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THE ROLE OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMMING IN PREDICTING
CRITICAL REFLECTION AND POSITIVE OUTCOMES
IN MARGINALIZED YOUTH

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management

by
Katrina L. Black
December 2019

Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose. The purpose of this study was to explore the role of critical reflection (CR) in promoting positive outcomes in high achieving marginalized youth in an academic-based out-of-school time (OST) context. Marginalized youth face adverse social conditions in the United States and CR is defined as being able to recognize the perceived structural inequalities in a community by using navigational tools that enable a person to analyze their social surrounding, conditions, and circumstances. There is a lack of understanding of how OST programs promote CR in marginalized youth. This paper intends to explore the relation between OST program activities, CR, positive youth development (PYD) and the differing types of contribution (i.e., traditional contribution and critical action) in marginalized youth. This study will examine the characteristics of OST programs based on youths' report of the perceptions of how helpful and how fun justice oriented activities are. High achieving marginalized youth participated in Boys Hope Girls Hope across six different after-school sites around the United States.

Methods. Surveys and semi-structured focus groups were used to collect data. Surveys were analyzed using regression analysis. Focus groups were transcribed and analyzed by researchers using content analysis. **Findings.** Findings suggest that (a) youth gleaned CR from participating in justice oriented activities (revealed in focus groups), (b) critical reflection predicts PYD in African American youth only when compared to Latinx youth and Latinx youth may need culturally relevant skills to enhance PYD; and, (c) justice oriented perceptions were significantly associated with traditional contribution in youth and when critical reflection was present critical action was stronger in high achieving

marginalized youth. **Future Research.** Future research is necessary to explore the effects of critical reflection in diverse intersections of marginalized youth who are not in an academic-based afterschool program to understand if CR levels would maintain its significance across groups. Additionally, this study supports the idea that researchers should consider CR and individual aspects of the Five Cs of PYD to better inform practitioners who work with marginalized youth and their communities. As research continues to support CR as a skill that marginalized youth use, CR might be best understood by investigating each C component instead of the composite PYD factor. In the future, research should continue to bolster the knowledge of CR and contribution in marginalized youth where practitioners can implement ways that will engender valuable and meaningful connections for the youth in their community.

DEDICATION

To my dad,

It was all worth it and you would be so proud if only you could see me now

To my grandmother,

I have listened to all the wisdom you bestowed upon me and trust and believe I am putting those lessons to good use, you would be pleased if only you could see me now

To my children,

I did my best and my best was not to give in and not to give up, you fortunately get to see me now

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is impossible to put into words how much gratitude I feel for so many incredible people that have been my supporters from day one. I thank the divine supreme being to continue to fuel my fire and aspirations to be the change I want to see in this world.

First, I must thank my parents for instilling in me love, confidence, faith and the ability to thrive. With this formative training any challenge that came my way I would figure out a way to overcome it. And in my life, challenges have been a dime a dozen.

Second, to my children, Ja'La and Tyler, I love you both to the moon and back. It is because of you two that I am! That I am strong, that I am faithful, that I am persistent. Thank you for not saying "Mom just give up", thank you for growing with me. You guys are truly the wind beneath my wings.

Thirdly to my dear husband, Willie Reed Jr., my loving sister, Demetria Black, and my best friends Brittani Williams, James Cooper, Adeymi Stovall, and Dev Singh you guys always stepped in with advice just before I was about to make a move in the wrong direction. I'm thankful that you all were assigned to my life trajectory. Kellie, Katherine Ann, Tiffany, Lauren, Gwynn, E'Lisha, Karleisha, Audrey, and Lauren D. you girls rock! Travis, Ikenna, and Kenny, my brothers from another mother, one love!

Lastly, to my committee thank you for being patient with me and trusting me to do good work. If not for all of you I would not have succeeded this far. From the bottom of my heart I am grateful for all the edits, lunch meetings, pep talks, life lessons, and encouragement you've given along the way. You guys rock too!

Special thanks to the Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) for funding my education. Thank you for hosting yearly mentoring and teaching institutes. Those institutes provided life for me and refreshed me yearly to continue to be invested in my future. This journey is not for the swift at heart but for those who persevere, remain focus and practice self-care. Thank you SREB for all that you do.

To the Boys Hope Girls Hope organization, you guys are doing such good work for the youth. Thank you so very much for allowing me to talk with your scholars. Their thoughts has helped me develop a research project that has the potential to benefit future generations. The lessons I learned from them were priceless. I am excited for them as they all have such bright futures. I wish them the best of luck!

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

John Lewis, one of the original 13 freedom writers of the 1960 Civil Rights Movement, asked “If not us, then who?” (Brinlee, 2017, para. 10). A question meant that there was a need to ignite action and promote agency among African-Americans challenging systematic oppression in the southern United States. Action and agency are essential components to bring about change in communities. However, before action can take place to dismantle systemic oppression, one must be able to recognize and understand how society operates, the way in which resources are allocated, and how these resources are supportive of social conditions that may impede advancement in marginalized communities. From a positive youth development (PYD) perspective, when youth from marginalized communities are provided with the appropriate resources to thrive, they can become “agents of social change” and contribute to their communities (Bowers et al., 2015; Hershberg, Johnson, Desouza, Hunter, & Zaff, 2015, p. 211). Therefore, promoting agency among marginalized youth may require promoting the skill of critical reflection – the analysis of the perceived social conditions within an environment (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016; Watts, Diemer & Voight, 2011). Critical reflection (CR) is one dimension of critical consciousness, which consists of CR, critical motivation, and critical action. Critical consciousness is seen as an antidote to oppressive conditions within marginalized communities (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999) that can nurture

the growth of both individual and collective human agency (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017).

Being able to recognize structural inequalities within systems places youth in a position to analyze, challenge, navigate, and overcome oppressive structures (Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter 2017); however, little research has considered the antecedents of critical consciousness development in youth. School systems have been examined as sites supporting critical consciousness yet youth spend about 80% of their waking time outside formal class settings (Lopez & Caspe, 2014). Where and how youth internalize messages and interact within social and cultural settings shape youth's perception and personal beliefs about society as a whole (Kersh, Flynn, & Palmer, 2019); therefore, it is important to understand what out-of-school experiences might predict critical consciousness development. Due to the significant population of marginalized youth attending out-of-school time (OST) programs, these settings may be a potential context where youth are developing CR skills and bring about positive outcomes for their lives (Duerden & Witt, 2010).

Critical reflection is positively lined to a set of outcomes such as promoting social change among youth, addressing political issues such as political education (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Watts & Flanagan, 2007), and fostering occupational development (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Compared to schools, OST programs often have the freedom to implement practices that more often engage with the social issues that affect youth (Murray & Milner, 2015). This programmatic freedom makes OST programs an optimal context for promoting CR

because they have the capacity to allow youth to organically explore their surroundings and make sense of societal systems and institutions (Murray, 2018).

Out-of-school time programs are contexts for youth development and aid in promoting growth and well-being (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). In particular, the positive youth development (PYD) model is derived from relational developmental system metamodels (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015). This system considers the mutually influential interactions between an individual and his or her context as defining human development. This framework underscores youth experiences, and how youth perceive those experiences, as factors in potential developmental outcomes (Lerner et al., 2005). Because there is a lack of research regarding diverse marginalized youth (Spencer & Spencer, 2014), additional exploration should be conducted. Researching the contextual social conditions that affect marginalized youth from the PYD perspective would contribute to the field of youth development (Bowers et al., 2010). The PYD model aligns youth strengths with assets of the community to promote healthy development (Lerner, Bowers, Geldhof, Gestsdottir, 2012). Social conditions in marginalized communities are indicators for positive development and adverse conditions of marginalized communities may lack sufficient resources that can foster youth skills and abilities (Ginwright, 2010). The U.S. Census Bureau forecasted that in 2012 there would be an increase of non-White racial and ethnic groups by at least 49.5% (Cabrera, 2013). Thus, exploring the nuances that promote positive development in youth who are non-white, of diverse ethnic makeup, and of marginalized populations maybe of importance in the near future. Further, Cabrera (2013) contends that researching the

diversity of racial and ethnic groups should be a priority. In her report she underscores that scholarly research this far have focused on supporting deficit models that do not display the positive aspects and strengths of youth of color. Due to the positive outlooks on life that are possible when youth exhibit CR, there are plausible reasons why researchers would explore CR as a predictor of developmental outcomes in marginalized youth and to examine these variables in the context of an OST program.

Furthermore, in marginalized populations, CR may aid in promoting healthy behaviors and predict aspects of PYD, as youth become agentic members of their community (Akom, Cammarota, & Ginwright, 2008; Flanagan & Christens, 2011; Zaff, Hart, Flanagan, Youniss, & Levine, 2010). As youth attend OST programs, it is intended that they will develop positive outcomes and contribute back to society in some capacity (Ginwright & James, 2002); however, little is known about the impact that OST programs have in encouraging and nurturing CR, and in turn, whether CR is linked to PYD outcomes in participating marginalized youth (Hope & Bañales, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative to explore the various OST program practices that might contribute to CR in adolescents. OST programs have the potential to provide instructional opportunities for youth to analyze social conditions (e.g. racism, discrimination, prejudice treatment) that they experience and find healthy ways to challenge and/or resist systemic structures. OST opportunities may generate social responsibility in youth who then possess the initiative, inspiration, and agency to influence change in their marginalized communities (Ginwright & James, 2002; Larson, 2000).

Research studies on OST programming and developing critically reflective youth are few in number. In the United States, marginalized youth experience harsh social conditions that affect their ability to thrive as youth and into adulthood (Ginwright & James, 2002). Failing to provide programs that provide instruction on how to combat these social circumstances is detrimental to the success of marginalized youth. Murray and Milner (2015) posited that OST activities should be situated in a way where practices consider four pedagogical features that may influence the development of critical reflective youth. In their review, they found that the central tents that will lead to empowered youth include: 1) Identity development; 2) Linkages to social, community and cultural contexts and the effects of historical influences upon these contexts; 3) Evaluating and investigating social conditions within a community that will lead to transformation; and 4) Establishing a skill set for researching community issues. Akom and colleagues (2008) also found that OST activities that focused on analyzing social conditions within a safe space bolstered youth CR. Their findings suggested that OST activities have qualities that enable organic discussions around issues of structural realities in an effort to uncover disparities among surrounding communities. They believe that these candid discussions engendered critically conscious mindsets and help youth navigate through personal choices that will affect their outcomes in life. Lastly, Ginwright and James (2002) purported that youth development programs integrate a justice-oriented approach where youth can glean the knowledge of local sociopolitical realities. The authors postulate that using the five principles of social justice youth development (SJYD) framework marginalized youth are positioned to organize and

mobilize social change. Youth who partake in sociopolitical programs become astute to their surroundings and are more likely to participate in effective decision making for their life.

While justice-oriented studies point to the promise of implementing activities in contexts such as OST programs, promoting specific skills like CR, warrants additional exploration. The existing studies regarding OST programs are typically qualitative and derived from small samples of youth engaged in social-justice oriented youth programs(Cammarota & Ginwright, 2007; Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Additional research examining these constructs in larger samples of youth from other types of OST programming has provided important information for both researchers and practitioners. Currently, there is a need for investigating what qualities of OST programming support or hinder CR development in marginalized youth. A better understanding of how these practices are integrated into programs could provide insight for how practitioners could promote CR in youth without changing core program practices, goals, and missions of existing youth serving organizations. In addition, little is known about how CR predicts PYD and youth contribution in their community. If the goal of promoting CR is to build “agents of change,” more evidence of this outcome is needed. Additional research could shed light on how to improve and better utilize OST programming for marginalized youth, and in turn, help youth become more cognizant of root causes of subjugation that youth experience and be better prepared to address these systemic and sociopolitical barriers.

Background

The data for the proposed research come from a larger evaluative study of the Boys Hope Girls Hope Academy programs. Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH) has existed for over 40 years and is “committed to providing holistic solutions that help poor and minority youth to thrive as healthy and productive members of society” (“Boys hope girls hope,” 2016, p. 2). Youth participants come from families affected by adverse conditions such as poverty, substance abuse, mental health issues, community violence, and a lack of sufficient academic opportunities. BHGH Academies provide each student with a continuum of support services from middle school through college. Programs are intended to provide youth with college readiness activities, connections to college and career pathways, and support during key transitions in adolescent life. BHGH’s mission is to “ help academically capable and motivated students in need of meeting their full potential to then become men and women that can serve others” (“Boys hope girls hope,” 2016, p. 2). BHGH provides marginalized youth with value-centered, family-like [programs], opportunities, and education from secondary schools through college.

BHGH Academy programs are non-residential programs that take place after school hours. Youth in this program maintain a GPA, of 3.0 based on a 4.0 scale, that is on trajectory for higher education (i.e., college admission). The program’s focus is to deliver long term, comprehensive academic and emotional support services. BHGH Academy programs are designed to serve the surrounding community. BHGH Academy provides resources extending from academic preparation, community opportunities, and

mentoring relationships (“Boys hope girls hope,” 2016). Their vision is for youth to thrive in adulthood where they operate to their full potential as adults.

Research data were derived from participants at all six Academy program sites: Phoenix, Denver (Aurora), Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco, and St. Louis. The sample, BHGH academy scholars are predominantly non-white (98%) and female (nearly 2:1 female-to-male ratio), ages range from 11-18 years of age. Three waves of data were collected—the first wave in Fall 2017, the second wave in Winter 2018, and the third wave in Spring 2018.

Most Academy activities help students reach their academic goals by developing reachable objectives, support via tutoring, resume writing, and life skill preparation, among other activities (“Boys hope girls hope,” 2016). Although the primary mission of BHGH Academy is to prepare students for college, BHGH Academy programs are contexts that provide opportunities for developing multiple social and cognitive skills. BHGH conduct activities for marginalized youth where they engage in the community via service, develop leadership skillsets, and gain new and meaningful experiences. The SJYD framework outcomes by Ginwright and James (2002) are aligned with the activities that BHGH implements. This framework is not currently used at BHGH but is one that has been identified to use with the population of students and to test the context that youth are in. Youth of the program experience new and impactful outcomes such as learning and valuing a sense of life purpose through community service, the capacity to change personal, community and social conditions via leadership training, and developing awareness of the community when they participate in service activities.

Within this context, marginalized youth have the chance to develop real life proficiencies for analyzing the world in which they live, thus developing their critical consciousness skills.

Problem Statement. Critical consciousness has been found to contribute to addressing forms of marginalization and oppression (Diemer et al., 2016) and positive outcomes in youth (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002; Diemer & Li, 2011; Seider et al., 2017). Increased sociopolitical development and analyzing economic, social, and cultural challenges that certain groups of people face on a daily basis has been an outcome of developing critical consciousness (Diemer & Rapa, 2016; Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). Critical consciousness has also contributed to engendering political participation and action among youth (Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer & Rapa, 2016). In addition, Diemer and Blustein (2006) found that critical consciousness predicted vocational commitment and job placement in urban youth. Lastly, critical consciousness has been linked to coping with stressors (e.g., racism, discrimination, and prejudice treatment) that marginalized youth often experience, promoting mental and emotional health (Diemer et al., 2006; Watts et al., 1999; Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

A small body of research has pointed to the role of OST programming in promoting critical reflection skills (Hope & Bañales, 2019); however, as indicated, most of this research has been conducted with small samples of youth in social-justice oriented programming (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Ginwright & James, 2002). There remains a gap in the youth development research that addresses understanding how traditional OST programs promote critical reflection in high achieving youth. The

research from my dissertation will add to prior research on critical consciousness by exploring what justice oriented activities predict critical reflection and critical action in marginalized youth. Exploring if justice-oriented activities influence the way in which youth regard giving back to their community will help practitioners choose effective activities for youth to participate while in OST programs. Moreover, the findings from this research could enhance the utility of PYD models for diverse youth populations by exploring critical reflection as a strength-based asset. Because OST programs have less structured curricula, it is a potential place to consider how social justice goals can be implemented or integrated in OST programs that do not have explicit social justice goals, such as BHGH Academies. If practitioners and policy makers see the value in OST programs being a conduit for intentional development of critical reflection in high achieving marginalized youth then youth might be able to navigate and contest social injustices within their communities and advocate for fair and just resources to support youth-serving programs. Additionally, examining the antecedents of critical consciousness and its potential in promoting positive outcomes in a larger sample of youth provides the power to test hypotheses about these constructs. The construct of critical reflection may be supported as a skillset that high achieving marginalized youth may use in order to overcome their circumstances promoting better outlooks, but further investigation is needed.

Purpose of the Study

The proposed research pursues gaining a better understanding of CR within the context of OST programs (e.g., practices and activities) and how these activities are

linked to PYD in marginalized youth. In addition to the framework proposed by Murray and Milner (2015), Ginwright and colleagues (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002) have developed and implemented the SJYD framework to promote agency, organizing, and activism among marginalized youth. The SJYD framework utilizes a socioecological approach to bring youth to understand how society works in regards to political, economic, and cultural contexts and realities. Although, Ginwright and James' work yields useful findings on promoting critical consciousness in youth, its reach is limited as it focuses on a small qualitative sample of marginalized urban youth who attend a social justice-oriented OST program. Youth intentionally addressed school and community issues through community-based projects where their agency and reflection were emphasized.

The Social Justice Youth Development framework (Ginwright & James, 2002) posits that positive outcomes in youth will be promoted in those who develop social analysis skills where they can use these skills to solve community problems. SJYD principles could be applied in other types of OST programs, but supporting literature is limited. Therefore, it may be informative to gauge the degree to which marginalized youth experience activities linked to critical consciousness (and its dimensions) in other types of OST programming. The proposed study's purpose is to examine the antecedents and outcomes of CR in high achieving marginalized youth who attend OST programming, as well as to explore the ways in which CR is manifested across diverse youth and if this manifestation of critical consciousness is linked to PYD (i.e., the Five Cs), contribution, and critical action.

Research Questions

This dissertation was a mixed-method design leading to the development of three empirical papers. Using an existing dataset to examine the antecedents and outcomes of critical reflection in marginalized youth the overall research question developed to frame the dissertation was “What role does OST programming play in predicting critical reflection and positive outcomes (e.g., the Five Cs of PYD, giving back to their communities) in high achieving marginalized youth?”

This study explored the following questions that are the focus of three separate empirical papers:

- Do SJYD activities predict CR among marginalized youth participating in academic-based OST programs?
 - a. How frequently do marginalized youth participate in justice-oriented activities?
 - i. Does participation in justice-oriented predict CR?
 - b. How helpful and fun are justice-oriented activities in OST programming?
 - i. Do these perceived qualities predict CR?
 - c. What are the processes that might link justice-oriented activities to CR in high achieving marginalized youth?
 - i. How do youth talk about these processes?
- Does CR predict positive youth development among diverse high achieving marginalized youth participating in academic-based OST programs?
 - a. Is there a difference in Black/African American and Latinx youths’ mean CR and PYD?

- b. Is there a relation between CR and PYD in Black/African American and Latinx youth?
- c. Is CR a significant predictor of growth in PYD in marginalized youth?
Does youth race moderate this relation?
- o In high-achieving marginalized youth, does perception of justice-oriented OST program practices predict traditional contribution in their community?
Additionally, does CR moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST program practices and traditional contribution?
- a. In high-achieving marginalized youth, does perception of justice-oriented OST program practices predict critical action in their community?
Additionally, does CR moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST programs and critical action?

Definitions

Academic based OST programming: Programs that are focused on building academic skills, geared around academic scholarship (Munoz, 2002).

Adolescent or youth: Young people who are between the ages of 10 and 19 years old (Kleiber, Larson, & Csikszentmihalyi, 1986).

Agency: A youth's ability to analyze and respond to problems impeding their social and economic advancement (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

Critical Consciousness (and dimensions of Critical Consciousness): Critical consciousness is referred as a set of skills that consist of critical reflection and critical action.

Critical reflection (CR) consist of being able to recognize the perceived structural inequalities in a community by using navigational tools that enable a person to analyze their social surrounding, conditions, and circumstances. Critical action is propelled by critical reflection inquiries.

Critical action (CA) can be an individual or collective movement towards resolving social inequities for specific groups of people (Diemer et al., 2017).

Marginalized or disenfranchised youth: Poor and working class youth, and/or lower socioeconomic status youth who have been historically considered to be oppressed, experienced socioeconomic, sexual orientation, gender-based or racialized forms of domination and marginalization (Freire, 1972; Garcia Coll et al., 1996).

Non-academic based OST programming: Programming that focus on building life skills, such that program activities allow youth free time in social, art or sport dimensions.

Scholar/Student: A female or male participant in the BHGH Academy program. Scholars attend the program at least one day a week for at least one hour.

Social analysis: Critically reflecting on societies systems and institutions.

Social justice: A critical awareness of the systems and institutions that promote or hinder progress toward social equity and respect for human dignity (Ginwright, Cammarota, & Noguera, 2005).

Sociopolitical Development or Sociopolitical Awareness: Refers to persons actively seeking the knowledge, skills, emotional faculties, and commitment to be cognizant of institutional barriers to then intentionally resist forces of subjugation (Thomas et al., 2014; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003).

Socially conscious youth: Youth who are aware of disparity in resource allocation and operate in a lens that critically analyze social conditions.

Delimitations

This study focuses on a specific population, high achieving marginalized youth within a specialized OST context. This OST context assists high achieving marginalized youth with academic achievement and skill development. Researchers were interested in understanding the antecedents and outcomes of CR, as a promising construct and skill for marginalized youth who are academically inclined. CR may be seen as an abstract concept and might require higher level cognitive skills in order to see the relevance of developing these skills (Fine, 1991). As a result, data were not collected from other OST sites not focused on youth and academic success; this is an area that should be examined in the future. Additionally, this study relied on youth self-reporting on their perception of OST activities and on how often they have participated in service activities in their community. Focus group were conducted in one site and surveys were conducted in all six sites. Attrition among the participants of the study was an issue with this time-series design as there were three waves of data collection. Some study participants dropped out of the program or were absent on the day for data collection as evidence by lower number of participants from wave one to wave three.

Format of Dissertation

To accomplish the proposed objectives, this study was organized into three distinct research questions, which are addressed in three separate papers. These three research papers complement each other. Papers are based on similar theoretical

frameworks — SJYD and PYD — but utilized different research methods to better understand the antecedents and outcomes of CR among marginalized youth in academically focused OST programming. Description of each article as well as the intended peer-reviewed journal outlets are outlined below.

1. The first article focuses on the five social justice youth development principles and if these principles predict CR in high-achieving marginalized youth. The purpose of this portion of the study was to understand if justice-oriented activities were implemented at OST programs, if these activities were perceived as impactful and enjoyable, and if OST activities were predictors of CR. Focus groups and surveys were used to address these purposes.
2. The second article focuses on the diverse race of high achieving marginalized youth, the skill of CR and its role in PYD. The purpose of this portion of the study was to investigate if CR was a significant predictor to the Five Cs model and if youths' race moderated this relation. Surveys were used to address this purpose.
3. This article focuses on perceived OST justice-oriented activities and predicting contribution among marginalized youth and investigating the role of CR as a moderator. The purpose of this study was to learn if the quality of justice-oriented OST activities predicted traditional contribution and/or critical action among youth and to understand if CR is a significant intervening variable. Surveys were used to address this purpose. The concluding chapter of this dissertation summarizes the findings, conclusions, and implications of this study.

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CHAPTER TWO

Out-of-School Time Programs and Critical Consciousness: A Mixed-Method Exploration of Program Practices that Promote Critical Reflection in Marginalized Youth

Abstract

Critical consciousness is “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). One domain of critical consciousness is critical reflection, which is identifying perceived inequalities within a community. Critical reflection is a key outcome of the Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework that integrates justice-oriented principles and predicts positive outcomes for youth (Ginwright & James, 2002). SJYD is intended to provide marginalized youth with tools that fosters youth analysis of inequities and injustices among their communities. The utility of the SJYD framework may benefit youth attending out-of-school (OST) programs because of the less structured curriculum that OST programs use. This mixed-method study conducted Pearson’s Correlations and ANOVA test to explore how activities reflective of this framework predicted critical reflection in a sample of 164 “risk immersed”, yet academically successful, youth who attended an OST college preparation program. At least 50% of youth reported engaging in SJYD-oriented activities. In general, youth reported that activities were helpful and fun; however, regression analyses indicated that neither participating in SJYD activities nor whether they were helpful or fun had a significant effect on youth’s critical reflection. Deductive analyses of focus group responses revealed that youth reported mixed views on how activities help shape who they are in society. This study suggests that implementing justice-oriented activities could be effectively utilized in academic-based OST contexts while also influencing ideologies on equity, justice and youth development among marginalized youth as an appropriate and necessary tool for survival.

Keywords: Social Justice Youth Development, Out-of-School Time programs, Critical Consciousness, Critical Reflection

Introduction

In the United States, young people of color face many systemic structural and social inequities which serve as obstacles to their likelihood of thriving (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). These youth of color are often times located in marginalized communities where the resources are limited or constrained due to social-political-economic disparities. Youth in marginalized communities face adverse conditions such as unmitigated violence, substance abuse, and unstable living situations (Ginwright, 2010) where implementing programs that promote positive outlooks would be beneficial. Youth in marginalized communities are more likely to attend out-of-school time (OST) programs (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, Martin-Glenn, 2006). Integrating frameworks that have the potential to promote skills such as political, social, and economic literacy (Ginwright & James, 2002) may bolster youth success and academic performance (El-Amin et al., 2017). Additionally, these skills developed in marginalized youth will help them navigate among social conditions inside and outside their community (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017; S. Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). When youth reside in disadvantaged and toxic communities, they may not have opportunities that facilitate social skills, critical consciousness, or development of political literacy (Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon, 2013). Justice-oriented models that are focused on youth development are proposed to have specific principles that could organize youth to induce change in social conditions while also gaining critical consciousness skills. Civic participation is one outcome of these particular frameworks, whereas it helps to organize and mobilize youth toward understanding their civic purpose

in a democratic society. This process happens primarily as youth learn how their communities shape the outlooks for their futures.

OST programs may be a supportive environment that allow marginalized youth to discuss sensitive cultural and social issues that are present in their communities (Outley & Witt, 2006). These discussions are designed to facilitate critical consciousness in marginalized youth so that they can contest, challenge, and navigate through unsupportive social-political-economic-cultural systems that hinder productive quality of life. By analyzing the root causes within systems, youth are able to reflect and identify how they can liberate themselves from systematic oppression (Freire, 1972). Up to now, most of the research concerning justice-oriented frameworks have taken place in programs centralized around teaching youth specific ways to resolve inequities in their community. Youth have learned the concepts of democracy, the importance of civic engagement and overcoming ideology that discourages them from changing their life circumstances (Ginwright and James, 2002).

Implementing justice-oriented frameworks in an academic-based OST program, where the intended focus is on academic enrichment, will provide college bound marginalized youth with a clear awareness of sociopolitical realities they will encounter in the future. Situating this framework in a non-justice-oriented setting will also provide insight as to the functionality of justice-oriented programs outside of its normal context. Outcomes are effective in that youth are better able to discuss the root causes of the conditions and strategically develop solutions that are practical and impactful. This study examined the construct of critical reflection and the utility of Social Justice Youth

Development (SJYD) principles in an OST college preparatory program for academically high-achieving youth. By integrating youth development program features with SJYD principles for marginalized youth, I will be able to determine if this context is one that will promote youth who are socially aware about their community.

