"UNTIL THE LION LEARNS TO SPEAK": REFUGEE YOUTH-LED PARTICIPATORY
RESEARCH TOWARDS CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

By

Kathryn A. V. Clements

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**ABSTRACT**

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According to the United States Department of State, 85,000 refugees were admitted to the U.S. in 2016, and 37,710 (44.4 percent) of those admitted were under the age of 18 (Department of Homeland Security, 2017). Resettled adolescent refugees face the challenges of adolescence while also navigating the loss of homeland, cultures, languages, and families. Research suggests that refugee youth desire the same ability to develop themselves and participate in school and community contexts as other youth, but they face consistent marginalization in their schools and communities (Hastings, 2012). To support marginalized groups, scholars and activists have promoted CC as a social-justice oriented construct that increases equity and access to resources through two main components: critical reflection and critical action (Diemer et al., 2017; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

Youth Participatory Action Research (yPAR) offers a structured, empirically-supported model for engaging youth in social change (Ozer, 2017). yPAR methods guide youth through three research phases; (1) Introduction to research and identification of a problem, (2) Data collection and analysis, and (3) Action. The current study explored how the CC components of critical reflection and critical action developed among refugee youth participating in a community-based yPAR project in which they researched the issue of bullying in schools. Four primary research questions explored how the yPAR framework supported the development of specific CC aspects of identity, power, critical skills, and inequity. Ethnographic field notes were collected at all yPAR sessions by three nonparticipant observers and retrospectively by the

facilitator as a participant observer. Field notes were analyzed using a modified analytic induction approach. This method generates empirically-based assertions that elucidate the connections between CC components and the three phases of yPAR. These assertions explain how the components of CC were developed within and across the yPAR phases.

Findings suggest that refugee youth developed a shared identity as a group through the course of the project, felt agency in their new ability to partner with powerful allies, and developed critical communication and feedback skills. However, data did not support a shift in reflections of inequity. Implications for the study findings include recommendations to refugee-serving organizations and scholars seeking to promote critical consciousness among refugee youth.

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone who's ever had to learn how to fight oppressive systems, consciously or unconsciously.

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And to my family: Thank you for believing in me even when you had no idea what I was doing.

Jason, "it's a 'we' thing." I love you.

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**CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW**

*"Until the lion learns to speak, the tales of hunting will be weak." ~ K'naan*

*K'naan is a Somali rapper, who fled Somalia with his mother as a refugee and resettled in Canada. This line opens a spoken word track on his hip hop album,* The Dusty Foot Philosopher. *In this line, he represents the power of telling one's own story and reclaiming a narrative often told by powerful victors.*

**Refugee Youth**

  **International and national refugee prevalence estimates.** A record high total of 68.5 million forcibly displaced people were recorded by the UNHCR in 2017 (UNHCR, 2018). Of those, 25.4 million were refugees, and just over half (52 percent) were children under 18. The remaining 43.1 million displaced people include some 40 million internally displaced people, and 3.1 million asylum seekers. In 2016, almost 20 percent of the total South Sudanese population had fled to a neighboring country. At that time, six countries, all in Africa, hosted refugee populations comprised mostly of children. One of the developing conflicts of 2017 was the persecution and external displacement of over one million Rohingya Muslims from Burma, in which 655,600 refugees (55% children) fled to Bangladesh in a span of 100 days (UNHCR, 2018).

  In the United States, the Refugee Processing Center (RPC), operated by the Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration uses a database to track the flow of refugees through the Refugee Admissions Program (Refugee Processing Center, 2018). According to the RPC (2018), 22,491 refugees were resettled in the U.S. during fiscal year 2018, compared with 49,255 in fiscal year 2017 and about 85,000 in 2016. The most recent data on age

reported by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics reports

37,710 (44.4 percent) refugees admitted in 2016 were under the age of 18 (DHS, 2017).

**Needs of refugee youth.** Refugee adolescents experience typical adolescence challenges

regarding identity development (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1989; Waterman, 1999),

educational experiences, (e.g., Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Meece, Anderman, & Anderman, 2005),

and community or civic participation (e.g., Yates & Youniss, 1998; Duke, Skay, Pettingell, &

Borowsky, 2009). However, refugee adolescents navigate these challenges while separated from

their homeland, culture, language, and sometimes family. This section reviews research that

contributes to our understanding of the experiences of refugee youth as they: (1) navigate

identity, (2) new educational systems, and (3) participate in their communities.

Erikson's psychosocial stage of identity versus confusion marks adolescence almost

universally, but refugee adolescents may experience additional identity confusion navigating that

stage while experiencing the loss of cultural identity markers (Yankey & Biswas, 2012). In

recent years, small-scale qualitative studies on adolescent refugees have begun promoting theory

and methods that center the unique experiences of refugee youth, instead of attempting to fit

refugee experiences into existing theory about adolescent identity development. One such

qualitative exploration of personal identity among refugee adolescents identified three categories

of personal identity; personal characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and environmental

characteristics (Ndengeyingoma, de Montigny, & Miron, 2014). Personal characteristics

included self-reflection, religious values, and the ethnocultural ambiguity raised by various

migratory paths. Interpersonal relationships revolved around family, both facilitating and

constraining identity. Refugee adolescents reported value in the ability to interact in multiple

cultural spaces. Communication and critical thinking skills may support the ability to interact in

multiple cultural spaces and were found to promote healthy identity development among Tibetan refugee adolescents (Yankey and Biswas, 2012).

Negotiating identity for refugee adolescents is influenced by their home culture and from the culture of their host or resettlement country. A mixed-methods study found that visible religious markers such as head coverings for Muslim girls made negotiating identity more difficult for Somali refugee girls than boys, since their identity as Somali was tied to their religion but not always aligned with their internal feelings (Ellis, MacDonald, Klunk-Gillis, Lincoln, Strunin, & Cabral, 2010). They were negotiating their own identity and their perceived identity by others. Over the course of a 3-year collaboration, youth and adult co-researchers in another study explored how refugee girls formed their identity in the face of the "dominant value systems in the United States" (Boutwell, 2015, p 79). They specifically discussed the ways in which the identity of "refugee girl" was impacted by gender, race, religion, nation, and age, through relational interactions with peers, friends, and family members. In particular, the African co-researchers resisted dominant othering narratives by disengaging with people who tried to impose inaccurate ideas about them in their interactions. Additionally, many shared they did not feel a sense of belonging in the U.S., because that would mean they would have to endorse that narrative.

Second, we consider refugee youth experiences in school contexts. Lockwood's exploratory study of male refugee adolescent experiences in a large metro area school system found that bias and bullying from teachers and students is commonly reported, and that school was a place where "harassment towards refugees has become expected behavior" (Lockwood, 2010, p 70). Refugee adolescents reported teachers had low expectations of their capacity to learn, punished and inadvertently isolated students for miscommunications, and did not provide

support or solutions when bullying by peers was reported (Lockwood, 2010). Conversely, students with supportive educational experiences felt competent and motivated to learn (Lockwood, 2010). One of the aspects of a supportive experience includes a group of similar peers who share refugee backgrounds (Lockwood, 2010; McGregor, Melvin, & Newman, 2016). Peer connections are generally important to all adolescents but sharing language and culture with other refugee adolescents in school appears to create a sense of belonging and contribute positively to refugee adolescent development (McGregor, Melvin, & Newman, 2016).

Hastings' (2012) phenomenological study of refugee boys' transition to secondary school provided insight into the process of adapting to school and developing a sense of belonging in new educational environments, as well as the need for safety in these new contexts. Consistent with previous research around bullying of refugee students, these students reported bullying experiences that impacted their ability to succeed, and that when they developed more knowledge and ability to succeed, they were proud to contribute to the success of other students (Hastings, 2012). In addition, youth's school experiences were heavily influenced by community or family factors. McNeely and colleagues (2017) conducted a survey of researchers, service providers, educators, and policymakers after recognizing a growing list of concerns about school success for refugee and immigrant newcomer adolescents. The survey asked professionals to rank their preferred research priorities from a list of 36 options, given the various challenges educators see among newcomer students and families. The top priorities reflect respondents' desire to understand more about newcomer youth in contexts both inside and outside of school, for the purpose of developing practical, actionable knowledge on how to support newcomer adolescent students. The top four responses included evaluating newcomer programs, understanding the impact of family and community stressors, identifying teachers' stressors, and

identifying how to engage newcomer families in education (McNeely, 2017). These studies demonstrate a growing interest in understanding the relationship between educational participation and community participation for refugee adolescents.

Unfortunately, the third area of exploration in this review is the most limited. Very little research exists to describe or assess how refugee adolescents contribute to their communities and otherwise participate in civic activities. In one study comparing three Lebanese communities (a refugee camp, and two poor suburbs), researchers found that the youth in the refugee camp reported greater civic engagement and community involvement than youth in the other areas, as measured by youth's follow up on local issues or community meetings (Khawaja, Abdulrahim, Soweid, & Karam, 2006). Ethnographically-informed methods have demonstrated that refugee youth were "keen observers, highly attuned to their surroundings and the actors within each setting," (Corley, 2016, p 170). This suggests the ability of refugee youth to discuss nuanced topics related to community issues, given the space to contribute in this way.

Given the lack of research specifically around refugee youth community or civic engagement, a related area of inquiry might be immigrant adolescent civic engagement, but little research systematically addresses that either (Stepick & Stepick, 2002). Most studies have focused on voting and the beliefs or attitudes of U.S.-born children of immigrants (Stepick & Stepick, 2002). In the first study to address civic engagement and undocumented youth, Perez and colleagues (2010) found that 90 percent of undocumented Mexican immigrant adolescents and young adults reported civic engagement, in the form of providing social services, activism, tutoring, and functionary work (e.g., cleaning, maintenance, or administrative work). Specifically, older students were more likely to have participated in activism. Immigrant youth often maintain transnational relationships that motivate and encourage civic participation in the

form of new civic movements and ways of organizing that may have been previously unavailable (Jensen & Arnett, 2012), which may hold true for refugee youth from restrictive contexts.

One challenge to documenting civic engagement among newcomer adolescents may be the shift between how engagement is defined for native-born adolescents and newcomers. For example, immigrant youth tend to be more involved in civic activities that benefit their ethnic group and therefore may not be measured with methods designed for the dominant U.S. population (Stepick, Stepick, & Labissiere, 2008). Diemer and Li (2011) found that nontraditional social actions (e.g., actions other than voting, such as protests) were more likely to be taken by adolescents of racial/ethnically minoritized groups but that these nontraditional actions were also associated with increased intention to engage in traditional participation like voting later. Stepick, Stepick, and Labissiere (2008) also found that immigrant youth appear to become more involved in activities that address discrimination, reflecting a pattern seen with members of minoritized groups in the U.S. (Stepick, Stepick, & Labissiere, 2008). However, Diemer and Rapa (2015) have suggested that specific traditional civic actions that may be more directly dependent on citizenship, like voting, may be more important to youth whose families are more likely to have recently immigrated. These mixed findings suggest that there may be other contextual factors that are important to newcomer adolescents as they pursue various avenues for community or civic engagement.

