShane & Hatfield, 2015). Our goal in comparing the SPD of students attending these two sets of schools was not to identify one model as superior to the other, but rather to investigate the diverse programming and practices through which schools can foster their students' SPD about issues of racial and economic inequality. As we report below, students attending progressive schools demonstrated meaningful growth in their ability to critically analyze these forms of inequality, while students attending no-excuses schools demonstrated meaningful growth in their commitment to challenge inequality through critical action.

Theoretical Framework

The foundational source of contemporary scholarship on SPD is Brazilian philosopher-educator Paulo Freire (1970), who invoked the term "critical consciousness" to refer to an individual's engagement in reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (p. 73). Freire characterized *both* critical reflection and critical action as necessary for individuals to

develop a deep and lasting commitment to social change, and he referred to this combination of reflection and action as "praxis" (p. 54).

Drawing from Freire's foundational work, Watts, Diemer, and Voight (2011) conceptualized critical consciousness as consisting of three distinct yet overlapping components: 1) critical reflection or critical analysis; 2) political self-efficacy; and 3) critical action. Critical reflection refers to the ability to name and analyze forces of inequality, including their root causes and preservation in societal structures and institutions. Political self-efficacy (or agency) is the internal belief that one has the capacity to effect social change. Finally, critical action refers to an individual's actual engagement in events and activities intended to challenge these oppressive forces and structures, and the unequal conditions they perpetuate.

Watts and Flanagan (2007) draw upon these components of critical consciousness in their conceptual model of youth sociopolitical development. These scholars posit a bi-directional relationship between critical reflection (which they label "social analysis") and critical action (which they label "societal involvement") such that increasing marginalized youth's ability to engage in social analysis strengthens their likelihood of societal involvement, and vice-versa. Watts and Flanagan (2007) also characterize this relationship between social analysis and societal involvement as moderated by youth's political self-efficacy (which they label "agency") as well as the availability of meaningful opportunities to engage in such analysis and action (which they label "opportunity structures"). Watts and Flanagan cite youth's schools, churches, part-time jobs, and community organizations as examples of such opportunity structures.

The present study takes Watts and Flanagan's (2007) youth SPD model as its guiding conceptual framework because this positioning of opportunity structures as a moderator of youth SPD aligns well with our study's focus on the role of two different schooling models in fostering

adolescents' SPD. Throughout this paper, then, we invoke terminology from Watts and Flanagan's (2007) youth SPD model (e.g. social analysis, societal involvement, agency) rather than a critical consciousness framework (e.g. critical reflection, critical action, sociopolitical efficacy).

Regarding the impact of this choice of framework, one might characterize Watts and Flanagan's (2007) concepts of social analysis and agency as largely synonymous with Watts, Diemer and Voight's (2011) definitions of critical reflection and political self-efficacy. However, Watts and Flanagan's description of the ultimate outcome of SPD— societal involvement— is broader than Watts, Diemer and Voight's (2011) definition of critical action. Specifically, Watts and Flanagan define societal involvement as encompassing 1) "traditional community service activities" that provide aid to individuals; 2) "civic engagement that involves conventional work" for established organizations and political parties, and 3) "sociopolitical activism [that]…includes work for social justice, community organizing, and extra-institutional action involving initiatives launched from outside of conventional institutions" (p. 788). These scholars explicitly note that this third dimension of societal involvement—sociopolitical activism— is the form of societal involvement most associated with Freire's concept of critical action. Within the present study, we are particularly interested as well in the role of schools in strengthening adolescents' capacity and commitment to sociopolitical activism.

Social analysis. As described above, one key dimension of youth SPD is the ability to name and analyze forces of inequality such as racism and poverty. In terms of racism, the Center for Racial Justice Innovation (2017) offers a conceptual framework that defines racism in terms of its interpersonal, internalized, and structural dimensions. For adolescents of color, awareness of interpersonal racism entails recognizing that others are likely to define them negatively, and

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see them only as members of a negatively valued group (Oyserman et al., 2001). Awareness of structural racism entails recognition of how particular policies, laws, and cultural practices can privilege or obstruct the success of particular racial/ethnic groups over others (Gordon, 2013). Finally, awareness of internalized racism is the recognition that people of color can absorb social messages about race that result in believing negative stereotypes about oneself or one's racial group (Center for Racial Justice Innovation, 2017).

In terms of analyzing the causes of poverty, Americans typically offer either individualistic or systemic perspectives to account for differences between affluent and poor citizens (Bullock, 2006; Kluegel & Smith, 1986). Scholars report that adolescents from low-SES families (Dickinson, 1990; Flanagan & Tucker, 1999; Flanagan et al., 2014) and adolescents of color (Dalbert, 2001; Flanagan et al., 2014; Woods, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2005) are more likely than their high-SES and White peers to cite individualistic factors that contribute to poverty.

Scholars also report that an individual's commitment to engaging in social action to address issues such as poverty and racism depend, in large part, on perceiving the injustice to be both unjust *and systemic* (Curtin, 2011; Hyers, 2007; Weiss-Gal et al., 2009). For this reason, one key dimension of investigating students' SPD was identifying schooling practices that contributed to students' ability to engage in social analysis of the systemic factors underlying racism and poverty.

Societal involvement. Watts and Flanagan (2007) characterize societal involvement as consisting of 1) traditional community services activities; 2) conventional civic engagement in organizations and political parties; and 3) sociopolitical activism. Scholars have found that engaging in community service experiences during adolescence is a significant predictor of both

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voting and voluntary service in adulthood (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007). Other scholars report that community service participation during adolescence is predictive of greater political knowledge, engagement in more political discussions, and higher levels of sociopolitical efficacy (Niemi, Hepburn, & Chapman, 2000). With regards to adolescents' conventional civic engagement in organizations and political parties, a number of scholars have argued that such engagement has a powerful effect upon the civic identity of adolescents and young adults by 1) introducing them to the civic skills, practices and processes necessary to operate these organizations; and 2) exposing them to ideological positions that they can consider and either reject or incorporate into their own developing worldview (Damon, 2009; Fischman et al., 2001; McAdam, 1986; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997; Sirianni & Shor, 2009).

Sociopolitical activism refers to engagement in events and activities intended to challenge oppressive forces and structures, and the unequal conditions they perpetuate (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015) parse such activism into three typologies: personal action, group action, and the mass action of social movements. Personal action describes the actions of a single individual to protest a policy or practice while group action entails the collective actions of an organization or collective to stage a similar protest. Finally, the mass action of social movements entails the coordinated efforts of multiple groups and stakeholders to challenge collectively institutional practices or policies. Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015) characterize group action as typically more impactful than personal action, and mass action as typically more impactful than group action. They further describe "external" actions aimed at the policies and practices of institutional targets as more impactful than "internal" actions aimed at the colleagues, benefactors, and allies.

As described in greater detail in the Methods, the present study included two measures of students' commitment to sociopolitical activism. The first, achievement-as-resistance, refers to the extent to which people of color regard their own striving for personal success as a means of countering hegemonic notions about achievement as a White attribute (Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995), and can be characterized as a form of personal action (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). The second measure, commitment to activism, refers to an individual's likelihood of engaging in group or mass forms of social action such as a boycott or demonstration (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

Agency. Sociopolitical agency refers to an individual's belief that he or she has the capacity to effect social change (Beaumont, 2010). This study's guiding youth SPD framework posits that young people from marginalized groups are more likely to engage in both social analysis and sociopolitical activism when the y believe their voice and actions can positively affect their communities (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Support for sociopolitical agency playing such a moderating role in youth SPD can be found in empirical studies that have found sociopolitical agency to moderate the relationship between marginalized adolescents' belief in a just world and civic engagement (Mohiyeddini & Montada, 1998; Watts & Guessous, 2006) as well as between their social responsibility beliefs and commitment to activism (Hope, 2016).