Review of Literature

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness is “learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & Whirter, 2016, p.216). Critical reflection, a subcomponent of critical consciousness, is linked to positive outcomes in marginalized youth (Diemer & Blustein, 2006;) and is considered “a critical analysis of perceived social inequalities, such as racial/ethnic, gendered, and socioeconomic constraints on educational and occupational opportunity” (Diemer et al., 2017, p. 2). In the United States, marginalized youth are constantly challenged with social issues (e.g. racism, discrimination, prejudicial treatment) that cause permeant and damaging effects that could hinder youth from being successful; therefore, it is imperative to engage youth in civic issues that foster and encourage their success and well-being.

Critical reflection is a necessary skillset to acquire because of the potential it carries when thinking critically and historically on an issue. Critical reflection allows a person to cognitively process their reflections and adapt their way of thinking with the intention to bring about positive change in regards to political, social, cultural, economic, and historical associations (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006). The promotion

of critical reflection in youth can be linked to three developmental processes: 1) increase the consciousness of historic and present social circumstances (Murray & Milner, 2015; Carlson et al., 2006); 2) bring to the forefront the effects that asymmetrical allocation of resources historically have on the environment leading to unhealthy current and future conditions (Akom, Cammarota, Ginwright, 2008; Watts & Flanagan, 2007); and 3) raise the intensity, severity, and ramifications of these social conditions where a critical evaluation and investigation can take place.

Critical reflection is a skillset that develops through a process of person-context interactions (Watts, Abdul-Adil, & Pratt, 2002). Thus, multiple perspectives may elucidate critical reflection as a process or as an outcome. Within this concept and due to the continual process that critical reflection entails, focusing on both the process and the outcome will help developmental researchers see how marginalized youth develop over time. Understanding that protective factors youth use to overcome toxic social conditions that may be discriminatory, racially-oriented, and prejudicial-based treatment may be unique to this population. As a result of the critical reflection process, youth will be able to perceive the underlying causes as to why certain groups of people remain economically ahead and why resources continue to remain unevenly distributed among communities. The likely next step in investigating critical reflection and its benefits in marginalized youth is to consider what contexts and aspects of those contexts are linked to critical reflection development.

Watts, Williams, & Jagers (2003) posited that critical reflection levels are manifested as individuals think, process, and develop to different consciousness levels.

This manifestation is related to social person-context interactions such that, lower levels of consciousness may be expressed through a denial of one's place in society (e.g., as inferior or superior in some cases) or the process of blaming individuals for the position that they are in (Carlson et al., 2006; Jemal, 2017). Carlson et al. (2006) recognized that lower levels of consciousness could be thought of as non-critical levels or the non-realization that consciousness constitutes a process to reach a higher conscious thought level, that is, an understanding of how a system maintains asymmetric resource allocation and the effects that the inequity brings. Similarly, critical reflection brings about the ability to visualize an invisible layer in society that is directed at sustaining injustices that are essentially group-based and tend to obscure the root causes of these injustices.

Being able to analyze the social and political systems of society is beneficial because it creates a sense of competence and confidence in youths' ability to navigate and challenge oppressive structures that may impede development within marginalized populations. Interactions that stimulate reflective thought may be associated with the context that youth frequently attend. The contexts that youth frequently attend may provide youth with the capacity to develop such an abstract view of society (Sánchez Carmen et al., 2015). As a result of critical reflective thought, youth are capable of being socially conscious where they participate in civic and extracurricular activities that support behaviors of which foster social and political habits (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). Developing critical reflection is a necessary tool that gives marginalized youth access to a different worldview where they are capable of social change within their communities (Ginwright & James, 2002).

In a study conducted by Diemer and Rapa (2016), among 761 poor and working class African-Americans and Latinx youth, the research team investigated ways to engage youth in being politically and socially aware of resource allocation in their communities. Diemer and Rapa, (2016) then posited how this awareness would predict action in their communities. Results showed that when African-American and Latinx youth learned of unequal resource allocation among communities, they were more apt to partake in multiple forms of political action (e.g., traditional action—voting, or activism movement—protest) and saw this as the most positive way to impact social change and receive political interaction. Findings support that development of critical reflection – youth perception of inequities – can be indicated by political efficacy and social awareness. Findings also underscores how vital critical reflection is in initiating action for social change but participation in thought provoking activities may be necessary to engender reflection as a skillset.

Critical reflection is a skill of relevance when preparing the upcoming generation in civic participation (El-Amin et al., 2017). Understanding the experiences that influence critical reflection development would likely be the next phase of inquiry. Ginwright and James (2002) posits that learning and utilizing social justice-oriented principles may elicit the development of critical reflection. They proposed that a social justice-oriented framework would be influential in developing youth’s awareness as principles explicitly target the social conditions that affect youth in marginalized communities and then organize to find ways to resolve the negative conditions.

The social justice-oriented framework provide youth with navigational skills enabling them to make healthy decisions for themselves and for the community for which they live. This framework is one that will benefit marginalized youth, as they tend to carry additional psychological layers that necessitate adopting unique navigational skills that will help them overcome adverse situations. This social justice-oriented framework has the potential to heal the additional psychological layers that oppressed communities experience; it has the potential to bring about liberation from being treated as a subjugated group of people (Ginwright & James, 2002). Critical reflection can be used as an antidote to overcome the impacts of historical negative treatment allowing youth to move forward in becoming social change agents.

Out-of-School Time Programs

There may be particular settings that influence critical reflection. OST programming may serve as appropriate contexts to support youth in the exploration of their communities and identities (Caldwell & Witt, 2011). As youth participate in activities that allow them to explore their physical surroundings and interact with caring adults such as at an OST program, youth's development are impacted (Lerner & Kauffman, 1985). OST programs typically are structured yet feel unstructured by the way activities are facilitated (Duerden & Witt, 2010). This unstructured environment is a conducive and an ideal place for youth to learn in a fun way to use critical reflection in their community. Larson (2000) asserts that activities that youth participate in should include some level of fun that intrigues the youth interest while also providing useful material that will aid in youth development.

Thus, it is logical to consider OST programming as a context to facilitate critical reflection skills.

Larson (2000) theorized that civic learning activities promote a critical lens on community reflection and contribution and have been implemented in both educational and non-educational settings. From a youth programming perspective, there should be spaces that serve youth with quality and relevant activities that develop critical skills (e.g., critical reflection, civic engagement, social skills and connection, and identity development), which promote positive life outcomes (Caldwell & Witt, 2011). However, practitioners and educators that work with youth tend to overlook or avoid conversations that uncover the root causes as to how the impacts of negative social conditions effect communities and how critical reflection skills and practices promote effective change and are linked to positive outcomes in youth (Murray, 2018).

These conversations are challenging to have but must take place. Taylor, et al. (2003) suggest that establishing proper fit of programs are imperative to their success. Due to the complexities and complicated nature of discussing historical discrimination upon certain groups of people, it may be that youth will process complicated social issues regarding critical skill development when they are presented in a fun and helpful way that matters to the youth. With this said, it is possible that OST programs can present critical reflection skills in a fun yet structured format where youth can learn and apply material with peers.

Focusing on contexts that bolster civic learning activities and engagement among marginalized youth is especially pertinent to youth servicing programs (Murray, 2018)

and are by-products of critical reflection development. A key component to building critical reflection in marginalized youth is identifying OST contexts and activities where youth can utilize social skills and learn political literacy tools. Although there is not an official blueprint to the specific types of activities offered in OST programming, exposure to relevant opportunities would optimize youth understanding of social, economic, and political needs of the community (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

The quality of youth OST programs should be grounded in practices that promote environments that are designed to serve the surrounding community and programs should be strength-based (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Marginalized youth that attend programs with a combination of goal directed, culturally relevant, and positive developmental features may stand a better chance at thriving in adverse situations where social conditions are not ideal but are realistic (Murray & Milner, 2015). The support and benefit of organizing youth critical reflection of their social environments can aid in shaping and enhancing life outcomes that can be situated in the implementation of program activities in OST context.

Critical reflection is a serious lens at viewing one's community, therefore activities that support this development should be effective in helping youth understand the socio-historical-political constructs that impede advancement in certain groups of people. Morgan, Sibthorp, & Wells (2014) asserted that one way to examine the experiences of a youth program/activity is to use qualities such as fun and helpful. Authors concluded that when activities that are fun are present in programming, youth tend to enjoy the activities, which can lead to voluntarily involvement for youths' own

purpose and fulfillment. In that, youth will likely be engaged, motivated to learn more about the subject, and see the program/activity as something valuable and helpful to their future success (Morgan et al., 2014). Furthermore, Bartko, (2005) suggested that OST programs are settings that may be utilized to promote youth activities that are fun and helpful and specific to justice-oriented activities; however, there's a lack of research supporting OST contexts as a space to implement critical reflection in marginalized youth.

Critical reflection can be associated with educational settings and OST settings, but limitations do exist. Educational curricula and settings may have limitations where curricula may not be structured in a way that fosters a critical lens for marginalized youth to look at social issues that challenge particular youth (Murray & Milner, 2015). OST programs may be a conduit to promote ways that develop youths' capacity to learn how to analyze their communities critically through reflection and navigational skill development. Due to the organic structure and small group setting that OST programs offer and the cultural barriers that may be presented in educational institutions (Jemal, 2017; Murray & Milner, 2015). OST activities may be an option to facilitate critical reflection development. Because of the nuances that are uncovered due to the root causes of discrimination, racial and prejudicial treatment among certain groups of people, explicit talks may be better situated in a space where youth feel safe and where youth developed a connection with a caring adult (i.e., adults of the same gender or ethnic make-up) (Murray & Milner, 2015). Thus, the opportunity to develop socially conscious

youth may be situated in OST programs (Ginwright & James, 2002; Malin, Ballard, & Damon, 2015).

Murray and Milner (2015) assert that OST programming has adaptable curricula that would allow for discursive based interactions, which have relevance to issues young marginalized people face. OST practices have the flexibility to create spaces where participants have the opportunity to explore and access information from other resources where they are able to increase their content and knowledge about historical events. Historical events include learning about the truths of their society by way of specific OST activities (i.e., peer discussion about past and current social issues and the future will look as a result) and access to free range technological equipment (i.e., computer labs of which they may not have access to within their homes). (Simpkins, Riggs, Ngo, Vest Ettekal, & Okamoto (2017) suggest that incorporating thoughtfully structured activities where youth participate in discussions around important social issues help youth to think through situations and scenarios and the impact these conditions can have on their well-being. Thus, OST programming would allow youth a culturally relevant and safe space to discuss their perspectives and develop ways to address positively the negative impact that social conditions can carry. However, the likelihood of OST programs promoting competencies that lead to positive outlooks on life—strategic thinking, critical consciousness, and contribution—in young people depends on the quality of these program experiences (Murray & Milner, 2015).

Murray and Milner (2015) describe the quality of program experiences as a favorable and productive context where one can discuss the critical matters that youth

face. Qualities such as having flexible curricula include allowing for open discourse, which revolves around uncovering oppressive institutional structures that influence how youth should navigate social situations and circumstances within marginalized communities. Secondly, OST programming generally creates relationships among the participants and youth workers where cross-cultural barriers are reduced. The majority of OST programs consist of those who identify as low-income and may live in communities that are under resourced and under privileged making them marginalized communities; this criteria makes it an opportune place to provide discussion around social issues that subjugate certain people and populations (Riggs & Greenberg, 2004). Lastly, in OST settings participants potentially have the freedom to converse with their peers about social issues without the concern of using class and instructional time to discuss social aspects of society. This research study is designed to lessen the gap and limitations that exist in OST context, regarding programs and activities that are social justice-oriented.

Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) and OST Programs

Discussing the impacts of toxic social conditions may be normal to youth who attend OST programs (Ginwright, 2010); however, discussing with youth the root causes of these issues may rarely happen. Ginwright and James (2002) developed the SJYD framework where principles engender healing and empowerment from historical situations that took place and hinder positive outlooks on life for marginalized populations. Ginwright and James (2002) research fosters critical reflection among youth in an effort to bring about youth who know how to organize and mobilize social and political change. The SJYD framework aims to resolve the belief that marginalized youth

are perceived to have low levels of agency and an inability to effect change in their context by using principles to bring about the social needs of the community. Through their research, Ginwright and James (2002) recognized a developmental gap in previous youth models and constructed a framework that aims to address the cultural, political, and economic inequalities found in minority communities throughout urban areas. The SJYD framework looks at the social ecological aspects of an environment, whereby the unit of analysis is placed on the environment primary to the individual (Ginwright & James, 2002). Placing the environment as the unit of analysis suggest that the environment plays an unequivocal role in promoting youth development along with the importance of creating productive and positive environments that youth are subjugated to experience.

The SJYD framework principles consist of five concepts: analyzing power in social relationships, making identity central, promoting systemic social change, encouraging collective action, and embracing youth culture. The principles are suggested to organize and mobilize youth in their community by reflecting on and analyzing the different forces that shapes their life.

Analyzing power in social relationships. This principle refers to imparting education that analyzes political power and the power that is present in one's own life. Power is referred to as accessing knowledge via epistemological curiosity and using critical thinking skills.

Making identity central. This principle proposes that youth invest time in themselves to understand how they relate to the world. This investment takes on an

abstract way of thinking and incorporates ecological and social analysis that youth have to be ready to encounter.

Promoting systemic social change. This third principle reflects the belief in fostering systemic social change, which requires transformational practices or activities that work toward illuminating the root causes of society's problems. Social change promotes the intentionality of initiating aspects of social analysis and critical reflection in one's social environment (Christens et al., 2016).

Encourages collective action. This fourth principle builds empowerment. Christens et al. (2016) posit that the element of collective action brings about empowerment within oneself and among the group. However, psychological empowerment maybe the springboard to developing dimensions of critical consciousness.

Embracing youth culture. The last principle consist of inviting practices and traditions into youth serving curricula of which youth are accustomed. This principle is designed to bring about engagement of dialogue around social conditions and conflicts between youth and adult ideologies that could potentially hinder mentoring relationships. In that, the intended goal of the SJYD framework is to focus on identity development—the power of knowing oneself—to then use this energy to mobilize today's youth and support their views in addressing issues in their own communities, thus promoting critical consciousness development (Ginwright & James, 2002; Watts et al., 2002; Murray & Milner, 2015). The practices and outcomes of the SJYD framework include principles that contribute to organizing and mobilizing youth. Researchers assert that youth who participate in SJYD programs will gain critical consciousness skills, sociopolitical and

analysis skills, learn how to problem-solve and make healthy decisions, and be open to forgiveness of oneself and others (Ginwright & James, 2002).

The SJYD framework address outcomes that are essential for youth participants to develop whereas they can craft their own practices that would allow for them to experience analyzing and challenging problems with the guidance of the SJYD principles. Up to this point, SJYD has been implemented in programs that are social-justice oriented. It is unclear whether SJYD principles and practices have an impact in programs, which are not justice-based. A better understanding of its usefulness in other types of youth programs is necessary to the field of youth development because if SJYD practices can be cultivated within other programs without changing a program's core components, more marginalized youth can successfully navigate and challenge existing social and structural inequities. OST contexts that incorporate SJYD practices give marginalized youth an opportunity to be able to participate in programs that serve as an avenue to create change (Nygreen, Kwon, & Sánchez, 2006), collaborate with like-minded individuals, and contribute to community development.

Purpose and rationale of study. The purpose of this mixed-method study was threefold. First, I aimed to explore whether SJYD-relevant program practices were present in an OST college-preparatory program where participants were high-achieving youth. Next, if SJYD activities were present, I wanted to examine youth perceptions of these activities. Finally, I aimed to explore whether the presence and perceived quality of these SJYD practices were linked to critical reflection in youth.

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How frequently do youth in this college preparation program report participating in SJYD activities?
 - 1a. How does participation in these SJYD activities predict CR?
2. How useful and fun are these activities in OST programming?
 - 2a. Do these qualities predict critical reflection?
3. What are the processes that link SJYD- oriented activities to critical reflection of marginalized youth?

To address these questions, data were collected from youth attending OST college preparatory programs at six sites across the U.S. Data were collected via youth surveys and youth focus groups. Additional details of the design are described in the following section.

Method

Program Description

The data collected for this research were obtained as part of a larger study on the Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH) Academy programs. BHGH Academy programs are holistic OST college preparation programs for “risk immersed” youth who show academic promise. The programs focus is to deliver long term, comprehensive academic and emotional support services for youth. BHGH Academy programs are non-residential programs, and programming takes place during after school hours. BHGH programs are located in six Academy program sites: Phoenix, Denver (Aurora), Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco, and St. Louis. The aim of the larger study was to explore the practices of the six academy programs and their links to positive youth developmental outcomes is ordered to determine standards for BHGH Academy programming. Only those elements of the larger study pertinent to this study are described below.

Participants and Procedure

Over a time series data collection, a total of 206 BHGH scholars were a part of the larger evaluative time series study. BHGH youth in the present study (N=158) identified as African-American (42.1%), Latinx (39.0%), Asian (7.6%), Multi-ethnic (6.9%), White (1.9%), Other race (2.5%). Survey participants were 61.4% female and between the ages of 11 to 18 years of age, 66.2% representing those between the ages of 14-18. The focus group participants were selected via convenience sampling at one Academy site, Cleveland, OH. Data were collected from youth (N=24), (65.2% female) who were also predominantly Black (94.5%) or Latinx (3.1%). Four groups of six students in grades 10th and 11th from one Academy site participated in focus groups that lasted for 45 minutes to one hour. BHGH scholars are considered high-achieving youth because they have indicated maintaining A's, A's and B's and B's on their grade report and are on track for college attendance.

Surveys were administered via Qualtrics by BHGH staff and the research team. At sites where there was no access to internet service, paper surveys were administered and verified for completion by the research team. One researcher conducted all four focus groups with participants. Focus groups were divided equally into four groups of six participants. Researcher followed the focus group question protocol and each focus group lasted no longer than forty-five minutes long. Focus groups were recorded, transcribed and checked to ensure that each comment was accounted for by the participants.

Quantitative Measures

SJYD program practices. In order to measure participation in SJYD activities youth were asked if they had participated in any of the 13 program activities exhibiting the five SJYD principles—*analyzing social relationships, promoting systematic change, making identity central, encouraging collective action, and embracing youth culture.*

There were 13 survey questions. According to the involvement of activities that each principle represented, the research team associated each of the survey questions to the corresponding SJYD principle creating five identifiable variables (please see Appendix C). For instance, making identity central is associated with two activity questions; analyzing power within relationships is associated with three activity questions; promoting systematic change is associated with two activities; collective action is associated with four activities; embracing youth culture is associated with two activities. Therefore, a participant can participate in no activities or all activities involving the associated principle. Out of 13 activities, the overall number of activities each youth participated in were created in order to evaluate if participation in SJYD activities predicted critical reflection levels. Please see Appendix A for further explanations of the associated survey questions.

Those who participated in the activities were then asked how fun or helpful was the activity. Perceived helpfulness of the activity was based on a 5-point scale ranging from *1 = Not helpful* to *5 = Very helpful*. Scores across the activities were averaged to create a composite Helpful score. Cronbach's alphas for Helpful was $\alpha=.91$. Perceived enjoyment/fun of the activity was based on a 5-point scale ranging from *1 = Boring* to *5 = Very fun*.

Scores across the activities were averaged to create a composite fun score. Cronbach's alpha for Fun was $\alpha=.93$.

Critical reflection. In order to measure Critical reflection, youth were asked to respond to eight items that asked about perceived inequalities from the Critical Consciousness scale (Diemer et al., 2017). Some example items are “Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education;” “Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs;” and “Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead.” Response range were based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. The composite scores were based on the average score across the eight items, with higher scores indicating higher consciousness of constraints on opportunities. (Diemer et al., 2017). Cronbach’s alpha of .78.

Qualitative Measures

The focus group questions were created based on face validity and strategic guidance based on the SJYD framework, principles, practices and intended outcomes for youth who participated in a justice-oriented program. The researcher developed intentional questions to uncover the process that youth experience as a result of participating in justice-oriented activities. Focus group questions were divided into three sections: Program-related, critical consciousness, and contribution. Program-related questions consisted of program-based inquiries such as, “Is BHGH a program where you feel safe asking questions about social issues (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia) that exist in the world?;” “What kind of things do BHGH staff do that make you feel safe about talking about these issues?;” “Does the discussion usually help to make you feel

empowered to make a difference in the community?”. Critical consciousness questions consist of reflective-based inquiries. Researcher used youth friendly language such as the term “Woke” instead of Critical Consciousness. According to Amanda Hess of *The New York Times* (2016), “Woke” is a popular culture term that refers to the awareness of the real issues and historical battle against unfair treatment of marginalized groups. Being “Woke” reflects that youth are politically conscious in their own way. Thus, critical consciousness questions consist of Woke-oriented inquires such as, “What does the term “woke” mean to you?”; “How do you think people become woke?”; “Does BHGH do anything to help you become woke?”. Contribution questions consist of community-action oriented inquires such as, “Does BHGH have conversations with the scholars that makes you want to learn more about what you can do to help your community?”; “What type of activities would you like to do to help support or give back to your community?”; and Why do you think those activities would help? (For full description of focus group guide, please see Appendix B).

Dealing with Validity

Researcher as an instrument. Data were collected through a mixed-method design to seek deeper understandings of how the processes of critical consciousness development and SJYD framework. With this decision, the researcher must realize that there may not be a direct source to access the true reality of how these constructs exist. Thus, the proposed study is post-positivist where the researcher recognizes that theories, backgrounds, knowledge, and values of the researcher can influence what is observed. This influence is one that can lead to bias at various points in the design. In order to

account for this potential bias, a mixed-method approach allowed me to triangulate qualitative and quantitative results to ensure greater validity of interpretations.

Reactivity and reflexivity. My approach to conducting this research is underscored in the post-positivist paradigm, where I used a systematic method to uncover and decode the nuances presented in the data. The questions I asked the participants were from an outsider perspective, conducted in a semi-structured format and intentional in gaining information about BHGH program activities relating to critical reflection and justice-oriented instruction (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). Lietz and Zayas (2010) suggested that a researcher's procedures could influence the credibility of the outcome of the study. Thus, the way in which I displayed affirming or non-affirming communication could have impacted the study's results. The participants could have behaved in a way that may or may not be a true representation or I could have unintentionally misinterpreted the data (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). However, as a Black woman in a researcher role, my position could have positively influenced the responses of my participants'. Being aware of how my presence could have influenced the participants responses placed me at a heightened sense of capability where participants could possibly be more open to having organic conversations. This type of open interaction could have provided the researcher with in-depth experiences that youth may or may not share with other research team members. This type of interaction could also impact the way in which I code the data, thus affecting the validity of results with the potential to misrepresent the data. I remained mindful of the potential socio-political bias and preconceived ideas that I brought into this research study (Horsburgh, 2003; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). I was cognizant that not all

biases would be eliminated; however, by understanding that there are personal biases, values, and preconceived opinions, provided a way to productively use reflexivity that would benefit the study. A reflexive activity that helped me to remain cognizant of my biases involved dialoging with the research team about the implementation and fidelity of the justice-oriented activities (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). Creswell and Miller, (2000) suggested the use of data triangulation where observation and multiple qualitative checkpoints are incorporated in the data analysis process. The qualitative checkpoints consisted of having members from the research team analyze the data to ensure all important ideas were included. I standardized the results by using a guided questionnaire (located in the Appendix B) for each focus group and with the help of the research team I developed consistent themes from the focus groups.

Data Analysis

This paper used a mixed-method approach consisting of both quantitative survey responses and focus groups (full survey and focus group questions can be located in the appendices A and B).

Surveys

First, descriptive statistics were analyzed to determine 1) the frequency of youth who reported engagement in SJYD activities, 2) the average level of how helpful the activities were, and 3) the average level of how fun the activities were. A Pearson's correlation was conducted to test and identify what relation existed among critical reflection, overall SJYD activity participation, and the quality of SJYD-oriented activities (helpful and fun). An ANOVA was conducted to test whether youth differed on mean

critical reflection levels based on the number of activities reflective of each SJYD principle in which youth participated (i.e., the five types of activities).

Focus Groups

With the permission from each participant (See assent in Appendix A), all focus groups with youth from the selected BHGH Academy were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The analysis of the focus groups was consistent with qualitative research methods that seek to deductively populate names that coded in regards to evidence from the focus groups participants responses (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) additionally code names were drawn from extant research literature on critical reflection and practices (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). In relation to the proposed research questions, principles of the SJYD framework: analyzing power in relationships, making identity central, promoting social change, encouraging collective action and embracing youth culture, were deductively used to set the scope for what the focus groups will uncover. Code names “are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 71). There were two cycles of coding that first, established “data chunks” that the researcher identified initially to summarize sections of data; the first cycle was inductive and the second cycle displayed a deductive approach.

In order to code focus group data, the researcher aligned each focus group response according to each focus group question whereby to elucidate the initial cycle’s coding in a clear format in a Excel spreadsheet. This procedure helped to inform the second cycle of coding where the initial focus group responses were juxtaposed, entering

into the second cycle of patterned coding. The second cycle of coding was similar to searching for “prompt or triggers for deeper reflection” and “pattern coding” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 73), which included mapping out the first round of coding and placing similar codes together to see where patterns emerged. Each focus group was coded independently and then simultaneously monitored with other subsequent focus group responses. After coding each focus group session, data triangulation was conducted to decipher any coding discrepancies. Discrepancies were either recoded or re-themed for accuracy. Checking for themes and codes aided in reliability of coding material that will elicit trustworthy findings (Charmaz, 2006).

The third cycle of coding grouped the data into smaller explainable chunks of data. This cycle was where the researcher analyzed the data in a more focused way, searching for schemes that introduced intersections of data generating a pattern, thus mapping and tying data together. Pattern codes are interrelated summaries that provide structure for data where categories, causes/explanations, processes, relationships among people, and theoretical constructs can be teased out and recognized (Miles et al., 2014). Conceptual pattern codes are designed in clusters and allow for the researcher to reflect on what the clusters share in common as they relate to theory alignment.

Findings of pattern coding are demonstrated in a narrative description consisting of the three cycles of data. Here, the researcher outlined the results from the focus group in a narrative form, which include direct quotes from the participants to support components discussed in the group sessions. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data occurred in two forms, connecting the survey results to understand the

processes of implementing SJYD activities in a youth program and merging the data to identify how youth were using these activities to develop their critical reflection skills (Palinkas et al., 2010). For example, the focus group question: “Is BHGH a program where you feel safe asking questions about social issues (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia) that exist in the world?;” was complementary to the survey question, while at BHGH “were there any activities that helped you talk about the social and political issues going on in your community?”

Moreover, survey data were used to develop a surface level understanding of what types of activities youth participate in, whereas the focus group data provided elaboration of activities and if these activities mattered in youth critical reflection development. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) asserted that qualitative methods allow researchers to explore a phenomenon while quantitative methods are used to confirm the validity of the models. In this research study, surveys were used to test the hypotheses linking justice-oriented activities in an academic afterschool program to critical reflection and then use qualitative explorations to highlight youths’ experienced phenomenon.

Results

Research Question 1: How frequently do marginalized youth reported participating in SJYD activities?

Research Question 2: How useful and fun were these activities in OST programming?

My first inquiry was to determine how often youth reported to have participated in SJYD-oriented activities while in the program and the reported quality of those activities. Table 2.1 includes the frequencies of participation along with the mean levels

of the youth-reported quality of activities—how fun and how helpful these activities were.