Each of the areas of refugee adolescent research reviewed above have limited empirical research to inform programs and services for refugee youth. Identity development is one crucial part of adolescence and it appears that negotiating identity for refugee youth may look different than it does for native born youth. Because much of adolescents' lives take place in educational settings, research has begun to explore the impact of those contexts and the ways in which

refugee adolescents navigate those environments. Interestingly, researchers in educational contexts have encouraged scholars to consider the impact of community spaces in which refugee youth may be more able to contribute meaningfully. However, the dearth of research on community or civic engagement of refugee adolescents forces us to rely on knowledge about other immigrant adolescent patterns of engagement. Refugee youth should be able to meaningfully participate in driving research that supports their healthy development, especially in the areas outlined above. Adolescence is a tumultuous time, and the impact of educational and community settings may have valuable and unique impacts on refugee adolescent identity development. Inclusive settings that offer a way to reflect on that identity development across settings would be particularly beneficial.

**Critical Consciousness (CC)**

The process of adolescent identity development is an integral part of becoming an independent adult, and that process is often disrupted for refugee adolescents through the loss of homeland, cultures, languages, and families. In other words, much of the structure that typically exists for adolescent development may be missing or dysfunctional for refugees. However, the research reviewed in the previous section suggests that refugee youth desire the same ability to develop themselves and participate in school and community contexts as other youth and adults. Therefore, a mechanism to facilitate critical thinking about that identity development for refugee youth may be particularly helpful for youth in this critical transition. Specifically, a mechanism that systematically guides youth through critical reflection of themselves and their environments may be particularly useful. Critical consciousness (CC) offers one such mechanism.

Critical consciousness is rooted in Paolo Freire's conscientização, most closely translated to the process of 'conscientization,' by which rural peasant women learned to read and become

aware of and motivated to change inequities in their lives (Freire, 2005). It grew broadly from sociopolitical development and critical pedagogy theories that emphasized the process by which individuals gained cognitive motivation to become engaged citizens (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Leading researchers use CC and the term 'sociopolitical development' interchangeably (Diemer et al., 2006). CC is now used in diverse disciplines to empower people affected by inequality by developing their capacity to reflect and act on sociopolitical forces in their lives (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). In other words, the history of utilizing CC to support disenfranchised and marginalized groups has led to theory and research on how it is used to be strategic about sociopolitical systems and how it has helped groups gain access to resources and opportunities (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Although originally theorized for adults, CC has been applied to youth research exploring areas of systematic disenfranchisement, including work (Diemer et al., 2010; Diemer & Blustein, 2006), systems of oppression and promotion of social justice (Diemer et al., 2006), and political participation (Diemer & Li, 2011). It has also been used to support Black and Chicano students to reflect critically on their identity and use academic skills to engage in political and community action (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998; Acosta, 2007).

 **Main components – critical reflection, critical action.** The two main components of CC described in recent research are critical reflection and critical action. Critical reflection begins the process and aims to initiate a process of reflection on one's sociopolitical position in the broader context. Critical action follows a reflective process and aims to strategically work within that sociopolitical context to increase access to resources or opportunities. Most CC studies have focused on building critical awareness among historically marginalized or disenfranchised children and adolescents. This literature review focuses on CC research

conducted with young people, primarily high school and college students.  Below, I outline a brief history of contemporary CC development and then examine the two main components more closely.

Contemporary CC scholars have focused on explaining attitude shifts that occur as one is becoming critically conscious (Diemer et al., 2015). Theories of CC development have largely been based on temporal-dependent development models that posit a shift from critical awareness, to motivation or efficacy, to critical action. The most recent version of the most widely used and theorized CC scale instrument produced three distinct factors: (1) Critical reflection: egalitarianism, (2) Critical reflection: inequity, and (3) Critical action (Diemer et al., 2017). It should be noted that this current model eliminated a motivation component. The move to eliminate the measurement of critical motivation obscures the bridge between identifying problematic systems and addressing them. This bridge serves as a marker of readiness for change that may be a precursor to social change actions (Diemer & Hsieh, 2008).

There is less guidance in the literature on developing readiness to take action in a CC process than developing critical awareness. Of studies that described how CC program facilitators addressed youth efficacy, four main approaches were described. Facilitators encouraged youth to consider what should be done about identified issues (Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009) or encouraged them to think through fictional possible actions (Hunsberger, 2007), consider how their individual strengths could contribute to addressing system inequity issues (Liboro, 2015), or imagine themselves taking action (Rios, 2013). However, youth did not necessarily feel like their actions would be impactful or feasible (Godfrey & Wolf, 2016; McWhirter, Valdez, & Caban, 2013; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012), or felt they were only empowered in certain settings that expressly attended to their needs

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(Gray, 2011). Four studies reported youth did feel motivated to act, and believed in their power to affect change (Acosta, 2007; Osajima, 2007; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012; Rios, 2013), two additional studies attempted to quantify that efficacy (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Kelso et al., 2014), and one study explicitly taught them the skills they would need to confront faculty in power (Villanueva, 2013)

The first theory that attempted to identify explicit stages of critical consciousness development was based on sociopolitical development theories and included five stages (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998). This theory began with the acritical stage, in which inequity is perceived as natural and people in low status positions deserve it, proceeds to the adaptive stage, in which inequity may be perceived as wrong, but individuals are focused on self-preservation within the system. The third stage, pre-critical stage, marks the shift from acceptance of inequity to concern, but the fourth stage, the critical stage, is when the individual is motivated to learn about inequity and feels social change is necessary. The final stage, liberation, includes social actions, and critical consciousness is an established part of the individual. This theory was empirically tested for the first time in a CC development program with male African American high school students (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998) and the authors noted that future researchers should integrate a more distinct documentation of the attitude shifts that occur through intervention. Towards that end, scholars of the past decade separated the process into three main components; critical reflection, critical motivation/political efficacy, and critical action (Diemer et al., 2015; Watts. Diemer, & Voight, 2011), and the most recent iteration of the field's primary scale has narrowed the components to *critical reflection* and  *critical action*.

First, I review *critical reflection* among youth. CC theorists posit that change, or the awareness required for change, begins at the individual level (Diemer, McWhirter, Ozer, &

Rapa, 2015; Freire, 2005; Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Literature over the past decade described several ways to build critical reflection or awareness, including independent self-reflection, more interpersonal and group-level reflections that integrate different system considerations, and a formal analysis of power.

Independent self-reflection has been facilitated by various levels of prompting around areas of identity and marginalization. One such strategy was personal journal entries, or reflection journals, sometimes reviewed by instructors to further prompt students (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2009; Palmer & Menard-Warwick, 2012). Three studies prompted students to reflect by having them create a narrative around a theme, an identity, or a photograph (Acosta, 2007; Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Gray, 2011). In narrative form, students reflected on an issue or idea and applied it to themselves. Most narratives were themed around issues of marginalization. Encouraging students to "see themselves" in an issue was particularly effective for students when prompted by key mentors (Guishard, 2009; Osajima, 2007). Villanueva (2013) described a pedagogy that invited students to reflect on how and why people with marginalized identities have differentially privileged knowledge. Furthermore, Rios (2013) elaborated on how praxis, in which reflection and action are cyclical, begins with personal reflection on one's identity and ideology. One example might be students' creating art after discussion around identity and experiences, such that the new art reflects ownership and integration of these ideas (Souto-Manning & James, 2008).

Another strategy for prompting critical reflection at the individual level was encouraging individuals to consider how others with different identities or experiences had influenced them. Latino educators were urged to develop a critical consciousness to help high school students think critically about their experiences, experiences with others, those throughout history, and

power relations (Rios, 2013). Some researchers found that this reflection was facilitated indirectly, by considering the impacts of friends, family, and school in their exploration of social issues within and outside schools (Diemer et al., 2006; McWhirter, Valdez, & Caban, 2013).

Group-level critical reflection was also facilitated by consideration and facilitation of discussion in which youth applied others' experiences to themselves in group settings. Several facilitators used media to facilitate critical reflection. In a rare example of creative application with very young students, Souto-Manning and James (2008) described using multiple art forms, including paintings and sculptures, to critique and redefine ideas with a first grade class. Their goal was to emphasize how students' experiences shaped their perceptions, and to continuously refine that skill when it came to their own ideas. A similar technique was used to analyze photographs in a Photovoice project (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010). In an after-school program with middle schoolers, one group interpreted privilege and equity using concepts from storybooks, and then applied those concepts to practice math as well. Educators sometimes used classroom group discussion to dialogue about social issues, but also reported feeling constrained by more pressing testing content (Hubbard, 2013; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011).

Group level sharing was conducive to students' critical awareness because they were able to see how their individual level reflections were shared by other students who had similar experiences with structural systems such as racism (Osajima, 2007; Villanueva, 2013). In this way, students shifted their mindset "to contextualize real life" (Osajima, 2007, p 74) beyond the individual level. These interpersonal and group interactions facilitate a deeper understanding of perceptions about social issues and social positions and offer an avenue to develop critical awareness beyond what might be possible from independent self-reflection. Building a sense of

shared group identity is theorized to lead a group of critically conscious individuals towards critical action to improve sociopolitical conditions (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007).

At the broadest level, facilitators encouraged youth to reflect on the influence of formal power structures. Building capacity to engage in sociopolitical systems requires strategic thinking about the sociopolitical structures which control access to opportunity and resources (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). Part of building CC is an analysis of power structures and the role of power in opportunity and equality (Diemer et al., 2015; Godfrey & Wolf, 2016). One approach to cultivating that capacity is critical reflection on and problematization of power structures at the micro- and macrosystem ecological levels that influenced individual contexts. Scholars described educators in powerful positions using that privilege to educate students and peers on the ways education privileges certain perspectives and individuals (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011), especially students of color (Peña, 2012; Villanueva, 2013). Examples of strategic thinking around power are not limited to higher education. Although originally theorized for adult populations, CC has been measured in adolescents. Among youth, scholars encouraged problematizing power to critically question power structures and be able to recognize privileged parts of the system (Keenan & Miehls, 2008; Mohajer & Earnest, 2009). Perceptions of power were quantitatively measured by asking how much youth felt government was responsive to the needs and opinions of voters, and the extent to which historically marginalized groups have the same chances at obtaining quality education (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014).

Guishard (2009) offered support for developing theories that CC is domain-specific, such that individuals can be critically conscious in one area and not others (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). As described above, evidence is mounting for the effectiveness of processes to guide youth through critical reflection. Unfortunately, researchers and practitioners have

stalled at describing critical reflection and awareness with fewer examples of how action is connected to that knowledge (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015).

Second, I review evidence for the component of *critical action* among youth. Theories of CC development (especially as described in Watts and Abdul-Adil's [1998] stage model) imply that critical action occurs because youth are motivated to act after critiquing the systems around them that restrict access to resources or opportunities. Few studies have investigated the extent to which youth engage in critical action after their CC has been raised, although there are examples of youth with higher scores on CC measures being more socio-politically involved. In other words, no empirical data supports the causal relationship between increasing CC and increasing critical actions. In fact, several quantitative measures developed thus far measure the *intention* to act, not behaviors in which youth have engaged, or future expectations. For example, Diemer and colleagues (2006) developed a measure for youth's perceived support for challenging systemic inequity, specifically racism, sexism, and social injustice. They categorized open-ended responses into a capacity for reflection, (e.g., how family and friends supported their exploration of issues) and a capacity for action (e.g., how their family and friends supported their challenging of issues).