Schools as opportunity structures. A growing body of scholarship supports Watts and Flanagan's (2006) positioning of schools as opportunity structures that also moderate youth's sociopolitical development. In analyses of survey data from the IEA Civic Education study of 90,000 adolescents from 28 countries, Torney-Purta and Amadeo (2012) reported that the explicit teaching of civic content and skills in school has a significant effect upon adolescents' sociopolitical development. In terms of how to teach such content and skills, scholars report that

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adolescents in secondary school classroom environments that foster free and open exchanges of ideas demonstrate deeper understandings of social and civic issues (Campbell, 2008; Hess, 2009; Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2012). Other scholars have found that youth exposed to political and social issues through simulations and role-plays (e.g. Levinson, 2012), community service learning (e.g. Authors' Names Withheld, 2012), youth participatory action research (e.g. Kirshner, 2015), and academic programming focused specifically on social and political issues (e.g. Cammarota, 2007) are more likely to express concern for such issues and a commitment to future involvement in addressing these issues.

With regard to the role of schools in addressing racial and economic injustice, numerous critical pedagogues argue that the curriculum, programming, and practices in K-12 schools typically reify or reproduce oppressive racial and economic conditions rather than challenging them (e.g. Apple, 1990; Fine & Weiss, 2004; Giroux, 1981). Evidence for this perspective can be found in the numerous research studies that have found language, literacy, and cultural practices in schools to align with White, middle class norms (e.g. Delpit, 2006; Paris, 2012) and school discipline systems to disproportionately punish students from historically oppressed racial groups (e.g. Skiba et al., 2002). Other scholars, however, describe schools that have been found to foster youth's SPD about racial and economic injustice such as Freedom Schools (Cobb, 2008), Black Panther Community Schools (Perlstein, 2002), and African-centered independent schools (Lee, 2008). Still other scholars have reported that school-based programs such as ethnic studies courses (Cammarota, 2007), youth participatory action research projects (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008), and critical civic inquiry groups (Kirshner, 2015) can foster students' SPD about issues of racial and economic injustice as well.

The present study sought to contribute to this extant scholarship by comparing the SPD of adolescents attending progressive and no-excuses urban secondary schools regarding issues of racial and economic inequality. In so doing, we seek to broaden understanding of the practices that can contribute to youth SPD rather than to make claims about hierarchies of schooling models. As described in greater detail in the Methods, progressive schooling models engage students as active citizens within their school community and broader communities through a curricular focus on social justice, inquiry-based learning, and deep understanding (Kohn, 2008; Little & Ellison, 2015). The "no-excuses" schools in the present study cited a commitment to fostering students' SPD as well, but take a more traditional approach to such work via hierarchical teacher-student relationships, teaching and learning that favors direct instruction, and a curricular emphasis on literacy and mathematics (Carter, 2000). We are not aware of previous research that has compared the SPD of students attending these popular but distinctive schooling models (McShane & Hatfield, 2015). The research questions guiding this investigation were the following:

1. What differences, if any, emerge in the SPD of adolescents attending progressive and no-excuses urban high schools in terms of their ability to analyze and challenge racial and economic inequality?

2. How do adolescents attending these schools describe and understand the schooling practices that contributed to their SPD with regard to racial and economic inequality?

Method

Participants

The study's participants are 458 youth who entered the ninth grade in September of 2013 at six urban charter high schools located in five northeastern cities in the United States. All of these students had been admitted to their respective schools via randomized registration lotteries.

Within this sample, 198 students identified as male (43%) and 260 as female (57%). Two hundred and twenty students (48%) identified as Black or African American; 93 (20%) identified as Latinx; 140 (31%) identified as multi-racial; and five (1%) identified as White. Nearly 80% of participating students qualified for free/reduced price lunch, a proxy for low socioeconomic status. These demographic characteristics are reported by school in Table 1 below. Pseudonyms are used for all participating schools and youth referenced in this paper.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

All six schools cited fostering students' SPD as part of their educational mission; however, three of these schools were guided by progressive schooling practices and the three others by no-excuses practices. Below, we describe key features of these two schooling models as well as brief descriptions of the participating schools (see Table 1 for more information about each school). In previous work that utilized a portion of these data, a different conceptual framework, and different analytic strategy, we examined the role of each individual school in fostering the SPD of the youth (Authors' Names Withheld, 2017).

Progressive schools. Progressive schooling models emphasize a caring and collaborative community in which students and teachers work together as partners as well as a curricular focus upon social justice, inquiry-based learning, and deep understanding (Kohn, 2008). The present study includes three progressive urban high schools associated with three different progressive organizations. Community Academy is located in a large northeastern city and features an expeditionary learning model that conceptualizes powerful learning as involving inquiry and service in the "real world" (EL, 2015). Espiritu High School is located in a midsize northeastern city and features the Coalition of Essential Schools' emphasis on eight habits of mind (e.g. analysis, empathy) and curriculum "deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity"

(CES, 2015). Finally, <u>Make the Road Academy</u> (MtRA) is located in a mid-size northeastern city and features the Paulo Freire Institute's (2017) problem-posing pedagogy that calls for teachers and students to work collaboratively to investigate real-world problems.

     No-excuses schools. **"**No-excuses" describes an approach to education that seeks to eliminate opportunity gaps facing youth from oppressed racial and SES groups through extended time in school, college preparatory mission, strict disciplinary environment, intensive focus on traditional mathematics and literacy skills, and explicit instruction in the social skills of school (Carter, 2000). In contrast to the description of progressive schooling above, the no-excuses schooling model does not definitionally include a commitment to fostering students' SPD. However, the three no-excuses schools in the present study explicitly cited a commitment in their mission or vision statements to fostering, not only adolescents' academic development, but their sociopolitical development as well. While it is not feasible to report on how many no-excuses charter high schools do and do not include SPD goals in their mission statements, we would not describe such a commitment as particularly unusual, given that public education in the United States was founded, in large part, to foster citizens' civic knowledge and skills (Levinson, 2012),

     <u>Leadership High School</u> is located in a large northeastern city and is guided by "the best practices of high performing, 'no-excuses' charter networks." <u>Freedom Preparatory Academy</u> is located in a midsize northeastern city and cites a "school culture guided by a no-excuses philosophy" among its core values. Finally, <u>One Vision High School</u> is located in the same midsized northeastern city as MtRA and has been cited as an exemplar of no-excuses schooling in publications such as the *New York Times* and *The Atlantic.*

Data Collection

Two types of data were collected as part of this research study. First, entering ninth grade students at the six participating schools completed surveys in September of 2013 (n = 458) that included previously validated measures corresponding with adolescents' ability to analyze and challenge racial and economic inequality. Participants then completed this same survey in May, 2014 at the conclusion of their ninth grade year (n = 450); in May, 2015 at the conclusion of their tenth grade year (n = 396); and in May, 2016 at the conclusion of their eleventh grade year (n = 395). Previously published papers have reported on preliminary analyses of the second and third waves of data collection (Authors' Names Withheld, 2016, 2017).

During the spring of 2014, we also conducted 30-60 minute qualitative interviews with five faculty members (30 total interviews) and 10-12 ninth grade students (70 total interviews) from each of the participating schools. Students were randomly selected by our research team from course rosters of ninth grade advisory periods. We then interviewed 54 of these adolescents again in both the spring of 2015 and 2016 (16 students were no longer attending their respective schools). The protocol for our student interviews was adapted from earlier studies on youth SPD such as Carter's (2008) work on Black adolescents' development of a critical race achievement ideology, and was designed to learn more about participants' ability to engage in social analysis and sociopolitical activism (e.g. Do you think society gives people of all race an equal chance to succeed? What opportunities have you had to participate in changing something you thought was unfair or not right?), as well as the schooling practices that contributed to such SPD (e.g. Are there issues in the news about race or class that you've been talking about in school? Has being a part of your school changed the way you think about the world or your ability to impact the community?).