Table 2.1

Participation Rates in SJYD-Oriented Activities and Mean Scores for Quality of Activities (Fun and Helpful) (N = 138)

SJYD Principle	While at BHGH any activities that helped you...	Participated In	FUN: M (SD)	HELPFUL: M (SD)
Making Identity Central	Reflect on What is Most Important in Your Life	143 (91.1%)	3.86 (.850)	3.61 (.849)
Making Identity Central	Feel Proud of Who You Are	121 (77.6%)	3.69 (1.04)	3.71 (1.00)
Analyzing Power	Learn How to Navigate Through Situations When Discrimination or Racism Happens	64 (43%)	3.40 (1.39)	3.16 (1.23)
Analyzing Power	Understand How to Cope with Unfair Opportunities Within Society	77 (50.7%)	3.54 (1.15)	3.13 (1.25)
Analyzing Power	Talk about the Social and Political Issues Going on in	103 (66.5%)	3.47 (1.23)	3.29 (1.10)

	Your Community			
Promoting Change	Develop Skills Useful for Resolving Social Issues Within Your Community	112 (71.8%)	3.60 (1.10)	3.44 (1.03)
Promoting Change	Helped You Feel Comfortable Speaking About Social and Political Issues Within Your Community	86 (55.8%)	3.32 (1.17)	3.64 (1.17)
Collective Action	Gain Experience for Making Positive Changes in Your Community	133 (85.8%)	3.91 (1.06)	3.64 (1.08)
Collective Action	Understand the Benefits of Contributing to Your Community	125 (81.7%)	3.92 (1.01)	3.54 (1.09)
Collective Action	Helped You Work with Others to Address Social Issues Within Your Community	84 (54.5%)	3.25 (1.11)	3.53 (1.18)
Collective Action	Connect with Caring Adults Outside of Boys Hope Girls Hope	125 (81.2%)	3.73 (1.21)	3.93 (1.17)

Embracing Youth Culture	Express Who You Are Culturally	77 (49%)	3.29 (1.36)	3.46 (1.24)
Embracing Youth Culture	Voice Your Concerns, Feelings, and Thoughts About Issues You are Facing	107 (70.4%)	3.80 (1.16)	3.45 (1.15)

Table 2.1 illustrates participation rates and indicates mean scores relating to the quality of the program’s activities gauged by the helpful and fun scales. Results indicated that the majority of youth (87.2%) reported participating in each SJYD-oriented activity. The top three activities youth reported to be engaged in are as follows: reflected on what was most important to them, gaining experience for making positive change in the community, and understanding the benefits of contributing to the community. The top three activities that youth reported to be the most fun were understand the benefits of contributing to your community (81.7%), gain experience for making positive changes in your community (85.8%), and reflect on what is most important in your life (91.9%). The top three most helpful activities youth reported were connecting with caring adults outside of the BHGH community (81.2%), activities that help youth feel proud of who they are (77.6%) and feel comfortable speaking about social and political issues within the community (55.8%). Youth reported to engage in these activities the least: work with others to address social issues within the community, express who they are culturally, and feel comfortable speaking about social and political issues within the community. The activities youth perceived as least helpful by the participants were understanding how to

cope with unfair opportunities within society (50.7%), learn how to navigate through situations when discrimination or racism happens (43%), and talk about the social and political issues going on in the community (66.5%). The activities youth perceived as least fun were reported to be working with others to address social issues within the community, express who youth are culturally, and feeling comfortable speaking about social and political issues within the community. Table 2.2 provides a summary of the top three most and least fun activities and the top three most and least helpful activities. Although, most youth (87.2%) reported participating in at least nine out of 13 justice-oriented activities while at BHGH, they shared mixed emotions on whether the activities mattered gauged by how enjoyable or impactful each activity was. Additionally, there were two exceptions of youth reporting participation of activities; less than 50% of youth reported participating in activities that helped them to navigate through situations when discrimination or racism happens and activities that aid youth in expressing who they are culturally.

Table 2.2. shows the top three justice-oriented activities youth reported to be most and least fun and helpful.

Table 2.2

Top Three Justice-Oriented Activities Youth Self-Reported as Fun and Helpful

Most Fun	Least Fun	Most Helpful	Least Helpful
Understanding the benefits of contribution to the community (81.7%)	Working with others to address social issues within the community (Q-Deal) (54.5%)	Connecting with caring adults outside of BHGH (81.2%)	Understanding how to cope with unfair opportunities within society (50.7%)
Gaining experience for making positive changes in the community (85.8%)	Expressing who you are culturally (49%)	Feeling proud of who they are (77.6%)	Learning how to navigate through situations when discrimination or racism happens (43%)
Reflecting on what is most important in your life (91.9%)	Feeling comfortable speaking about social and political issues within the community (55.8%)	Feeling comfortable speaking about social and political issues with the community (55.8%)	Talking about the social and political issues going on in the community (66.5%)

Please note: This table is a summary of the overall reported fun and helpful activities that youth participated in while at BHGH facilities. The attached percentage of how often youth reported to participate in the justice-oriented activity are also indicated.

Research Question 1a: Does participation in these SJYD activities predict CR?

Pearson’s correlation was conducted to determine the relations between critical reflection levels and overall participation in justice-oriented activities, and critical reflection levels and quality of activities (Table 2.3). Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with both variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There were no statistically significant correlations between critical reflection and overall participation ($r = -.13, p > .05$). Overall participation levels statistically explained 1.6% of the variability in critical reflection levels. The number of activities youth reported participating in did not predict their levels of critical reflection.

Table 2.3

Pearson’s Correlation Table

Variables	Critical reflection	Average fun	Average help
Average fun	-.07		
Average help	-.09	.85**	
Overall participation	-.13	.61**	.68**

Note. + $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

As total number of activities did not predict CR in our sample, I decided to examine if the type of activities participated in, based on the SJYD principles,

correlated with critical reflection levels. Table 2.4 displays results for an ANOVA testing critical reflection levels based on the number of specific SJYD-oriented activities in which youth participated. Table 2.4 provides the results for the number of activities and the mean critical reflection at each level of participation for the corresponding SJYD principle. The number of activities did not have a statistically significant effect on critical reflection levels for any of the five principles (all p 's > .05). Therefore, total number of activities was not related to critical reflection levels in youth, and participation in specific types of SJYD activities was not related to critical reflection in youth. The next examined whether youth-reported quality of the activities was related to critical reflection.

Table 2.4

Average Critical Reflection Comparisons Across Number of SJYD-Oriented Activities for Each SJYD Principle

SJYD Principle	No. of Activities	No. of Youth participating	Critical Reflection (M)	Critical Reflection (SD)	p Value
Identity	0	5	3.52	± 0.9	0.439
	1	35	3.11	± 1.13	
	2	107	2.94	± 1.17	
Power	0	26	3.15	± 1.07	0.345
	1	48	3.18	± 1.18	
	2	34	2.75	± 1.07	
	3	39	2.92	± 1.25	

Promote	0	32	3.29	±1.23	0.307
	1	45	2.93	±1.01	
	2	71	2.94	±1.21	
Collect	0	4	3.56	±1.83	0.207
	1	11	2.99	±0.91	
	2	26	3.00	±1.10	
	3	44	3.29	±1.25	
	4	63	2.79	±1.09	
Culture	0	31	3.18	±1.15	0.600
	1	59	3.02	±1.10	
	2	58	2.92	±1.23	

Note. + $p < .1$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Research Question 2a: Does the quality of the activities predict critical reflection?

Pearson's correlation was conducted to determine the relations between critical reflection levels and quality of activities (Table 2.3). Preliminary analyses showed the relationship to be linear with both variables normally distributed, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p > .05$), and there were no outliers. There were no statistically significant correlations between critical reflection and quality of activities (r 's ranged from $-.07$ to $-.09$, both p 's $> .05$). However, the qualities of the program—fun and helpful—were strongly correlated and statistically significant ($r = .61$, $p < .01$). Additionally, fun and help qualities were strongly correlated to the overall participation of activities ($r = .68$, $p < .01$). Meaning that when youth reported that activities were fun they were also

impactful to learning about the social issues of the community. The average level of fun statistically explained 0.4% of the variability in critical reflection levels. The average level of helpfulness statistically explained 0.8% of the variability in critical reflection levels.

Research Question 3: What are the processes that might link SJYD-oriented activities to critical reflection of marginalized youth?

Focus groups were used to understand the perceptions, reactions, experiences, and underlying processes and development of critical reflection via involvement in SJYD activities. Grounding the focus groups responses allowed the researcher to perform an analytical and critical lens to explain the experiences of the youth and pull the pieces together to reduce ambiguity of how social conditions came to be within marginalized communities and how youth may decide to resolve them (Charmaz, 2014). Here are themes that were identified and deductively compared with the SJYD framework in mind, also included are emergent themes that stood out and were identified as additional information.

Key issues youth face. The researcher established each focus group with the same question “What are some of the big issues kids and people in your community are facing?” Group’s responses reflected the undesirable conditions of the community (e.g. lack of role models, discrimination, racism, bullying). These common descriptions of the community explained negative conditions that youth face, as well as youth feelings toward implementing critical reflection via SJYD principles. There were similar responses across all groups on social conditions displayed within their local community: Social conditions in communities

Bullying, violence, poverty... misunderstanding of a lot of things... The pressures of growing up...Stereotyping. Discrimination.

Focus group 1

Bullying, gay rights, stereotypes...

Focus group 2

Lack of positive role models, [Youth] not valuing education, microaggressions, peer pressure, gang violence

Focus group 3

Stereotypes... It's like I feel when people at school, it's like different groups of people at school. The popular people and the people that focus on school, and then there's people that hang out with people that focus on school but they're not focused on school. It's just weird...

I believe police brutality because I'm actually doing an extensive research paper on that for a part of the International Baccalaureate Program I'm in...

There's a big drug problem in my community... School to prison pipeline.

Focus group 4

Although these (i.e., bullying, poverty, stereotypes, police brutality, drug issues in the community) may sound like typical adolescent developmental issues, experiencing stereotyping and discrimination could hamper a youth of color's ability and capacity for positive development. Youth also identified as an issue the lack role models in their community. In low-income African-American communities, there are fewer people continuing to higher education such as college (Carnoy, 1994). These particular youth (attending BHGH) are titled as high achieving in regards to academics and are looking for people that look like them in spaces that have historically hindered people of color from educational advancements.

That's just how society thinks...youth in this group are just convinced that society is programmed in a way that does not value them as a person.

Focus group 1

I feel like ever since that whole Trayvon Martin thing it's just like black people just been targeted [in] a certain way; If they wear hoodies and certain stuff; Like dark clothes...youth realize there is a certain aesthetic look that places a person in a certain social class much like profiling.

Focus group 1

School to prison pipeline.

Focus group 4

School to prison pipeline is a concern that was brought up in the focus group and one that is of national regard (Christle, Jolivetter, & Nelson, 2005). Skiba, Arrendondo, and Williams (2014) argue that one issue youth find themselves navigating is systemic institutional policies that covertly apply harsher behavioral consequences to certain groups of students for minor offenses such as habitual tardiness or things as simple as using a cell phone in class. Youth of this program recognize the impact this 'pipeline' has on their school system and how stereotype, this is considered having a conscious mindset.

When asked if BHGH was a safe place to discuss sensitive conditions such as social issues that youth may experience in their communities youth responded with mix emotions.

We talk about it [social conditions and the consequences] so much where it feels weird if we don't talk about it.

Focus group 1

Yeah, yeah; I would say I feel safe; I think because sometimes they even start to discuss different issues, and they feel safe enough to ask us even though they're majorly Caucasian and we're majorly African American, they still feel safe to ask us even though we're not the same race and they might not be that connected with us.

Focus group 2

BHGH staff attempt to aid youth of color in navigating through circumstantial situations that underlines the issue of race. As a participant stated, the staff may not be able to relate to the situation but they are really good at providing support by listening and offering any available resources or advice.

Analyzing power in social relationships. Power within social relationships refers to investigating the underlying origin of societal problems. It was clear that youth who encompass a sense of political education may have the astuteness to determine where social problems have originated. Likewise, those who understand this institutional structure may be able to identify where power has been misused by engaging in critical thinking skills. Questions such as, what does it mean to youth to be aware of sociopolitical issues and how are adults sharing power (i.e. voice) with youth, responses are addressed below.

Be aware; You can be woke but that's basically saying you're acknowledging issues with being aware. It's actually taking into consideration how it affects your life. So I like that term better.

I think everybody keeps riding the wave [social justice movements] and no one helps. That's another big issue. People just say what's out there, but they don't really have a voice of their own. They're always just going with what mass people are talking about.

Focus group 2

Aware; Seeing beyond the surface and really get to know the inward parts
Focus group 3

Youth demonstrate that they understand the reference of being aware of toxic social conditions but never spoke on the impact this awareness provides in regards to how they can be agents to change their environment.

Youth reflect on their power (i.e., their voice) being silenced, this is a demonstration of the power or voice that adults do not want to share. This power imbalance between youth and adults minimizes the capacity for youth to express their concerns. Youth explain their frustration passively as they convey the conversations they share with adults are questionable regarding how adults dismiss youth because of the lack of confidence or knowledge that an adult may think a youth may have about rectifying social conditions of the community.

I remember just being a young kid and trying to be an advocate for some things but they were like, "Oh, you're too young. You don't understand this. You have a whole life ahead of you. You have so much more to learn.", but these problems get worse in our country day after day and we're exposed to them and affected by them.

Focus group 4

But at the same time adults very rarely listen to us. I feel like the only adults that really do listen to us is here [BHG facilities]

Focus group 1

Youth addressed how power in society is misused to portray the behaviors and actions of a certain group of people, identified as a stereotype.

Well, not all black people, but it's a stereotype. Most people feel like they gonna be loud, angry so I, I mean sometimes I get loud and angry because people don't understand me, and I feel like I keep to myself, over and over and over again. I get irritated and sometime I just like you know what? Or sometimes I just shut down, or when you said like generation, my problem is the Martin Luther King, I don't feel like praying and being quiet about stuff. It's not always effective. Sometime you gotta go out. Sometimes, do be loud, but not ghetto. And you got to get your point heard. It depends on what the situation is.

Focus group 3

Ageism is commonly known as a prejudice among those of different ages and mostly seen in working environments. The labeling of this category is fitting because of the pre-judgement of youth and their abilities by adults. Youth

reported that their ideas, suggestions, and input are generally ignored and not regarded as valuable by trusted adults.

I think my dad's catch phrase for 14 years, "You just a kid. You young." So because of my age nothing I said really mattered and that's how a lot of us feel, I guess.

I feel like they just don't take you serious. When we try to talk to them about a big problem they don't take you serious or they be like, "It will go away in two weeks or one week." ; That our passion for that topic will die out.

Focus group 2

I remember just being a young kid and trying to be an advocate for some things but they were like, "Oh, you're too young. You don't understand this. You have a whole life ahead of you. You have so much more to learn.", but these problems get worse in our country day after day and we're exposed to them and affected by them.

Focus group 4

Below is an example of how youth see their power being diminished when building adult relationships. Here youth are willing to be creative and work towards a solution however, they express that adults don't take them serious when they present alternate ways to resolve negative social conditions.

I feel like they [adults] just don't take you [youth] serious. When we try to talk to them about a big problem they don't take you serious or they be like, "It will go away in two weeks or one week"; [hoping] That our passion for that topic will die out.

Focus group 1

It's not something that is meaningful to us. The Q deal for example. It wasn't anything meaningful [the Quicken Loans Arena, the Q, is a multi-purpose arena that brings in revenue for the community]...

Focus group 2

Although youth may express multiple issues that they deal with daily, youth also expressed the importance of being able to speak about how they perceive inequalities that exist in their communities.

I feel like if we weren't as open with each other it would be a lot of tension and there'd just be a lot of conflict sometimes because you keep stuff bottled in. It just does something to you. And you can maybe lash out at the wrong person. So I'm glad that we have people here that actually cares about us to ask us, "Hey, what's going on? How do you feel about this? Tell me your opinion about this." So, it's really nice.

You start to realize that everyone experiences it, too. Even like in America, even though it's white-dominated, people have stereotypes about white people, too, that are messed up. They have such high expectations for each other sometimes; Like my friend Daniel his average thing he's supposed to do is carry like a 4.0, get a job, and play a sport at the same time; that's they average, that's what they expected to do since they're white. I'm like, "Dang." I can't do that.

Maybe it's because society is telling you that you can't do it. So you think you can't.

Yeah, because I feel like I can say how I feel about certain topics and somebody can actually listen to me. It's not always like that in school.

Focus group 1

Being able to reflect critically on how they feel about social conditions help youth to first acknowledge and second to process the effects and impacts of these social issues that they may be susceptible to. SJYD framework intention is to create a clear understanding of the root causes of these conditions within the community that hinder racial/ethnic groups from thriving.

Making identity central. A youth's identity is an essential component to youth development. Often times, a youth's identity is directly correlated with the elements within the environment. Below are responses to how youth analyze the interplay or intersection of identify formation with the social inequality they face. Youth were vocal about understanding how sociopolitical forces influence society's perception of certain groups.

Most youth expressed that activities or discussions they participated in while at BHGH helped them identify who they did not want to be and helped them identify who they wanted to be academically. However, discussions and/or activities were not effective at helping them understand who they wanted to be socially or culturally, but gave them the freedom to be comfortable with who they were and wanted to be in the space that they were in. Youth stated that finding out who they wanted to be, either socially-politically-culturally, is important and a big issue they face in society.

I guess they help us be observant...Being aware of how you treat people, I guess. Stuff like that. How you treat yourself. So I would kind of say like no, they don't really [teach us about ourselves]. Unless you do a one on one conversation with a particular person and then maybe they give advice.

Focus group 2

Youth also mentioned that finding out who you are was subjective to expectations of adults. Expectations of adults feed into sociopolitical influences where parents place meritocracy and academic progress as primary to building a successful life.

My parents told me to be valedictorian, and I just want to be me. I don't care about that.

And then some people want you to be something else like what he was saying and then it shapes your views about things. If your parents are telling you to be valedictorian all of your life, I don't know if it's all of his life, but they're telling you that you have to do all your school work, put your academic life before your social life even if you might not want to do that. You want to be, not like a regular person but someone who has friends, who always talks to them and not worrying about school all the time. I mean, school is a lot, but it's not everything I don't think.

Focus group 2

Dismantling social norms of black identity are additional layers of identity that youth are aware of and challenged. Here they express the effort it takes to recreate the norm.

We're not really expected to do it [succeed that is], we're not supposed to, anyway...

In order for me to prove the white man wrong I have to show that I'm just as good and even better. I get talked about because people think that a "B" is okay and I'm like, "No, a "B" is not okay." I just have to keep improving myself. And that's just me...you know, showing them that I am worth it and I'm actually good.

Focus group 1

To sum it up, one participant stated and I believe she spoke for the group in saying “Now I embrace it [who I am] because I can't change it. This is how I am and if you can't accept me then, bye, meaning that she is comfortable with who she is becoming and anyone who disagrees with who she is becoming can be dismissed. It is likely that BHGH may provide activities they support youth identity development where youth learn to accept who they are in society.

Promoting systemic change. In order to promote change one must know “what” and “how” to change within a complex system and often times this is a challenging plight. Necessary to uncovering systems that sustain inequality are locating the root causes that maintain unequal policies in schools, businesses, and communities. Encouraging youth to engage in effective change is one way to strategize and organize activism. SJYD intention is to facilitate long-term institutional change.

They've [BHGH staff] helped me put action to my words. I was in middle school and I was just talking about how I would do things. And now that I'm in a more-diverse high school I feel like I can actually put that things to use, good use.

Focus group 1

The youth implies here that being in a more diverse high school will allow him the opportunity to be involved in social change, thus reflecting on previous experiences at his former school. This shows his awareness of the school systems.

The root causes that lead to promoting systematic change does not always bring about clarity in regards to the resolution of problems within a community. The quote below describe how challenging it is deciding what social conditions are relevant to change in their community. Promoting systematic change requires someone to know what change or resolutions they are willing to take part in. Youth were able to brainstorm a plethora of concerns that needed their attention; however, the facilitation of steps to resolve those issues were not implemented. Knowing what and how in transforming institutional systems are the crux of promoting systematic change within the community.

And so when we started learning about grant proposals, everyone had an idea of what they could fix but no one knew how they could fix it.

Youth feel that the utility of social media may help to engage others in the social justice cause. Because of the transparency that social media affords, youth are able to see and upload instantly, negative situations where others may visually assess and make a judgement for themselves. This aligns with promoting systematic change because often times it can be a challenge to uncover the complexities of systems. Youth express that using social media is a key.

If people have a following [on social media] then they can be influential, they can speak up for what they believe in; Then you tell people. Then people got to agree. Especially since a lot of people don't have their own mindset of their own anyway, so if you're making a way you're making a good way. A lot of people are already followers. They might as well follow the right thing. Right?

Focus group 4

Youth are receiving mixed messages as it relates to their abilities to act in a leadership role. Youth elude to using social media as a platform that will engage others in a movement, which will transform practices of inequality. Youth concur that social media can be one way to gather others attention to galvanize approaches that could fix social conditions.

Encouraging collective action. Acting collectively to enforce change within the realms of organizing and activism. This involves people coming together to facilitate sit-ins, rallies, or marches if that is the purpose of the movement. In this case youth were responsible for contributing to a grant writing project (the Q project) of which they did not feel to be helpful or impactful within their community. Although the Q project provided insight for youth to see how civic issues are engaged, they would have rather the project demonstrate the local needs closer to their community. They also speak about their feelings towards community collaboration and how the conditions of their community is an unfortunate one. SJYD intention is to create bonds of solidarity.

We wanted to write our own for our community issue [youth wanted to be a part of the solution but did not have the opportunity to voice their opinion]

When they related it to us, to our new school being built, I felt more-connected I hope that we do something different, that's what we like...
[As you can see here, when youth are involved they feel more united]

Focus group 1

Youth expressed why they think there is not more collective action and contribution among people in their communities. At times, people in the communities

discourage youth from growing and leaving the community. Then there are times when youth recognize that their surroundings help to shape them in who they are going to be, thus being conscious of community resources is key to thriving.

[I] feel like sometimes people don't give back because for them to get out of the community, [they] have to do something themselves [work together]. And they have so many people like doubting them and belittling them and telling them that they can't do it, that they can't make it out and never come back. Because I know some people that's trying to do that. I know people that be like, if I have an opportunity to not be here, I'm not coming back. It's a wrap. I know people that say that. To be honest, I would do that too. There's nothing here, for real. I've been here for 17 years, like there's really nothing here. And it's gotten worse.

Focus group 3

[I need to pay more] attention to my surroundings, because knowing my surroundings is key, because you never know like it what's happening for real. So you can't just be like focused on one thing, you have to be aware of everything else. So I feel like this program kind of did help a little bit.

Focus group 3

Embracing youth culture. This principle implies that youth organizations consider ideas and common practices shared by most young people such as having youth voice on certain community-based projects. Youth and adults tend to have a difference of opinions as to how they would identify resolutions to the social conditions that youth face. When youth apply their culture or style they are more likely to participate and feel safe when discussing conditions in society that mostly affect their well-being and likelihood to thrive as an adult. The SJYD framework intention is to create compassion among those that participate in programs that implement justice-oriented activities. The first quote refers to a

participant identifying that there is a certain skillset that is needed in order to engage in project proposals (e.g. social skills).

They wanted us to learn how to do it as teenagers because we can do it as teenagers, but I don't feel like a lot of us are up to doing stuff like that. Sure. People can be up to it, but sometimes people don't have enough social skills or stuff like that to be able to do grant proposals or anything of that sort.

Lastly personal culture matters, youth reported to be vocal about what motivates them to work towards handling social issues and recognized that everyone is different in the way they respond to problems within their communities.

My culture ... my kind of person, I solve problems with a lot of logic but not very much emotion because I don't like to cloud the idea; But someone who wants to bring a bigger picture out might solve their problems with a lot of emotion. So, the culture dependent on who you were raised by and the people that are around you can determine how you can solve any problem by anger, or frustration, or by logic or reasoning.

Focus group 1

Other participants identified that may be cultural barriers that hinder them from approaching staff members about negative community conditions of which they experience. Youth express that it is important to them to be able to have someone they can speak to, and that can relate and understand what it feels like to live a life where social conditions are stressed upon them. Youth agree with the comments below that negative issues in society *should still be discussed*, even though ethnic qualities may be different or even in the second comment from focus group 2, there may be issues that marginalized youth who identify as white experience but because of the predominance of youth of color, *his* issues may be overlooked.

No. To be honest I'm a bit like I must say "kind of", because I feel like some people don't really know. Because I feel like half, most of the BHGH community is majority kind of white and like they've been trying to like to implement more African-Americans but like, I don't know. Some people don't really know how to approach, you know, say certain things. It's awful at having a conversation like that. With BHGH staff members is not the way to go. I talk to people, people I know that I can relate to and I feel like I can't relate to staff members, only like certain staff members.

Focus group 3

Yeah. They do ask a lot about all this racial stuff and how we feel about certain things. But then there's also, I feel like they gear towards more, because the kids are more African American than they are Caucasian. But me being the only Caucasian in my class, sometimes it's different because they learn more about how there's African American segregation and not ... there's a lot that also happens with Caucasians but we don't really talk about that because it's more of an African American class

Focus group 2

Discussion

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to determine if high-achieving marginalized youth participating in justice-oriented activities reported significant levels of critical reflection over a period of a school year. Youth, who attend BHGH, gain understanding in SAT/ACT preparation, test taking strategies and methods on developing proper study habits because of their abilities and capacity to continue into higher education trajectories. This study aimed to address (a) if participation of justice-oriented activities in an OST program influenced the development of critical reflection, and (b) if the quality of justice-oriented programs correlated with critical reflection, along with determining if specific SJYD activities mattered. An integration of quantitative and qualitative data was used to address these queries. An overview of these findings (a) extend existing research and theory relating to OST programs and SJYD principles; (b)

provides implications for youth development programs; (c) indicates limitation of the study; and (d) suggests directions for future research.

As youth participate in overall academic-focused program, it is befitting for youth to experience a sense of confidence that they will be in better positions to attend college and make a better life for themselves. One question from the critical reflection scale by Diemer et. al (2017) suggest that ‘certain racial groups do not have the same chances to make it to higher education’ as others do. The majority of BHGH participants scored closer to somewhat disagree to disagree, underscoring that youth viewed higher education as accessible to all and that gaining entrance may be a fair and just process among all racial groups. This indicates that youth may be receiving messages that oppose the systems thinking mindset and perhaps learning to apply the concept of their personal role in the successes of their life. High-achieving marginalized youth attending this program are in positions that bolster and support their success for graduating high school and progressing to the next step of education (e.g., higher education, college entrance). The additional support from BHGH may have influenced youths’ responses to the CR survey and focus groups. This concept actually came up in the focus groups where youth reported that staff at BHGH ‘teach us [youth] who not to be’, this ideology is one that can help to scaffold youth as they are able to conceptualize life and career choices. If youth are being led to believe that the systems that decide someone’s fate is mostly individualized, then there is justification as to why BHGH youths’ CR scores reflect on the lower half of the

scale because they are able to separate themselves from group members of the racial group in question.

Youth are learning and processing multiple issues at once, thus the way in which youth process sensitive conversations that are influenced by the social and political conditions of the environment may be better captured via focus groups or interviews (Morgan, 1996). When asked about participating in activities that help youth navigate through situations when discrimination or racism happens, youth reported lower participation levels. Youth expressed in the focus groups that staff of BHGH were sufficient at listening to their concerns, however, did not offer resolve as to the very ways that a person could navigate through toxic social conditions. The focus groups took place at one site, where the staff members were of different race / ethnicity and of one gender, mostly white women. It is very likely that the staff's race and gender make-up might not relate to the discriminatory treatment experienced by marginalized youth. Reports of partaking in this type of discussion less frequently than in other social-justice oriented activities (e.g., reflecting on what is most important to youth and gaining experience for making positive change in the community) may be attributed to staff's ability to better relate with their personal experiences in civic participation (Gutiérrez, Larson, Raffaelli, Fernandez, & Guzman, 2017).