To date, the literature has not focused on examining actions that stem from CC development, but prior research has examined political involvement as one type of *critical action.* Descriptions of *political involvement* and descriptions of the construct *critical action* are included here. Various forms of sociopolitical involvement are associated with higher levels of CC, but causal explanations for this are not established. Traditional political involvement can be considered a specific manifestation of one type of critical action. Diemer's (2012) research on political participation by marginalized youth suggested that researchers should consider

traditional forms of political participation such as voting, but that marginalized youth may be more likely to participate in critical or social movement activism. Critical action by adolescents is sometimes divided into school-level actions or community/social-level actions, to reflect the distinct social realms within which youth may feel empowered to act. Diemer and colleagues (2016) posited that some of the mechanisms linking CC to community level change may be increased capacity to address challenges in the face of structural barriers, improvements in strategic thinking, and the social capital that results from collaborating with fellow activists. Examining traditional forms of political action like voting has been shown to be predicted by peer and parental sociopolitical support, which also suggests a degree of sociopolitical development within trusted social circles (Diemer & Li, 2011).

Most documented actions are described independently of an intervention process designed to facilitate action. In other words, the following critical actions are associated with being more critically aware, but not *caused* by raised CC. Godfrey and Grayman (2014) attempted to add to the limited research on critical action in CC literature by operationalizing critical action in part as past political involvement. To do so, they measured past participation in a student council/government, and whether they had volunteered in their communities in the past. Osajima (2007) included student-organized community protests as an example of critical action. At the institutional level, these students also participated in campus organizing and programming, facilitated diversity trainings, and advocated for curriculum and college diversity. However, Osajima (2007) interviewed students who were already engaged in educational activism, and were not part of a formal reflective process designed to increase their CC. When faculty's CC is raised, they became involved in advocating for institutional changes that redress educational disparities (Peña, 2012). Rios (2013) described student walkouts as an example of

critical action taken by high school students within schools to demand representation for their culture within faculty and curricula.

Although the research around critical action is limited and correlational, Acosta (2007) provides qualitative support for his classroom teaching methods designed to increase CC. Continuous intentional engagement with critical reflection and class assignments culminated in action projects such as presentations, documentaries, and workshops within and outside schools regarding school funding and community issues.

**Applying a CC model to research with refugee adolescents.** The stage development model (Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998) offers researchers a conceptual model for studying how to promote critical thinking and attitude change among marginalized youth (Diemer & Hsieh, 2008). This facilitated adaptations in component measurement for specific populations, but thus far no adaptations have been created with refugee youth. For example, focus groups with Latina adolescents directed researchers to focus on particular contextual aspects relevant to their educational and vocational goals (McWhirter, Valdez, & Caban, 2013). This information, coupled with theoretical knowledge about critical consciousness development, informed the development of a measure of adolescent critical consciousness (MACC; McWhirter & McWhirter, 2015). Among a sample of low-income Latina/o adolescents, the MACC demonstrated support for direct and indirect effects of sociopolitical development/CC on school achievement and postsecondary expectations (Luginbuhl, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2016).

There has also been no application of CC measures or interventions with refugee adolescents, a particularly minoritized and disenfranchised group. The development of the MACC (McWhirter & McWhirter, 2015) supports cultural considerations in the application of CC models, but this has yet to be explored among refugee adolescents. The current sociopolitical

landscape in 2018 is such that refugee families and unaccompanied children are marginalized on the basis of race, religion, language, and in the face of rising nationalist sentiment, nationality. While CC may be valuable for refugee adolescents as a way to strategically and critically confront sociopolitical systems, researchers in refugee communities have strongly encouraged scholars to be more inclusive and participatory with refugee youth in their methods (Couch & Francis, 2006). Overall, research suggests that participatory approaches are important for understanding refugee adolescent identity and cultural development, but no examples have been developed yet to demonstrate such a process with refugee adolescents.

**yPAR**

Participatory research methods are well-suited for engaging youth in an active, meaningful way. One method that has been effective at engaging youth is youth Participatory Action Research (yPAR). Youth Participatory Action Research (yPAR) is one approach to research that has a well-established, empirically supported history of meaningful engaging youth in decision-making (Ozer, 2017; Ozer & Douglas, 2013; Silva, Zimmerman, & Erbstein, 2002). It is an application of participatory action research that engages youth in the research process on issues that affect them. For purposes of this review, youth refers to middle and high school students unless otherwise noted.

yPAR is a research approach that is driven by participants and follows a research and action cycle that includes the phases of participatory problem identification, research question identification, data collection and analysis, and data-informed change actions. The first phase of the yPAR cycle is problem and research question identification, in which youth researchers are guided through the process of selecting a problem of interest to address, and developing a research question to pursue (Ozer, 2017). The second phase, data collection and analysis, guides

youth researchers through training on various research methods and how to select an appropriate method to answer their research question (Ozer, 2017). In this phase, youth researchers will develop their data collection tools, collect their own data, and are guided through an analysis process of analysis and interpretation. The third phase, action, guides youth through a strategic approach to stakeholders in which they present data and take some action towards changing the problem (Ozer, 2017). yPAR has been developed as a curricular approach to engaging youth in research, such that the phases lend themselves well to developing phase-by-phase, session-by-session lesson plans. Youth-specific teaching activities have been developed and made publicly available to support facilitation of yPAR projects in this phase model.

There are many examples of yPAR in diverse settings with youth of various ages and interests (Kornbluh, Ozer, Allen, & Kirshner, 2015). It has been used to promote civic participation by youth, especially those who have been marginalized or oppressed by previous research and action efforts, but there are very few examples with refugee youth. It has been shown to increase sociopolitical skills (Ozer & Douglas, 2013) and critical thinking skills (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010). yPAR approaches demonstrate a concerted effort on helping youth drive the knowledge production around an issue.

There is a history of intervention in yPAR, such that the approach is designed to intervene on a problem (Ozer, 2016; Ozer et al., 2010) and as a process, can be considered a skill-building intervention itself (Langhout & Thomas, 2010). There are many examples of the ways youth build skills by making research, evaluation, or action decisions about how to address important social issues in their lives. Between the development of skills and the outcome of action is a process by which youth gain new research skills. A few examples of the ways youth participate in distinct research phases are described here.

**Phase I: Problem and research question identification.** The problem identification phase, one of the "nonnegotiable" aspects of yPAR approaches (Ozer, 2016), is operationalized here as the description of the social problem to be addressed by research. The problem identification phase of yPAR specifically attends to youth involvement in identifying research problems, research topic, and research questions relevant to their lives, centering youth voices in the research agenda. Using a photovoice methodology, Foster-Fishman and colleagues (2010) posed framing questions and probed discussion around photographs taken by youth co-researchers. Youth drove the direction of the discussion such that the community problems that emerged from their perspective were co-created by the facilitators and the youth [e.g., safe, drug-free neighborhoods, youth engagement and activities, and environmental concerns (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010)]. Another photovoice example included campus mapping by middle school youth, who photographed resources and problems at their school, and were guided by adult facilitated discussion to narrow the list of problems to what students wanted to address most (Ozer et al., 2010). Youth chose to focus on problems they perceived affected the most students and they considered "winnable."

In a separate example, adults trained in facilitating yPAR facilitated a discussion among high school students in which the students created an issue tree; with leaves representing student issues within the school, branches connecting similar issues, and linked to shared root causes (Ozer & Douglas, 2013). In dedicated yPAR classrooms that promoted student voice in identifying problems, youth voice was constrained as incoming students chose between identifying new problems to address, about which they may have felt strongly, or continuing the work of previous students (Ozer et al., 2013). Zeldin, Christens, & Powers (2013) described a partnership in which youth initially discussed community problems among themselves, then

facilitated discussions with powerful adult stakeholders to determine which issues to select for their community organizing efforts. Working with First Nations student filmmakers, Riecken, Scott, & Tanaka (2006) did not detail the co-creation process, but noted that students met in groups and then individually with teachers and researchers to "develop their ideas around health" and identify the specific problem they wished to address (p 9). Sánchez (2009) described how youth co-researchers participated in a developing program of research for four years and reported they felt free to determine the direction of the research topics. In Los Angeles, Council of Youth Research students aimed to address the problem of racial inequities in school policies and outcomes and used data from UCLA and the mayor's office to identify specific topics within schools (de los Ríos, Lopez, & Morrell, 2015).

**Phase II: Data collection and analysis.** Participatory approaches also develop skills around data management and methods choices. Scholarly articles are most clear about the extent and quality of youth engagement in the data collection and analysis phases of research. In Chen and colleagues' (2007) study, youth were trained with an overview of qualitative and quantitative methods and chose what best fit their research questions. Similarly, high school students were guided by the adult co-researchers to develop the method (survey, interview, observation, multi-media approaches) used to approach their identified problem (Ozer et al., 2013). In a separate study, Inuit youth proposed using multiple methods to strengthen response rates, and specifically suggested adding a survey component (Kral, Idlout, Minore, Dyck, & Kirmayer, 2011). youth were given more voice in this phase, methods are unique and varied. Youth were also responsible for developing and conducting interview and focus group protocols (Chen et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2007; Pullmann et al., 2013; Livingstone et al., 2014, Zeldin et al., 2013). Photovoice participants were responsible for creating the data collected by taking photos (Foster-

Fishman et al., 2010; Helm et al., 2015; Ozer et al., 2010) and poetry used as data was also created by participating youth (Dill, 2015). High school students were responsible for conducting theatre workshops with younger students to understand perceptions of whiteness (Tanner, 2015).

Youth directed data analysis by theming interview data qualitatively and quantifying the types of responses (Chen et al., 2010). In Photovoice, a visual method for understanding community issues and developing actions, youth sorted the key messages of their photo stories into first order themes, representing main ideas of each narrative. Next they developed second order themes by grouping those main ideas into clusters and using those clusters as the data on which they based their action recommendations (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010). In other qualitative analyses, youth and adults together reached consensus about analysis through dialogue where they examined the data in depth to determine themes (Dill, 2015; Katsiaficas et al., 2016; Monchalin et al., 2016; Pullmann et al., 2013). Fox (2016) described a novel theatre approach wherein youth and adults enacted a vignette representing a piece of data and adult audience members helped critically analyze different interpretations or explanations for the data, or scene, they were witnessing.

**Phase III: Youth action.** One of the main goals of yPAR is to build research and critical thinking skills among young people, such that they can cultivate compelling evidence to support change around an identified social problem (Ozer et al., 2010; Ozer, 2016). These examples of the extent of youth involvement in identifying social problems, developing research questions and determining appropriate research methods, and collecting and analyzing data represent critical areas in which capacity for change are built with yPAR approaches. The action phase of the yPAR research cycle also serves to develop skills. If yPAR is a holistic, inclusive research

process by which youth become researchers of their lives and communities, we should expect to see examples of youth actions that reflect their findings and promote changes in the community.