Measures

This study's survey tool included three measures of youth's ability to engage in social analysis, two measures of their commitment to engaging in sociopolitical activism, and one measure of sociopolitical agency that were all adapted from previously validated scales of SPD, civic engagement, and racial identity development. Exploratory factor analysis (promax rotation) revealed each of these measures demonstrated the items loaded appropriately on the underlying factors, and Cronbach's coefficient alpha indicated acceptable-to-good internal consistency reliability. The three measures of social analysis were: Awareness of Interpersonal Racism (Oyserman, Gant & Ager, 1995), Awareness of Structural Racism (Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, 2011), and Structural Thinking about Poverty (NPR-Kaiser-Harvard, 2001). The two measures of sociopolitical activism were: Commitment to Activism (Corning & Myer, 2002) and Achievement as Resistance (Oyserman, Gant & Ager, 1995). Finally, the measure of sociopolitical agency was Peterson et al.'s (2011) Sociopolitical Control Scale for Youth. More information about each of these measures (e.g. reliability, factor loadings, sample items) can be found in Table 2.

Students responded to all of the items comprising these measures along a 5-point Likert scale in which a "1" represented "No way!" or 'Not like me at all," and a "5" represented "Definitely!" or "Very much like me." As described in greater detail below, we analyzed participating students' shifts on each of these individual measures rather than merging them together into a single composite measure of critical consciousness.

Data Analysis

This project utilized a sequential explanatory analytic strategy in which we first analyzed quantitative survey data to test relationships, and then qualitative interview data to explain and interpret initial results (Creswell & Clark, 2011). In so doing, our quantitative findings motivated

the themes we explored in our qualitative interview data; however, we also remained open to (and report on below) qualitative results that contradicted our quantitative findings.

Quantitative surveys. For each outcome measure, we conducted longitudinal hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) analyses wherein measurement occasions were nested within individuals. HLM analyses were conducted for each measure in order to consider 1) differences in the mean level of SPD between school types; and 2) differences in the mean growth on each SPD measure between school types.

These data would have been best modeled using a three-level model, with measurement occasions nested within students, nested within schools. However, this was not feasible for the current analyses given that HLM is not recommended with $J = 6$ schools. Additionally, preliminary model testing indicated that only a very small proportion of the total variance in scores was attributable to between-school differences (i.e., the level-three intraclass correlation ranged from 0.006 to 0.038 for all measures, indicating between 0.6% to 3.8% of the total variance in scores was between schools; the exception was Awareness of Interpersonal Racism, for which between-school differences accounted for 14.5% of the total variance in scores). Given that school type was central to the research questions of the study, we responded to this limitation in our data by including school type at level-2, reducing the alpha level to .01 and focusing more on describing the substantive interpretation of coefficients than their statistical significance. We describe below the model-building process for the two-level models examined.

The first step of our HLM entailed testing an unconditional, intercept-only model, which allowed us to calculate the intraclass correlation (ICC) and assess the proportion of total variance in scores due to between-individual variation. The ICCs ranged in value from 0.376 to 0.525, indicating substantial between-student variation in scores. In the current analyses, the Level-1

outcome variables were the various measures of SPD. The second step involved building the level-1 model by adding a time variable to the intercept-only model indicating the year in which the survey was administered (centered at the most recent measurement period, thus intercepts in these models represent scores at the most recent measurement occasion). At this step, intercepts and slopes were examined to determine whether there was individual variability in intercepts (i.e., levels on each SPD measure) and/or slopes (i.e., growth on each SPD measure).[1] Finally, the level-2 model was built by adding student characteristics as predictors of any existing intercept and slope variability such as the type of school (progressive, no-excuses) attended by the participant. Also included in these models were a number of control variables such as participating students' gender, race/ethnicity, and home city that prior scholarship has found to predict SPD (e.g. Cohen, 2010; Jenkins, 2005).

Finally, in our Results reported below, we focused particularly on differences in mean growth in adolescents' SPD across the two sets of schools. This focus was due to the adolescents in our sample attending the no-excuses schools demonstrating significantly higher baseline scores across all six measures of SPD. A possible explanation for these higher baseline scores is that the no-excuses students in our sample had attended "feeder" middle schools that were part of the same charter networks as their respective high schools and emphasized similar sociopolitical programming. In contrast, the progressive schools in the study were independent charters that drew their ninth graders from a more heterogeneous group of middle schools.

Qualitative interviews. All interviews with students were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Our analysis of these interviews was a multi-step process consistent with qualitative

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[1]If in this second step, there was not significant individual variability in intercepts and/or slopes or if allowing intercepts and/or slopes to randomly vary led to convergence issues, they were constrained to be equal to zero; otherwise, they were treated as random effects in the model and level-2 predictors were incorporated in a final step.

research methods that seek to balance etic/outsider and emic/insider perspectives (Erickson & Murphy, 2008). Beginning with an etic structure, during the spring of 2014, our research team utilized our research questions, interview protocols, and conceptual framework to construct categories that represented key dimensions of our inquiry (MacQueen et al., 1998).

Next, we worked collaboratively to populate these superordinate categories with code names drawn from both etic concepts from the extant research literature on critical pedagogy (e.g. counter-narrative, Perry, 2003), racial socialization (e.g. preparation for bias, Wang & Huguley, 2012) and civic development (e.g. controversial conversations, Hess, 2009) and also emic descriptions by study participants emerging from our qualitative interviews (e.g. Black Lives Matter, Freire Culture Circles, Theater of the Oppressed) that added depth or texture to one or more of these superordinate categories (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Our selection of etic codes drew closely from the extant scholarship on critical pedagogy (e.g., Cammarota, 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008) and civic development (Campbell, 2008; Watts et al., 2003).

Each qualitative interview was then coded independently by two members of the research team using NVivo Research 10 software. After coding each interview independently, two members of the research team then compared their analyses of each interview transcript, recoded, and then compared again until all coding discrepancies are resolved. Our team then utilized NVivo's "cutting and sorting" capabilities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to compile summary tables for each individual code, organized by the superordinate categories, so as to identify emergent patterns and themes in the coded data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Results

Student Surveys

The descriptive statistics for students' scores on all six SPD measures are presented in Table 3 below. These summary statistics reveal that students attending both progressive and no-

excuses schools demonstrated growth, on average, across the four time points on the majority of SPD measures. As is evident in Table 4, however, adolescents attending progressive schools demonstrated meaningful growth on the three measures of social analysis as well as the achievement-as-resistance measure in comparison to their peers at the no-excuses schools. At the same time, adolescents at no-excuses schools demonstrated meaningful growth on a key measure of sociopolitical activism in comparison to their progressive-school peers.

INSERT TABLES 2 & 3 HERE

Social analysis. Students attending progressive high schools demonstrated more sizeable growth than their peers attending no-excuses schools on all three measures of their ability to analyze racism and poverty. For example, HLM analyses revealed an important interaction between school type and time in adolescents' awareness of structural racism. The coefficient of -0.13 (p < .0001) represents the difference in average rates of change between adolescents attending no-excuses and progressive schools when controlling for the other variables in the model, and indicates that students attending progressive schools demonstrated more rapid growth in their awareness of structural racism over their first three years of high school. Concretely, students attending progressive schools had a yearly rate of change of .20 points, resulting in an average increase of approximately 0.60 points over the course of the first three years of high school. Students attending no-excuses schools had a yearly rate of change of 0.07 points, resulting in an average increase of approximately 0.21 points over the course of three years. The inclusion of school type (progressive, no-excuses) explained approximately 34% of the variation in students' rates of change on this measure.