Placing emphasis on program development and effective social justice oriented activities for marginalized youth take time to understand, thus the question arise, are traditional OST programs a reasonable place to implement

justice-oriented activities followed by discussion of perceived inequities within the community? According to the data gleaned from the participants, focus groups provided a space for youth to express how BHGH staff challenged and empowered the youth of the program. One of the focus group participant's implied that being in a more diverse high school allowed him the opportunity to be involved in social change. This involvement allowed him to see value in the lessons learned through his participation in justice-oriented activities while at BHGH programming. He was able to reflect on previous experiences at his former school and speak up about school improvements that could be made at his new school. This participant experience reflects the relevance of BHGH in bringing about the benefits of critically reflecting on the environment where youth can see different social systems at work. Elaborating on why there is a difference of systems would be the logical next step in a program that is central to providing opportunities to marginalized youth and helping them to think through why these systems are set up in such a way.

Best practices of youth development suggest that programs should aim to meet youth at their level, which includes devising creative programming strategies that offer a variety of activities that may or may not be crafted to organize or mobilize youth (Lauer et al., 2006). For this program, BHGH are serving high-achieving youth who are among the lower economic and social class system. Meeting youth at their level may require practitioners and researchers to embrace the culture that is more relevant to youth in programs similar to BHGH

programs (Murray & Milner, 2015). Thus, utilizing longitudinal developmental approaches may be best suited for youth of this program in order to capture the complex nuances of critical reflection and the utility of the SJYD framework. Longitudinal developmental approaches could mean that survey and focus group questions are modified to be parallel with what youth are accustomed. Taking time to observe the youth, their space, and how they interact before constructing questions may be helpful and effective.

Currently, integrating SJYD principles into youth program are solely based on social-justice oriented programs; therefore, it is important to determine whether activities reflective of SJYD principles are occurring in other youth programs for marginalized youth. At least half of the time most participant youth reported to have participated in activities that corresponded to SJYD principles. Youth also reported that these activities were enjoyable and useful in their journey to contributing citizens of their communities. One way to intrigue a youth's interest in developing social and political skills is by aligning their intrinsic motivations to relevant and specific goals of the community (Watts & Flanagan, 2007; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). The way practitioners can do this is by making activities appealing and embrace the culture that youth are accustomed (Ginwright & James, 2002). Nurturing youth initiative helps them to shape the person they are ascribing to be (Larson, 2000). Engendering this initiative early in life will create habits of participation that will enable youth to thrive in adulthood. Activities that deserve attention are navigating through situations when discrimination or racism happens and activities that aid youth in expressing who they are culturally because these

activities scored the lowest quality out of the 13 activities youth participated and have the potential to engender healing and spiritual development, which is an intentional focus of SJYD. The focus groups revealed that youth were faced with difficult situations that are characteristic of adolescence such as bullying, identity development, social norms, and discrimination. However, when digging deeper into social conditions and the impacts, youth expressed that they had to navigate through additional layers to dismantle the social norms that both parents and other caring adults placed upon them. Structuring OST programs and activities to support marginalized youth who experience challenging types of situations may help youth to appropriately handle conversations and better represent themselves as the proud youth that they are.

Although the effect size for the link between SJYD principles to critical reflection development was very small, indicating that SJYD principles may not be an appropriate predictor for CR in this sample. Due to this being the first time that the SJYD principles were in a survey format there were no other quantitative examples to compare. Most studies involving SJYD principles are qualitative and has been found to demonstrate CR (El-Amin et al., 2017). Because of this information, we would suggest testing these principles over a more diverse academic sample of youth based on academic engagement and success. Secondly, the measurement used to assess CR levels may not be as effective as we would have liked it to be. The questions that were being measured on the CR survey may lack specific examples that marginalized youth could relate, which may be reflected in the CR reported at low levels than expected. As youth who may live

in marginalized community researchers may have expected CR levels to reflect more so on the higher end of the scale closer to 5-strongly agree regarding how youth perceive inequities in their environment. It is very likely that this group of youth does not represent all youth of color in the way that they report social awareness and the way they view differences in ethnic minorities. These differences include factors such as academic success and economic advancement that they have access to due to the support of this program. Although the program engenders positive outlooks on life, youths' time are extremely limited because of the strenuous attention to fulfilling academic requirements, which generally happen after school. This lack of time and extreme academic focus also supports the underlying reason as to why having justice-oriented activities in OST programs will benefit those who are dedicated and limited in time. OST programs can provide an accurate reflection on their community and talk through making appropriate community changes when they can. Moreover, the SJYD framework aids youth in developing activism skills where they learn that civic participation and engagement are detrimental to thriving in adulthood (Ginwright & James, 2002). Participants of the focus groups agreed that being more conscious of things that happen within their community is key. Youth reflected on the fact that it helps to be focus on fixing one thing in their community, however; they realized that being cognizant of all things that happens in their community is a step in the right direction. This reflection bolsters the ideology that youth may have additional pressures placed on them as academically successful, marginalized

youth, that limits their capability to be as reflective as they would like. Youth recognized they needed to be cognizant of the happenings of their community; this is the first step to organizing the fixable social conditions of the community leading to understanding the concepts of democracy.

Congruent with existing research by Ginwright and James (2002), this study suggested that participation in justice-oriented OST programs with culturally and socially relevant activities may perhaps be better understood when the thoughts and reflections of CR are deeply explored. Specifically, participation in justice-oriented activities helped scaffold youth views of their social conditions and helped youth reflect on indicators that led to uncovering the effects of inequalities within one's community. Additional observations consist of examining the ways that OST programs are designed to implement social justice discussions in a community-based format. Murray and Milner (2015) suggested that afterschool programs have the ability to reduce cross-cultural barriers that youth may experience when there are disparate racial backgrounds of youth workers, thus creating an organic environment for youth. However, in this study youth realize that BHGH OST programming is a safe place to have community-based discussions no matter the racial makeup of the staff. This realization may have been an indicator of the positive outlook on life that other cultures can speak towards and consider contributing to change. Moreover, youth expressed how they oftentimes referred to their peers for support and reported that because of the length of time they knew their peers they felt comfort knowing that they have built trust in each other to discuss

sensitive issues such as racism, discrimination and prejudice treatments of certain groups of people in the US.

The principles of SJYD framework helped youth describe their perceived impacts of critical reflection. Youth identified that critical reflection was an ongoing process where they feel that being aware of the impacts of social conditions on a community was a significant skill to have. They identified barriers that would not allow them to fully reveal the reactions of their critical reflection (i.e. ageism and expectations of adults). Ageism, a discriminatory and prejudice construct involving judgmental treatment to persons of certain ages, was a perceived inequity involving youth capacity (Cherry, 2019). Diemer (2012) discussed ageism as a hindrance in youth development as it relates to critical consciousness development. Youth need adults who will believe in their ability to make change happen. Moreover, ageism effects the way that youth respond and participate in a multitude of community-based projects that inform transformation. In the focus groups, youth expressed in several responses that they felt hindered from being allowed to reach their full potential because of being constantly reminded of how young they were. On multiple occasions youth stated how adults would send ‘mixed messages’ where they would encourage them and empower them to change the world and then on other occasions they would patronize and infantilize the power of their [youth] voice suggesting that they were too young to understand. Sending mixed messages to youth is something that needs to be addressed in programs that apply SJYD practices. Making sure to empower and not confuse youth about the strength they have in making changes within their community is an important yet challenging principle that is sure to continue

to resurface. Making that distinction for youth has always been a blurred line, more research should be conducted to support ways in which adults can truly support youth in being social agents of change.

More specifically, findings within this study supported existing theoretical frameworks and conceptual foundations (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002) related to justice-oriented approaches and the illumination of critical reflection, which was best informed by focus groups discussions.

According to the survey, SJYD principles may not be the best predictor of the items we used to determine critical reflection for this sample population. Surveys indicated that there was no relation between critical reflection levels and participation in and quality of justice-oriented activities in youth.

Implications

Implications from the quantitative component of this study underscored the opportunity that youth have in developing critical reflection skills by way of SJYD frameworks. However, when implementing social justice oriented activities practitioners must be cognizant in how youth report levels of critical reflection.

This CR report was elicited through focus groups discussions. Youth had critical reflection levels that were low (e.g., scoring strongly disagree and disagree) to high (e.g., scoring strongly agree to agree) on conditions that referred to economic and academic advancement for people of certain racial or gendered groups.

Noteworthy to mention, youth mean scores on the critical reflection scale did not differ significantly as a function of the number of SJYD-reflective activities in

which youth participated. One might expect that critical reflection scores in a sample of youth of color from low-resourced communities might be relatively high. However, the critical reflection scores reported were relatively low, which Diemer and colleagues (2017) would identify as a low level of critical reflection. When we looked deeper at the results and connected these results to SJYD principles and then to the BHGH mission and goals, we realized that the lower critical reflection scores may not necessarily indicate that youth were showing lower levels of critical reflection. Watts et. al, (2003) expressed that there were two levels of CR—low and high—where low levels are demonstrated by a victimized mindset not showing any acknowledgement of the institutionalized systems that exist, and higher levels of CR are demonstrated by acceptance and liberation from these systems of oppression. Although youth reported to participate in the majority of activities that were justice-oriented (see table 2.1 and 2.2), shifting the focus of the conversation to include the root causes of social conditions that marginalized youth experience may help youth develop connections to structural systems that they will encounter as they enter into higher education and the workforce (Godfrey & Burson, 2018). Thus, enhancing developmental policies and practices for youth to include a shift in ideology may be a most appropriate implication from this study results. Diemer and Blustein (2006) suggested that when youth were able to perceive the inequalities that exist in their communities, they were able to navigate through different and adverse environments. Developing skills that create visual roadmaps would essentially

enable youth to thrive in their future working conditions and in developing who they are socially or politically.

Limitations

I was able to identify limitations to using the SJYD framework to explore determine critical reflection levels in marginalized high-achieving youth. When using the SJYD framework, the principle, making identity central, may suggest that youth regard their identities (i.e., socioeconomic statuses, gender, race) as markers of success. In BHGH, youth may be focused on their academic identity, which is equally important for youth who are striving for higher education. However, this focus on academic identity might limit the utility of the SJYD principle with this group of youth. As Ginwright and James (2002) alluded to, it would be an identity that is connected to how power is seen and determined in relationships and how this power is attached to how and who a person identifies and label themselves to be. Identities may have layers that how youth view themselves. I realized that surveys for this population (164 “risked-immersed” youth; predominately youth of color, and 65% female) might not be the most appropriate way to capture the specifics of justice-oriented activities or how youth reflect on what is important in their communities. However, applying the findings of this study to other programs in an effort to uncover the limitations of quantitative data collection provides advancement in scale development. In particular, the design of the survey (i.e., format and questions) could have been better structured to connect daily activities to SJYD frameworks to then evaluate the quality of this program. For instance, instead of asking the participant “if there

are any activities that helped you reflect on what's most important in your life", we could maybe utilize exact language from the participants of the program. This limitation exist because:

1. Each community use semantics that are only used by people who live in that particular area. Thus, when outsiders come in a community to gather information, without first understanding the dynamics of the community and the ethos of different groups, it could prevent receiving the most accurate information.
2. The research study did not use a pilot study to assess if the survey items accurately addressed the research questions. Due to the lack of pilot study findings, the researcher did not have the opportunity to test whether the survey was comprehensible, appropriate, and well defined (Hassan, Schattner, Mazza, Keluarga, 2006). Questions on the survey and focus groups questions might have been unintentionally misunderstood by participants and could provide misleading answers to the inquiry being asked. Youth may make up answers due to the misunderstanding of the question at large, thus influencing the directions of the research findings.

Secondly, youths' views may be disparate from the intention of the SJYD framework. Such that youth within this program may primarily base their identity development on academics instead of who they are racially and gender specific. Structuring quantitative and qualitative questions to respond to the focus of this academic program, which is to support youth of color who show promise of

attending higher educational institutes, may provide greater information and a segue way into connecting academics, making identity central, and analyzing power within relationships.

Future Research and Conclusion

Future research may entail applying this framework with youth who are not considered high-achieving youth might provide insight into measuring the invariance of the surveys. Although this project was not intended to create a scale measurement, being able to support the utility of this framework to assess critical reflection may necessitate testing this survey on multiple diverse academic levels of achievement in marginalized youth. Obtaining sensitive information (i.e. experiences with racism, discrimination, and prejudicial treatment) via surveys may be challenging. Moreover, information with such complex details may not be effectively gleaned in survey format. Albeit, surveys are effective ways to get an assessment of the participants' knowledge, thus coupling surveys with qualitative data can help to illuminate constructs that youth are discovering. Programs that allow youth to discuss sensitive conditions (i.e., racism, prejudicial treatment, discrimination) in their communities can make an effort to bring about awareness and mobilize change (Akom et al., 2008).

It is promising to continue to investigate civic participation and civic engagement programs that provide critical reflection skills for marginalized youth. In that, exploring other OST context that facilitate programs with youth of color should also implement SJYD principles effectively. This would

intentionally help to develop and strengthen critical reflective skills and bolster critical consciousness among those who have additional social-political-cultural-economic layers to overcome.

Additionally, although there was evidence from the focus groups that support developmental processes of critical reflection, if this study could be redesigned, the researcher would incorporate the verbiage or phrases used in the focus groups into a questionnaire with other youth located in the urban area who may or may not be in the program. This way the focus groups would be more relatable to the participants and youth may feel more comfortable having explicit conversations about their feelings regarding social conditions effecting their communities. Moreover, future research may allow me to be able to gain a deeper understanding of community issues as well as uncover nuances that are invisible to an outsider. This strategy is one that I can use in the future in order to gain additional trust from my participants in a way that will decrease barriers, which have the potential to hamper a thorough discussion about the explicit social conditions of their communities. This strategy would bolster a liberated mindset where critical consciousness is a result to those who are involved in the process.

Lastly, future research in justice-oriented activities should make sure to include intersections of those who may not identify as a person of color but may experience the similar harsh treatment due to their sexuality choice or socioeconomic status. Social justice is for not only people of color to utilize but also for all people to be involved and included. Going further, justice-oriented

activities should not be limited to only “Black” issues, addressing and including issues that affect all walks of human life is how change is created. Critical reflection is about organizing for change, it has no limitations on who it can help or what it can change (Murray, 2018).

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CHAPTER THREE

Critical Reflection and Positive Youth Development Among Academically High Achieving Marginalized Young People: Does Youth Race Matter?

Abstract

Critical reflection, a dimension of critical consciousness, is the ability to see injustices within one's community. Critical reflection (CR) is linked to several measures of youth well-being; however, it remains unclear how CR is associated with comprehensive measures of positive youth development (PYD) among diverse youth. This study examined CR and PYD, as measured by the Five Cs, across an academic year among 125 marginalized ($M_{\text{age}} = 14.2$; 61.5% female) Black/African-American ($n = 58$) and Latinx ($n = 67$) youth from six after-school programs located in low-income areas. Ordinary Least Squares regressions and correlations were conducted. Bivariate correlations indicated a significant link between CR and current and subsequent PYD among Black youth; however, regression analysis revealed that CR was not significantly linked to growth in PYD across the academic year. The implications of these findings and suggestions for future research and practice are provided.

Key terms: Critical reflection, Positive youth development, African-American youth strengths, Latinx youth strengths, after-school program

Introduction

Marginalized youth deal with harsh realities in their communities that have a high probability of hindering positive outlooks on life (Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). Marginalized youth can overcome these realities by learning social analytic tools (e.g., navigational skills) that will help them “read the world” that they live in (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). This reading of the world can be a key indicator for surviving while in adolescence and thriving in adulthood among these youth. Critical consciousness is the capacity to recognize and overcome sociopolitical barriers (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). Critical consciousness has significantly contributed to positive outcomes in marginalized youth and stand a high chance of producing agency and predicting developmental outcomes in marginalized youth (Ginwright & James, 2002). These outcomes extend from making healthy choices throughout life as it relates to sexual health (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002), coping with mental and emotional health (Watts, Roderick, Diemer, & Voight, 2011), demonstration of better navigational techniques in achieving success in the academic setting (Diemer & Li, 2011; Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter, 2017), and occupational awareness (Diemer & Blustein, 2006) contribution to positive development.

Critical consciousness has subcomponents: critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). A central topic of examination in this research paper is critical reflection (CR). Focusing on CR allows youth to hone in on issues that affect their own community and could potentially provide ways where youth can balance how they will respond to injustices that they face. Focusing on building the skills that foster CR might provide an avenue where youth can

brainstorm effective ways in which they will commit to taking action against these issues (El-Amin et al., 2017). Marginalized youth are considered poor and working class young people who are of lower levels of social and economic status (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). Marginalized youth also are considered youth of color who experience racialized forms of discrimination and marginalization (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). CR is intended to help marginalized youth analyze the social conditions that exist within their community to then develop agency to resolve such issues (Diemer & Li, 2011; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). CR can help youth become social agents of their community where they can mobilize positive change. The positive youth development (PYD) approach provides a way to explore processes that may link CR and promote positive outcomes in marginalized youth.

In the present study, I examined the links between CR and PYD in a sample of “high achieving” youth who are enrolled in an afterschool program that fosters skills necessary to be successful in college. Youth are considered marginalized and self-identified as Black/African American or Latinx. This study will use the terms Black/African American and Latinx as a component of youth race (Dowling, 2004). Dowling (2004) explains how race is linked to systemic oppressive structures and resource allocation in the United States for Latinx population. She discusses that the Latinx populations may identify their race as White due to the status that whiteness brings for persons living in America. Dowling (2004) highlights that Latinx can be viewed as a race that can be juxtaposed against other racial groups (Dowling, 2004).

Literature Review

Critical Reflection: A Dimension of Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness emerges when a person becomes aware and mindful of injustices embedded in their community (Freire, 1972; Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). According to Diemer, Rapa, and Perry (2017), through CR youth learn how to analyze their community for social injustices which, in turn, could impact how they view society. How youth view society and their place within that society, as a direct correlation to one's race, may influence how youth interact with their contexts which could either enhance or hinder youth development.

Critical reflection is linked to positive outcomes in marginalized youth (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Ginwright & James, 2002) and is considered “a critical analysis of perceived social inequalities, such as racial/ethnic, gendered, and socioeconomic constraints on educational and occupational opportunity” (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017, p. 2). These analytic skills may be beneficial to youth navigating communities marked by adverse conditions that hinder youth from having positive outlooks on life. Most work on critical consciousness has examined links to a limited set of outcomes such as promotion of social change among youth, addressing political issues such as political education (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Watts & Flanagan, 2007), and identity and occupational development (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Li, 2011; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002).

Critical reflection is having an awareness of how a system maintains asymmetry of resources and information and the effects that inequity brings (Diemer & Rapa, 2016).

Similarly, CR brings about the ability to visualize an invisible layer in society that is directed at sustaining injustices that are group-based and tend to obscure the root causes of those injustices. Through CR, a person cognitively processes their reflections, and adapts their way of thinking with the intention to bring about positive change (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006), in regard to political, social, cultural, economic, and historical associations. CR suggests a way to fully grasp and understand perceptions of pervasive stigmas or inequalities that ethnic groups experience (Thomas et al., 2014). CR skills may provide marginalized youth with insight as to how to manage and navigate among sociopolitical realities in college, in the workforce, and in society.

Critical Reflection and Positive Youth Development

The positive youth development (PYD) approach provides a way to explore processes that may link CR and promote positive outcomes in marginalized youth. The process of PYD is derived from relational-developmental systems theoretical models (Lerner et al., 2014). These models posit that the basic process of human development involves the mutually influential relations between the individual and the contexts within which he or she is embedded (identified as individual \leftrightarrow context relations). From a PYD perspective, all youth have strengths such as the ability to set and pursue goals, hopeful future expectations, and school engagement (Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, & Lerner, 2014) and the contexts in which youth are embedded (families, schools, and communities) have resources (e.g., supporting parenting or a caring mentor) to support youth thriving. The claim can be made that PYD arises when CR skills are nurtured in marginalized youth; CR can be considered as a youth strength and is the youth's

contribution to the mutually-beneficial person \leftrightarrow context relations that mark a positively developing young person (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). When marginalized youth possess strong CR skills they are more likely to recognize the potential resources and obstacles in their contexts, and, in turn, optimize their likelihood of benefitting from their environment as has been seen with intentional self-regulation skills (Diemer, McWhirter, Ozer, & Rapa, 2015; Urban, Lewin-Bizan, & Lerner, 2009). Consistent with a systems approach to youth development, prior research has also indicated that the links between CR and youth well-being may differ as a function of youth race and socioeconomic status (e.g., Godfrey & Burson, 2018; Tyler, Geldhof, Black, & Bowers, 2019). Extending this work, the present article examined how CR is linked to positive and healthy development across diverse “risk-immersed, yet high achieving” marginalized youth of color.

For marginalized youth, not learning these skills can be detrimental to promoting healthier outlooks on life; thus, being critically conscious helps youth develop skills to overcome and resist oppressive situations (e.g., institutional, intrapersonal, and/or internalized racism) that marginalized youth may face. Adolescence is a promising period for promoting CR because youth develop cognitive skills that can help them be reflective and strategically think in regards to evaluating the circumstances of the environment in which they live (Larson & Hansen, 2005). This evaluation can lead to youth involvement in changing the adverse social conditions that often mark their communities. Research contends that examining CR as a tool to further PYD is better studied in marginalized youth because of the poor social and economic circumstances that youth reside in

(Diemer et al., 2015). High achieving marginalized youth who possess CR stand a higher probability of obtaining clarity on socioeconomic issues within their community and committing to vocational careers (Diemer & Blustein, 2006) to support themselves in adulthood. Due to the scant literature on linking CR and PYD, additional research examining how CR functions in promoting PYD across this unique and diverse sample of youth has the potential to better understand how high achieving marginalized youth process overcoming adverse conditions.

PYD models underscore the relations between characteristics of youth and features of their contexts that bolster and foster healthy growth. There are several models of PYD; one such model is the Five Cs of PYD model (Lerner et al., 2005). The Five Cs of PYD are character, caring, competence, confidence, and connection (See Table 3.1 for full definitions of the Cs). A key hypothesis of the Five Cs model is that when youth strengths, such as goal directed skills or hopeful future expectations (Lerner et al., 2014), are aligned with resources from the contexts within which youth are embedded, such as families, schools, and afterschool programs, youth thriving (development of the Five Cs) is more likely. The PYD perspective suggests that when youth have higher levels of the Five Cs, they are more likely to provide multiple forms of contribution as it relates to self, family, community, and civil society (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015; Lerner et al., 2005)

Table 3.1

Definitions of the Five Cs of PYD

C	Definition
Competence	Positive view of one's actions in domain specific areas including social, academic, cognitive, and vocational. Social competence pertains to interpersonal skills (e.g., conflict resolution). Cognitive competence pertains to cognitive abilities (e.g., decision making). School grades, attendance, and test scores are part of academic competence. Vocational competence involves work habits and career choice explorations.
Confidence	An internal sense of overall positive self-worth and self-efficacy; one's global self-regard, as opposed to domain specific beliefs.
Connection	Positive bonds with people and institutions that are reflected in bidirectional exchanges between the individual and peers, family, school, and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.
Character	Respect for societal and cultural rules, possession of standards for correct behaviors, a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.
Caring and Compassion	A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.

Note. Taken from Bowers et al., (2010) and derived from Lerner et al. (2005) and Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003.

From a PYD perspective, CR skills can be a key individual strength of youth which reflects the individual contribution to individual \leftrightarrow context relations. As youth become more attentive to the social-political-cultural issues around them (i.e., develop CR skills), they need structured support from caring adults who will listen and provide facilitative guidance (Ginwright, 2010). This guidance can appear in facilitative group discussions about conditions that affect young people and limit their chance of striving and surviving (Freire, 1972). Outcomes of this process consist of youth understanding

social conditions among the interactions with their environment, as simultaneously adolescents are also developing an understanding of how they fit into the society in which they live. Not only does the process of reflection promote healthy attitudes regarding self-development, but it also can help marginalized youth find better coping mechanisms for social conditions instead of resulting to negative and maladaptive behaviors (Thomas et al., 2014). “Learning to see how history works, how received ways of thinking and feeling perpetuate existing structures of inequality” (Hopper, 1999, p. 13) encompasses a big part of the revealing process (i.e. reflection). When youth recognize their strengths and are able to align themselves with the assets and resources of their community, the potentiality to mature in the Five Cs could indicate healthy developmental periods (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006; Lerner et al., 2005) where youth have the opportunity to thrive in making integrative contributions to self, family, and civil society (Lerner et al., 2005).

Moreover, it is important to examine CR’s potential influence on the comprehensive measures of youth well-being as researchers, practitioners, and policy makers take a more holistic approach to youth development (Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, & Geldhof, 2015). For example, further investigation is needed to understand the role of youth race in understanding the links between CR and PYD. Godfrey and Burson (2018) contended that one way to advance research in CR and PYD is to be intentional in exploring all systems (e.g., oppressive and privilege) that would foster youths’ development of CR. This translates to exploring diverse populations (e.g., a variety of ethnic and racial populations, gender, sexual orientations). Godfrey and Burson (2018)

suggested that developmental scholars focus on how systems interact and intersect and the impact that these systems may have on the diverse populations and overall youth development. CR has the potential to connect youth to these hidden systems of marginalization and allow them the opportunity to organize ways in which they can play a role in dismantling oppressive structures for their generation.

Although there is a growing body of evidence linking the construct of critical consciousness to positive youth outcomes, there are few studies that consider the dimension of CR as a predictor for positive development in youth (Bañales et al., 2019; Hope & Bañales, 2019). CR can be viewed as a youth strength that is particularly important to thriving in marginalized youth (Diemer et al., 2015). CR implies the critical analysis of one's environment, which could also be an integral component of the mutually beneficial individual \leftrightarrow context relations that youth need to succeed; thus understanding how CR operates across diverse youth could provide insight into PYD research as it has yet to be thoroughly explored. Godfrey and Burson (2018) asserted that the recursive process that youth undergo as they interact with persons and contexts typically unfolds into the different types of marginalization that youth experience. They mention that to overlook social positions of power, privilege, and oppression would be detrimental to youth who are members of a marginalized society. Including the processes by which marginalized youth come to understand power, privilege, and oppression may be beneficial to promoting well-being with diverse youth.

Critical Reflection, PYD, and Race

Prior research has indicated that the links between CR and youth well-being may differ as a function of youth race and socioeconomic status (e.g., Godfrey & Burson, 2018; Tyler et al., 2019). For example, a cross-sectional study conducted by Tyler et al. (2019) examined the association of CR and PYD among an economically and racially diverse sample of rural youth. They found that CR negatively correlated with the Five Cs among White (non-Hispanic) youth from both low- and middle-income levels, whereas CR did not show significant association to the Five Cs among Black youth from low-income environments. In addition to this literature, the current study seeks to examine CR and PYD among urban youth in order to present the case that CR may promote favorable outcomes in urban youth. There is reason to believe that CR may elicit different outcomes in youth depending on their geographical location and racial makeup (Cuervo, 2014). Godfrey and Burson (2018) argues that in order to further understand CR and its nuances exploring multiple systems of marginalization caused by multiple forms of oppression is required. They argue that multiple forms of oppression will express itself differently according to racial and/or gender makeup. Furthermore, the authors recommend researching the structural systems that maintain marginalized ideology that hinder economic and educational advancement in marginalized youth. Being able to recognize these systems would conversely give youth the reflective tools that can aid in identifying institutional structures where they can contest and navigate through sociopolitical barriers that would potentially hamper PYD in marginalized youth.