Most of the yPAR studies that detail action describe examples of action aimed at increasing awareness of the identified problem. The two main types of awareness-raising actions were publications and presentations, two actions that arguably serve to benefit academic researchers more than communities or yPAR participants. One study resulted in an academic policy brief (Katsiaficas et al., 2016), and five in conference or other academic presentations involving participating youth (Monchalin et al., 2016; Tuck, 2009; Sánchez, 2009; Pullmann et al., 2013; Riecken et al., 2006). It is important to note that some youth felt so tokenized by the conference presentation experience, that they were deeply discouraged from continuing to share their findings (Tuck, 2009). In community publications, youth designed and distributed recommendation booklets to youth-serving community organizations (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Scott et al., 2015). Youth have also published a guide for youth interested in leaving high school for their GED in response to inhospitable education systems (Tuck, 2009.

Community presentations offered more diversity in awareness-raising activities. Youth led formal outreach initiatives and programs with their knowledge about HIV prevention (Monchalin et al., 2016) and distributed a video and board game created by children (Raynes-Goldie & Allen, 2014). Performance-based presentations included a documentary screening (Riecken et al., 2006; Katsiaficas et al., 2016), public readings of their poetry (Dill, 2015), and an original stage play with an original poem and song (Tanner, 2015). They also showcased their findings with a traveling photography exhibit (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Ozer et al., 2010) and garnered local media attention around community development (Hutzel, 2007). A group of indigenous Dene youth explored the meaning of health and activity to promote physical activity

within their community by sharing research findings in community meetings with elders and facilitating a vote on which activities to contribute resources to, based on the findings (Tang & Jardine, 2016).

Fewer action examples address the underlying social structures that create problematic conditions for youth. One potentially valuable action was connecting with powerful stakeholders, because of its ability to improve access to power. There are examples of youth confronting people with power or leadership positions to advocate for desired changes. Youth have met with organizational leaders to discuss how to improve youth engagement in community decisions (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010). Internally, youth developed action groups within their school that connected them to school administration and external stakeholders like police departments and media (de los Rios et al., 2015). One yPAR group used narrative poetry as data, published it as a book, and present it to literary audiences, museums, city halls, universities and academic conferences, with plans to begin hosting town halls (Dill, 2015). These town halls will focus on using their experience to make formal policy recommendations to local policymakers, an avenue for confronting power structures by raising awareness.

This is not to say that awareness-raising actions are less valuable avenues to change than other types of actions. Some youth confronted powerful stakeholders with the aim of informing them of the extent of the problem impacting them. For example, the Youth Researchers for a New Education System (YRNES) were commissioned to explore issues of control and communication in education and shared their data with New York City-based Education is a Human Right Campaign (Tuck, 2009). Their participatory research collected data around how power was used by local government and police to control educational access and knowledge, and the harm of unclear and inconsistent school policies around access challenged the power

structures to consider the humanity of educational policies. This kind of confrontation demonstrates (at least some) adult support for the value of critiquing power structures.

**Applying yPAR methods with refugee adolescents.** Participatory action research with refugee youth has been extremely limited in North America, and existing examples primarily emphasize issues of identity, community-level issues, and education (Boutwell, 2015; Boutwell, 2011; Chen, 2015; Corley, 2016). Boutwell's (2011) three-year project with refugee girls included several different projects, but all were focused on how refugee girls' experiences of being marginalized and othered contributed to their adoption or rejection of the 'refugee girl' identity. Over the span of three years, Boutwell (2011) describes how the participating girls integrated interpersonal interactions and macro-level cultural impacts into their identity. Ultimately, the participants of the Imani Nailah Project developed strategic ways to resist and counter the cultural perception of themselves as just a 'refuge girl' (Boutwell, 2015). In this sense, action was not always imposed as collective action, but also on the ways they individually strategized against the narratives that conflicted with their identities.

A group of refugee adolescents used digital storytelling to craft a description of their individual identities to share with their teachers, school staff, and peers (Chen, 2015). In Arizona, restrictive language policies in schools grounded exploration of the way youth reflected on their multiple identities and how other interacting factors shaped their sense of belonging (Corley, 2016). Corley (2016) found that youth overall identified strongly as refugees, with one young man forcing the discussion, "Let me talk about the refugee thing" (p 100).

There is clear potential of yPAR as a curricular approach to developing youth capacity for social change. Curricular approaches to yPAR facilitation offer clear instructions for facilitators about how to introduce youth to research principles, engage in data tasks, and use

findings to promote action. Although the extent that any of these examples used specific yPAR curriculum tools is unknown, it is clear that a wealth of knowledge exists for how to facilitate these knowledge and skill building practices. Among refugee youth, however, there is little known about how the approach may develop knowledge or critical sociopolitical skills. yPAR offers an engaging methodological approach to youth-driven social change, but projects involving refugee youth have not yet explicated the process by which these critical changes occur.

**Bringing yPAR and CC Together**

CC offers a theory for how individuals and groups develop critical reflection around themselves and their surrounding sociopolitical systems and take critical action to advocate for equity within those systems. Literature supports its application among disenfranchised groups who may benefit from challenging power structures that control rights and resources for members with particular identities (Acosta, 2007; Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer et al., 2010; McWhirter & McWhirter, 2015; Watts & Abdul-Adil, 1998). Resettled refugee youth represent multiple layers of marginalization and experience the adolescent stage of identity formation with the added pressure of an often-unfamiliar context. CC offers a way to intentionally build skills and knowledge to critique systems impacting refugee youth and take action to improve them. However, CC research lacks a rigorous method by which to measure development over time in a facilitated intervention. The structure provided by yPAR methods is valuable for demonstrating how a process unfolds over time. The implementation of yPAR as a method for developing the construct of CC fills a crucial gap of precisely *how* CC develops from critical reflection to critical action. In other words, yPAR offers a methodological framework for *how* to get young

researchers from awareness to action. Throughout the course of a research project, one can document the various developments within and across research phases.

yPAR is well suited for promoting CC development for a number of reasons. As a research method, yPAR is highly structured in its implementation. Its participatory nature requires flexibility and adaptability to different contexts and participants, but the standards of rigorous, peer-reviewed research require consistent and evident structure. yPAR offers a methodological framework for testing the development of CC over time because of its distinct research phases of problem identification, data collection and analysis, and action. Each research phase includes distinct goals and tasks that theoretically cultivate skills and capacity for social change. yPAR offers a methodological framework to build CC with a strong history of documenting the necessary steps for developing communication and advocacy skills around social change objectives (Israel et al., 1998; Evans et al., 2014). The involvement of youth in all stages of the yPAR process supports giving youth more of an equitable role in the research process, empowering them to confront other power structures using critical consciousness.

**The proposed CC-YPAR model.** Infusing CC prompts into the phases of a yPAR model allow for documentation of CC over time. The model proposed for the current study can be found in Figure 1 below.

| Problem Identification | Methods | Social Action |
|---|---|---|

**Privileged Perspectives:**

- Whose perspective is privileged in this research process? Whose is not?
- Whose perspective is privileged in the current power structure? Whose is not?
- How might different ecological levels identify this problem?

**Problem Impact:**

- How are youth shaping problem definition?
- How does this problem impact youth involved?
- How does it impact the group?
- How does it impact youth not represented in group?

**Youth Engagement:**

- How are youth typically engaged in this issue?
- What are the barriers youth face engaging with this data?
- What are barriers imposed by adults?
- What are barriers imposed by power structures?

**Sustaining Engagement:**

- What are the skills needed by youth to engage in this issue?
- How can we embed these skills in the setting?

**Action Impact:**

- Why are youth motivated to act?
- What impact can particular youth actions have?
  - On immediate setting
  - On larger system
- Which youth will be impacted by particular actions? (Benefit/risk)
- Which youth will not be impacted by particular actions? (Benefit/risk)
- What is in place in the setting to support the action?
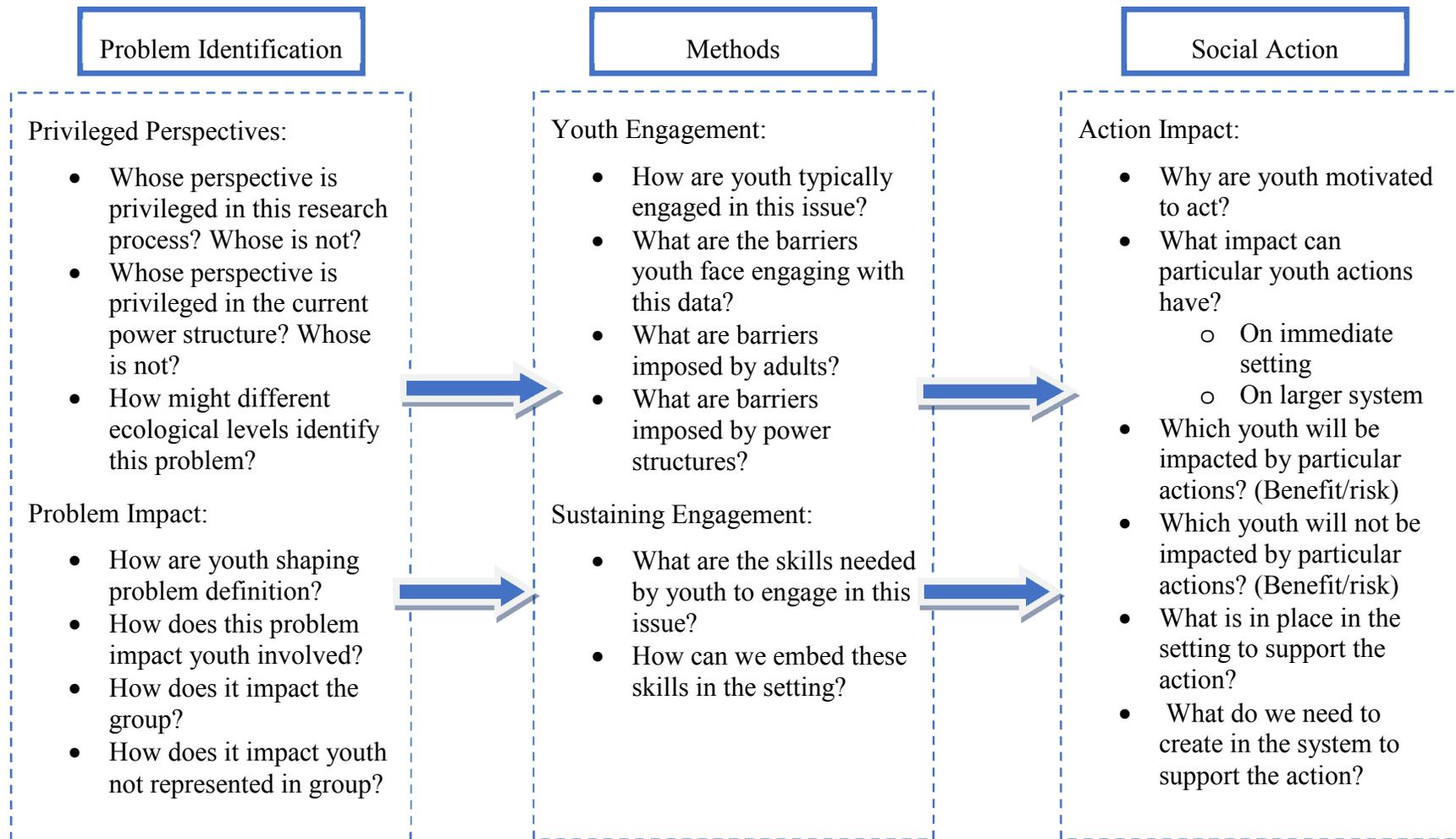- What do we need to create in the system to support the action?