A similar pattern of growth is evident on the two other measures related to analyzing racism and poverty as well, though the students attending no-excuses schools actually concluded

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their third year of high school with higher mean scores on both measures. HLM analyses, again, revealed a significant interaction (p = .01) between school type and time in adolescents' growing awareness of interpersonal racism, with adolescents attending progressive schools demonstrating more rapid growth on this measure. Specifically, adolescents attending progressive schools had a yearly rate of change of 0.24 points, resulting in an average increase of 0.72 points over their first three years of high school. Adolescents attending no-excuses schools had a yearly rate of change of 0.14 points, resulting in an average increase of 0.42 points over their first three years of high school. The inclusion of school type explained approximately 10% of the variation in students' rates of change on this measure.

Finally, adolescents attending progressive schools demonstrated growth in their structural thinking about poverty at a faster rate than their no-excuses peers that approached statistical significance (p = .02). Specifically, adolescents attending progressive schools had a yearly rate of change of 0.13 points on this measure, resulting in an average increase of 0.39 points over their first three years of high school whereas students attending no-excuses schools demonstrated a yearly rate of change of 0.06 points, resulting in an average increase of .18 points during this same time period. The inclusion of school type explained approximately 7% of the variance in students' rates of change on this measure.

Sociopolitical activism. Students attending progressive schools also demonstrated growth in their achievement-as-resistance at a faster rate than their no-excuses peers that approached statistical significance (p = .02). Achievement-as-resistance is a form of personal social action that refers to the extent to which people of color regard their own striving for personal success as a means of countering hegemonic notions about achievement as a White attribute (Carter, 2008; Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995). Adolescents attending progressive schools had a yearly rate of

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change of 0.05 points on this measure, resulting in an average increase of 0.15 points over their first three years of high school whereas students attending no excuses schools demonstrated a yearly rate of change of -0.03 points, resulting in an average decrease of .09 points during this same time period. The inclusion of school type explained approximately 8.5% of the variation in students' rates of change on this measure.

Adolescents attending no-excuses schools demonstrated more sizeable growth than their peers at the progressive schools on the commitment to activism measure, which represented students' likelihood of engaging in various forms of group or mass social action. HLM analyses revealed an interaction approaching significance (p = .03) between school type and time in adolescents' commitment to activism, with adolescents attending no-excuses schools demonstrating more rapid growth on this measure. Specifically, adolescents attending no-excuses schools had a yearly rate of change of 0.07 points, resulting in an average increase of 0.21 points over their first three years of high school. Adolescents attending progressive schools had a yearly rate of change of 0.01 points over this same time period, resulting for an average increase of just 0.03 points over their first three years of high school. The inclusion of school type explained approximately 2% of the variation in students' rates of change on this measure.

Agency. There were no significant differences between students attending progressive and no-excuses on the measure of sociopolitical control, which sought to capture adolescents' sense of agency to influence social and political systems. In fact, there was insufficient variability between the two sets of students to even carry out analyses comparing their change over time on this measure.

Student Interviews

Given the quantitative findings reported above, we turned to our qualitative interviews to investigate participating adolescents' understandings of the role that their respective schools played in their sociopolitical development. Specifically, we sought adolescents' descriptions and understandings of the programming and practices by which 1) progressive schools sought to foster their students' ability to critically analyze the causes of racism and poverty; 2) no-excuses schools sought to foster students' commitment to engage in sociopolitical activism challenging such inequality; and 3) discrepant data regarding social analysis at the no-excuses schools and opportunities for activism at the progressive schools.

Opportunities to reflect on racism at progressive schools. A key theme emerging from our interviews with the students attending progressive schools was that each school had established formal structures to facilitate students' learning, discussion, and reflection about a broad range of social inequality issues including racial and economic injustice. These structures took different forms at different schools. For example, all students at Make the Road Academy participated as ninth graders in a required Social Engagement course that introduced a "Three I's" framework for understanding different forms of oppression. Specifically, students learned that oppression could be interpersonal, institutional, or internalized, and they then utilized this framework to delve deeply into issues such as racism and poverty. One student, Maxine, described the importance of learning more about the interpersonal racism she experienced as an African American:

> Social Engagement, that's one of my favorite classes because, like, it's where I go to look at situations outside of the classroom and what's happening in the real world, and like what's being said about us and about our community. We also have like discussions about the stereotypes and prejudice acts that we're all gonna come across in life.

Another MtRA student, Michael, described learning about how institutionalized forms of oppression contribute to economic inequality in the United States:

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> In Social Engagement we learned about capitalism and stuff, like how it's an economic system, about how the rich get richer at the expense of the poor. I don't feel like that's right or that's fair because everybody should have equal opportunity in America.

Other courses at Make the Road Academy engaged students in learning about oppression and inequality as well. However, even as eleventh graders, MtRA students continually cited their learning and discussion of the "Three I's" framework from ninth grade Social Engagement class as having deepened their understandings of both racial and economic inequality.

Another progressive school, Community Academy, featured a humanities curriculum that focused at every grade level on case-studies of racial and economic oppression: apartheid South Africa in ninth grade, the genocide of the American Indians in tenth grade, and the American labor and civil rights movements in the eleventh grade. In describing the impact of such programming, one Community Academy student, Missy, described learning about the resistance put forth by Steven Biko and the African National Congress against South Africa's apartheid government:

> I mean it showed me a few things. Like before I came here I didn't have humanities so coming here learning about apartheid I don't know what the world has been through, so it's like, yeah, I like it. And I like how it gives me ideas too…To see what other people been through. People from back then, history, they went through a lot and they still managed to keep up [their spirits]. I mean I haven't even been through that much like starvation and all. It's crazy.

Here, Missy described learning about the racial oppression and resistance in apartheid South Africa as both eye-opening and also a source of motivation to "do what I have to do" to contend with the contemporary challenges facing an African American teenager in the United States.

Another Community Academy student, Sydney, described learning about the genocide of the American Indians in the tenth grade and making connections to her own history as an African American:

> We also learned about the Indians too, about their reservations and how they [are] actually just like Blacks… And I just think that, you know, Blacks, we're not alone cause like Indians been through a lot that I never knew about… And I was like wow, Blacks aren't the only ones who go through this. There's other races that go through this as well.

Finally, a third Community Academy student, Angelina, described learning about the Civil Rights movement in the eleventh grade: "We're learning about the lynchings in Mississippi and in the South more generally. Learning about that, it like, gives us an insight on like, why this is happening. Why the police [today] are acting the way they act." Angelina went on to describe her research project focused on the deaths of three young activists during the Mississippi Freedom Summer protests:

> These three young men – two were White and one was Black…They were driving like on a road in Mississippi. They were driving at night, and then they were pulled over. They were arrested, and them, um, shortly after they were released from jail, they went missing. So everyone was like, wondering like, what happened to these men. And to find out that the police, they released them, and the KKK, they killed them. And the police were involved. And I feel like that's basically what's happening now, it's just more covert.

For these and other Community Academy students, the humanities curriculum highlighted the workings of oppression in a variety of contexts that also informed their understandings of present-day inequality and injustice in the United States.

Finally, the third progressive school, Espiritu High School, reserved time and space in its weekly schedule for students to engage in dialogue with each other about issues of racial and economic inequality. Specifically, Espiritu students and teachers spent two afternoons each week working in small groups to learn about topics such as racial inequality, homelessness, and immigration. These groups subsequently facilitated discussions about these topics for the entire student body at Espiritu's weekly community meeting. For example, Jada explained that her discussion group on racial inequality focused on "seeing the patterns in history and seeing what's

happening now. We were talking about Eric Garner and Trayvon Martin… and we try to educate the people at this school." Her classmate Nelson added of this same group: "Basically, we studied Ferguson and everything, and we came up with presentations, videos, and posters to like teach the whole school about what's happening." A third student, Camilo, who was an audience member for this presentation and discussion of the 2014 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, explained:

> So we talked about it, and we kind of got a better understanding of what happened, and the whole story behind it… I usually don't really speak my mind too often, but when I finally got the opportunity to, I was finally able to say, 'I don't like the way people are taking advantage of their power.'