Given racial and ethnic disparities within the United States, it is also important to identify levels of CR by racial qualities and if these levels predict significant growth in

PYD. Spencer and Spencer (2014) purported that the contexts and nature of assets matter for youth when positive development is assessed. Youth who reside in communities that are conditioned by adverse interactions such as violence, substance abuse, and/or unstable income and wages, positive development may be contextualized via CR development (Ginwright, 2010). Spencer and Spencer (2014) indicated that minority and marginalized youth were often excluded from major studies of PYD, thus indicating the limitations and generalizations that previous research may provide. Travis and Leech (2014) suggested that there are structural and social realities that marginalized youth, specifically African-American, experience that are missing from the Five Cs model. They recommended implementing a more empowerment-based framework for African-American youth. Along the same lines, Neblett, Rivas-Drake, and Umaña-Taylor (2012), expressed that PYD for Latinx youth bolstered promotive factors that are based on youths' ethnicity and may not be fully explained in the mainstream PYD model. Furthermore, CR has the capacity to shape the development of the Five Cs among marginalized youth because of CR's ability to help youth envision their place in society. Considering CR as a process and skill may be the missing link and the catalyst needed to enhance youth development in communities that are marginalized.

PYD models that explore ethnic and racial minority children and adolescents are aligned with the need to implement programs and interventions that incorporate adaptations instead of the deficit-oriented models in minority youth (Cabrera, 2013a). The U.S. Census Bureau estimated in 2012 the increase of non-White racial and ethnic groups accounted for 49.5% of the population (Cabrera, 2013b). Thus, there is an

urgency to understand the unique nuances that promote positive development in youth who are non-white and of diverse ethnic makeup. Due to the positive outlooks on life that are possible when youth have CR, exploring aspects of CR contributes to developing sound research that can bolster marginalized youth development. Moreover, Godfrey and Burson (2018) recognized that developmental scholars are making progress to uncover CR and its benefits; however they grapple with how to analyze this construct and suggest focusing on the systems of marginalization rather than the individual.

In addition to considering the lack of research on youth of color from a PYD perspective, deficit approaches to these populations have also overlooked “high achieving” youth of color. High-achievement among African-American youth can be considered a protective factor from universal barriers and realities that plague the Black community. Therefore, high-achieving and critically reflective marginalized youth stand a chance at overcoming barriers and produce positive outcomes of which usher success by navigating and contesting inequities in their communities. Carter (2008) posited that academically gifted African-American youth perceived academics to be their pathway to upward mobility where “schooling” became the key mechanisms to being successful in life. Carter (2008) qualitatively explored the development of racial and achievement self-conceptions among 20 high-achieving African-American youth ages 15-17 years. Findings indicated that “schooling” engenders a concept in youth that builds persistence, as youth learn more from school instruction about the inequities in society. Youth develop higher levels of critical consciousness, positive self-conception, and pragmatic

attitudes about continuing school, being successful in school, and investigating how social change can take place, simultaneously.

In another study by Carter (2007) positive racial identity was correlated to consciousness in intellectually gifted Black youth. Youth operated in layers of cognizance about their blackness which created a school environment where youth could express themselves in spaces specifically for them. This space provided youth who were intellectually gifted and situated in White (non-Hispanic)-dominant classrooms, a place to be themselves and discuss social, political, and cultural inequities that they experience unlike their counterparts. Being high-achievers allowed youth to develop a resistance strategy to responding to discriminatory remarks, microaggressions, and negative racial treatment. The messages that youth receive also play a major role in how youth develop CR skills, thus socialization of youth identity (i.e. racial socialization) would be crucial to how youth view themselves in society (Hope & Bañales, 2019). Thus, CR may be a skillset that enhances PYD that allows high achieving marginalized youth to filter mistreatment because of their group identity.

Critical consciousness has also been found to uplift high achieving Latinx youth (Kirshner & Ginwright, 2012) and provide benefits that could advance their chances of occupational and educational opportunities (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2016). In a study conducted by McWhirter and McWhirter (2016), researchers sampled English and Spanish speaking Latinx youth about their understandings of barriers encountered in school and career-oriented systems. Questionnaires were given to 476 male and female youth who attended a school-related conference. Different high schools were represented

at this leadership conference. Findings indicated that as youth attended conscious related conferences where information was discussed about the impacts of continuing higher education, youth reported higher critical consciousness levels as a result. These findings indicated that Latinx youth have interest in developing leadership skills and are learning and aware of inequities and uneven resources that hinder advancement and economic opportunities. Moreover, McWhirter & McWhirter (2016) postulated that reporting higher critical consciousness of socioeconomic hindrances promotes educational persistence and vocational development. Here, being critically reflective of socio-historical-political underpinnings was used as a protective factor enabling youth to resist structural and institutional realities. Hills and Torres (2010) mentioned that the educational culture of Latinx youth are centered on morality, responsibility, being respectful, and youth being well behaved. Second and third generation Latinx in the United States are straying away from the native culture that their parents were accustomed (Hill & Torres, 2010; Rodríguez, 2002). Thus, adopting skills such as CR, may bolster Latinx youth in an opportune place to reach educational and economic advancement. CR is instrumental in racial minority groups and have the probability of enhancing PYD in these populations.

Purpose of Study

In this study, CR levels in a sample of marginalized youth (African-American/Black and Latinx) who participated in an afterschool college preparation program for high achieving, “risk-immersed” youth were investigated. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. How does African-American and Latinx youths' mean levels of CR and mean levels of PYD differ?
2. Is there a relation between CR and PYD in African-American and Latinx youth?
3. Does CR significantly predict the growth of PYD in African-American and Latinx youth?
 - a. Does the effect of CR on PYD vary by ethnicity?

High achieving Latinx youth attending OST afterschool programs were expected to have significantly lower levels of CR and PYD compared to African-American youth due to the interaction among adverse conditions and contexts within which they live (Hypothesis one). High achieving African-American youth attending OST afterschool programs were expected to have stronger relations between CR and PYD (Hypothesis two). This expectation is based on theoretical suggestions in the literature that the construct of CR may be a skill set that could benefit marginalized youth. In some capacities Latinx youth may experience different levels of marginality from African-Americans (Hope & Bañales, 2019).

High achieving marginalized youth were expected to report significant growth in PYD as a result of CR development (Hypothesis three). Past research indicates that CR can be identified as a strength for youth of color that may align with aspects of PYD (Ginwright & James, 2002), thus higher levels of CR may be linked to higher PYD levels. The race of youth may moderate the link between CR and growth of PYD in high achieving African-American and Latinx youth (Hypothesis four). High achieving

African-American and Latinx youth may understand CR as a different analysis due to their socio-cultural-political backgrounds (Travis & Leech, 2014), thus race may show an affect between the two constructs of CR and PYD.

Method

The data collected for this research were obtained from a larger study on the characteristics and outcomes of program activities across all BHGH Academy sites. Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH) Academy program is an afterschool college preparation program for “risk immersed” and academically high achieving youth. BHGH Academy programs are non-residential programs, located in low-income communities and are designed to serve the surrounding community. Programming takes place during after school hours either at the school’s campus or a facility operated by BHGH staff. The program focus is to deliver long term, comprehensive academic and emotional support services for youth. BHGH programs are located in six Academy program sites: Phoenix, Denver (Aurora), Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco, and St. Louis.

Participants

BHGH Academy youth (N=125) were all considered high achieving. Youth were majority female (61.5%) and identified as African American/Black (46.4%) or Latino (53.6%). Average participant ages were between 11 and 18 years, with an overall sample average of 14.2 years across sites.

Procedures

The data from this study were obtained as a part of a large three data collection wave for program evaluation assessing the practices and procedures alignment with core components of the program. Data were initially collected Fall 2017, Winter 2018, and Spring 2018, two of the three data collection times were used in this study — Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. The overall evaluation was aimed at examining program practices and youth outcomes in order to identify standard practices across the programs. Participants were recruited to attend an after-school program due to their academic success from urban schools in six different sites across the United States.

Informed consent/assent was obtained from all individual participants and parents included in the study. The study was approved by Clemson University IRB. A detail protocol was used to create a uniform administration of the survey and to ensure the return of all survey materials. Directions for surveys were told to participants before starting the survey. Surveys were administered via Qualtrics on computers provided by the afterschool program and paper surveys were administered to those without internet or computer services. Participants were informed that all identifying information would be detached from their survey and kept confidential. Participants took approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey. Graduate assistant entered the paper survey results into Qualtrics.

Measures

Critical reflection. In order to measure CR, youth were asked to respond to eight questions that asked about perceived inequalities from the Critical Consciousness scale

(Diemer et al., 2017) in 2017 and 2018. Some example items are “Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education;” “Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs;” and “Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead.” The response range for this scale was adapted in the present study to be based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. This adaptation was to align response options across scales used in the full questionnaire. The composite scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater perceived consciousness of constraints on opportunity. Cronbach's alphas for the CR scale were .96 (2017) and .97 (2018).

Positive youth development. Positive youth development (PYD) was assessed in 2017 and 2018 using the 34-item Short Form measure of the Five C’s of PYD (Geldhof et al., 2014), derived from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (Lerner et al., 2005). The 34 items reflected five factors, referred to as the Five Cs: competence, confidence, character, caring, and connection. Competence was measured by items such as, “I am as smart as other children my age;” Confidence was measured by items such as, “I am happy with myself most of the time;” Character was measured using items such as, “It is important to me that I help make the world a better place to live in;” Caring was measured by items such as, “When I see someone being taken advantage of, I want to help them;” Finally, connection was measured by items such as, “I feel useful in my family;” While each of the factors within the Short Form measure of the Five C’s of PYD are composed by different questions, all utilize a five-point Likert scale for responses, from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. An average score across items was

calculated with higher levels of positive youth development being reflected by greater scores. Cronbach's alpha in the current sample was .92 for both 2017 and 2018.

Data Analysis

Study measures included CR and PYD in 2017 and 2018 for BHGH participants. To address research question 1, *t*-tests were conducted to test for differences in mean African-American and Latinx CR and PYD in 2017 and 2018. To address question 2, bivariate correlations were conducted among all outcomes of interest across all youth and then separated by race/ethnicity. To address research questions 3 and 4, an ordinary least squares multivariate linear regression model predicting PYD in 2018, controlling for PYD in 2017, was conducted. This model tested whether CR, race, or the interaction of these two variables were significant predictors of growth in PYD over the academic year (from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018).

Results

First, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to determine if there were significant differences between the average CR and PYD scores of African-American and Latinx youth (Table 3.2). Second, a zero-order correlation matrix to examine relations among constructs cross-sectionally and across time was produced (Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5). Finally, a multiple regression model was conducted to determine the significance of each predictor variable and which variable contributed the most to predicting PYD in

2018 in African-American and Latinx youth, after controlling for PYD in 2017 (Table 3.6).

Research Question 1: How does African-American and Latinx youths’ mean levels of CR and mean levels of PYD differ?

Table 3.2 shows that in 2017, average PYD scores were not significantly different among youth ($p > .05$). In 2018, average PYD scores were not significantly different among youth ($p > .05$). However, the average CR scores among youth differed significantly in 2017 ($p < 0.01$) and 2018 ($p < .05$) with African-American youth reporting significantly higher CR scores at both time points. Youth started the academic year with similar PYD scores but significantly different CR scores. When CR and PYD scores were collected in 2018, both African-American and Latinx youth CR scores increased, but African-American scores were still significantly higher, while PYD scores remained stable.

Table 3.2

Independent Samples Test for PYD in 2018

	Youth Race/Ethnicity	M	SD	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
PYD 2017	African American	4.07	0.53	1.45	.20	0.04	0.30
	Latinx	3.96	0.50				
PYD 2018	African American	4.07	0.48	1.43	.15	0.05	0.30

	Latinx	3.94	0.50				
CR 2017	African American	3.17	1.21	2.48	.01	0.09	0.77
	Latinx	2.74	1.63				
CR 2018	African American	3.62	1.09	2.18	.03	0.05	0.94
	Latinx	3.13	1.22				

Note: PYD=Positive youth development CR=Critical Reflection

Research Question 2: Is there a Relation Between CR and PYD in African-American and Latinx Youth?

Zero order correlations for all study variables are presented in Table 3.3 to show the relation among African-American and Latinx youth PYD and CR scores. Table 3.3 shows that PYD scores in 2017 showed a significant positive correlation to PYD scores in 2018 ($p < .001$). CR scores in 2017 were positively correlated to CR scores in 2018 ($p < .001$). There is a statistically significant relation between youth race and CR 2017 ($p < .05$) and CR 2018 ($p < .05$), and a marginally significant relation between youth race and PYD 2017 ($p < .10$), indicating that African-American youth reported higher levels of each outcome.

Table 3.3

Correlation Matrix for All Youth CR and PYD Scores

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. PYD 2018	-				
2. PYD 2017	0.69***	-			
3. CR 2018	.16	.16	-		
4. CR 2017	.06	.12	.54***	-	
5. Race	-.12	-.13+	-.21*	-	-
				.18*	

Note.

PYD = Positive Youth Development

CR = Critical Reflection

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To further explore the relations among CR and PYD in youth, zero-order correlations were conducted separately for African-American and Latinx youth. Table 3.4 presents the relations among CR and PYD in African-American youth. Results indicated that PYD scores in 2017 were positively correlated to the PYD scores in 2018 ($p < .001$). Additionally, CR scores were also positively correlated from 2017 to 2018 ($p < .001$). For African-American youth, CR 2017 scores showed a statistical significant and positive relation with PYD 2017 ($p < .05$), CR scores in 2018 were also significantly and positively related to PYD scores 2018 ($p < .05$).

Table 3.4

Correlation Matrix for African-American Youth CR and PYD Scores

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. PYD 2018	-			
2. PYD 2017	.67***	-		
3. CR 2018	.33*	.24	-	
4. CR 2017	0.18	.23*	.50***	-

Note.

PYD=Positive Youth Development

CR=Critical Reflection

*Correlation is significant at .05 level (two-tailed)

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3.5 shows that Latinx youth PYD scores in 2017 were positively correlated to PYD scores in 2018 ($p < .001$). CR scores in 2017 were also positively correlated to CR scores 2018 ($p < .001$). CR was not related to PYD concurrently or longitudinally in Latinx youth (all p 's were $> .1$).

Table 3.5

Correlation Matrix for Latinx Youth CR and PYD Scores

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. PYD 2018	-			
2. PYD 2017	.73***	-		
3. CR 2017	-.14	-.16	-	
4. CR 2018	.06	.09	.57***	-

Note.

PYD=Positive Youth Development

CR=Critical Reflection

*Correlation is significant at .05 level (two-tailed)

+ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Research Question 3: Does CR significantly predict the growth of PYD in African-American and Latinx youth?

a. Does the effect of CR on PYD vary by ethnicity?

Results for the multiple linear regression model predicting PYD 2018 on CR 2017, youth race, and their interaction, after controlling for PYD 2017, are presented in Table 3.6. R^2 for the overall model was 46.1% with an adjusted R^2 of 44%, a moderately medium size effect according to Cohen (1988). The joint model of PYD 2017, youth race, CR 2017, and the interaction of CR 2017 and youth race accounted for a statistically significant proportion of PYD 2018 scores, $F(4,104) = 22.240, p < .001$. See Table 3.6 for the regression coefficients for the model. There was an observed significant relation between PYD 2017 ($t = 8.677, p < .001$) and PYD 2018. After controlling for PYD 2017, the relation between CR 2017 ($t = -0.476, p > .05$) and PYD 2018 was not significant ($t = 1.60, p > .05$); the interaction between Race and CR was also not significant ($t = 1.28, p > .05$).

Results indicated that PYD 2017 was a significant predictor of PYD 2018 ($b = .68, p < .001$). PYD scores are relatively stable from 2017 to 2018. CR scores 2017 also did not significantly predict PYD growth ($b = -0.02, p > .05$). youth race did not moderate the relation between CR and PYD growth ($b = 0.03, p > .05$). For one unit increase in PYD 2017 was associated with 0.70 unit increase in PYD 2018 after controlling for all other variables ($p < .001$).

Table 3.6

Coefficients for Variables

Variable	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig
1. PYD 2017	.71	.07	.69	8.68	.001***
2. Race/ethnicity	-.003	.21	.17	.87	.39
3. CR 2017	.06	.05	.06	-.48	.55
4. CR 2017 x Race	-.03	.06	-.05	1.28	.80

Dependent variable: PYD 2018
 $+p < .1 < .05^*, p < .01^{**}, p < .001^{***}$
 Note: $R^2 = .46, p < .001$

Discussion

PYD frameworks point to strengths in youth that are linked to thriving (Lerner, 2005). PYD models offer promotive and protective factors that support healthy outcomes and well-being among youth. Scholars have indicated that until recently, PYD frames and models have been explored and examined with mainstream youth populations (Cabrera, 2013a; Spencer & Spencer, 2014). Expanding research to fully investigate youth who live

in marginalized communities is likely the next step to contributing to future improvement of PYD frameworks. This study examined CR as a predictor of PYD in order to better inform research on marginalized youth developmental systems. CR was conceptualized as an individual strength where youth are able to identify injustices and inequities in their community. This study sought to understand whether youth perception of inequities affected the PYD of high achieving marginalized youth in urban communities, and if youth racial/ethnic makeup moderated the relation between CR and PYD.

When testing CR among diverse high achieving marginalized groups — African American and Latinx youth — it is beneficial to find out if there are any differences in CR levels according to the differences in racial groups. Spencer and Spencer (2014) asserted that when assessing PYD in youth, taking into consideration the context for which the youth reside are indicators as to how the youth sees their world. If CR is an intense social analysis of one's community, then race/ethnicity would matter in unfolding multi-level systems of privilege or oppression that governs resource allocation among communities. Diemer et al., (2017) argued that CR is subjective however it allows for researchers to understand marginalized youth experiences and the connection to CR. The utility of CR can be somewhat of a protective factor for youth and enhance the chances of youth understanding their community to then make strides to change the adversity that may be prevalent (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). High achieving youth who may be motivated to learn about conditions in their communities have the potential to uncover systems of oppression and may be motivated to work towards overcoming such structures

for themselves and others in their community (Ginwright 2010; Ginwright & James, 2002).

Key Findings

Is there a difference in African-American and Latinx youths' mean CR and PYD?

The comparison of CR indicated significant mean differences among African-American and Latinx youth at both time points over the academic year. African American youth reported higher CR levels when compared to Latinx youth in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. PYD mean did not differ significantly between African American and Latinx youth. It was hypothesized that CR and PYD would differ among African American youth and Latinx youth. These findings partially support hypothesis one. The difference in the two constructs could potentially be associated with community influences and social messages which are determining factors for both CR and PYD (Bowers, Geldhof, Johnson, Lerner, & Lerner, 2014; Hope and Bañales, 2019; Ginwright, 2010). The mean level of African American youth ($M = 3.17$) compared to Latinx youth ($M = 2.64$) may be representative of the survival tools that Black youth had to adopt due to the adverse conditions in their immediate surroundings (Diemer et al., 2015; Watts et al., 1999). When researchers can evaluate youth's reflective knowledge of their community, indicated by youths' mean CR levels, it is suggestive to researchers, practitioners, and policy makers that youth encompass the ability to internalize how life circumstances effect outlooks on living a productive life (Larson & Hansen, 2005). High-achieving marginalized youth in particular may straddle a line of internal or external circumstances dictating how they will thrive to live better lives; this assumption is highlighted by their

CR mean levels (see Table 3.2 for CR mean levels of youth). In high achieving marginalized youth PYD should ultimately be affected by measures of CR and this effect may be dependent upon the geographical location where youth reside, however, there were no supporting evidence that demonstrated the means of youth PYD were statically different. It is possible that Latinx may use other cultural skills as potential resources to gain clarity of sociopolitical issues (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Hill & Torres, 2010) and bolster their PYD. These cultural skills may have similarities to CR in Black youth and provide reasoning as to why CR is statistically different among the two groups of youth and supports why PYD is not statistically different. Although Diemer et al. (2015) suggested that CR is a skill set that every marginalized youth should ascertain, the way in which CR is manifested or taught is different dependent on how youth choose to look at the systems as unjust or of opportunity (Tyler et al., 2019).

Further, CR is likely a skill that can be used to enhance leadership, instill pride, build empowerment, and develop critical thinking skills (Ginwright & James, 2002) which will aid youth in college and effective decision making. It is possible that youth's mean differences are indicative of positive school outcomes such as civic roles, extracurricular engagement, and academic grades. It is also possible that the mean differences of CR could be related to the different identity development that each marginalized group understands about themselves, even as it relates to the schools youth attend and communities they reside in (Neblett et al., 2012). From understanding the working definition of CR, it would be logical to make reference to CR as a potential skill that would afford youth to look at themselves and their community differently. African

American youth may not have the characteristics that Latinx youth share about their communities. The aforementioned discussion could be plausible indicators of differences in CR levels between the diverse samples of youth. However, the present data do not allow for examining these possibilities, future studies may delve into this topic deeper by exploring the processes of CR and its functionality in marginalized youth's lives.

Moreover, PYD is a stable variable that has been extensively researched, with little attention on positive growth of marginalized populations (Cabrera, 2013a; Travis & Leech, 2014). Travis and Leech (2014) argues that PYD lacks full representation for youth of color populations. The authors mentioned that PYD does not clearly connect youth of color cultural or social realities of which is attached to youth of color sociodemographic makeup. Not recognizing youth of color realities could portray an unimportance to youth of color and their subjective experiences as a result of their demographic makeup. Identifying what strengths support youth development among marginalized youth will contribute to the field of PYD. Tyler et al. (2019) assert that among a group of rural youth, CR and PYD had no association within a sample of White middle-class youth. Additionally, researchers found no significant results between CR and PYD in low-income Black youth. This is not consistent with the findings in this current study which suggest that there was a significant association between CR and PYD in Black youth. The Black youth that Tyler et al. (2019) refer to was geographically located in the rural part of the southeastern states, while in the current sample Black youth were located in multiple urban cities. Although income or socioeconomic status is characteristic of marginalization we have not considered the differences in location and

the nuances that location unfolds. Future research should investigate how location plays a role in CR despite socioeconomic status. Location has the potential to uncover social inequities and can be a key feature to CR development.

Godfrey and Burson (2018) suggested that future studies should explore intersections of youth where research can provide a multi-cultural view of society and explore how CR may impact youth life. My findings provide a multi-cultural view of diverse youth and how African American youth and Latinx youth view their resources and opportunities within their community. The current study demonstrates that it is possible to have different perceived understandings on inequities in a community but reside in the same community. Exhibited by diverse youth mean levels of CR ($M = 3.17$ African American and $M = 2.64$ in Latinx youth) explains that this group of youth may not be concerned about the educational constraints that is suggested by CR research. This could be directly related to how youth are communicating their knowledge of inequities and brainstorming ways in which to resolve the issues that one sees in their community (Freire, 1972). It is possible that CR can be useful skills for development in a unique group of youth. Future studies could explore geographical location, comparing rural youth to urban youth to understand the multi-cultural differences that exist in diverse contexts

Is there a relation between CR and PYD in African-American and Latinx youth?

It was expected that African American youth would have positive correlations with CR and PYD because of the benefits CR skills carry and the characteristic of the communities that African American youth reside in. This finding supported hypothesis

two (i.e., high achieving African-American youth attending OST afterschool programs were expected to have stronger relations between CR and PYD). The results of the bivariate correlation analyses suggest that both outcomes, CR and PYD, were related to youth race; however, Latinx youth were related to lower levels of CR and PYD. African-Americans exhibited a concurrent positive correlation between CR and PYD at both time points. A combination of developing cognitive skills where youth are capable of reflecting (Larson & Hansen, 2005), understand how community resources operate (Diemer et al., 2015), and able to find ways to utilize the available resources (Diemer & Blustein, 2006) are possible reasons as to why African Americans show positive correlation of CR and PYD.

There was no relation between PYD and CR in Latinx youth. As Latinx youth perceive the social and cultural reality of educational advancement and economic opportunity due to their adverse living conditions youth may allow external stimuli to decrease their PYD levels (Hill & Torres, 2010). Depending on the generation (e.g., second or third for Latinx youth), Latinx youth may not be familiar with the resources needed to support their growth in the United States and may have developed opposing attitudes towards educational success, despite their supportive home living circumstances (Hill & Torres, 2010; Rodriguez, 2002).

Furthermore, when running the correlations separately for African-Americans, it was determined that PYD 2017 positively related to PYD 2018, CR 2017 positively related to PYD 2017, and CR 2018 positively correlated to PYD 2018. Hope and Bañales (2019) explored the attributions and impacts of socialization in youth. Socialization is

considered messages about society, where a majority of messages are learned in contexts such as a youth's home (Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, & Rowley, 2007). There are many forms of institutional socialization such as in the form of educational systems (Ladson-Billings, 1998), religious doctrine, family values, and political ideology (Diemer, 2012). Racial socialization includes specific messaging about society and race, regarding how one should behave according to their race. Racial socialization may include messages from family members where they reflect on social inequities of which they underwent and attributed to the experiences as being a person of color. Having these conversations among family members shape how a marginalized youth views their community and how they may be seen in and outside of their community. Moreover, racial socialization messages can be linked to CR and PYD development (Bañales et al., 2019; Diemer, 2012). Racial socialization messages may be different for Latinx youth and African American youth. The socialization messages may likely support why there is a link among CR and PYD in African American youth and there is no evidence of relation in Latinx youth in this sample. Watts et al. (2003) suggested that youth benefit from a critical understanding of social conditions and how these conditions promote positive future development. Therefore, CR and socialization messages may play a role in PYD across diverse youth.

Is CR a significant predictor of growth in PYD in marginalized youth and does youth race moderate the relation between CR and PYD?

Results from the regression analyses indicated PYD in 2017 predicted PYD in 2018 for all youth over an academic year. The regression results indicated that for one

unit of change of PYD in 2017, PYD in 2018 increased by 0.71 units. This highlights the stability of the construct PYD. The regression results show that CR 2017 did not support PYD growth for youth in 2018 which was contrary to the researcher hypothesis three (i.e., high achieving marginalized youth were expected to report significant growth in PYD as a result of CR development). The mean level of African American youth CR 2018 $M = 3.62$, increased by 0.45 increments, while Latinx youth CR 2018 $M = 3.13$, increasing by 0.39 increments. Black youth continue to have greater levels of CR than Latinx youth. There is a possibility this finding is due to the type of racial socialization messages that African American youth receive. African American youth may be socialized with racial pride messages that include Black history resilience and positive ways to overcome obstacles (Lozada, Jagers, Smith, Bañales, & Hope, 2017). Racial pride messages indicated by previous authors may also support the difference between youth's PYD scores because of the positive association to their sociodemographic make-up. PYD in 2018 for African American youth $M = 4.07$ and in Latinx youth PYD in 2018 $M = 3.94$, which relatively stayed the same over the academic year. Future research could explore if there is a difference among racial pride messages and cultural pride messages, where Latinx youth may be support PYD with cultural pride messages instead of CR. However, understanding the utility of CR processes would provide researchers a way to link subjective experiences and meanings that high achieving marginalized youth may have as a result of CR.