*Figure 1*. Model Integrating CC into yPAR Framework.

This model outlines how to facilitate CC reflections strategically throughout the yPAR process to track changes in degree, quality, and content of youth researchers' critical reflections. Furthermore, it outlines how to integrate the two ideas to promote action targeted at the underlying structures through the use of discussion prompts aimed at continuous reflection of access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes, or power structures broadly. The model shows the three main phases of yPAR as three columns. Within each phase's column are discussion prompts to elicit a more critical reflection on the context and impact of issues and actions generated by youth researchers. For example, in the first phase when youth are introduced to research and must identify their problem of interest, probing questions are provided that help youth reflect on whose perspectives are being privileged in that process and how the problem may differentially impact people. In the second phase when youth are implementing their research method, probing questions guide reflection on youth engagement currently and how to sustain engagement in the future. In the last phase, probing questions guide critical reflection about the impact of their action. The model provides a way to guide assessment of CC in various phases of a yPAR curriculum. yPAR resources publicly available provide a testable method for dissemination such that any other community-engaged scholars would be able to implement the same yPAR curriculum and document impacts on CC throughout their intervention.

**Current Study**

The aim of this study was to understand how a yPAR approach facilitated critical consciousness in adolescent refugees. Given the power of critical consciousness concepts to advance social justice and social change for marginalized communities and the value of meaningful youth participation in research supporting refugee communities, this study aimed to understand how the yPAR framework supports CC development in refugee adolescents.

To accomplish this aim, I partnered with a local refugee-serving nonprofit organization. I was one of only a few volunteers at the program's after-school tutoring program at a high needs school. The program was not staffed by program staff at the time, so I was able to direct activities with the students. The students far outnumbered volunteer staff, so I started facilitating games of 'hangman,' and divided participating students into two competing teams to solve spelling and vocabulary puzzles. It was election season in 2016 at the time, so I frequently used puzzles that were related to social issues or political figures that may have been relevant to students. These puzzles helped me gauge their interest in learning more about sociopolitical topics, and I approached the organization's executive director and proposed a participatory research project. Although the organization "doesn't participate in research," the aims of yPAR and CC interventions aligned with the organization's educational and self-advocacy mission, and their board of directors agreed to support the research project. They were especially supportive of developing youth skills and knowledge, and a way to contribute to their communities; something they knew was of interest to refugee families. They agreed to provide a space in the community to hold yPAR sessions, and a co-facilitator from their staff. The co-facilitator was a staff member identified by the director as being particularly skilled at communicating with families and recruiting youth to join programs. He was a refugee himself who had joined the staff a few years earlier and been a valuable part of several youth programs. I agreed to provide the financial support and primary facilitation.

My co-facilitator and I facilitated a 12-session yPAR curriculum with a group of refugee adolescents. The curriculum had three main phases; research basics, data collection and analysis, and action. During the research basics sessions, the group learned about PAR, conducted a community assessment, and identified a social problem and research question to address. By way

of preview, the group defined their community as their schools (members of the group attended two high schools), and their problem as bullying in school. Specifically, they wanted to know which students experienced the most bullying (of several types) by age, race, and religion. During the data collection and analysis sessions, youth developed and administered a survey, and practiced entering data in Excel. Graduate student research assistants completed data entry, and I conducted basic descriptive analyses outside of the session. Youth were not interested in entering every survey or using analysis software. To move the project along, these tasks were completed by me outside of the session and reviewed with the co-facilitator before the next session. During the action sessions, youth conducted a root cause analysis, developed an action plan targeted at one of their root causes and proposed their social change action to powerful school stakeholders. Through each phase, research steps were guided by specific lesson plans facilitated by the co-facilitator and me, and critical reflection questions were posed throughout each session to prompt development of critical reflection and action (see Appendix A).

Critical consciousness and YPAR literature underscore the importance of critical reflection, and research questions were developed accordingly. To understand how CC develops using a yPAR approach, the study was guided by the following research questions:

*RQ 1:* How does the implemented yPAR framework support the development of the CC component of critical reflection around identity for refugee adolescents?

*RQ 2:* How does the implemented yPAR framework support the development of the CC component of critical awareness around power structures that impact the lives of refugee adolescents? To what extent do refugee youth feel agency to take critical action and advocate for social change in those power structures?

*RQ3:* What, if any, critical skills does the implemented yPAR framework help refugee

adolescents develop to support their critical action efforts?

*RQ 4:* In what ways does the implemented yPAR framework support critical reflection of

inequity in existing social structures?

# CHAPTER 2: METHOD

## Setting

Participants were recruited from a local organization that serves refugee families throughout a Midwest capital area, home to approximately 20,000 refugees (Refugee Development Center [RDC], 2016). The organization describes itself as "a grassroots organization offering formal and informal learning opportunities in an open and inclusive setting." The organization focuses on education for both youth and adults and accepts refugee families who have lived in the area for any amount of time, with no expiration on service access.

According to the 2017 annual report of its activities, the organization served 2,247 newcomers, (RDC, 2018). That included people from 51 countries, including 1,280 youth (RDC, 2018). It was also a record year of annual clients for the organization, suggesting the need for services and support in the area is increasing, despite the sharp decrease in refugee admissions as directed by the U.S. President.

The yPAR sessions took place in a community clubhouse located in a residential complex where many refugee families live. The organization's director chose this site because there is a good relationship between the organization and the complex, it was convenient for youth to attend close to home. Additionally, the co-facilitator was able to do drop-in home visits before the sessions started to remind youth about the session starting, and to check in and say hello to parents.

## Participants

**Selection and recruitment.** Convenience sampling was agreed to be the most appropriate technique for recruiting participants, given the nature and goals of the project. yPAR is designed to support youth in understanding and addressing a community problem, and a

shared geographic community may facilitate that process. Youth were recruited from the residential complex where sessions would be held. Through discussions with the organization director and the assigned co-facilitator, homebased recruitment was planned. This meant the co-facilitator and I would visit families with adolescents already engaged in the organization's programs in their homes to explain the study, invite the adolescents to join, and obtain informed consent. University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was received for this approach to recruitment. After receiving approval from the university's human subjects research office, the organization staff member serving as co-facilitator and I began recruitment home visits. To the extent possible, both the staff co-facilitator and I visited together. When it was not possible, the co-facilitator conducted home visits alone. Homebased recruitment resulted in 15 assenting participants and their consenting parents. No adolescents who were recruited for participation declined. Four additional youth were recruited based on their stellar leadership skills demonstrated in a five-week summer camp hosted by the organization. Only two of those youth leaders continued with participation in the full project, due to conflicts with other after-school activities. We obtained parental informed consent and youth child assent (see Appendix B) from a total of 19 youth, although two youth never attended any sessions, and about ten attended on a regular basis.

Of those who ever attended, eight were girls and nine were boys. Youth ranged in age from 13 to 17 years old. Parents and children were informed about the participatory skill-building nature of the project, the opportunity for their child to be an influential community member, and the data collection purpose and process. Parents and children were assured of confidentiality of information, as well as the limits of confidentiality, given that youth would choose or choose not to share the products of their research. On average, 12 youth attended

Phase I sessions, nine youth attended Phase II sessions, and eight youth attended Phase III

sessions. Participation declined dramatically during later sessions that occurred during winter,

likely due to family holidays and a snow day.

        **Informed consent – Parental consent, child assent.** Project participation required

parental consent for children under 18. All participants were between the ages of 13 and 18,

therefore provided assent by signing the parental consent form (Appendix B). Consent was

obtained through home visits to recruited youth and their parents, which is the usual process the

organization conducts when recruiting families for participation in programs. The co-facilitator

conducted all home visits and explained the project, procedures, risks, and benefits, and obtained

parental consent. I accompanied organization staff on home visits as possible. Youth signed the

consent form as well to provide assent. The form included a section where youth and their parent

can opt to release identifying information. They also indicated consent for sessions to be audio

recorded.

        The university's IRB exempted the youth's yPAR research project from being considered

data as long as they did not collect identifying information. Therefore, original, anonymous data

collected by youth as part of their yPAR project on bullying in schools was *not* considered data

by the IRB, and youth researchers did not need to collect separate informed consent to administer

their bullying surveys.

**yPAR Procedures**

        **Phase and lesson plan model.** Consistent with the phases of the yPAR cycle, the

sessions were divided into phases of the cycle. Appendix C provides an overview of lesson plans

nested in sessions nested in phases. Phase I, "research basics," included four sessions designed to

introduce research, participatory action research specifically, ethics, and methods. Phase II, "data

collection and analysis," included three full sessions and some of a fourth, designed to guide youth researchers through survey design, data collection and analysis. Phase III, "action," included four full sessions and most of a fifth, designed to guide youth researchers through institutional action planning and execution. The final session of Phase III also included a debrief portion in which youth reflected on the program experience overall. Most of the lesson plan facilitation materials were adapted from the yPAR Hub, an online resource center for implementing yPAR through the University of California, Berkeley (yPAR Hub, 2015).

Each week, the co-facilitator and I would meet to debrief the previous week's activities and review the lesson plan activities planned for the upcoming session. He would provide feedback and edits to the plans, and preferred that I take the lead facilitator role during the research sessions with youth. Our collaboration in lesson planning during each phase and at each step of the research cycle attended to the organization's strict standards for ethical programming with refugee families. Consideration was given to feasibility, developmental appropriateness for the group, and existing knowledge. Based on these planning discussions, lessons were occasionally adapted or removed. The yPAR Hub encourages researchers and communities to use the materials and adapt them freely in order to fit the needs and abilities of users (yPAR Hub, 2015).

**yPAR choice point outcomes.** By the end of Phase I, the youth researchers understood the progression of PAR and had conducted a community assessment that included issues and assets. They narrowed the issues to the top two issues they felt were most important to them and their peers, were most feasible to address, and would have the most impact. The group voted and determined their issue to research would be bullying in school. Through a brainstorming and group consensus process, they identified their research question: Who gets bullied the most by

age, race, and religion? Most of the youth researchers attended one of two high schools, and so the research would take place at both schools.

During Phase II, there were strong mixed opinions among the youth regarding the appropriateness of interviews and surveys to answer their research question. Youth divided into 'pro-interview' team and a 'pro-survey' team. After a debate in which youth tried to convince the leader of the opposite team that their method was best, unanimous agreement was reached that a survey was most appropriate for their research question. They piloted the survey among themselves and revised based on a 'red card-green card' activity, designed to integrate their love of soccer, in which they voted to red card (stop and edit problematic questions) or green card (allow) each item. Each student planned to administer the survey in one class and returned their surveys ($N = 120$). I set up a database in Excel that included each question and dropdown menus for responses and youth practiced entering the data. In order to move the project forward, after each youth researcher was able to practice, graduate student research assistants completed data entry while youth began discussing institutional change and root cause analysis.