These comments suggest that the weekly time and space Espiritu High School provided for students to engage in dialogue *with each other* represented an important entry point for thinking deeply about issues of inequality and oppression.

Opportunities to engage in activism at no-excuses schools. A key theme emerging from our interviews with the youth attending no-excuses schools was their descriptions of school-based opportunities for engaging in group and mass forms of sociopolitical activism. For example, students at Freedom Preparatory Academy described the impact of engaging in protests with their peers, teachers, and family members for charter schools (such as their own) serving youth of color and low-income youth to receive state funding equal to that of traditional public schools. Freedom Prep student Raul discussed this experience in his eleventh grade interview:

> In this school, we went to some rallies having to do with charter schools and their funding. And that was important because I go to a charter school, and that's like fighting for something that I do, and what I am a part of… It was fun. It was just like, you know, getting the word out and putting it out in public to try to keep funding these charter schools that are trying to help kids do better.

Here, Raul described participating in a mass form of sociopolitical activism for an issue to which

he felt personally connected. In responding to a follow-up question about whether his

participation had impacted his commitment to activism, Raul added:

> Yes, because normally there's not that many opportunities to, you know, go outside of
> school and fight for something with your friends and your teachers. And that made me
> feel like I had more of an impact. Normally, I don't really see myself as having a big
> impact as one person. But when you're at a rally with a lot of people, you bring attention
> to yourself.

Here, Raul articulated his belief that it is unusual for a young person to have a genuine

opportunity to work alongside peers and teachers to impact educational policy.

Another Freedom Prep student, Tiana, described feeling a similar sense of impact from

having participated in this protest. She explained:

> Freedom Prep has allowed us to like go to these meetings and rally and tell our
> government that basically we deserve the same rights as scholars at other schools, so I
> think we did change a lot in that way... It felt really good because you know how you're
> always scared to stand up for something you believe in by yourself, but it wasn't just me.
> It was like all schools around the state that are charter schools. So it was like we were all
> standing up to make a change. I think it did more for a lot of people than just one person.

Here, Tiana echoed Raul in noting that participating in this protest for educational equity

strengthened her belief about what mass forms of sociopolitical activism can accomplish.

Leadership High School students also described the impact of engaging in school-

sponsored group social action. Specifically, the capstone project for twelfth grade students at

Leadership High School was to design and execute "Be the Change" projects in which they led

other students from the school in social change efforts. A number of Leadership tenth graders

described the experience of participating in an upperclassman's Be the Change project that

consisted of a "die in" in front of their local police station to protest police violence against

African American men. One student, Aniyah, described her experience in participating in this

project:

Some of the seniors had to make a "Be the Change" project in order to graduate. And their project was like, take a stand to like make some kind of change with police violence. So like, we went on basically a march, I guess. We went to a precinct, and then we just stood there with posters. Some of us laid on the ground, you know. We stayed there for a while, like, basically made a stance. So it kind of made me feel like maybe what I'm doing may change something, you know. Maybe people are going to start seeing what we did as, you know, something important, maybe we should change it.

Here, Aniyah described participating in the protest as strengthening her belief that group action is capable of effecting social change.

Another tenth grade student, Justin, described the impact of listening to each of the Leadership seniors "pitch" their projects to the entire student body in order to solicit their support and participation:

It's impacted me because like, there's a lot of things that I could do to solve a problem. Like before, like, problem solving was really hard. And like, it's really hard to process. But, when you do like [hear] a pitch, you really notice that there's a lot of problems in society that need to be fixed.

In these explanations, both Justin and Aniyah discussed the ways in which witnessing and participating in older students' group action projects strengthened their convictions about the power of sociopolitical activism.

Discrepant interview data. Although our interview data offered valuable insight into the programming and practices at the two sets of schools that contributed to students' meaningful growth on different dimensions of SPD, that is not to say that students at the progressive schools described no opportunities for group or mass forms of social action, or that students at the no-excuses schools described no opportunities for social analysis. For example, students at Community Academy described how their school's foreign language classes worked to protest a travel warning issued in 2013 by a European consulate to avoid the neighborhood in which Community Academy is located and the majority of its students reside. Students in the foreign language classes authored a letter of protest to the consul general; organized a demonstration

outside the consulate; and invited the consul general to tour their school and surrounding

community. As one student Johara explained:

> We recently had [the consul general] come up to the school because they say how, you know, our neighborhoods are bad and they shouldn't come and visit and a student felt some type of way about that, like, that's not true… So they did something about it. They wrote a letter to the consulate and that's when they came up to Community Academy. They, you know, they walked [him] around our neighborhoods to show that it's really not that bad.

The tour concluded with a town hall meeting at Community Academy where students articulated

their concerns about the travel warning and brought the many positive elements of their

community to the consul general's attention.

There were also examples from the no-excuses schools of students engaging in social

analysis. For example, at One Vision High School, students described reading Toni Morrison's

The Bluest Eye in their tenth grade English classes and critically analyzing how dominant

standards of beauty in the United States influenced the novel's central character—an eleven-

year-old African American girl name Pecola—to yearn for blue eyes. In describing class

discussions of the novel, Melissa explained: "We started off the year with *The Bluest Eye*, and

that was just really eye opening, and it was just showing the extreme effects of all the racism and

stuff." Her classmate Tynequa connected dominant standards of beauty to the American Dream

in noting that society "has a certain [beauty] standard that wants it to be met in order to have that

Dream met." Finally, a third student, Nathan, explained of One Vision's English classes:

> The novels that are chosen are picked specifically to cater to like finding solutions to the society we live in now and like the racial inequality that takes place in the society now. So, um, things like *The Bluest Eye* or *To Kill a Mockingbird*, those novels are picked to see how well you can read and analyze…and how you can use that now in order to go out in the world and fix the racial inequalities.

In short, there were unquestionably opportunities for students at progressive schools to engage in

sociopolitical activism, and for students at no-excuses schools to engage in social analysis of

racial and economic inequality. However, as both these examples and our broader corpus of qualitative data suggest, one might also characterize such opportunities as both smaller in scope and somewhat less embedded in the school's core programming than the opportunities for social analysis at the progressive schools and opportunities for sociopolitical activism at the no-excuses schools.

Discussion

The present study considered the sociopolitical development of adolescents attending progressive and no-excuses urban high schools in terms of their abilities to analyze and challenge racism and poverty. We found that students at these two sets of schools demonstrated meaningful growth on different dimensions of SPD. First, in comparison to their peers at the no-excuses schools, students attending progressive high schools demonstrated meaningful growth in their ability to analyze critically issues of racism and poverty and in their belief that achieving personal success challenges hegemonic notions about the abilities of people of color. On these measures, the type of school attended by participating adolescents explained 7%-34% of the variance in their rates of change from the start of ninth grade to the end of eleventh grade.

Students attending no-excuses schools demonstrated growth approaching significance in their commitment to engaging in group and mass forms of sociopolitical activism in comparison to their peers attending progressive schools. On this measure, however, school-type accounted for just two percent of the variance in participating adolescents' rates of change, which perhaps stands as a reminder that secondary schools have been structured to influence students' analytic skills more than their societal involvement (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

Finally, there was not sufficient variability between students attending the two sets of schools to carry out HLM analyses comparing their development of sociopolitical agency.

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Descriptive statistics suggest that, on average, students across the sample demonstrated small positive shifts on this measure over their first three years of high school. From these results, one might speculate that perhaps adolescents' development of sociopolitical agency is more influenced by ecological factors (e.g. parents, youth groups, adult mentors, etc.) other than their school's pedagogical approach. All of these findings hold important implications for both scholars and practitioners committed to the SPD of youth marginalized by inequities in race and socioeconomic status that we consider below.