Implications

Understanding how CR operates across diverse youth is yet to be thoroughly explored, as this is one of the few studies investigating the potential of CR as an influential factor of PYD. The act of CR is a critical analysis of perceived social inequalities, such as racial/ethnic, gendered, and socioeconomic constraints on educational and occupational opportunity” (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017, p.2). CR is related to PYD in high achieving African American youth, thus thought provoking conversations provides one way for practitioners to implement CR where they encourage marginalized youth to examine and question the social and cultural realities of their life circumstances. Additionally, high achieving African-American youth use CR as a tool in many instances: to understand the structural inequalities that can hamper their PYD, to motivate them towards success, and increase their well-being and PYD levels. Practitioners can implement activities that bolster CR development such as using frameworks that are justice-oriented (e.g., Social Justice Youth Development Framework). Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework fostered development of CR among marginalized youth by encouraging ways to be prideful in who they are by reflecting on power dynamics in their lives, developing critical thinking skills that focus on sociopolitical issues, and facilitating collective action (Ginwright & James, 2002).

In high achieving Latinx youth CR was not associated with PYD. Prior research has indicated that the links between CR and youth well-being may differ as a function of youth race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status (e.g., Tyler et al., 2019). Practitioners may develop specific culturally relevant programs that assess Latinx CR separately from

African American youth. Latinx youth may have different ways to reflect or converse about hypersensitive social issues that occur in their community. Practitioners should invest in learning about the culture of Latinx youth so that they are informed about the cultural realities of Latinx youth when facilitating these discussions.

Overall, youth practitioners should encourage youth to partake in opportunities that will aid in flourishing CR development as this process supports growth of PYD for a number of participants within this study. Furthermore, PYD is an important concept to explore for marginalized youth and represents the qualities that youth should exhibit in order to thrive in adulthood. CR development and associations to PYD is a subject that is growing rapidly (Diemer, 2012; Hope & Jagers, 2014; Seider et al., 2017). CR may assist high achieving marginalized Black youth by helping them to be more aware of societal barriers, being that they would be more equipped to overcome adverse conditions. Intuitively, it is not difficult to imagine that for marginalized youth with higher competence, confidence, caring, connection, character — elements of PYD — youth would be able to overcome perceived barriers by challenging, contesting, and navigating institutional systems. Overcoming perceived barriers could promote positive outlooks on life involving educational and economic advancements in high achieving marginalized youth. It is fair to mention that “research does not provide an answer” stated by (Watts et al., 2011, p. 47) but it does provide insight that will lead to better consideration of program activities involving conversations that will support CR as a strength and influential factor to PYD in marginalized youth.

Limitations

Critical reflection is a construct that requires the unfolding of processes that takes place as one develops analytical skills. CR may better be assessed in a mixed-method format such as including qualitative research designs to capture a deeper understanding of the nuances of CR. The lack of qualitative assessment is considered a limitation in this study because marginalized youth may be receiving different socialization messages from institutions such as school, home, and their personal life that may be overlooked from survey design (Hope & Bañales, 2019). Additionally, this sample did not include students who were not considered high-achieving marginalized youth; therefore, applying the findings of this study to all youth would be not be applicable. This study would need to be performed with youth who are not in an academic-based afterschool program to understand if CR levels would maintain its difference and to also determine if CR would be a significant growth indicator of PYD in specific marginalized youth.

CR survey questions created by Diemer et al. (2017), sought out perceived knowledge of marginalized youth pertaining to educational and economic constraints; however, in order to fully conceptualize the differences of CR among diverse racial groups, it may benefit researchers to create questions that are relevant to the cultural realities of the youth that are in the sample. Thus, applying the CR survey to all marginalized youth may be lacking in specificity and may be too broad to capture cultural perceptions of community conditions. For instance, questions asked on the survey may not be culturally relatable or relevant to marginalized youth as CR surveys focuses on educational and economic constraints that are racially and gendered-based. Perceptions of racial and gender groups may not be culturally relevant to all marginalized youth

populations causing youth to answer questions that do not pertain to them or where youth answers are neutral. This pose as a limitation because there may be less of a variance in the data being collected.

Lastly, Spencer and Spencer (2014) asserted that when assessing PYD in youth, researchers need to take into consideration the context for which the youth reside because geographic location can be an indicating factor as to how youth see their world. This consideration was outside the scope of this research design but is worth considering in future directions.

Future Directions

It is understood and supported that CR is a significant construct for marginalized youth (Diemer & Rapa, 2016) and PYD has been extensively researched (Bowers et al., 2010; Lerner et al., 2005). Because of PYD stability, future research should consider teasing out the separate Cs that compose the composite PYD construct as this may be a more indicative outcome of CR development. For instance, Crocetti, Erentaitė, and Žukauskienė (2014) investigated that PYD in youth could be determine by using factors such as youth's identity developmental style to predict growth. The researchers argued the stark differences of youth's reported Five Cs could be perceived by specific identity styles as youth matured in adolescence. The authors identified elements of PYD and contribution as youth outcomes. This study supports the proposed future study where researchers should consider CR and individual aspects of the Five Cs. CR may be better

justified as a skill for marginalized youth and best understood by investigating each C component instead of the composite PYD factor.

Seider et al., (2017), demonstrated how critical consciousness was associated with character development among a group of youth attended diverse schools. Just as critical consciousness has been linked to character – one of the Five Cs – CR can be argued to be linked to confidence and competence in urban youth. Confidence and competence may be used with critical thinking skills and bolster confident and competent youth that will become socially intelligent and operate in social responsibility (Watts, et al., 1999). Further, Watts et al., (1999), suggested that social intelligence was a key strength needed to navigate and overcome oppressive social conditions that may shape one’s life. Social intelligence may involve educating oneself on sociopolitical practices that are situated within the community which are positive outcomes of CR. Exploring CR associations to individual Five Cs are likely the next steps in PYD development.

As it relates to CR development, particularly in Latinx youth, practitioners might explore the utility of a cultural assessment to understand Latinx’s youth pathways to CR. This assessment should depict relevant and ethnic realities that Latinx youth may experience. Dowling (2004) contended in her research the challenging process that Latinx population undergo as they consider their race and ethnic identities in America. Latinx in her study identified as White, as a race, but more so as a form of status. Thus, future critical reflection assessments should reflect more of the ethnic qualities that highlight Latinx youth traditions and culture. Moreover, cultural assessments may examine if Latinx youth identifying with these qualities affect the relation among CR and PYD.

This research study focused on high-achieving marginalized youth attending academically-focused programming. Future research should focus on assessing youth who are not attending academic-based programs but may show concern towards community issues. It is possible that CR will also predict contribution within marginalized youth community due to the insight and knowledge they will glean from their critical analyses. Youth may feel compelled to engage in action-oriented resolutions to improve social conditions of their community. Future research that explores how the different types of contribution can be impacted by youth social assessment of their community may benefit the field of youth development since contribution qualifies as the 6th C in the Five Cs model. Lastly, it is a logical suggestion that marginalized youth CR scores could predict how youth decide to contribute back to their community. (Garcia Coll et al., 1996)

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CHAPTER FOUR

Critical Reflection's Role in Predicting Traditional Contribution and/or Critical Action Among Marginalized Youth

Abstract

Critical consciousness, an analysis of the social conditions in society, supports the development of youth through their participation in contributing within their community. Despite this link, the effect of critical consciousness on the type of contribution that youth participate in remains under researched. Using a self-report questionnaire, this study examined critical reflection—a component of critical consciousness—as a moderator of the relation of perception of justice-oriented OST activities and traditional contribution (e.g., related behaviors specific to civil society) and critical action (e.g., behaviors aimed to influence policy or institutional practices) in 158 high-achieving marginalized youth ($M_{\text{age}} = 14.5$; 61.4% female) who were predominantly non-white (98.1%). OLS regression analyses were conducted. Findings revealed that marginalized youth favored traditional contribution ($M = 3.7/5$) over critical action ($M = 1.29/5$) and scored close to neutral on the critical reflection scale ($M = 2.65/5$). Marginalized youth reported participating in traditional contribution at least once a month and critical action activities once or twice a year. Critical reflection was not a moderator for the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST activities and traditional contribution. However, critical reflection marginally moderated the relation between perception of OST justice-oriented activities and critical action. The implications of these findings and suggestions for future research are provided.

Introduction

Marginalized youth face structural inequalities in the United States (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002) and youth may use negative external conditions to direct their life paths rather than developing positive behaviors (Lerner, Wang, Champine, Warren, & Erickson, 2014). Considering the social conditions of marginalized communities, contribution efforts by youth may be a positive means of altering their life trajectory (Chan, Ou, & Reynolds, 2014; Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). However, promoting contribution among marginalized youth may be challenging. One way to get marginalized youth involved in giving back to their community is to find sociopolitical activities that are justice-oriented that will help youth develop critical consciousness skills such as critical reflection and critical action (Diemer, Rapa, Perry & Park, 2017).

Learning and mastering critical reflection (CR) skills helps marginalized youth uncover social-political-cultural realities (Diemer & Li, 2011). Critical action (CA) is how one person or a collective group decides to try to change social injustices (Diemer & Li, 2011). This type of youth contribution to the context differs from traditional approaches to youth contribution such as community service through volunteering at shelters, helping one's neighbors, or serving in student government (Hershberg, Johnson, Desouza, Hunter, & Zaff, 2015; Lerner, Wang, Champine, et al., 2014). Predictors of contribution can be found in contextual factors such as community or school based activities (Hershberg et al., 2015). One context to explore CR and the different types of contribution are found in out-of-school time (OST) programs that marginalized youth

frequently attend. The perception of quality of OST activities that are justice-oriented can be the determining factor in whether youth choose to participate in either traditional contribution, CA, or both (Eccles, 2002). Justice-oriented OST activities implementing CR could provide an experience that would create an urgency within marginalized youth to contribute to civil society by facilitating changes in their community.

High achieving marginalized youth are a specialized population that would benefit from understanding the systemic realities of society (Ginwright & James, 2002). Not only would understanding about the realities of society help youth be assertive and contest social change but also fostering youth understanding of their own perceived inequities can help youth learn to navigate through adverse conditions. Marginalized youth who are cognizant about their social realities might have a stronger recognition of their role in society and be in the position to benefit from contribution back to their society through the form of traditional contribution and critical action (Hershberg et al., 2015). For marginalized youth, not learning critical reflection skills can be detrimental to promoting healthier outlooks on life and the community (Ginwright, 2010). High achieving marginalized youth stand a high probability of developing cognitive skills that can help them be reflective and strategically think in regards to evaluating the circumstances of the environment in which they live (Larson & Hansen, 2005). High-achievement among youth can be considered a protective factor from universal barriers and adverse realities that plague marginalized communities (Carter, 2008). Carter (2008) and Rogers and Terriquez (2013) posited that youth who develop higher levels of critical reflection have pragmatic attitudes about continuing school, being successful in school,

and investigating how social change can take place. Thus, high achieving marginalized youth are a population that show promise of contributing behaviors that will be advantageous to their community.

Little research has explored how the perception of justice-oriented OST activities predicts diverse types of contribution among marginalized youth. Therefore, the aim of this study is to better understand the connection between justice-oriented OST activities and the types of contribution that marginalized youth engage in to improve their communities.

Literature Review

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness “describes how oppressed or marginalized people learn to critically analyze their social conditions and act to change them” (Watts, Roderick, Diemer, & Voight, 2011, p. 44). Becoming critically conscious is theorized to occur through a cyclical process of reflection and action-oriented tasks (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Jemal, 2017). Marginalized youth are defined here as youth of color who experience socioeconomic or racialized forms of domination (Diemer & Li, 2011). As marginalized youth recognize or perceive inequities in their context they may search for ways to appropriately express themselves in order to influence change (P. Freire, 2000). Watts, Griffith, and Abdul-Adil (1999) further described critical consciousness as a remedy to overcome structural oppression, but a marginalized youth must first undergo a process that unpacks the socially embedded political-historical-economic- institutional inequities within their communities.

The critical consciousness research highlights positive outcomes in youth including effective decision making, achieving academic success, and ways that youth give back to their community (Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer et al., 2017; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Ginwright & James, 2002; Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter, 2017; Watts et al., 2011). The Social Justice Youth Development (SJYD) framework by Ginwright and James (2002), suggest alternative ways to measure contribution among marginalized youth. The framework utilized justice-oriented principles in order to organize and mobilize youth to be agents of their development. When youth develop these principles through critical reflection they become cognizant to the society for which they live. Ginwright and James (2002) explains in their study that youth who participate in programs that use the SJYD framework are more inclined to engage in contribution. SJYD programs have been used mostly in social justice oriented contexts. Exploring SJYD principles in an academic-based program that is non-justice oriented might shed light on ways that practitioners can reach high-achieving marginalized youth without disturbing their academic structure.

Critical consciousness is composed of two components: critical reflection and critical action (Diemer & Li, 2011). Critical reflection (CR) is a process a person enters in as a result of an awakening experience (i.e., connecting social-emotional-historical-political realities that take place in a person's life regarding the conditions that are shaping their experiences) (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006). Critical consciousness helps a person view and see their world from a different perspective from which a person might explore strategies to improve their life chances (Ginwright &

Cammarota, 2007). Specifically, CR empowers marginalized youth to be conscious of social responsibility and provides insight into the power dynamics of the social systems within society (Flanagan & Christens, 2011). Being able to analyze the social systems of society creates a sense of competence and confidence in youth as they navigate and challenge oppressive structures that may impede their development (Hope & Bañales, 2019). From a cognitive perspective, Fine, (1991) mentioned that youth need to possess a certain level of cognitive capacity to understand the nuances of complex social systems. Because CR is such an abstract construct, youth who are considered high-achieving are better able to process the knowledge of systematic oppression and the impact upon the conditions of the community to then figure out ways to resolve the conditions. However, knowledge of community issues may not motivate youth to contribute back to society (Fine, 1991). Practitioners considering activities that bring social justice issues to the light to engage high-achieving marginalized youth in contribution should also provide ways to make activities fun, fresh and innovative (Reed Larson, 2006). Research contends that examining CR as a tool to measure contribution levels is better studied in marginalized youth because of the poor social and economic circumstances where youth reside. (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). High achieving marginalized youth who possess CR stand a higher probability of obtaining clarity on socioeconomic issues within their community and committing to improving living conditions (Chan et al., 2014). There is little research available as to how high-achieving marginalized youth will react to learning about these conditions and the contributions that will come from their perception of participating in the activities.

Critical action (CA) represents how oppressed populations enact and mobilize social change (Diemer & Li, 2011). CA is exemplified when marginalized populations transform from being the objects of oppression to active subjects with a liberated mindset from oppressive realities (Diemer et al., 2010). CA underscores a marginalized population's capability to contest and change social conditions in a political way. When marginalized populations participate in CA, they are demonstrating agency, joining allied forces, and contesting reform policies that perpetuate systemic inequality (Diemer, McWhirter, Ozer, & Rapa, 2015).

Researchers consider CR as being the catalyst to CA (Diemer & Li, 2011; Diemer & Rapa, 2016). Diemer and Rapa (2016) provided evidence that CA is based on sociopolitical literacy, which is the capacity to recognize and then change social and political inequalities. For example, Diemer and Rapa (2016) were able to demonstrate that the construct of CR was a determining factor to youth participating in both conventional political action (i.e., voting) and activism (i.e., participating in social action groups, protesting, etc.); however, youth with greater CR levels participated more in activism type contribution. Diemer and Rapa (2016) found that when African-American and Latinx youth (n=761) learned of unequal resource allocation among their communities they were more apt to partake in CA. Youth saw these action steps as the most effective way to impact social change. Findings supported the development of CR – youth perceived inequities – and initiated action for social change.

Moreover, Diemer and Li (2011) studied a sample of marginalized youth, (N = 665, 15-25 years of age, 53.1% identified as youth of color) to better understand youth

who were politically disengaged. Researchers hypothesized that critical consciousness levels would predict traditional voting behavior. The sociopolitical support of peers, parents, and teachers would moderate this relationship. Additionally, researchers posited that youth who experienced “habits” of civic and extracurricular participation (e.g., routine activities that youth are involved in while at school—student council—or while in out-of-school spaces—volunteering at soup kitchens), would likely continue to contribute to these habits well into adulthood (Diemer & Li, 2011). Peers and parents are influential because they may aid in youth connecting vital social issues to root causes of unjust conditions within the community. Teachers could create a classroom environment that could bolster the development of critical consciousness by making sure there are opportunities for political engagement. Diemer and Li (2011) mentioned that marginalized youth may not be afforded similar experiences of sociopolitical support when compared to a white affluent family. Many White affluent youth observed their parents taking on political tasks and were able to practice discussing these political matters with other affluent youth (Diemer, 2012). As a result, affluent youth were able to utilize social and political understanding to practice justice-oriented activities in school. Findings indicated that the foundation of sociopolitical development significantly depends on parental and peer political support, which may be lacking in most marginalized households and communities. Traditional contribution behaviors result from positive engagement with community and civil society (Lerner, Wang, Chase, et al., 2014). Out-of-school time (OST) activities may be a resourceful context for marginalized youth to participate in traditional contribution and complement what youth learn in

formal education. The habits gleaned from justice-oriented activities have the potential to influence CR, yield social action outcomes, and promote positive developmental trajectories for marginalized youth (Chan et al., 2014).

In order to create spaces where youth feel the importance of engaging in the community civically, there should be programming that implement features that engender social responsibility among youth (Ginwright & James, 2002). OST programs can be conceptualized as practices that foster skills and provide opportunities where youth can participate in both traditional contribution and CA. Researchers have typically interacted and involved youth in traditional contribution and critical action via OST programming throughout the community (Ginwright and Cammarota, 2002). Therefore, contextual factors that encourage contribution must be considered (Duerden & Witt, 2010), when evaluating youth development programs.

An effective component of creating a thriving community that fosters civic participation is to involve youth. Theoretically, a community that thrives consists of members coming together to reduce disparities, promote positive outlooks on life, and contribute back to youth (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). OST programs are contexts that can support and promote youth toward building a collective society (Walker, Scott, & Stodolska, 2016) through understanding their community conditions and then taking appropriate action. Therefore, there is a case for examining spaces — of importance are the quality of activities and how youth perceive the activities within these space in order to better understand how to promote the outcomes of contribution and/or CA of marginalized youth.

Out-of-School Time Programs

OST programs and activities, are often intended to promote positive youth development through several methods where youth strengths are aligned with the ecological assets of their community (Mueller et al., 2011). OST programs are intended to foster a variety of skills (e.g., life skills, problem-solving skills) (Simpkins, Riggs, Ngo, Vest Ettekal, & Okamoto, 2017; Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015). Additionally, Hershberg and colleagues (2015) recommended that skill building in OST activities should provide social contexts and platforms where youth have opportunities to be active and engaged citizens within their communities. OST programming that foster social responsible practices may facilitate activities that aim at engendering civic responsibility that matter to marginalized youth.

Youth spend a sizable amount of their time in OST settings, providing the potential to establish a deep understanding of social conditions within their community. From a cultural relevance perspective, Murray and Milner (2015) and Simpkins et al. (2017) asserted that educational facilities may be at a disadvantage in facilitating discussions around social equality. Therefore, a probable place to support thriving among marginalized youth may occur in OST programming (e.g., programs that focus on academics or sports programming) as opposed to formal educational settings. Due to the instructional set up of OST programs, cultivating strategic thinking skills among youth should result in bringing about a critical awareness of their community, which may be effortlessly grasped by youth due to immediate cultural relevance (Larson, 2006; Simpkins et al., 2017).

OST programs are spaces where marginalized youth can develop CR that can help them live successful and thriving lives. Hershberg et al. (2015) considered thriving as a significant marker indicating that youth understand the importance and necessity to invest and contribute back to their community. Hershberg et al., (2015) postulated that when youth participate in activities that support the development of CR and further understand the outcomes, youth grapple with relevant ways in which their contributions can be effective. However, the levels, types, and processes underlying contribution and the structure of activities that promote giving back by youth may be different for those from marginalized communities (Hershberg et al., 2015). For instance, in Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) SJYD framework outlines five justice-oriented principles that can be used to help marginalized youth develop CR. These principles link the relation between being critical conscious and social action. The practices that the authors suggest are relevant to youth. Additionally, Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) suggest optimal contexts that help youth understand and look beyond adverse social conditions to examine the developmental supports, opportunities, and resources that are restricted by institutional systems. The authors also mention contextual factors such as community-based projects or activities that youth should participate in to build social awareness and bolster justice-oriented goals. Therefore, it is worth investigating the quality of justice-oriented activities and youth perceptions of these activities in order to support implementing specific programming that bring forth positive outcomes in marginalized youth. CR may moderate the relation between perception of OST justice-oriented activities and the type of contribution in which youth choose to participate. Exploring

these constructs inform the ways in which youth view the different ways to give back to their community.

Justice-oriented OST programs may be a conduit to promote ways that develop youth's capacity to learn how to analyze their communities critically through reflection and to build navigational skills. However, the likelihood of justice-oriented OST programs promoting these competencies depends on the quality of these program experiences (Eccles, 2002; Murray & Milner, 2015). Eccles (2002) argues that the quality of program content is most prominent when developing a program's curriculum because quality plays a huge role in youth attending and remaining in the program. Eccles (2002) states that not only do youth report fun as a specific quality they look for in a program, but also how helpful the information is within the program. A program's helpful quality can be considered how much the activities of the program lead to goal-oriented outcomes (Eccles, 2002). Larson, Hansen, and Walker (2005) posited that quality of programs are correlated to youth attendance. They further mentioned that program and activities should be strategically based where youth can understand that activities are structured to help them to reach their goals and thrive in the community for which they live. Murray and Milner (2015) described the specific characteristics and qualities that make OST programming a favorable and productive context for discussing critical matters that youth face. Qualities include having flexible curricula and activities that allow youth to participate in civic engagements, practice conflict resolution, and speak on oppressive realities in their community. OST programs have the flexibility to create spaces where participants have the opportunity to explore and access information from other resources

(e.g., computer labs, technology, Wi-Fi) where they are able to increase their content and knowledge about historical events (Murray & Milner, 2015). Historical events include learning the truths about their society by way of specific OST activities (i.e., peer discussion about past and current social issues and the future) may be helpful to marginalized youth in providing reasoning as to why community contribution and CA is needed (Hope & Jagers, 2014). Simpkins et al. (2017) suggested that incorporating thoughtfully structured activities where youth participate in discussions around important social issues help youth to think through situations, scenarios, and the impact these conditions can have on their well-being. Thus, OST programming would allow youth a culturally-relevant and safe space to develop and discuss their perspectives and discover ways to positively address the negative impact of current undesirable social conditions in their community.

Further, participating in candid conversations about social issues in OST settings could shape youth toward becoming persons who want to learn more about how change can be accomplished for marginalized communities. Caldwell and Witt (2011) suggested that leisure spaces such as OST programs may provide youth this experience of engagement. Opportunities for interaction would then illuminate conditions of inequity that people of marginal communities experience as a result of the institutional structures embedded in society (Allison, 2000). Ginwright and Cammarota's (2002) research suggested that when youth are exposed directly to the problems of society, it allows them to find strategic solutions by critically thinking through the scenario and carrying out their own plans for resolution. OST settings can facilitate these guided discussions by

portraying real world issues of which marginalized youth face in the proximity of their communities.

Contribution

Hershberg et al. (2015) contended that traditional contribution includes active and engaged youth who exhibit behavior that portrays actions that give back to civil society. The authors also lean towards the different types of contribution among marginalized youth. Traditional contribution actions are considered positive engagement with family and civil society (Lerner, Wang, Champine, et al., 2014). When youth participate in traditional contribution they learn civic skills that bolster their ability to connect with the community (Hershberg et al., 2015). These activities reflect youth involvement in the community via volunteering at shelters, helping out a neighbor, helping family, and serving on student government. Civic duty may also promote positive developmental trajectories for youth who may be at risk for negative outcomes (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). In a study conducted by Chan et al., (2014), researchers examined the associations between youth individual and collective activities that addressed public concerns and how these outcomes might enhance the well-being of the community. This study underscored the broad terms of contribution and defined public concerns as youth who engaged in traditional contribution (e.g., participating in community activities that help homeless families) are likely to promote healthy and successful development and enhance political equality in youth (Chan et al., 2014). Additional research support outcomes of traditional contribution as it is linked to positive individual developmental assets in youth and youth ideologies of contribution (Hershberg, DeSouza, Warren,

Lerner, & Lerner, 2014). Behaviors such as helping family members, friends, and others defined by Hershberg, DeSousa, Warren, Lerner, and Lerner (2014) are contribution efforts that youth report as meaningful and valuable. Although traditional contribution may support youth giving back to their community, youth in marginalized communities may desire a different type of contribution that might resonate youth more intensely (Hershberg et al., 2015). Thus, critical action is youth behavior that is influenced by activism and is developed when youth question the status quo of society (Kirshner, 2007). Critical action then becomes a work in progress toward improving social conditions for themselves and the overall society. Through critical action is beneficial to youth directing their anger for injustices toward positive developmental ends (Hansen et al., 2003). Critical action projects may be found in informal settings where youth are able to go beneath the surface of community social conditions to determine practices that could be explored to reduce the adverse conditions plaguing marginalized communities (Kirshner, 2007). Youth experience the results of their efforts when they collaborate with caring adults and other peers in a collective group. Community youth programs that take place in an OST context has the potential to support youth activism groups where youth are empowered through CR skills. Youth who used CR skills will likely contribute to their community either individually or in a collective group (Chan et al., 2014). Youth-activism groups facilitate effective critical action because they are promoted by invested adults and provide strategies for youth to accomplish goals and learn relevant skills that will help them thrive in adulthood (Kirshner, 2007).

Programs have been designed where CA is the intended outcome of activity implementation. Freire (1972) contended that CA is action upon the world in order to transform the world. In particular transforming the world translates to transforming one's community. The SJYD framework is one model that encourages youth giving back to their community and supports youth as transforming agents. Through the five justice-oriented principles, practices were developed to encompass political education, community organizing, and working to end social inequality. Outcomes of this framework produced youth who were more apt to work on projects that influence social change and strengthened the well-being of the community through engagement and involvement. Christens and Kirshner (2011) reported that youth participating in a social justice OST program utilized political education to illuminate inequities in a Los Angeles high school. Youth participated in forums and wrote proposals to the high school superintendent in order to enact change in their school's policy concerning safety issues. Moreover, youth who have the opportunity to be open about sensitive conditions within their community and are able to stand up for what they believe in are more likely to participate in CA activities (Godfrey & Burson, 2018). There is limited research that explores OST programming activities and CR with the goal of bolstering youth who have interest in both traditional contribution and CA.

Evaluating whether there is a relation between justice-oriented OST programming activities and traditional contribution and/ or critical action levels moderated by CR, would contribute to research on adolescent development and provide a theoretical foundation for curricular frameworks used in OST programs. The impact of improving

marginalized communities may be situated in leisure programs as these programs have the potential to include civic-based education linked to positive outcomes in youth (Kelly-Pryor, & Outley, 2014). From the research cited above it is possible that CR skills developed in an OST setting may help youth increase their developmental assets and different CR levels may encourage different contribution types. Lerner et al. (2014) stated that neither individual nor contextual factors should prevent a youth from participating in contributing to their community. Lerner and associates were referring to conditions in a youth's community that might discourage youth from wanting to give back to their neighbors and society (e.g., unmitigated violence in communities or parental disapproval, things that would either deter or physically hurt a youth). Lerner et al. (2014) conclude that those who work with youth should work towards applying specific characteristics to youth programming that will engage youth in contribution activities dependent on the ecological impact of the youth's community of youth. Practitioners may collaborate with other organizations to find the resources, align these resources with the strength of the youth and foster positive growth.