During Phase III, youth researchers presented their data summary to a group of younger children that the organization had partnered with for cross-cultural community connections. They presented the answers to each part of the research question (i.e., bullying by age, race, and religion) and respondent demographics, and then they facilitated an action brainstorming and theming activity with the full group. Later root cause analysis and institutional change sessions led to a plan to address the bullying root cause of 'hate' by 'spreading messages of support and love' through a public campaign at school. They unanimously chose a changemaker ally (a teacher) who was well respected by diverse students, staff, and the principal to support their

campaign and provide access to space and materials to design posters, and access to the principal to advocate for the importance of spreading the campaign throughout the school.

**Data Collection**

To address the research question of how a yPAR approach facilitated critical consciousness in adolescent refugees, qualitative data were collected. The qualitative data collection was done during each yPAR session. Using the integrated model in Appendix A, discussion questions were posed to the youth as they talked through each phase of the research process. The discussion prompts were designed to continue to elicit reflections on the sociopolitical impact of social problems, research itself, and action. Early sessions included attempts to audio record the sessions (with participants' permission), but several challenges in using the audio for analysis led to abandoning that collection approach.

Three different forms of non-participant observation were conducted (see Appendix D). Unstructured and structured observations took place on site during each session. For this project, observers were not considered participants because they did not engage with the participants in their lives or even in the distinct time and setting in which the yPAR program took place. Instead, they were direct observers of the setting without interaction (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Observers were trained undergraduate research assistants, who were trained using the training regimen in Appendix E. Training took place over two weeks, and each week included assigned readings, practice exercises, and a debrief session as a group, in which I assessed their readiness to observe in the field. Week 1 included training on observation skills, and Week 2 addressed training on field notes or structured observations. Three unstructured observers were trained, and an observation schedule was created such that two would observe each session and they rotated

sessions. One unstructured observer attended each session and recorded all of the unstructured observation data.

The unstructured observers kept ethnographic field notes in which they documented the interactions, norms, dynamics, and overall setting in which the yPAR sessions took place, with a focus on selecting and recording emergent events centered on CC concepts (Singleton & Straits, 2010). The goal of these observations was to be able to form a dynamic understanding of the way CC unfolds develops over the course of the project (Bartle, Couchonnal, Canda, & Staker, 2002). Similar to other ethnographic approaches, this approach is based on the belief that individuals in the setting each have unique perspectives about the world and those perspectives guide their behavior and interactions with each other (Kluwin, Morris, & Clifford, 2004). Rapid ethnographic approaches begin without the assumption that observers need a lot of time to 'learn' the setting and the participants, and instead enters with knowledge about the setting, specific plans for collecting data, and a timeline (Kluwin, Morris, & Clifford, 2004). Rapid ethnography most closely describes the type of unstructured observations that took place in the yPAR sessions.

Observers were trained prior to setting entry on what to expect from the sessions and the exact duration of observations – both individual session observations and the end date of the program. The observers were placed strategically in the setting to minimize interference with, and therefore reactivity of, the youth participants. They were introduced in the beginning of the session as researchers there to assist me, the facilitator. This level of introduction was suggested by the organization's executive director. The director shared that the youth were accustomed to being observed in their classrooms and during organization programming and would not be very reactive to observers in this setting. This would help decrease the likelihood and effect of

demand characteristics, wherein youth may shape their responses towards the reaction of observers (Singleton & Straits, 2010). In fact, during a lesson plan where youth researchers were planning ahead about the logistics of data entry, someone asked, "Why can't they [the observers] just do it?" I reminded them that the observers were already working, on making notes about the session. They had forgotten the observers were there to do something and suggests they were accustomed to them sitting quietly in the background.

Unstructured observers followed a general observation protocol (Appendix F). The process for recording their observations began with jottings, or "a brief written record of events and impressions captured in key words and phrases" that are meant to "jog the memory later" to write more detailed fieldnote records (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p 29). Observers were trained in the process of jotting in the field and were required to translate those to fieldnotes within 48 hours. The observers were encouraged to write down immediately any contextual or behavioral memos that add to the jottings that may be missed before more detailed field notes can be recorded. Jottings consisted of an ordered list of the events that took place in a session, conversation snippets, and details about the identities of speakers. Observers were trained to focus specifically on conversations and interactions in which CC concepts are discussed. In addition, it should be noted that unstructured observation was only feasible during whole-group level discussion. When small group discussions broke out, there was still a maximum of three observers (two for unstructured and one for structured observations), and one audio recorder. It was not feasible to increase observers or recordings, which is an acknowledged limitation of this project.

The process of transforming the jottings into field notes took place within 48 hours. Observers "filled in the blanks" by adding contextual detail and transforming notes into detailed

sentences that described each session. Extended jottings and dictated notes offered two means of extending jottings prior to full field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Observers were encouraged to fill in immediately some context if they were unable to fill in detailed field notes immediately after a session, creating what could be deemed more extensive jottings. They were allowed to record into their own recording device (i.e., a smartphone) any contextual notes they wanted to add to full field notes before they had time to sit down and focus on them. These recordings could be used to refresh their memory when writing full field notes, if needed, and deleted within 48 hours of each session. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) advised that if the observer is too tired to complete fieldnotes, it is preferable to write them after getting a good night's sleep. Time and space were available to them in the psychology building to work on fieldnotes and debrief as a team the day after each session.

In addition, the second component of data collection aimed at answering this research question was the use of structured observations during each yPAR session. This approach was ambitious but ultimately unsuccessful. For structured observations, the observers followed a slightly different training regimen found in Appendix E for structured observation. The structured observations were designed to obtain frequency counts of behavior that pertained to key components of CC. For example, it may be that the specific event coded by observers is infrequent during the first few sessions but increases in frequency over time. Observers used an event sampling protocol (see Appendix F). Event sampling occurred whenever a youth initiated one of the CC probing questions listed in Appendix A. The observers were trained to cue in to instances in which youth raise the CC probing topics outside of the facilitator-led probes. Observers were trained on how to record the structured observations in a coding sheet attached to

a detailed observation protocol (see Appendix F). The protocol detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria for each of the CC constructs being coded.

Additionally, plans were made to 'observe' the recorded version of the session by another research assistant, off site after the session. While not a full triangulation, the comparison of fieldnotes could have offered a richer, more comprehensive observation record of the sessions. The demands of being present in the physical environment may leave observers more prone to exhaustion in some points of the session, and the observer using a recording can pause and reenergize (Emerson et al., 2011). The observer using the recording may lose valuable nonverbal cues of implicit meaning, and either observer may become less attentive or motivated as they become accustomed to the task (Emerson et al., 2011). Recorded sessions also provided an avenue for reviewing observer accuracy and coming to consensus on coding behavior. The structured observations were unable to be analyzed for two main reasons. First, audio quality was not sufficient for the off-site observer to code full sessions. Because there was only one on-site structured observer, there was no way to assess reliability of observations. Second, weekly debrief meetings raised concerns that the protocol was insufficient for capturing all of the CC components that emerged during sessions. We attempted to adjust the protocol, but the ongoing nature of the process proved unfeasible to maintain. One structured observer continued to use the protocol on-site during each session as a developmental tool because the observations were not necessarily comprehensive, accurate representations of events or interactions representing CC.

In general, rapid ethnographic field methods such as these are effective ways to understand dynamic contexts, provided there is a clear research question and focused variables, (Bernard, 2011; Singleton & Straits, 2010). There are acknowledged methodological limitations of the data collected using the observation methods in this study. Some data collection strategies

were unsuccessful. The structured observation protocol was not a comprehensive list of the possible CC events and therefore was not an effective tool for quantifying CC over time. Moreover, no comparison could be made to strengthen validity and reliability of the observations because the quality of the audio recording was not sufficient for an off-site 'observer' to use. This may have made an interpretation of the frequency of CC discussions over time more difficult to discern. There are limitations to the strength of the nonparticipant observations as well. Although there were two observers in this role each session, it was difficult for them to follow each interaction and they inevitably missed some contextual details. It was especially difficult for the nonparticipant observers int his study, because sessions included small group activities and the observers were not required to capture observations of those discussions. It was not possible for them to be fully attuned to both the large group setting and the multiple moving small groups. As a participant observer and facilitator, the strength of my observations was limited as well. As the facilitator, it is possible that my observations include bias in what was recalled from each session and how it was interpreted in my field notes. Audit trails and memos helped to identify and minimize any negative impact resulting from bias (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). All of the data collected was subject to the observer's skills in observation, note taking, and interpretation during field note writing (Singleton & Straits, 2010). This study moved very quickly once I obtained IRB approval, and research assistants had only two weeks to be learn and practice the method. Observers were also unable to observe the setting prior to their data collection. These factors limit the strength of the conclusions that can be made from these field notes because the quality of observations changed over time. As practice and familiarity increased, later sessions likely included more complete and accurate details than earlier sessions.

**Data organization.** To summarize, three types of observations were collected. Two nonparticipant observers collected ethnographic field notes, and I provided retrospective ethnographic field notes, after each session. One nonparticipant observer collected structured observations, and a second, off-site observer used the audio recording of each session to 'observe' using the structured protocol. Only the unstructured, ethnographic fieldnotes (written by the research assistants and those written separately by me) were analyzed for this study.



*Figure 2*. Summary of How Analyzed Data was Collected and Organized into Master Session File.

Figure 2 illustrates how the phase structure of yPAR was facilitated using distinct lesson plans, which were observed by nonparticipant observers conducting unstructured ethnographic observation. The figure illustrates the generic process of connecting the yPAR phase model to yPAR observed data within yPAR lesson plans. These observations were then integrated into session master files for analysis, detailed in the next section.

**Data Analysis**

The analytic approach used in this study was analytic induction. Analysis of the data began during the yPAR data collection, with the use of analytic memos and context notes, which provided a space for early analysis to begin connecting concepts being described in sessions

(Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These analytic memos guided later analytic decisions and considerations by providing reminders of important contextual information.

Once all the yPAR sessions and data collection was complete, data analysis formally began with a data preparation, or cleaning process. The goal of this cleaning process was to format all of the raw field notes into a more cohesive, structured, manageable format. First, a master file was created for each session that included one set of fieldnotes. I started with a base file, a set of fieldnotes that was clear and detailed, and then weaved into that base file additional information from other sources, primarily the other observers' fieldnotes. Duplicate observations were not integrated, and any observations that were potentially related to understanding CC development were included. Each observer's fieldnotes were color coded, so the source of the fieldnotes was identifiable in each session's master file. This process involved reviewing closely each observer's field notes from each session, in addition to the readings that had been done during the collection phase.