Fostering Social Analysis & Sociopolitical Activism

Our qualitative interviews illuminated participating students' insights into their respective schools' contributions to their SPD. Specifically, the students attending progressive schools described the impact upon their worldview and self-concept of 1) learning a framework for analyzing oppression; 2) curriculum focused on racial and economic injustice; and 3) time and space to engage in dialogue with their peers about inequality. In considering these practices, recall that Erikson (1968) characterized adolescence as a peak period of identity exploration in which individuals explicitly seek out new and different ways of understanding both the world and their role in it. For students at Make the Road Academy, a new heuristic for understanding the world came in Social Engagement class through the introduction of the "Three I's of Oppression" (Ritchhart, 2002). Students described this heuristic as reshaping their understanding of events ranging from the United States government's response to Hurricane Katrina to the extrajudicial killing of Trayvon Martin. Likewise, for students at Community Academy, the opportunity to learn about cases of race-based oppression ranging from apartheid South Africa to the genocide of the American Indians to the Civil Rights movement served to reframe their own lives and striving for success as a form of resistance against long-held notions of White

supremacy (Carter, 2008; Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995). Cumulatively, these and other practices seemed to contribute to students at the progressive schools demonstrating meaningful growth in both their ability to analyze oppressive social forces such as poverty and racism as well as in their belief that their own lives and actions represented an opportunity for achievement-as-resistance.

The students attending no-excuses schools described the impact upon their commitment to activism of opportunities to participate in 1) statewide protests for an issue highly relevant to their lives; and 2) small-scale activism in the broader community designed and led by older peers. In considering these opportunities, recall that the engagement by Freedom Prep students in statewide protests for charter school funding represents an example of "mass action of social movements" for an "external audience" that Watts and Hipolito-Delgado (2015) characterize as the most impactful form of sociopolitical activism. Such a characterization aligns with the description of the protest by Freedom Prep students as an authentic and rare opportunity to impact social policies that disadvantage the youth from marginalized racial and economic groups attending charter schools. Moreover, because students participated in these protests alongside peers and adult community leaders, their commitment to sociopolitical activism was likely strengthened by both feelings of interpersonal connection with their peers (McAdam, 1986) and their interactions with adult role-models (Damon, 2009; Fischman et al., 2001).

Students at another no-excuses school, Leadership High School, described engagement in group action for an external audience through the school's "Be the Change" capstone projects (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Students characterized their participation in projects such as a "die-in" to protest police violence as having strengthened their commitment to activism, and also emphasized the import of the projects being led by older peers rather than adults (Parks,

2011). These descriptions of programming and practices across both sets of schools offer useful insights for educators committed to fostering youth SPD as well as evidence of the feasibility of public secondary schools incorporating such practices into their everyday work with students. While we noted earlier in this paper that the vast majority of public schools in the United States hold implicit or explicit goals around fostering their students' sociopolitical development, both sets of schools in the present study are perhaps unusual in the extent to which they have taken the opportunity to actualize these goals through their programming and practices.

Praxis & Opportunity Structures

In work that serves as a foundation for contemporary scholarship on both critical consciousness and sociopolitical development, Freire (1970) characterized praxis— engagement in *both* critical reflection and action— as necessary for social change work that ultimately results in liberation from oppression. He (1973) described critical reflection without action as simply "verbalism" that does not advance the organized struggle for liberation necessary for societal transformation (p. 66). Likewise, he argued that action without critical reflection is "disastrous activism" liable to reify the subordination of individuals from oppressed groups (p. ix).

Freire's (1973) emphasis on praxis highlights the importance of educators being attentive to opportunity structures for fostering *both* the analysis and activism dimensions of adolescents' SPD. As made evident by the discrepant interview data in our results, we do not intend to claim in this paper that progressive schools offered no opportunities for students to engage in sociopolitical activism, or that no-excuses schools offered no opportunities for engagement in social analysis. However, the fact that youth attending these schools demonstrated meaningful growth on different dimensions of SPD serves as a reminder that a particular school or schooling model's programming and practices might unintentionally favor one dimension of SPD over the

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other. Accordingly, educators and other stakeholders are well-served to continually reflect upon and evaluate the impact of their programming on students' ability to analyze and challenge inequality, and to be receptive to other practices that can complement their efforts.

A useful case in point is the example raised in the Results of Espiritu High School's practice of affording time and space at its weekly community meeting for students to teach and dialogue with each other about oppression. This weekly meeting was unequivocally an opportunity structure for students to engage in social analysis, but the practice within this community meeting of students-teaching-students arguably represented a form of sociopolitical activism as well (Horton & Freire, 1990). Yet, few Espiritu students who participated in interviews cited the community meeting as an example of their engagement in sociopolitical activism, and the descriptive statistics from four waves of surveys indicated that Espiritu students, on average, demonstrated virtually no differences over time in their commitment to activism. Perhaps because this form of social action occurred within the confines of their own school building, students did not themselves regard this practice of teaching their classmates as related to sociopolitical activism in the "real world." Or to invoke Watts and Hipolito's (2015) typologies of sociopolitical activism, perhaps because teaching one's fellow students about oppressive social forces represents an "internal" form of sociopolitical activism, students did not see this practice as connected to forms of sociopolitical activism directed at more "external" communities and audiences. A reasonable question, then, is whether Espiritu faculty and leaders could have fostered meaningful growth in their students' commitment to sociopolitical activism by more explicitly framing this core practice within the school's weekly community meeting as a form of, not only social analysis, but sociopolitical activism as well. In short, it is crucial for educators to assess the effects of different programming and practices upon their students rather

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than simply assuming particular practices to exert a wide range of positive effects across every dimension of students' SPD.

Another important question about the praxis between social analysis and sociopolitical activism beyond the scope of the present study is whether students who demonstrated meaningful growth in one dimension of SPD are now better positioned to demonstrate meaningful growth in the other dimension of SPD, as they move into later adolescence and early adulthood. As mentioned, Watts and Flanagan's (2007) youth SPD framework posits a bi-directional relationship between analysis and action, such that increasing youth's ability to engage in social analysis strengthens their likelihood of societal involvement, and vice-versa. According to these scholars then, the meaningful growth in social analysis demonstrated by students at the progressive schools around issues of racism and poverty can encourage robust growth in their commitment to social action addressing these inequities. Likewise, the meaningful growth demonstrated by students at the no-excuses schools in their commitment to activism can catalyze their ability to engage in social analysis of the social forces necessitating such activism.

In future work, we plan to investigate whether adolescents' social analysis scores serve as a predictor of change over time in their commitment to sociopolitical activism and vice-versa, as well as whether there is a significant association between change over time in students' social analysis and sociopolitical activism. We are hopeful that such analyses will offer useful additional insight into the relationship that Watts and Flanagan (2007) hypothesize between social analysis and societal involvement. Importantly, however, Watts and Flanagan (2007) do not argue that this hypothesized bi-directional relationship is automatic or inevitable, but, rather, one that is moderated by the opportunity structures in youth's lives. In considering the

implications of the present study, positioning schools (and other opportunity structures) in this moderating role would seem to further emphasize the importance of educators across a variety of schooling models taking stock of the practices they have already put in place to foster their students' SPD, and then drawing from practices raised here and in other scholarly work that can complement those efforts.

Limitations

There were several limitations to the present study. In term of our quantitative analyses, one limitation was the lack of random assignment to the two school types. Although students were admitted to participating schools via randomized registration lotteries, it is possible that particular types of students were differentially likely to enter lotteries for enrollment in these different schooling models. A second limitation was that the relatively small number of schools in our study prevented us from modeling our quantitative data with a three-level model that accounted for dependencies within students and within schools.