Critical Reflection, OST Programs, and Contribution

Critical reflection is implemented by marginalized persons when there is a critical analysis of social-political-economic powers that operate in a community (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). This analysis takes place in a number of ecological contexts: school, faith-based organization, community-based programs, and while at home. Researchers suggest that OST programs are an effective context that would enable youth to engage in discussion surrounding community and social conditions (Murray and

Milner, 2015; Simpkins et al., 2017). Examining the potential of developing positive habits (e.g., traditional contribution and CA) that facilitate youth giving back to their community may be found through the perception of OST activities in which they participate. This relation may be stronger or weaker if youth exhibit CR. Research supports that CR has the ability to promote youth's critical thinking where youth learn to consider many aspects of making effective decisions for their lives (Ginwright & James, 2011). For instance, Watts and Flanagan (2007) critique of organizing youth around justice-oriented issues supports including activism focused activities that afford youth the opportunity to implement social change. Researchers suggest the need to balance contribution efforts in youth's community by including aspects of CR while in community-based programs (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Diemer and Li (2011) contend that marginalized youth who are aware of the inequities in their communities have a higher probability of participating in social change via traditional contribution (Diemer & Li, 2011). Having critical reflective skills fosters this investment within the community. OST programs (i.e., community-based programs) are structures where civic and political constructs can be learned and understood as youth become involved in one or both forms of traditional contribution and CA.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine in a sample of high-achieving marginalized youth, whether the perception of quality of justice-oriented OST activities influences traditional contribution and/or CA. I will also examine whether CR moderates

the relation between the perceptions of OST activities and the types of contribution in which youth engage.

Questions of inquiry:

1. In high-achieving marginalized youth, does quality of justice-oriented OST programs influence traditional contribution in their community? Additionally, does critical reflection moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST programs and traditional contribution?
2. In high-achieving marginalized youth, does quality of justice-oriented OST programs influence critical action in their community? Additionally, does critical reflection moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST programs and critical action?

I expected high-achieving marginalized youth attending OST programs to report higher levels of traditional contribution when they report more positive perceptions of OST justice-oriented activities (Hershberg et al., 2015). I expected CR to have a significant effect as a moderator on the relation between perception of OST justice-oriented activities and traditional contribution where CR would affect the strength or direction of the level of traditional contribution in youth. I hypothesized that youths' reported traditional contribution would show as positive and traditional contribution levels would increase as a result of their perception of the justice oriented OST activity and CR relation (hypothesis one).

I expected there to be no significant relation between youth perception of OST justice-oriented activities and CA. I expected CR to be a statistical significant moderator between perception of OST justice-oriented activities and CA, where CR would affect the

direction or strength of the relation between perception of OST justice-oriented activities and CA (hypothesis two). I hypothesized that when youth report high levels of CR, perceptions of justice oriented activities would be positively related to CR; at low levels of CR, there would be no relation between perceptions and CA. Watts and Flanagan (2007) suggested that CR might be influential factor that may impact the way in which youth participate in critical action behaviors. These behaviors are influenced by organizing youth around justice-oriented activities. Therefore, if youth participate in justice-oriented activities that are influenced by developing CR skills, youth should exhibit CA.

Method

Program Description

The data collected for this research were obtained as part of a larger study on the Boys Hope Girls Hope (BHGH) Academy programs. Data were collected at three time points throughout the academic school year: Fall 2017, Winter 2018, and Spring 2018. I only used the Winter 2018 cross-section of data from the larger research design. BHGH Academy programs are holistic OST college preparation programs for “risk immersed” youth who show academic promise. The programs focus is to deliver long term, comprehensive academic and emotional support services for youth. BHGH Academy programs are non-residential programs, and programming takes place during after school hours. BHGH programs are located in six Academy program sites: Phoenix, Denver (Aurora), Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco, and St. Louis. The aim of the larger study was to explore the practices of the six academy programs and their links to positive youth

developmental outcomes in order to determine standards for BHGH Academy programming. Only elements of the larger study pertinent to this study are described below.

Participants and Procedure

BHGH scholars are considered high-achieving youth because they have indicated maintaining A's, A's and B's, and B's on their grade report and are considered college-bound. In addition, although procedures differ somewhat across sites, scholars were required to complete an application process to be a part of BHGH, which included a personal statement, essay questions, and an interview with BHGH staff. Additionally, BHGH scholars are motivated to go to college after high school and are motivated to be a part of BHGH because of the help that BHGH offers for college preparation and scholarship opportunities (e.g., 91% of surveyed youth reported that this financial support was a reason that they joined BHGH). Scholars commit to attending weekly BHGH meetings and completing the additional requirements, such as community service or additional academic work, that are required.

Informed consent/assent was obtained from all individual participants and parents included in the study. The study was approved by Clemson University IRB.

Survey procedures. BHGH youth in the present study completed surveys in Winter 2018 (N=158) and identified as African-American (41.1%), Latinx (38.0%), Asian (7.6%), Multi-ethnic (6.3%), White (1.9%), Other race (2.5%) (See Table 1). Survey participants were 61.4% female and between the ages of 11 to 18 years of age, 66.2% representing those between the ages of 14-18.

Convenience sampling was used to administer surveys via Qualtrics by BHGH staff and the research team. At sites where there was no access to internet service, paper surveys were administered and verified for completion by the research team.

Table 4.1
Socio-Demographics of Study

Socio-demographics	n=158	% Sample
Gender		
Male	62	39%
Female	96	61%
Race		
African American	67	42.7%
Asian	12	7.6%
Latinx	62	39.0%
Multi-ethnic	10	6.3%
White	3	1.9%
Other	4	2.5%
Age		
11-13 yrs old		33.8%
14-18 yrs old		66.2%
<i>M</i> =15 (1.08)		

Quantitative Measures

SJYD program practices. There were 13 survey questions. According to the involvement of activities that each principle represented, the research team associated each of the survey questions to the corresponding SJYD principle creating five identifiable variables (please see Appendix D). For instance, making identity central is associated with two activity questions; analyzing power within relationships is associated with three activity questions; promoting systematic change is associated with two activities; collective action is associated with four activities; embracing youth culture is associated with two activities. Therefore, a participant can participate in no activities or all activities involving the associated principle. Out of 13 activities, the overall number of activities each youth participated in were created in order to evaluate if participation in SJYD activities predicted critical reflection levels. Please see Appendix B for further explanations of the associated survey questions.

In order to measure participation in SJYD activities, youth were asked if they had participated in any of the 13 program activities exhibiting the five SJYD principles — *analyzing social relationships, promoting systematic change, making identity central, encouraging collective action, and embracing youth culture*. I developed 13 survey questions each concerning a particular activity in which youth may have engaged at BHGH. Each of the survey questions corresponded to a particular SJYD principle (see Appendix D). For instance, making identity central is associated with two activity questions; analyzing power within relationships is associated with three activity questions; promoting systematic change is associated with two activities; collective

action is associated with 4 activities; embracing youth culture is associated with two activities.

Those who participated in the activities were then asked how helpful was the activity. Perceived helpfulness of the activity was based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Not helpful* to 5 = *Very helpful*. Scores across the activities in which each youth reported participating were averaged to create a composite Helpful score. Cronbach's alphas for Helpful was $\alpha = .91$.

Critical reflection. To measure CR youth were asked to respond to eight questions about perceived inequalities from the Critical Consciousness scale (Diemer et al., 2017). Some example items are “Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education,” “Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs,” and “Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead.” The response range for this scale was adapted in the present study to be based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. This adaptation aligned response options across the scales used in the full questionnaire (Passmore, Dobbie, Parchman, & Tysinger, 2002). The composite scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater perception of consciousness of constraints on opportunity. For the current study, the Cronbach's Alpha for the critical reflection scale was .96.

Contribution. To measure contribution in BHGH Academy activities youth were asked to respond to six questions about helping and service (Geldhof et al., 2014; Lerner et al., 2005). Some example items are how often have you “Helped a friend” or “Helped a

neighbor”. Response categories were based on a 5-point scale ranging from *1 = Never* to *5 = Very Often*. Youth were asked frequency of engaging in service. Questions such as how often do you “Volunteer your Time (somewhere like at a hospital, day care center, food bank, youth program, community service agency)” and how often do you “Mentor or participate in Peer Advising”. Response categories were based on a 5-point scale ranging from *1 = Never* to *5 = Every day*. Responses across the six questions were averaged with the composite scores ranging from 1 to 5 and higher scores indicating greater perceived contribution levels. For the current study, the Cronbach's Alpha for the contribution scale was .61.

Critical Action. To measure critical action in BHGH Academy activities youth were asked to respond to nine questions about sociopolitical participation (Diemer et al., 2017). Some example items are how often have you “Participated in a civil rights group or organization” or “Wrote a letter to a school, community newspaper, or publication about a social or political issue.” Response categories were based on a 5-point scale ranging from *1=Never did this* to *5=At least once a week*. Averages across the nine items were calculated. The composite scores ranged from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater perceived critical action levels. For the current study, the Cronbach's Alpha for the critical action scale was .79.

Data Analysis

To test hypothesis one, I measured the direct effect of the BHGH Scholar’s perception of the quality of justice-oriented OST activities in predicting self-reported contribution in marginalized youth. I used CR as a moderating variable. I examined a

zero-order correlation matrix in preparation for an OLS regression analysis. I examined the regression coefficient to determine if the hypothesized paths were statistically significant (Baron & Kenny, 1986). I performed mean centering on interaction variables (Aiken & West, 1991). A test of the interaction between perception of justice-oriented OST activities and traditional contribution was used to evaluate whether CR was a moderating variable. Judgment of significant values were set at $p < 0.10$ as marginal significance, $p < .05$, and $p < .01$ (Olsson-Collentine, Van Assen, & Hartgerink, 2019).

To test hypothesis two, I measured the direct effect of perception of justice-oriented OST activities in predicting CA in marginalized youth. I tested CR as a moderating variable. I examined a zero-order correlation matrix in preparation for an OLS regression analysis. I examined the regression coefficient to determine if the hypothesized paths were statistically significant (Baron and Kenny, 1986). I performed mean centering on interaction variables (Aiken & West, 1991). A test of the interaction between perception of justice-oriented OST activities and CA was used to evaluate whether CR was a moderating variable. Judgment of significant values were at level $p < 0.10$ as marginal significance, $p < .05$, and $p < .01$ levels (Olsson-Collentine, Van Assen, & Hartgerink, 2019).

Results

The zero-order correlation matrix (Table 4.2) displays interrelationships of the independent and dependent variables, Means for the composite variables are also included.

Table 4.2

*Zero-Order Correlation Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations
Among Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1. Helpfulness	-				3.70	0.81
2. Critical Reflection	.11	-			2.65	1.17
3. Traditional Contribution	.20*	.21**	-		2.90	0.72
4. Critical Action	.16	.20*	.33***	-	1.29	0.58

Note. M =average scores are on a scale from 1 to 5

*Correlation is significant at .05 level (two-tailed)

+ $p < .1$ < .05*, $p < .01$ ** $p < .001$ ***

Perception of justice-oriented OST activities (i.e., helpfulness scores) was significantly associated with traditional contribution ($r = .20, p < .05$). CR and traditional contribution is significantly associated ($r = .21, p < .01$) and CR and CA was significantly associated ($r = .20, p < .05$). Traditional contribution and CA were significantly associated ($r = .33, p < .001$). Examining the composite means in Table 3, youth reported that justice-oriented OST activities were helpful ($M = 3.7/5$). On the helpful scale a 3.7 is between the response “” to “somewhat helpful” to “quite a bit helpful”, 1. Examining the composite means in Table 3, youth reported that levels of CR were near the midpoint of the scale ($M = 2.65/5$). Youth reported on average that they "disagree" or “somewhat agree and disagree” That opportunities differ as a results of social inequities. Youth were

more likely to report participating in traditional contribution (2.9/5) over activities that reflect CA activities (1.9/5). Youth reported taking part in traditional contribution activities “sometimes” or “a couple times per month.” Whereas youth on average reported that they participated in critical action activities “once or twice” in the last year.

Research Question 1: In high-achieving marginalized youth, does quality of justice-oriented OST programs influence contribution in their community? Additionally, does CR moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST programs and contribution?

I ran an ordinary least squares multivariate linear regression model of perception of justice-oriented OST activities and CR as predictors of traditional contribution. The R^2 for the overall model in Table 3 was 8.6% with an adjusted R^2 of 5.8%. The variables together account for 5.8% of the variance in traditional contribution scores, a small effect size yet significant portion ($F(3, 99) = 3.10, p < .05$) (Cohen, 1988). Regression results indicated that perception of justice-oriented OST activities demonstrated a marginal significance as a predictor of growth in traditional contribution scores ($b = .15, p < .10$). CR was a significant predictor of traditional contribution growth ($b = .12, p < .05$). CR did not moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST activities predicting contribution efforts ($b = 0.02, p = .75$). For every one unit change in perception of justice-oriented activities, holding all other variables constant, there is a .15 unit change in contribution. For every one unit change in CR, holding all other variables constant, there is a 0.12 unit change in contribution. Both perception of justice-oriented

activities and CR are significant predictors of traditional contribution ($t(99) = 1.73$; $t(99) = 2.19$, respectively, both p values were $< .05$). See Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Regression Results for Perception of Justice-Oriented OST Activities, Critical Reflection, and Interaction

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Perception of justice-oriented OST activities</i>	0.15	0.09	.18	1.73	.09+
<i>Critical reflection</i>	0.12	0.06	.22	2.19	.03*
<i>Perception of justice-oriented OST act x Critical reflection</i>	0.02	0.07	.03	0.32	.75

DV: Traditional Contribution
 $+p < .10$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$
Note. $R^2 = .086$ $p < .05$

Research Question 2: In high-achieving marginalized youth, does quality of justice-oriented OST programs influence critical action in their community? Additionally, does CR moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST programs and critical action?

I ran an ordinary least squares multivariate linear regression model of perception of justice-oriented OST activities and CR as predictors of CA. The R^2 for the overall model in Table 4.4 was 8.7% with an adjusted R^2 of 6%. The variables together account for 6.0% of the variance in CA scores, a small effect size yet significant portion, ($F(3, 100) = 3.18, p < .10$) (Cohen, 1988). Regression results indicated that perception of justice-oriented OST activities demonstrated a marginal significance as a predictor of growth in CA scores ($b = .16, p < .10$). CR was a marginal significant predictor of CA growth ($b = .09, p = .10$). For every one unit change in perception of justice-oriented activities, holding all other variables constant, there is a .16 unit change in CA. For every one unit change in CR, holding all other variables constant, there is a 0.09 unit change in CA. Both perception of justice-oriented activities and CR are marginal predictors of CA ($t(100) = 1.90; t(100) = 1.67$, respectively, both p values were $< .10$). See Table 4.4. The interaction between perception of justice-oriented OST activities and CR demonstrated a marginal significance predicting growth in CA ($b = .11, p < .10$). Figure 4.1 demonstrates the small moderating effect of critical reflection on the relation between perception of justice-oriented activities and critical action. When youth reported low levels of CR, perceptions of helpfulness of the activities were not related to CA. However, as youth CR levels went up, the relation between perceptions of helpfulness and CA became stronger.

That is, at higher levels of CR, greater perceptions of helpfulness were more strongly related to greater CA.

Table 4.4

Regression Results for Perception of Justice-Oriented OST Activities, Critical Reflection, and Interaction

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Perception of justice-oriented OST activities</i>	0.16	0.06	.19	1.90	.06+
<i>Critical reflection</i>	0.09	0.05	.16	1.67	.10+
<i>Perception of justice-oriented OST act x Critical reflection</i>	0.11	0.07	.17	1.65	.10+

DV: Critical Action

+*p*<.10<.05*, *p*<.01***p*<.001***

*Note. R*² = .087 *p* < .05

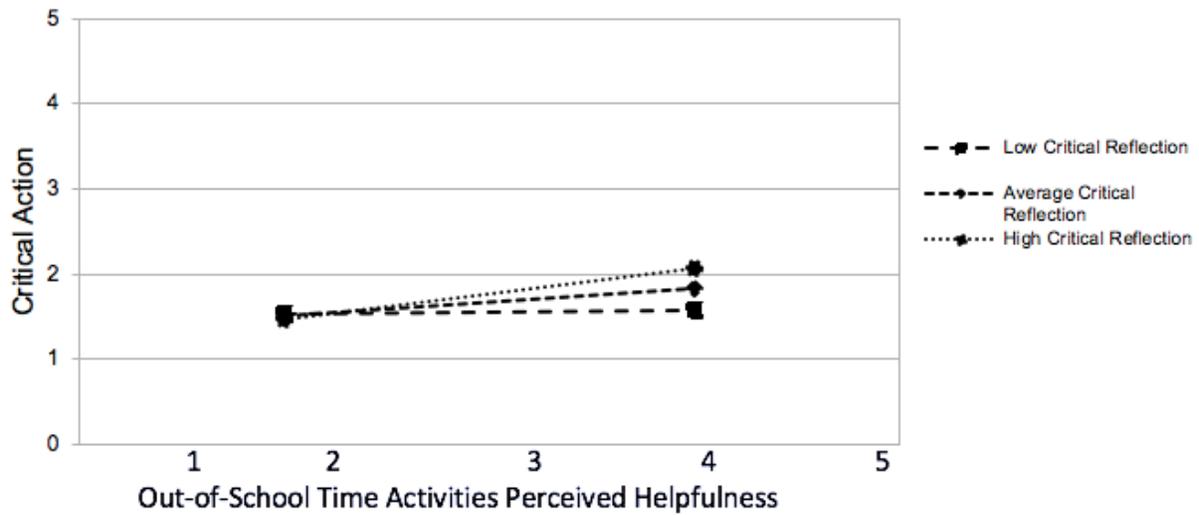


Figure 4.1. *Simple Slopes of Perception of Justice-Oriented OST Activities Predicting CA for the Effect of CR.*

Figure 4.1 demonstrates the interaction between perceived justice oriented OST activities and CA moderated by CR. As youth CR levels went up, the relation between perceptions of helpfulness and CA became stronger.

Discussion

This study evaluated whether CR moderates the relation between perceived justice-oriented OST activities and traditional contribution and CA. Three conclusions can be drawn from the results:

1. The perception of how helpful justice oriented OST activities were and their utility in predicting traditional contribution and CA were marginally significant. Contrary to hypotheses, high-achieving marginalized youth perceptions of justice oriented OST activities exhibited a similar relation to CA and traditional contribution.

2. In high-achieving marginalized youth, CR showed significant associations with traditional contribution and CA as indicated by the correlation matrix; however, CR had a stronger statistically significant relation with traditional contribution in the full regression models.
3. CR was a marginally significant moderator of the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST activities and CA. In youth with moderate to high CR scores, CA increased as youth participated in more helpful OST activities. Youth with low CR scores maintained low CA regardless of perceived helpfulness of OST activities.

Perception of OST activities was positively but weakly related to traditional contribution. The results are consistent with hypothesis one, and with prior research that indicate participation in justice-oriented OST activities that were considered helpful would impact youth participation in traditional contribution activities (Eccles, 2002). Further, in line with hypothesis one, CR did not moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST activities in predicting traditional contribution scores. One explanation is that youth who participated in traditional contribution might not have viewed CR as an additional construct or idea to grasp while participating in the justice-oriented OST activities. CR is an abstract concept and should be discussed in detail for youth to begin processing on a serious critical reflective level. It is not known whether youth debriefed the justice oriented activities after participation to fully make meaning of institutional systemic structures or if youth participated in the activity to fulfill a requirement. Consistent with literature, if programs are intentional about providing high-

achieving marginalized youth with CR tools (Hope & Bañales, 2019) along with quality justice-oriented OST activities, traditional contribution scores would likely be positively affected because quality of OST activities and traditional contribution were significantly correlated. In this study, high-achieving marginalized youth reported participating in traditional contribution once every few months. CR did not act as a moderator and was likely due to the types of traditional contributions that youth are able to implement while at BHGH Academy. The lack of interaction means that the relations between perceived justice-oriented OST and traditional contribution did not differ across the differing CR levels in youth. The justice-oriented OST activities were related to traditional contribution to the same degree regardless of CR levels.

Additionally, CR is related to traditional contribution but not to CA due to the BHGH programming constraints. The likelihood of high-achieving marginalized youth participating in activities and demonstrations that promote justice-oriented themes are more subjected to constraints (e.g., staff member and youth ability, reputation of organization) and thus youth and staff might focus on traditional contribution instead of CA. In prior research, Murray and Milner (2015) suggested that strategizing OST program curricula for youth requires implementing flexible activities that encourage civic participation initiatives and learning conflict-resolution skills. Future research might explore adult-youth relationships as a moderator between perception of OST activities and traditional contribution.

Perception of OST activities were marginally, yet favorably associated with predicting CA. CR was marginally and favorably associated with CA. These results are

consistent with hypothesis two with one exception, I expected OST activities to not have any association with CA, and according to the results there was association. Prior findings indicated that when OST activities take on a social-justice approach the likelihood of marginalized youth engaging in action-oriented events would reflect issues that matter to them (Hershberg et al., 2015). The action-oriented events would simultaneously seek to improve the social conditions of the community (Ginwright & James, 2002). Christens and Kirshner (2011) asserted that when youth are able to see and understand the inequities within a community, it is likely that this new perspective would motivate participation in CA in order to help others and themselves. There is contrasting research stating that when youth learn how the social community operates they are demotivated to act (Fine, 1991). In this research study this sample of high-achieving marginalized youth reported average CR levels ($M=2.65/5$) which means that youth scores were in between disagree to somewhat disagree regarding their perception of economic and educational inequities for certain racial and gendered groups. The high achieving marginalized youth in this sample might perceive that there may be opportunities to advance by way of academics and merit due to their current academic status. This is not too farfetched to consider as this sample of youth attend an academic-based OST program that prepares youth for higher education. Therefore, these youth may envision a different life trajectory and not hold the survey questions at high regard. Likewise, youth who have higher CR levels would demonstrate a higher likelihood to participate in traditional contribution and critical action due to the lack of resources within the community. Youth contributing to their community may better their chances of

survival (Hansen et al., 2003). This current study is consistent with Hershberg et al., (2015) rather than Fine's (1991) study that suggest that youth will not use CR as a skill to improve their well-being. Structured activities are key to supporting youth in their endeavors to thrive in adulthood and seek thoughtful means for social change.

Findings supported hypothesis 2, CR was a marginally significant moderator between perception of justice-oriented OST activities in predicting CA scores. This interaction was marginally significant, meaning that the effect of perception of OST justice-oriented activities on CA scores are dependent based on the CR levels of youth. Those with high to moderate CR scores increased their CR and CA scores when perceiving helpfulness of OST justice-oriented activities. Youth with low CR scores maintained a low CA score despite how helpful they perceived the justice-oriented activity. Possible reasons why youth maintained low CA scores and low CR scores while participating in justice-oriented activities might have been due to other quality that was not tested in this sample. Youth might not have connected the OST activity and CA to being helpful to the community or to themselves. It is possible that the activity truly was not helpful in general. Ginwright and Cammarota (2002) posited that in order to mobilize change, youth must first understand what needs to change. CR skills have the capacity to uncover these changes and promote CA. Additionally, future studies may look at the different ways in which justice-oriented frameworks effect how youth visualize their communities using CR. This may provide an opportunity for high-achieving marginalized youth to increase their contributions where they can promote social change.

Implications

The act of CR is a serious analysis of the impacts of historical-political-economic-social conditions within one's community (Diemer et al., 2016). Practitioners may implement justice-oriented OST programs and activities with marginalized youth to allow them to explore and question social inequities in their communities. Although results are marginal significant, my research contributes evidence that justice-oriented activities in academic-based OST programs are developmentally appropriate for marginalized youth. OST programs should intentionally leverage opportunities that focus on marginalized youth giving back either traditionally or CA, as youth experiences rest on integrating knowledge from CR and acting upon real-world realities that marginalized youth encounter. Given the depth of critical conceptions, recursive dialogue, and OST activities and experiences, the promise of infusing marginalized youth with the act of giving back to their community should complement the curricula of academic-based OST programming.

Furthermore, it is imperative for youth programming organizations that serve marginalized youth to seek out fun, fresh and innovative ways to include youth in sensitive issues that will affect their trajectory in life (Eccles, 2002). The research on CR and contribution is increasing. For instance, Hershberg et al. (2015) focused on developing marginalized youth strengths regarding CR and contribution. Hope and Bañales (2019) uses CR as a tool to foster conflict resolution in marginalized youth indicated by giving back to their community. Establishing critical reflective activities for marginalized youth have the potential to facilitate social change in marginalized communities.

Understanding the nuances of these four variables – perception of justice-oriented OST activities, CR, contribution, and CA – and how they relate to one another provide insight into the ways youth choose to give back to their community. Moreover, traditional contribution and CA are suggested to be types of contribution that marginalized youth should participate in while in OST settings (Murray & Milner, 2015). In disadvantaged communities, being able to participate in traditional contribution may be favored over CA, although both contribution components are required to implement change (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). With this stated, there is a need to utilize OST settings for youth to learn about and act on both types of contributions.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study collected self-report survey data at programs provided by a national organization that implements OST programs for high-achieving marginalized youth. The geographical diversity of my participants enhanced the generalizability of my findings, but this study's findings are limited due to the use of a specialized population of high achieving marginal youth.

Also, participants of the study were somewhat younger ($M = 14.5$ years) than expected, therefore limiting their ability to participate in CA. Although some research supports the ability of early adolescents to understand social and political issues (Hope & Bañales, 2019), early adolescents may find it challenging to engage in CA that requires direct interaction with authorities. This age-related concern may have been the reason as to why the average CA scores were on the lower-end of the scale (see Table 4.2).

Conceptually, researchers should consider how to measure CA more broadly, particularly in younger adolescent children.

I chose to use CR as a moderator in the current analyses but recommend that future work specifically consider other contextual factors such as socialization to act as a moderator. Messages that youth hear and receive play a major role in how youth develop CR skills and socialization (i.e. racial socialization) would be influential in how youth regard themselves in society (Hope & Bañales, 2019). Socialization messages can in turn moderate how youth choose to give back to their community, either traditional contribution or critical action. In my work, CR demonstrated moderate significance and predicted CA and traditional contribution. This finding was consistent with some work that suggest that marginalized youth may exhibit differences in the way they participate in contribution efforts (Hershberg et al., 2015). While my sample was limited to cross-sectional analysis, the potential for CR to affect the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST activities and traditional contribution and/or CA provides evidence to support increased use of longitudinal methodology to examine CR, traditional contribution and/or CA.

Critical reflection scores are intended to assess a person's perceived inequalities of social and political conditions as it relates to constraints on educational advancements (Diemer et al., 2017). Marginalized youth who are not considered high-achieving might report different responses to similar programming. Future research should study a more diverse population.