Once fieldnotes were structured such that each session had one complete data file, they were imported to the web-based qualitative analysis software Dedoose. An adapted version of analytic induction was implemented to accommodate the temporal nature of the research questions and yPAR data. A summary of the analytic process used is shown in Figure 3.

| First Cycle Coding | | Second Cycle Data Display | | Third Cycle Assertion Development | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Step 1: Applied general inductive and deductive codes | Step 2: Developed and applied more nuanced subcodes to general codes | Step 1: Arranged summary of codes across phases of yPAR | Step 2: Collected all associated excerpts for specific codes in Step 1 | Step 1: Generated assertions based on interpretation of code's associated excerpts | Step 2, Validation: Generated confirming and disconfirming evidence. Used theory to determine missing concepts |

*Figure 3.* Summary of Adapted Analytic Induction Process.

A three-cycle analytic approach was used, and each cycle included two steps. Step 1 of the First Cycle process involved assigning general codes to portions of data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). An explanatory method of First Cycle coding, hypothesis coding, was used because the research questions were based on critical consciousness theories that provided concepts to be used as codes. I had a list of predetermined concepts and codes based on the critical consciousness components and research questions that I expected to find in the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Hypothesis coding is appropriate for content analysis and analytic induction, which occurred in the Second Cycle (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

During Step 1 of First Cycle coding, I applied the list of inductive codes that pertain to core CC components (e.g., power, privilege, exclusion and marginalization, and skills) to the fieldnotes. The following table demonstrates how Step 1 codes were applied.

*Table 1*. Step 1 of First Cycle Coding

| Field note excerpt | First Cycle code |
|---|---|
| Katie: Ok, so why do you think this is important? Why should other students at your school care about this?<br>Radia[1]: It's important.<br>Katie: Ok, what's important about it? You can ask them too. [Heaven and Azzam are quiet, never volunteer information. She interprets]<br>Radia: They say they don't know. [they shrugged]<br>Katie: OK, so why do you think other students should care about this?<br>Radia: It's important and it affects a lot of people, so we can find out about this with the survey. [Upon probing, she gave a long explanation about how] people who are bullied usually are bullied by someone who feels they are stronger and tougher than someone else. Then, someone who is bullied feels like the only thing they can do (especially a girl?) is to fight them. Then, when she hits him, she will feel strong and tough. Because if she goes to the principal's office, and complains about what happened, [sad, fragile voice], she'll have to say "oh, this person was mean to me, they said or did mean things, I'm not strong enough," and then there is no way to be strong. But with the survey, now we have a way to be strong without fighting because we are the ones asking the questions and making change.<br>Katie: Ok. That is a great answer, good. You keep talking about it and see if you can ask them other questions to get their ideas. I'll go hear from some other tables.<br>I go to the boys' table. I ask why they think it's important.<br>Shahmeer: It's important because it's everywhere at school. | Power<br><br>Problem awareness |

In addition to the predetermined codes, I added or excluded codes based on the fieldnotes data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). For example, I added a code for 'session engagement' to track activities or lessons in which youth researchers were more or less engaged in the discussion and activities. Engagement itself was not predicted to be a CC component but emerged as a

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[1] All youth names are pseudonyms.

valuable way to identify activities or concepts with which youth spent more time. The level of refinement in the Step 1 codes was still insufficient for answering the research questions.

Step 2 of the First Cycle coding involved expanding those codes by creating subcodes that added nuance and detail to better understand the CC concepts in context, resulting in lists of general codes with related subcodes. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) describe subcoding as a type of second-order tag assigned to add detail to any coded excerpt. Due to limitations of Dedoose software, I reviewed the data again and implemented an approach that refined codes on paper. Those codes were then applied to the fieldnotes by searching for excerpts that had been chunked with the broader keyword code. On a large sheet, Step 1 codes were refined by writing subcodes underneath that more specifically described the associated observation. On the large sheet of paper, I added the session number in which each subcode was present. This process was repeated until I reached saturation of theoretically important CC components. For example, to refine the 'critical skills' code, I extracted each excerpt that had been coded with 'critical skills' and added codes describing which type of critical skill (e.g., communication skills) to each excerpt. Table 2 provides an example of that coding process.

*Table 2.*  Step 2 of First Cycle Coding

| Field note excerpt | First Cycle code |
|---|---|
| Katie: Ok, so why do you think this is important? Why should other students at your school care about this? | Problem awareness |
| Radia: It's important. | |
| Katie: Ok, what's important about it? You can ask them too. [Heaven and Azzam are quiet, never volunteer information. She interprets] | |
| Radia: They say they don't know. [they shrugged] | |
| Katie: OK, so why do you think other students should care about this? | |
| Radia: It's important and it affects a lot of people, so we can find out about this with the survey. [Upon probing, she gave a long explanation about how] people who are bullied usually are bullied by someone who feels they are stronger and tougher than someone else. Then, someone who is bullied feels like the only thing they can do (especially a girl?) is to fight them. Then, when she hits him, she will feel strong and tough. Because if she goes to the principal's office, and complains about what happened, [sad, fragile voice], she'll have to say "oh, this person was mean to me, they said or did mean things, I'm not strong enough," and then there is no way to be strong. But with the survey, now we have a way to be strong without fighting because we are the ones asking the questions and making change. | Power - Conducting research/having data gives youth power to make change |
| | Power – gender – girls have fewer options when bullied |
| Katie: Ok. That is a great answer, good. You keep talking about it and see if you can ask them other questions to get their ideas. I'll go hear from some other tables. | Power – gender – girls don't want to seem weak |
| I go to the boys' table. I ask why they think it's important. | |
| Shahmeer: It's important because it's everywhere at school. | |

The resulting comprehensive list of codes was then organized in an electronic spreadsheet with a column each for the general code, the subcode, and the session number. Each column had filter settings so that I could quickly find codes that appeared within sessions or track codes appearing over sessions. I added what Dedoose terms 'descriptors' to the fieldnotes, serving as fieldnote characteristics in the way demographic characteristics may for an interview. Each document included a descriptor label that identified which phase of yPAR the session was part

of. The goal was to easily be able to produce a data display that broke down the number of times specific codes were applied during each phase.

This led to the start of Second Cycle, or pattern coding. The goal of Second Cycle coding is to refine First Cycle codes such that the researcher will be able to identify emergent themes or explanations (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), Pattern coding serves four purposes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p 86), to: (1) Condense large portions of data into smaller, more manageable units, (2) Jumpstart analysis during data collection, (3) Contribute to a cognitive map or mental schema for relationships within data, and (4) Prepare cross-case analysis for multi-case studies. At this point in analysis, the nature of temporally dependent intervention data did not fit well with the typical next steps in this analytic approach. Subsequent steps modified the coding and analytic strategies for the dynamic, process nature of the data. In this study, both Step 1 and Step 2 of the Second Cycle or Pattern coding were designed to produce data displays that connected data and themes.

Step 1 of the Second Cycle started with the list of codes generated in Step 2 of the First Cycle (refer back to Figure 3). Because each session was explicitly part of a specific yPAR phase, I could track changes in code applications through phases. To start Pattern coding, I looked across the data and codes in First Cycle, Step 2 coding, and drafted a summary Pattern coding data display to test the appropriateness of this approach for addressing CC development over time. It was structured by yPAR phase, which sets the framework to answer the research question of how these CC concepts develop over time. This was somewhat in between the more traditional steps of Pattern coding and creating a data display (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). For ease of clarity, it was determined that the next step of the analysis would begin with the parts of the data display that clearly linked the yPAR process with CC and included the

topics of power and communication. Two of the rows of that data display are presented below.

These are the rows that were expanded upon in response to the research question.

*Table 3*. Pattern Coding Data Display

| Phase I (Sessions 1-4) RESEARCH BASICS, PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION | Phase II (Sessions 5-8) DATA | Phase III (Sessions 7, 9-12) ACTION |
|---|---|---|
| a) high engagement around community assessment including populations affected by problems and those with decision-making power (elected offices, American govt) b) Those with power perpetuate systems with ineffective solutions | a) Youth critique power structure (those with resources) as endorsing bullying; have ability to influence others b) Exhibit high levels of large and small group engagement when discussing power and systems | Youth critique power structure (resources) as endorsing bullying; have ability to influence others a) mixed feelings about whether their new skills are empowering in tangible ways |
| YPAR provided structure for developing collaborative skills, including challenging each other's ideas, giving and receiving critical feedback, communication within and outside group, acknowledging different levels of awareness and experience, individual leadership capacity | YPAR structure developing activist skills, including giving/receiving critical feedback, leadership, promoting skill development in other young people, communicating to outsiders, building relationships with each other | YPAR structure developing activist skills, including respect (and challenging) for each other's perspectives, promoting skill development, leadership, communication, modeling engagement with problem, critical analysis, organizing |

Step 2 of the Second Cycle collected all of the observational data that accompanied specific themes from Step 1 into one document per theme. In other words, each theme was now represented by a list of associated excerpts. The next step in analytic induction was generating and testing assertions. Next, I describe the modifications to the traditional approach to assertion generation made in this study.

Broadly, the goal of analytic induction involves developing and testing assertions, or explanatory statements (Erickson, 1986) that fit the data. Not only should it produce a set of

assertions, but Erickson (1986) described analytic induction as a process designed to connect assertions and thematic ideas in order to understand a phenomenon. Analytic induction involves a series of steps to develop and test assertions, and the nature of the data used in this study required a modified version of those steps as well (refer to Figure 3 for a brief overview of the Third Cycle). In general, the modified analytic induction process includes developing an initial explanation of the phenomenon of interest, reexamining the definition against new data as it is collected, modifying it when negative cases disconfirm the definition, actively seeking negative cases, and redefining the explanation until a complete explanation exists (Bogden & Biklen, 2007). The phase structure of yPAR lends itself well to understanding a process over time, but the analytic induction approach outlined by Erickson (1986) does not necessarily advise how to consider its application when ideas across distinct temporal phases need to be linked. The inductive analytic strategy used to understand the development of CC included:

1. Search data within each phase as its own data corpus. In this case, the data refers to the master fieldnote files prepped during First Cycle coding.

2. Develop assertion about the phenomenon in each phase, referred to as mini-assertions.

3. Establish evidentiary warrant for the assertions. In other words, gather all evidence confirming the validity of assertions and seek and document disconfirming evidence.

4. Reframe or refine the assertions as the analyses proceed.

5. If disconfirming evidence outnumbers confirming evidence, then the assertion is not warranted by the data.

6. Review disconfirming evidence thoroughly to determine if it warrants a new, separate assertion.

7. Search for key linkages among mini-assertions across phases. A key linkage is of central significance for the major assertions.

8. Connect phase-specific mini-assertions with the development of a major assertion that explains the linkage between phases.

Step 1 of the Third Cycle involved organizing the data displays from Step 2 of the Second Cycle such that the data displays were separated by phase. In order to generate assertions regarding how a CC component changed over time, each CC theme was reviewed with all accompanying excerpts within a phase. To elaborate using the previous example, I started by deeply reviewing all Step 1 excerpts that included the codes *critical feedback* and *communication*. From there, I formulated an assertion that described an overall explanation of *communication*, for example, in each phase. Phase-specific "mini-assertions" were then reviewed without accompanying data, to form an overall summary or "major assertion" for each CC component. These overall CC component assertions served to summarize how CC was developing over time.