Related to these limitations is a point raised in the Methods that students at no-excuses schools began their first year of high school (Time 1) with significantly higher scores on all three measures related to analyzing racial and economic inequality. We suggested that these higher baseline scores were likely attributable to the majority of no-excuses students attending "feeder" middle schools within the same charter networks as their respective high schools, and cited these higher baseline scores as an important reason to focus on students' change over time on these measures. That said, it is also possible that the significantly lower baseline scores with which students in progressive schools began their high school years meant that they had greater potential for steeper growth on these measures. Each of these limitations points to the need for additional research going forward with a larger number of schools and, perhaps, a comparison of

students attending such schools to those who were not admitted via each school's randomized registration lottery.

Finally, two additional limitations to the present study emerged from our analytic strategy for triangulating our quantitative and qualitative data. First, in addition to the quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews described above, our research team also collected artifacts and field notes from more than 100 days of observations at the six participating schools. These data offer valuable insights as well into the role of each schooling model in fostering students' sociopolitical development; however, the decision was made that such data could not be effectively presented or analyzed within a single paper already reporting on two types of data. Additionally, our decision to utilize a sequential exploratory analytic strategy that began with the quantitative analyses also brings with it strengths and limitations. On one hand, such an approach seems to play to the strengths of each type of data by utilizing longitudinal quantitative surveys to consider change over time in adolescents' SPD, and then qualitative interviews to consider adolescents' perceptions of the processes underlying such change. At the same time, such an approach serves to narrow the lens with which we considered our student interview data. Despite explicitly seeking out contradictory and discrepant data, this approach may have resulted in us missing patterns and themes that might otherwise have emerged from these student interviews.

Implications

Despite longstanding claims about the American dream and social mobility (Hochschild, 1996) and more recent claims about a "post-racial America" (Wise, 2010), economic and racial inequality continue to be powerful and pernicious forces in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Piketty & Saez, 2003). Scholars have long argued that schools have an important role to

play in strengthening students' capacity to analyze and challenge these forces (Cobb, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Lee, 1992; Perlstein, 2002; Perry, 2003).

Scholarship from both civic education and critical pedagogy have identified specific practices for fostering students' ability to engage in social analysis and sociopolitical activism ranging from open classroom discussions (Campbell, 2008; Hess, 2009) to youth participatory action research (Kirshner, 2015) to ethnic studies courses (Cammarota & Romero, 2006). The present study likewise sought to contribute to this scholarship by highlighting schooling practices capable of fostering students' SPD ranging from heuristics such as Make the Road Academy's "Three I's of Oppression" to Leadership High School's "Be the Change" capstone projects. Additionally, however, this study sought to contribute to the extant scholarship by considering the broader question of how adolescents attending two popular but distinctive schooling models compare in their sociopolitical development over the first three years of high school.

Because progressive schooling models draw upon a number of the practices from the civic education and critical pedagogy scholarship (e.g. open classroom discussions, experiential learning, social justice curriculum), one might reasonably have predicted students attending progressive schools to demonstrate more substantial growth in their SPD than their peers at the no-excuses schools. And, in fact, these students did demonstrate more substantial growth on all three measures of social analysis and in their belief in achievement-as-resistance. However, perhaps the fact that students at the no-excuses schools demonstrated more meaningful growth in their commitment to group and mass forms of social action underscores a perspective offered by historian-of-education Perlstein (2002) that "no single pedagogical approach inherently serves the cause of social justice" (p. 269). It is crucial, then, that educators committed to identifying and drawing upon the practices that can support their students' SPD engage in dialogue and

reflection with each other across the myriad constructed boundaries in education ranging from the pedagogical (e.g. progressive/no-excuses) to the structural (e.g. district/charter) to the geographic (e.g. urban/suburban). Learning from and drawing upon each other's promising practices offers the greatest potential for educators across these school-types to ensure their students' engagement in the social analysis and sociopolitical activism necessary for both personal and societal liberation.

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Table 1. *Descriptions of Participating Schools (J = 6)*

School	Pedagogy	Urban Context	Students of Color	F/R Lunch	Per Pupil Expenses	Mission, Philosophy or Core Values
Community Academy	Progressive: Expeditionary Learning	Large northeastern city	99%	75%	16,902	Philosophy: Develop in students the knowledge, skills and commitment to envision a better world and work toward achieving it.
Make the Road Academy	Progressive: Problem-Posing	Midsize industrial city	100%	76%	15,690	Mission: To offer students an education that strengthens our community by equipping them to address educational and social inequities.
Espiritu High School	Progressive: Coalition of Essential Schools	Midsize industrial city	91%	78%	12,817	Mission: Community involvement and improvement are central goals at Espiritu Academy…Students engage in deep learning and reflection about their own experiences and relationships to others in our community.
Leadership High School	No-excuses	Large northeastern city	100%	81%	15,957	Mission: To educate socially responsible students for a life of active and engaged citizenship.
One Vision High School	No-excuses	Midsize industrial city	100%	77%	16,878	Core Value: We work to improve our community and the world.
Freedom Preparatory Academy	No-excuses	Midsize industrial city	99%	73%	15,963	Mission: Freedom Prep graduates will possess the skills and drive to serve as the next generation of leaders of our community

Table 2.
Study Measures

Category	Measure	Adapted from	# Items	α	Range of Factor Loadings	Sample Item
Social Analysis						
	Awareness of Interpersonal Racism	Oyserman, Gant & Ager, 1995	3	0.79	0.53 - 0.61	"Some people will treat me differently because I am (students' racial group)."
	Awareness of Structural Racism	Gurin, Nagda, & Zuniga, 2011	4	0.67	0.43 - 0.54	"Racism in the educational system limits the success of Blacks, Latinos, and other racial minorities."
	Structural Thinking about Poverty	NPR-Kaiser-Harvard, 2001	5	0.75	0.42 - 0.51	"A shortage of jobs is a major cause of poverty."
Sociopolitical Activism						
	Commitment to Activism	Corning & Myer, 2002	9	0.80	0.27 - 0.38	"How likely is it now or in the future that you will take part in a protest, march or demonstration?"
	Achievement as Resistance	Oyserman, Gant & Ager, 1995	4	0.78	0.48 - 0.52	"If I am successful, it will help the (students' racial group) community."
Agency						
	Sociopolitical Control	Peterson et al., 2011	6	0.79	0.39 - 0.44	"There are plenty of ways for youth like me to have a say in what our community or school does."

Table 3. *Summary Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation) for SPD Measures (n =458 students)*