Despite these limitations, the present study provides evidence of usefulness of SJYD practices to promote traditional contribution and CA among high-achieving marginalized youth. My findings suggest that high-achieving marginalized youth who attend youth-serving organizations may take advantage of OST resources to support positive development, CR, and CA. As the youth development field continues to understand the needs of marginalized youth and the impact of justice-oriented OST programming relating to contribution, it is important to consider the quality of activities and how influential these activities can be regarding marginalized youth and their role as social change agents.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Reflections

Research Reflections

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of CR in promoting positive outcomes in high achieving marginalized youth in an academic-based OST context. More specifically, this paper sought out to understand how OST programs promote CR in marginalized youth to then predict how CR impacts PYD and the differing types of contribution. The guiding questions were: 1) Do SJYD activities predict CR among marginalized youth participating in academic-based OST programs?; 2) Does CR predict positive youth development among diverse high achieving marginalized youth participating in academic-based OST programs?; and 3) In high-achieving marginalized youth, does CR moderate the relations between youth perceptions of justice-oriented OST program practices and traditional contribution and critical action in their community? I found evidence that CR provided a link between justice-oriented practices, PYD, and traditional contribution and critical action. The present research addressed existing gaps in the literature with both qualitative and quantitative designs. The research design incorporated a mixed-method structure where surveys and focus groups were used to grasp a more comprehensive understanding of CR and how it develops. This research also addressed how CR would promote PYD and contribution in youth through survey analyses.

What I learned from this research study was that high achieving marginalized youth report perceptions of inequities regarding race, gender, and socioeconomic status at a lower level than expected. When I began researching the background of critical consciousness, I felt as though critical consciousness was the missing element in marginalized communities and needed to be explored in order for change to happen. Although critical consciousness is a beneficial construct to learn, understand and apply, there is a possibility that youth could perceive their social conditions as overwhelming and reject the idea that CR could provide a way to overcome being a victim of the adverse conditions that they face. For example, youth who allow their

external conditions to direct and lead their life trajectory may feel that there are few options that would help them overcome adverse conditions in their life. High achieving marginalized youth who are subject to such conditions and are in programs that support educational success and advancement may view the benefits of meritocracy as a satisfactory means to being successful in their life. Thus, planning to attend higher educational institutions where they would have a better chance to thrive in life is their path to overcome the adverse conditions in their lives. High achieving marginalized youth are a unique population of youth who may have different motivating factors to change their life trajectory; however, there is potential to investigate non-high-achieving marginalized youth to determine if CR outcomes would be supported by SJYD framework in an academically diverse sample of youth. Additionally, continuing to use a mixed-method assessment of CR would afford opportunities to provide a more comprehensive understanding of CR and how it develops.

Review of Findings

Through the exploration of SJYD practices, CR, PYD and contribution among high achieving marginalized youth, various findings were gleaned. Summary of findings can be found in Table 5.1. Additional insight is provided that will guide further explorations relating to the construct of CR.

Table 5.1
Summary of Research Questions, Corresponding Findings and Implications

Research Question 1	
Do SJYD activities predict CR among high achieving marginalized youth participating in academic-based OST programs?	
Findings	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Most youth (87.2%) reported engaging in at least 9 out of 13 SJYD-oriented activities ○ Youth reported the most fun activities to be: contributing to the community; gaining experience for making positive changes in your 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ According to the most helpful and most fun activities that youth reported practitioners should continue to focus on activities that expose youth to positive interactions within the community where youth can see the positive changes they are making in their community

- community; and reflecting on what is most important in your life
- Youth reported the most helpful activities were connecting with caring adults outside of the BHGH community; feeling proud of who they are; and feeling comfortable speaking about social and political issues within the community
- The least helpful activities were understanding how to cope with unfair opportunities in society and learning how to navigate through situations when discrimination or racism happens
- Least fun activities were feeling comfortable speaking about social and political issues within the community, expressing who youth are culturally and working with others to address social issues within the community
- Focus groups revealed that youth had processed CR and understand the benefits for developing CR
- Youth made connections to how their community can have an impact on who they are and their future selves

- Practitioners working in youth-serving organizations should be sure to connect youth with caring adults and incorporating culturally relevant activities that will engender pride for one's race/ethnicity
- This research addresses gaps in programs that provide services for marginalized youth. One way youth-serving programs can address social issues that are sensitive is by implementing the SJYD framework which provides practices and outcomes that may help youth cope with unfair opportunities and navigation skills
- Findings from the focus group concluded that OST programs that are college-readiness programs, can be a viable context where youth can hone in on necessary skills that would foster aspects of thrive in adulthood
- This research indicated that youth are capable of using their agency if caring adults would be willing to support them

Research Question 2

Does CR predict positive youth development among diverse high achieving marginalized youth participating in academic-based OST programs?

Findings

- Youth-reported CR is higher in African-American youth
- CR is related to PYD at both time points in African-American youth, but not Latinx youth
- PYD in African-Americans and Latinx did not significantly differ throughout the academic year
- CR in African-American and Latinx did significantly differ throughout the academic year

Implications

- Practitioners can continue to implement activities that bolster CR development such as using frameworks that are justice-oriented for African-American youth
- Practitioners may develop specific culturally relevant programs that assess Latinx CR separately from African American youth
- CR may assist high achieving marginalized Black youth development by helping them to be more aware of societal barriers, being that they would be more equipped to overcome adverse conditions

Research Question 3

In high-achieving marginalized youth, does perception of justice-oriented OST programs influence traditional contribution and/or critical action in their community? Additionally, does CR moderate the relation between perception of justice-oriented OST programs and traditional contribution and/or critical action?

Findings	Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Youth perception of OST justice oriented activities exhibited a significant association with traditional contribution. Regression analysis indicated that activities marginally predicted traditional contribution○ Youth perception of justice oriented OST activities exhibited a nonsignificant association to CA, but regression analysis indicated a marginal relation between activities and CA, which was different than hypothesized○ CR showed significant association with traditional contribution and CA indicated by the correlation matrix, but only with traditional contribution in the regression models○ CR as a moderator did demonstrate a marginally significant effect on the relation between justice oriented activities and CA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ OST programs should intentionally leverage opportunities that focus on marginalized youth giving back either traditionally or in CA○ Youth-serving organizations should continue to offer activities that youth feel are helpful to the community○ Incorporating CR in activities might help youth see the benefit of critical action in working towards resolutions for inequities within the community○ Youth-serving organizations that reside in marginalized communities should consider implementing justice oriented activities that integrate knowledge of CR as this may support contribution back to their communities○ Policy makers can support youth who want to make a positive social change in their communities by visiting places where youth are providing their contribution efforts

The first article (chapter 2) presents findings associated with participation in justice-oriented activities and critical reflection. Since overall participation in justice-oriented activities were not positively associated, predictors such as grouping justice-oriented activities according to the five principles (Appendix D) were examined for their relation to the outcome of CR. Overall, students had the opportunity to participate in justice-oriented activities of quality where youth learned about community issues and youth stated that OST programs were safe spaces to implement such activities. Youth reported that collective action (e.g., community organizing including working with others

to address social issues) was helpful and fun; therefore, they were more willing to participate in these types of activities that allowed them to work with caring adults and peers.

This quote demonstrates youth using what they have learned from caring adults at BHGH program leading to effective change:

“They've [BHGH staff] helped me put action to my words. I was in middle school and I was just talking about how I would do things. And now that I'm in a more-diverse high school I feel like I can actually put those things to good use.”

Youth simultaneously felt like the community issues they participated in were not relevant to what they wanted to explore.

This quote describes youth wiliness to be creative and work towards a solution; however, the idea was not something they understood to be helpful to the community:

“It's not something that is meaningful to us. The Q deal for example. It wasn't anything meaningful [the Quicken Loans Arena, the Q, is a multi-purpose arena that brings in revenue for the community]...”

Youth expressed that they understood the purpose of participating in justice-oriented activities; however, youth would take more of an interest if activities were more related to their culture and mattered to them as youth who reside in the community.

This quote expressed how youth wanted their culture to be exhibited in the social issues that they wanted to resolve:

“We wanted to write our own for our community issue [youth wanted to be a part of the solution but did not have the opportunity to voice their opinion]”

“When they related it to us, to our new school being built, I felt more-connected I hope that we do something different, that's what we like ... [As you can see here, when youth are involved they feel more united]”

Lastly, youth recognized that their surroundings help to shape them in who they are going to be, thus being conscious of the communities resources are key to thriving. Youth also noticed that there is a power struggle between adults and youth where youth reported that adults inside and outside of the program did not take them serious. All in all, youth understand that they are the agents of their survival and they key to thriving is being aware of their social conditions and what they can do to make those conditions better.

“I feel like they [adults] just don't take you [youth] serious. When we try to talk to them about a big problem they don't take you serious or they be like, “It will go away in two weeks or one week” [hoping] That our passion for that topic will die out”.

“[I need to pay more]attention to my surroundings, because knowing my surroundings is key, because you never know like what's happening for real. So you can't just be like focused on one thing, you have to be aware of everything else. So I feel like this program kind of did help a little bit”.

The second article (chapter 3) focused on the impact of CR on PYD and if the relation differed due to youth race. According to Diemer and Rapa (2016), CR is useful tool for marginalized youth; thus, I was curious to understand in what ways did CR function differently across groups of marginalized youth. The results were different than what I expected. African American youth displayed greater CR than Latinx youth and PYD was linked to CR in African American youth only. As both groups represented marginalized populations because of either the color of their skin and socioeconomic status, I hypothesized that CR would be evident in both groups of youth. CR would impact PYD, however, only in African American youth. These findings speak to the importance of strengthening CR skills in African American youth and exploring other cultural relevant ways for Latinx youth to participate in being critically reflective youth.

The link of CR and PYD was not prevalent in Latinx youth possibly due to the socialization messages that might be different for African-American youth and Latinx youth. Hope and Bañales (2019) contended that racial socialization is more apparent in African American families where youth receive messages from family and friends on ways in which to behave in society. Hill and Torres (2010) suggested that Latinx youth receive socialization messages that relates to proper behavior in educational institutions.

The third article (chapter 4) presented findings on the links between youth perception of justice-oriented activities and types of contributions as moderated by CR. The different types of contribution were traditional contribution (such as community service through volunteering at shelters, helping one's neighbors, or serving in student government) and critical action (identifying status quo and working towards resolving injustices in society). Among the differing contribution types, traditional contribution was associated with youth perception of justice oriented activities. When CR was examined as a moderator to investigate its effect on the relation between justice-oriented activities and contribution types, results indicated that CR was a marginally significant moderator for the relation between justice-oriented activities and CA. The perceived benefit of how helpful justice-oriented activities indicated that there was not a difference in types of contribution efforts unit CR was investigated as a moderating factor. The interaction suggest that youth with high CR predicted higher CA scores and those with low CR predicted lower levels of CA scores. The interaction between perception of justice-oriented OST activities and CR demonstrated a marginal significance predicting growth in CA. There is a small moderating effect of critical reflection on the relation between

perception of justice-oriented activities and critical action. When youth reported low levels of CR, perceptions of helpfulness of the activities were not related to CA. However, as youth CR levels went up, the relation between perceptions of helpfulness and CA became stronger. That is, at higher levels of CR, greater perceptions of helpfulness were more strongly related to greater CA.

Both justice-oriented activities and CR could have been motivators for youth to be involved in action-oriented demonstrations after being exposed to traditional types of contribution. A possible reason that CR acted as a motivator to traditional types of contribution could be due to the additional exposure that youth experienced to injustices within their community, thus resulting in development of CR. Both contribution types are of importance in marginalized communities indicated by youth reporting how helpful activities were in implementing contribution. OST programs that serve youth in marginalized communities might find it beneficial to continue to facilitate justice-oriented activities where youth can be involved in social change and civic engagement within their communities.

A Need for Future Research

While the generalizability of these findings are limited, they raise questions that are worth exploring in the future. The two overarching questions being – how are college preparatory OST programs preparing marginalized youth for encountering spaces in college where they may be the only person of color? In the United States, where marginalized youth face harsh conditions (Ginwright & James, 2002), exploring ways to improve social conditions for marginalized youth might be advantageous for future

generations. It is necessary for practitioners, educators, policy makers to be invested in youth who can make a change in their community. OST programming is only one part of the equation; although youth spend a sizable amount of time in OST contexts (Lopez & Caspe, 2014), formal education plays an important role as well. A reasonable conclusion for practitioners and educators is to integrate practices and activities that teach and guide students towards positive outcomes. Both Ladson-Billings (2009) and Simpkins, Riggs, Ngo, Vest Ettekal, and Okamoto (2017) call for culturally relevant and responsive teaching with Ladson's perspective is from an educational context and Simpkins et al., perspective is from an informal educational context. It is not farfetched to explore ways to integrate curricula that is from informal and formal educational backgrounds that will emphasize sociohistorical and political concepts where youth can learn how to challenge injustices that marginalized youth experience. Moreover, academic achievement and social activism could be incorporated in formal and non-formal educational settings. Cammarota (2011) purported that the learning process consist of youth being able to positively reflect on who they are, where they live, and how they might bring changes to the world around them. This learning process can take place in both informal (e.g., OST programs) and formal educational programs (e.g., traditional classrooms). Being able to connect the two settings with critical reflections of how youth can bring about better change to the world would possibly foster youth who may thrive in adulthood. It is worth exploring how educators and practitioners might align subject matter to impact justice-oriented movements for all. Godfrey and Burson (2018) asserted that focusing on sociohistorical concepts would underscore the root causes to intersecting systems of

oppression and privilege. Future research might consider developing curricula and programs that include activities situated around sociohistorical concepts that look at the multitude of inequitable systems that exist within different communities. The potential to foster programs that are found in both communities and schools that follow the same format of implementing social change could be beneficial to marginalized communities and the youth who reside in them.

The next steps of research should explore the development of the justice-oriented quantitative scale. This scale may have the potential to assist practitioners in understanding how youth view justice-oriented principles at work in their communities and in themselves. SJYD principles may be linked to a youth's geographic location since it's primarily been used in urban youth. Although SJYD principles has been linked to CR in marginalized youth, it would be advantageous to consider these principles as supportive features for youth development and to test whether or not they aid in development for youth who may not live in urban areas. In conclusion, CR—a subdimension of critical consciousness—may propel youth in marginalized communities to view the systems within which they live in order to identify the positive conditions that support youth being unique individuals and to focus on the negative social conditions that need to be improved.

As a person part of a marginalized community, I would like to end with this quote:

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.

Maya Angelou

As marginalized youth begin to understand the role that they also play in the existing social conditions of their community and strive to be the change they want to see in their communities, they too will thrive.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Youth Assent to take part in the

Boys Hope Girls Hope Academy Program Evaluation 2017 Study

Hi,

We are from Clemson University in South Carolina. You might remember that we are interested in your Boys Hope Girls Hope Academy Program experience and the lives of kids like you. We are hoping that you will continue to help us with this study by taking part in this survey.

Why have I been asked to be in the study?

Because you are participating in the Academy Program at your local Boys Hope Girls Hope site, we want to know more about what it's like to be a young person like you. We want to know what you think about your Academy Program experience, how it has affected you, and what you think about your future. You may end up sharing thoughts or feelings about yourself, your activities, and your behaviors.

What do I do first?

Please read this document (or ask us to read it to you). Please ask us if you have any questions.

What is the study about?

What young people think about the Academy Program. What young people think about themselves, their activities, other people, and the world. What young people think about their future.

Who will be in the study?

About 375 youth attending Academy Programs around the United States.

If I agree to be in the study, what will I be asked to do?

We will ask all participants like you to complete two separate surveys: one at the beginning of the school year for the Academy Program, and one at the end of the school year for the Academy Program. We are also asking some youth to complete a survey during the middle of the school year. All of the surveys should take about 15 minutes to complete. The survey has questions about you, what you think, and what you do. There are also a few specific questions about your Boys Hope Girls Hope Academy Program experience. Your answers to all of the questions will be kept private. Your parents/guardians will not be able to see any of your answers. If you do not want to answer a question, you can skip it. As a participant, you may also be asked to participate in a brief (10-20 minute), one-on-one interview with one of the researchers. Like the surveys, interview questions will focus on what you think about yourself and what you think about your Academy experience. Interviews will be audio recorded, but your answers to all questions will be kept private. If you do not want to participate in an interview or answer a specific interview question, you may ask to stop at any time.

What are the risks to being in the study? If any questions make you uncomfortable, you can skip them. There is a potential for a loss of confidentiality; however, we will minimize your risk through several ways. Your responses will be linked to an id number, and not your personal information. Your data will be kept in files only accessible by the research team. What are the benefits of being in the study? Your answers will be used to help people understand how to improve the Academy Program and similar programs to help as many young people as possible. You will get a \$10 gift card each time you complete a survey. Will the things I say be kept secret? The records of this study will be kept private. Only the researchers will keep them.

If we write a report, we will not include your name or anyone else's name. We will keep survey and interview records in a locked file. Any personally identifiable data will be destroyed at completion of the study. What if I choose to not take part or leave the study? You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you decide not to do the study, it will not affect your relationship with Boys Hope Girls Hope

or the Academy Program. It will not affect your present or future relationships with Clemson University. You can quit at any time, for any reason. There is no punishment for not being in the study or for quitting.

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

The researcher running this study is Dr. Edmond Bowers: edmondb@clemson.edu. If you think this research has harmed you, call Dr. Bowers at 864-656-1983. He will tell you what to do next. If you have any questions about your rights as a person taking part in the study, you should call: The IRB (Institutional Review Board) at Clemson University (866) 297-3071, or IRB@clemson.edu.

Statement of Assent:

I have read (or have had read to me) the information on this form. I have been encouraged to ask questions. My questions have been answered (if I had any). I want to take part in this study.

If you want to take part in the study, please enter the information below:

Appendix B

BHGH Survey

1. What is your gender (check one)?

_____ Male

_____ Female

_____ Other (Please specify: _____)

2. How would you identify your race/ethnicity (check one)?

_____ Asian, or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others

_____ Asian Indian, (Asian) Indian-American

_____ Black or African American

_____ Latino/a

_____ Middle Eastern/North African American

_____ Native-American/Alaska Native

_____ Pacific Islander

_____ White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American

_____ Multiethnic: (Please specify: _____)

_____ Other: (Please specify: _____)

3. Are you Hispanic (check one)? _____ Yes _____ No

4. How old are you? _____ years

5. What are your current or most recent grades (check one)?

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| _____ Mostly As | _____ About half Cs |
| _____ About half As | _____ Mostly Ds |
| _____ Mostly Bs | _____ About half Ds |
| _____ About half Bs | _____ Mostly Fs |
| _____ Mostly Cs | |

6. How many days a week do you attend Boys Hope Girls Hope (check one)?

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| _____ Less than 1 day a week | _____ 3 days a week |
| _____ 1 day a week | _____ 4 days a week |
| _____ 2 days a week | _____ 5 days a week |

7. About how long do you spend at Boys Hope Girls Hope each day you are there (check one)?

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ Less than 1 hour | _____ 3 hours or more, but less than 4 hours |
| _____ 1 hour or more, but less than 2 hours | _____ 4 hours or more |
| _____ 2 hours or more, but less than 3 hours | |

8. How long have you participated in the Boys Hope Girls Hope program?

_____ years

While at Boys Hope Girls Hope, have you participated in:

9. Any activities that helped you **Reflect on What is Most Important in Your Life** (check one)? _____ Yes _____ No

(makes identity central)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

- | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Not Helpful | A Little Helpful | Somewhat Helpful | Quite a Bit Helpful | Very Helpful |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|
| Very Boring | Kind of Boring | A Little Fun, but | Kind of Fun | Very Fun |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|

A Little
Boring

10. Any activities that helped you **Feel Proud of Who You Are** (check one)? Yes
 No

(embrace youth culture; makes identity central)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
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b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
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While at Boys Hope Girls Hope, have you participated in:

11. Any activities that encouraged you to **Express Who You Are Culturally** (check one)?
 Yes No

(embrace youth culture)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	---------------------	---------------------	------------------------	-----------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	-------------------	--	-------------	----------

12. Any activities in which you **Talked about the Social or Political Issues Going on in Your Community** (check one)?

Yes No (Analyzes power in social relationships)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	---------------------	---------------------	------------------------	-----------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	-------------------	----------------------	-------------	----------

A Little
Boring

While at Boys Hope Girls Hope, have you participated in:

13. Any activities that helped you **Develop Skills Useful for Solving Social Issues Within Your Community** (check one)? Yes No (Analyzing power in social relationships)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	----------------	-----------------------------------	-------------	----------

14. Any activities that helped you **Gain Experience for Making Positive Changes in Your Community** (check one)? Yes No (Promoting systemic change)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	----------------	-----------------------------------	-------------	----------

While at Boys Hope Girls Hope, have you participated in:

15. Any activities that helped you **Understand the Benefits of Contributing to Your Community** (check one)? Yes No (Encouraging collective action)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	----------------	---	-------------	----------

16. Any activities that helped you to **Feel Comfortable Speaking About Social and Political Issues Within Your Community** (check one)? Yes No
(promoting systematic change)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
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While at Boys Hope Girls Hope, have you participated in:

17. Any activities that helped you **Learn How to Navigate Situations When Discrimination or Racism Happens** (check one)? Yes No (analyzing power within social relationships)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
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b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
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18. Any activities that encouraged you to **Work with Others to Address Social Issues Within Your Community** (check one)? Yes No (Analyzing power within social relationships)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	----------------	---	-------------	----------

While at Boys Hope Girls Hope, have you participated in:

19. Any activities that helped you **Understand How to Cope with Unfair Opportunities in Society** (check one)?

Yes No (analyzing power within social relationships)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
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b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	----------------	---	-------------	----------

20. Any activities that helped you **Connect with Caring Adults Outside of Boys Hope Girls Hope** (check one)?

Yes No (

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring	Kind of Boring	A Little Fun, but A Little Boring	Kind of Fun	Very Fun
-------------	----------------	---	-------------	----------

While at Boys Hope Girls Hope, have you participated in:

21. Any activities that help you **Voice Your Concerns, Feelings, and Thoughts About Issues You are Facing** (check one)? Yes No (reconstituting urban youth identity Ginwright and Cammarota, 2007)

a. If yes, how helpful were those activities (circle one)?

Not Helpful	A Little Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Quite a Bit Helpful	Very Helpful
-------------	------------------	------------------	---------------------	--------------

b. If yes, how fun were those activities (circle one)?

Very Boring Kind of Boring A Little Fun,
but A Little Boring Kind of Fun Very Fun

How much do you agree with these statements (circle one answer per statement)?

		Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get a good high school education.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get good jobs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. Women have fewer chances to get good jobs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25. Poor people have fewer chances to get good jobs.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

26.	Certain racial or ethnic groups have fewer chances to get ahead.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
27.	Women have fewer chances to get ahead.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
28.	Poor people have fewer chances to get ahead.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree and Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please respond to the following statements by selecting you how often you were involved in each activity in the last year (circle one answer per statement)?

29.	Participated in a civil rights group or organization	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
30.	Participated in a political party, club or organization	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
31.	Wrote a letter to a school, community newspaper, or publication about a social or political issue	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
32.	Contacted a public official by phone, mail, or email to tell him or her how you felt about a social or political issue	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
33.	Joined in a protest march, political demonstration, or political meeting	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week

34. Worked on a political campaign	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
35. Participated in a discussion about a social or political issue	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
36. Signed an email or written petition about a social or political issue	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week
37. Participated in a human rights, gay rights, or women's rights organization or group	Never did this	Once or twice last year	Once every few months	At least once a month	At least once a week

How often do you do the following things? "Helping" means doing anything you don't have to do but that you do to improve things or make things easier for other people. Please circle one answer per statement.

38. Help a friend	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
39. Help a neighbor	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

40. During the last 12 months, how many times have you been a leader in a group or organization (check one)?

- Never
 Once
 Twice
 3-4 Times
 5 or more times

How often do you participate in the following school clubs or activities? Please circle the answer that best describes your participation over the last school year. If you never participated please circle "Never."

41. Volunteering your Time (somewhere like at a hospital, day care)	Never	Once a Month or Less	A Couple of Times	Once a Week	A Few Times a Week	Every Day
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center, food bank, youth program, community service agency)			per Month			
42. Mentoring/Peer Advising	Never	Once a Month or Less	A Couple of Times per Month	Once a Week	A Few Times a Week	Every Day
43. School Government or Other Organization at your School	Never	Once a Month or Less	A Couple of Times per Month	Once a Week	A Few Times a Week	Every Day

44. Does your family speak a language other than English at home?

_____ Yes

_____ No (If no, skip to item 57)

45. If yes, how often do you translate or interpret something for your family?

_____ Never

_____ Rarely

_____ At least once a week

_____ Many times a week

_____ Every day

Appendix C

Focus Group Questions

Program Related Questions

1. What are some of the big issues kids and people in your community are facing? Why is that a big issue? What do you think about it? What are some ways you might address it?
2. Is BHGH a program where you feel safe asking questions about social issues (e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia) that exist in the world? What kind of things do BHGH staff do that make you feel safe about talking about these issues? Does the discussion usually help or make you feel empowered to make a difference in the community?
3. Do you feel that you, as a BHGH scholar, are developing skills such as being able to recognize unequal differences within your community? Do you find that these differences are easy to fix? Does BHGH provide guidance that will help you find solutions to these problems that will help your community thrive, grow, get better?
4. Have you ever wondered how money is distributed to different areas within your community? What are your thoughts on that distribution of those resources? Do you think this money is distributed fairly? Why or why not?
5. Does BHGH discuss what it means to be you (e.g. identity development)? Do you ever get to talk about fitting in in this world? Do you ever talk about whether your identity has a role in the inequalities within your community?

Critical Consciousness Questions

1. What does the term “woke” mean to you? How do you think people become woke? Does BHGH do anything to help you become woke?
2. How does your culture or tradition play a role in handling social issues differently in society?
3. Are there influences in popular culture (musicians, rap artists, actors, sport celebrities) that speak about political and or social issues that you follow? Does the artist create an awareness in you about social issues? Why or why not?

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4. How can we use music to engage youth in organizing community groups? Have you thought about participating with a community group where you can learn about how political things work in your community?
 5. Does BHGH have conversations with the scholars that makes you want to learn more about what you can do to help your community? What kinds of things do you talk about? What are some of the things that are stopping you from making changes within your community?
 6. Do you know of ways that youth could actively engage with school's officials?
 - a. How likely would you do that (whatever they respond above)?
 - b. If necessary, do you feel that you could organize a community group for a cause?

Contribution
Questions

1. Does BHGH provide opportunities where you can be a part of changes made within the community?
 2. What type of activities would you like to do to help support or give back to your community? Why do you think those activities would help? Why did you choose those things?
 - a. If you could give back what would you prefer? Soup kitchen? Or hold a protest for something that is unjust in your community
 3. Is there a reason why people don't give back to their communities?
-

Appendix D

Table 1

Description of the Five Principles Paired to Survey Items.

SJYD Principle	Associated Activities
	Youth were asked did you take part in any activities that helped you...
Making Identity Central	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reflect on What is Most Important in Your Life2. Feel Proud of Who You Are
Analyzing Power within Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Talk about the Social and Political Issues Going on in Your Community2. Learn How to Navigate Through Situations When Discrimination or Racism Happens3. Understand How to Cope with Unfair Opportunities Within Society
Promoting Systematic Change	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop Skills Useful for Resolving Social Issues Within Your Community2. Feel Comfortable Speaking About Social and Political Issues Within Your Community
Collective Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Gain Experience for Making Positive Changes in Your Community2. Understand the Benefits of Contributing to Your Community3. Work with Others to Address Social Issues Within Your Community4. Connect with Caring Adults Outside of Boys Hope Girls Hope
Embracing Youth Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Voice Your Concerns, Feelings, and Thoughts About Issues You are Facing2. Express Who You Are Culturally

Note: Activities associated with the SJYD framework by Ginwright and James (2002).