	N	Structural Thinking About Poverty				Awareness of Interpersonal Racism				Awareness of Structural Racism			
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4
Freedom Prep	131	3.38 (.66)	3.35 (.77)	3.43 (.81)	3.43 (.80)	3.37 (.80)	3.47 (.90)	3.72 (.84)	3.78 (.85)	3.41 (.66)	3.71 (.78)	3.62 (.70)	3.71 (.77)
Espiritu Academy	49	3.20 (.54)	3.30 (.57)	3.64 (.69)	3.67 (.67)	2.53 (.85)	2.73 (.94)	3.11 (1.00)	3.42 (.91)	2.94 (.56)	3.17 (.66)	3.44 (.78)	3.84 (.70)
Community Academy	41	2.94 (.71)	3.13 (.75)	3.36 (.83)	3.58 (.88)	2.99 (.92)	3.33 (.93)	3.70 (.94)	3.82 (1.09)	3.45 (.70)	3.42 (.79)	3.73 (.67)	3.92 (1.04)
Leadership HS	82	3.36 (.62)	3.25 (.72)	3.51 (.70)	3.59 (.73)	3.46 (1.05)	3.24 (1.02)	3.72 (.94)	3.62 (1.12)	3.67 (.66)	3.68 (.68)	3.72 (.68)	3.80 (.67)
One Vision HS	95	3.58 (.66)	3.61 (.72)	3.76 (.70)	3.89 (.68)	3.92 (.93)	3.95 (.95)	4.20 (.77)	4.34 (.74)	3.74 (.76)	3.66 (.82)	3.69 (.70)	3.97 (.69)
Make the Road Academy	60	3.27 (.50)	3.40 (.72)	3.40 (.67)	3.50 (.68)	3.52 (.96)	3.80 (.93)	3.97 (.91)	3.99 (.68)	3.46 (.62)	3.85 (.76)	3.88 (.79)	4.01 (.80)
Progressive (Cumulative)	150	3.16 (.59)	3.29 (.69)	3.47 (.72)	3.57 (.73)	3.05 (1.00)	3.32 (1.03)	3.61 (1.01)	3.79 (.89)	3.28 (.66)	3.50 (.79)	3.69 (.77)	3.94 (.83)
No-excuses (Cumulative)	308	3.44 (.65)	3.41 (.75)	3.55 (.75)	3.63 (.76)	3.56 (.94)	3.55 (.99)	3.86 (.88)	3.91 (.96)	3.58 (.71)	3.69 (.76)	3.67 (.69)	3.82 (.71)
All Schools	458	3.35 (.65)	3.37 (.73)	3.52 (.74)	3.61 (.75)	3.39 (.99)	3.49 (1.0)	3.78 (.93)	3.86 (.94)	3.48 (.71)	3.63 (.78)	3.68 (.72)	3.86 (.76)

Table 3 Continued. *Summary Statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation) for SPD Measures (n =458 students)*

		Commitment to Activism				Achievement as Resistance				Sociopolitical Control			
	N	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4	T1	T2	T3	T4
Freedom Prep	131	2.98 (.61)	2.95 (.70)	3.05 (.70)	3.10 (.66)	4.04 (.66)	4.02 (.79)	3.84 (.78)	3.73 (.90)	3.64 (.50)	3.59 (.75)	3.48 (.59)	3.34 (.65)
Espiritu Academy	49	3.04 (.50)	3.02 (.43)	2.83 (.59)	3.11 (.65)	3.77 (.65)	3.67 (.76)	3.73 (.70)	3.95 (.85)	3.56 (.42)	3.74 (.57)	3.87 (.49)	3.88 (.57)
Community Academy	41	2.61 (.81)	2.74 (.70)	3.20 (.63)	3.13 (.70)	4.14 (.63)	4.04 (.72)	4.17 (.66)	4.25 (.90)	3.61 (.53)	3.67 (.72)	4.00 (.76)	3.86 (.61)
Leadership HS	82	3.10 (.75)	3.00 (.76)	3.30 (.67)	3.33 (.77)	4.02 (.75)	3.89 (.78)	4.05 (.76)	4.09 (.90)	3.66 (.58)	3.60 (.70)	3.80 (.60)	3.77 (.68)
One Vision HS	95	3.12 (.63)	3.11 (.62)	3.27 (.69)	3.30 (.63)	4.05 (.74)	3.91 (.82)	3.98 (.73)	4.14 (.73)	3.63 (.52)	3.70 (.60)	3.84 (.61)	3.82 (.68)
Make the Road Academy	60	3.17 (.69)	3.23 (.69)	3.07 (.89)	3.01 (.75)	3.83 (.71)	4.09 (.76)	3.94 (.72)	4.02 (.82)	3.60 (.52)	3.78 (.65)	3.64 (.77)	3.74 (.68)
Progressive (Cumulative)	150	2.97 (.71)	3.02 (.65)	3.02 (.74)	3.07 (.70)	3.89 (.68)	3.94 (.76)	3.93 (.71)	4.05 (.85)	3.59 (.49)	3.73 (.65)	3.81 (.69)	3.81 (.63)
No-excuses (Cumulative)	308	3.05 (.66)	3.02 (.70)	3.20 (.69)	3.24 (.69)	4.04 (.71)	3.95 (.80)	3.95 (.76)	3.98 (.86)	3.64 (.53)	3.63 (.69)	3.69 (.62)	3.64 (.70)
All Schools	458	3.03 (.68)	3.02 (.68)	3.14 (.71)	3.18 (.70)	3.99 (.70)	3.94 (.79)	3.95 (.75)	4.00 (.86)	3.63 (.52)	3.65 (.68)	3.73 (.65)	3.70 (.68)

Table 4. *HLM for SPD Measures (n = 458)*

	Awareness of Interpersonal Racism					Structural Thinking about Poverty					Awareness of Structural Racism				
	b	*SE*	*t*	*P*	% Red in Var	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	% Red in Var	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	% Red in Var
Intercept	3.69	0.14	25.94	<.0001		3.35	0.11	30.60	<.0001		4.01	0.12	34.76	<.0001	
Year	0.24	0.03	7.78	<.0001		0.13	0.02	5.82	<.0001		0.20	0.03	7.41	<.0001	
Gender	-0.17	0.06	-2.64	0.01		-0.08	0.05	-1.70	.08		-0.05	0.05	-0.89	.37	
Latino	-0.15	0.08	-1.94	0.05		-0.07	0.06	-1.14	.25		0.01	0.06	0.13	.90	
Multiracial	0.01	0.07	0.02	.99		0.06	0.05	1.19	.23		0.05	0.06	0.95	.34	
City1	0.56	0.10	5.66	<.0001		0.27	0.08	3.57	.0004		0.04	0.08	0.53	.60	
City2	0.08	0.09	0.89	.38		0.02	0.07	0.32	.75		-0.17	0.07	-2.32	.02	
City3	-0.27	0.17	-1.61	.11		0.31	0.13	2.47	.01		-0.40	0.13	-3.03	.003	
City4	0.14	0.17	0.82	.41		0.08	0.13	0.61	.54		-0.10	0.13	-0.77	.44	
No-excuses	0.10	0.12	0.84	.40	2.9%	0.18	0.10	1.82	.07	4%	-0.22	0.10	-2.13	.03	6.5%
Year*No-excuses	-0.10	0.04	-2.68	.01	10%	-0.07	0.03	-2.33	.02	7.2%	-0.13	0.03	-4.17	<.0001	34%

	Commitment to Activism					Sociopolitical Control					Achievement as Resistance				
	B	*SE*	*t*	*p*	% Red in Var	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*P*	% Red in Var	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	% Red in Var
Intercept	3.15	0.11	28.99	<.0001		3.75	0.09	40.72	<.0001		4.09	0.12	33.71	<.0001	
Year	0.01	0.02	0.02	.99		0.02	0.01	1.59	.11		0.05	0.03	1.69	.09	
Gender	-0.19	0.05	-3.96	<.0001		-0.12	0.04	-2.86	.004		-0.08	0.05	-1.47	.14	
Latino	-0.06	0.06	-1.08	.28		0.01	0.05	0.11	.91		-0.04	0.06	-0.70	.48	
Multiracial	0.10	0.05	1.88	.06		-0.01	0.05	-0.22	.83		-0.05	0.06	-0.79	.43	
City1	0.03	0.07	0.40	.69		0.03	0.07	0.47	.64		-0.02	0.08	-0.22	.83	
City2	-0.10	0.07	-1.52	.13		-0.17	0.06	-2.82	.004		-0.09	0.07	-1.20	.23	
City3	-0.07	0.13	-0.53	.60		0.09	0.11	0.81	.42		-0.16	0.14	-1.14	.25	
City4	-0.29	0.13	-2.31	.02		0.08	0.11	0.74	.46		0.15	0.14	1.08	.28	
No-excuses	0.14	0.10	1.42	.16	1.3%	0.03	0.07	0.41	.69	0%	-0.10	0.11	-0.90	.37	.8%
Year*No-excuses	0.06	0.03	2.19	0.03	2.2%						-0.08	0.03	-2.27	.02	8.5%