Step 2 of the Third Cycle was a validation step. Two types of validation approaches were implemented. First, I created a table with the assertion in the left column, confirming evidence (excerpts that supported the assertion) in the middle column, and disconfirming evidence (excerpts that did not support the assertion) in the right column for each phase mini-assertion (as seen in Appendices H-L). Assertions were revised as evidence was gathered. A crucial feature of analytic induction is the linkage between data and assertions, and a crucial feature of analytic induction in this study is the linkage between mini-assertions to form a major assertion that provided an explanation of each phenomenon investigated. For this project in particular, establishing the linkages was critical to answering how the yPAR process contributes to critical

consciousness development. These linkages demonstrate how specific lesson plan activities, described in the excerpts accompanying assertions, can elicit behaviors and attitudes over time.

For the second validation approach, I revisited theory and literature about refugee youth, CC, and yPAR to identify any important missing concepts that may be necessary to answer the research questions. The addition of the second validation approach resulted in the development of assertions related to power, identity, critical skills (critical feedback and communication), and inequity. Not all assertions had evidence that supported developmental change through phases, which will be clearly described in presenting the results. Given that the typical analytic induction techniques were modified throughout the process to accommodate the temporal nature of the research questions and data, it should be noted that each Cycle summarized in Figure 3 was iterative and developed based on consistent communication and guidance from the study's faculty advisor and existing literature.

**Credibility of Data Collection and Analyses**

Trustworthiness of the study's findings was supported using the standards of trustworthiness set forth by Lincoln and Guba (1985). To ensure credibility, or the 'truth' of the findings, I implemented strategies of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, and negative case analysis. I was engaged with the organization for over a year prior to the yPAR program, volunteering in programs to become familiar with youth perspectives and interests. The yPAR program was developed in collaboration with the organization for several months prior to its start and was a collaborative ongoing effort. Observations of the sessions occurred for two to three hours each week for three months, and then on average, once a month for three following months by multiple observers. I debriefed facilitation challenges, analytic

decisions, and interpretations of analysis at each phase consistently with the study's faculty chair, and occasionally with other committee members.

To ensure confirmability, or authenticity to the respondents (not researcher bias), an audit trail was maintained throughout the analytic process that tracked when and how each decision was made, and regular meetings with the study's faculty advisor provided another perspective on interpretation and choices. In addition to the faculty advisor's perspective, the disconfirming evidence sought in the process of analytic induction provided another check on data interpretation. A table detailing the criteria for trustworthiness followed in this study is found in Appendix G.

**Researcher role/Reflexivity**

I am a White woman with 11 years of experience working with refugee and immigrant families in two states. I approached the organization after working with a different agency's unaccompanied refugee/immigrant minor programs. I initially volunteered my time supporting adult ESL learners, and then expanded my volunteer efforts to include after school tutoring. These volunteer roles helped me establish connections to refugee families and demonstrate my competence working with members of the refugee and refugee-serving communities. After approximately a year as a volunteer, I approached the executive director about a research partnership.

When I approached the executive director of the organization to propose a participatory research project, her main concern was that I may not understand the constraints of a non-profit organization, as a researcher. After some discussion about what the organization could provide and what I could contribute, we agreed that the partnership would be beneficial to both of us. One common conflict in community-based participatory research is the tension over funding –

including who manages the funds and where funding is allocated within a project (Israel, Shulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998). In this case, funding was the primary concern of the community organization. The executive director provided a sample budget to work with, and I agreed to provide funding, allocating funds in the way the organization typically does (i.e., transportation, interpreters, co-facilitator staff, etc.). This model of openness about our needs, and the director's willingness to be open about reservations regarding research, allowed us to build in mechanisms to the collaboration that would ease our tensions. Additionally, it allowed the director to screen me against existing reservations working with researchers or students unfamiliar with the population specifically or community-based work generally. My background in partnering with communities and refugee work helped to give me credibility and legitimacy to an organization with a "no research" policy.

Throughout the negotiation process establishing our research partnership, I continued to volunteer within the organization's programs, although I did take a hiatus during the actual yPAR facilitation. The 2016 election cycle occurred during my volunteer time, which gave me extra opportunities to become involved in community outreach that the organization hosted, and find other ways to connect to the refugees and immigrants in my area. Although this was a challenging time for everyone, the youth I interacted with seemed to have mixed feelings about the election itself and were unsure how to express them. This confirmed my commitment to developing outlets in which youth could drive the conversation while developing skills that would enable them to think critically and thoroughly about important topics.

The process of facilitating meaningful conversations with refugee youth who were experiencing a politically significant shift in the United States was invaluable. I practiced harnessing my researcher training and let the voice of the youth researchers drive the research,

even when I wanted to elicit more politically relevant nuance. One of the most enlightening comments from my co-facilitator came in the middle of the fifth session, during a snack break. He approached me and commented on how unique this program was, compared to other organizational programming. He shared that most of the organization's youth programming was directed at language learning or required specific language skills, or it was designed to intervene when youth were experiencing some kind of social or educational problems. "This is a program for anyone, they don't have to speak the language. And it's not because they get in trouble, it's because we want them to be a part of their community. It's really special." These words stuck with me in future sessions and I tried to remember that the language barriers, the challenges of working with adolescent behaviors, and the general challenges of organizing a group of marginalized youth to take social action were all worth the trouble, to create a space for a group of youth to be a meaningful part of their community.

After the yPAR program officially ended, undergraduate research assistants worked with me to create an exit report for the organization summarizing the experiences and reflections of the youth researchers. The organization has since used the program and its successes to promote more community investment in the organization and its activities. I viewed my role throughout that process as mentoring both undergraduate researchers and adolescent researchers in the skills necessary to achieve the outcomes that make community engagement more meaningful for everyone.

# CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

**Descriptive Findings: How the yPAR Process Unfolded with Refugee Youth**

The yPAR process unfolded in three phases with three to five sessions in each phase. The objectives for the first phase, research basics, were to introduce participatory action research, ethics, conduct a community assessment, identify a community problem to research and research question, and determine which method would be best suited to answer the question. Using adapted lesson plans from the yPAR Hub, described in the previous section, the organization co-facilitator and I guided the group through each objective. The sessions introducing the youth to research included lessons on defining the scope of research, the definition of participatory research, research cycles, and research ethics. Given the conditions and experiences under which youth become refugees, discussing ethical research was a particular concern, and youth articulated an impressive level of sensitivity in approaching participants, consent procedures, and seeking sensitive information. The group conducted a broad community assessment, after which they narrowed their definition of community to their school setting based on their concerns about the feasibility of addressing larger community issues at the city or state level. Once at the school level, they narrowed the social issues of concern to school bullying because they felt it was especially important to them and to other students and limiting to the school context made it feasible. After developing potential research questions, they went through a voting and open discussion consensus process to determine that they specifically wanted to know how many students at their two schools were bullied, by age, race, and religion – the factors they identified as most salient. They also wanted to ask specifically about physical, mental/emotional, and cyberbullying experiences. This phase also included an introduction to three research methods; interview, survey, and Photovoice, which they were able to practice to get a better understanding.

The phase ended with a voting process and lively debate over which method would best answer their research question, given their resources. They unanimously chose to use a survey method.

During the data collection and analysis phase, the main objectives were to design their survey instrument, administer it and collect data, enter it into a database and analyze data for a summary of findings. Again, adapted lesson plans from the yPAR Hub provided structure for guiding youth researchers through each objective. During instrument design, youth brainstormed as many questions and corresponding response options as possible addressing demographics, bullying knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes or beliefs, and the group discussed which ones to keep and which to discard. I formatted their questions into a draft survey and the youth researchers spent one session piloting and revising the survey, with special attention to inclusivity in response options, clarity in phrasing, and visual appeal. They drafted a survey introduction to read aloud in a designated class of their choice and would pass out surveys and collect them within approximately five to ten minutes. They brought completed surveys ($N =$ 160) to the next session, and they each practiced entering data into a database that I set up in Excel using their revised survey. During the next session, I brought in a slideshow summary of the data. For context, the average respondent was in 9th grade and 15 years old. Most of the respondents were African American and Christian. To answer their research questions, 14-year-olds, African Americans, and Christians reported the most bullying. Given the demographics of their sample, these are expected results. The youth researchers chose their own sampling strategy, and their convenience sample limited variability in their results. During the data interpretation sessions, youth discussed the impact on basic analyses of sample size and oversampling of certain demographics. Without advanced analyses, youth were not able to explore any data nuances. Respondents reported the greatest amount of mental or emotional

bullying, and in an open-ended question described verbal insults as most common. Youth researchers presented their key findings to a group of younger youth during a subsequent session, and youth researchers facilitated their own action brainstorming activity with the group.

The objectives of the third phase, action, included a root cause analysis, action brainstorming, introduction to systems social change, identification of a powerful ally, action identification and implementation. The last session was focused on debriefing their experience, identifying next steps, and the role of evaluation. Adapted yPAR Hub lessons and original lesson plans guided the activities in the action phase. Through a root cause analysis, youth identified hate and lack of policy enforcement in schools as the main causes of bullying. Using a systems change approach, they brainstormed various actions to combat both root causes and identify a powerful ally with whom they could partner to conduct their action. They determined their most feasible and impactful action would be to combat hate by flooding the school with a public display of kindness, such that each student who commits to helping three peers adds their name to a public poster and promotes kindness as a social norm.

**Critical Reflection: Identity**

The first area of CC exploration was how the yPAR framework supported the development of critical reflection around identity. CC scholars have posited that self-reflection furthers identity development and group reflection furthers understanding about shared systemic experiences (e.g., racism; Diemer et al., 2017). To understand how the yPAR process could influence identity development, field notes were analyzed by phase. Findings suggest that youth were critically reflecting on their identity throughout the project, initially resisting the only shared identity (refugee teen) and eventually adopting new shared identities that included experiences they discussed as a group (see Appendix H). First, I present the overall assertion that

explains how the yPAR process is related to identity development across all three phases. That overall assertion is elaborated briefly, then the assertions for identity development within each phase are presented with supporting evidence. This general format will be repeated for each assertion in the Results.

> ***Identity Assertion:*** *For Phases I & II, youth have hesitation in claiming shared refugee identity, but offer interpretations and explanations during discussion that indicate their refugee background. In Phase III, youth are more actively resisting the refugee identity by claiming other shared identities based on experiences (e.g., Muslim, action researchers).*

Youth were recruited into the YPAR process by virtue of being part of a local refugee-serving organization's services. They were all refugee youth who the co-facilitator knew personally, or who had come to his attention through snowball sampling. Critical consciousness is theorized to be most effective and beneficial when raised among marginalized populations, and resettled refugee adolescents are perhaps some of the most marginalized groups. While their status as refugees was part of the inclusion criteria for participation, it was not a driving force of each lesson plan or discussion. Over the course of the YPAR project, youth demonstrated a resistance to the refugee label, and adopted instead other group identities based on shared experiences.

**Phases I & II identity assertion.** Following is a closer look at how identity developed during Phase I (research basics and problem identification) and Phase II (data collection and analysis) of the yPAR process.

> ***Phase I and II Identity Assertion:*** *Facilitator uses prompts to try to draw out collective identity, referencing refugee background. Youth interpretations/explanations to prompts indicate their refugee background.*

In Phases I and II, lesson plan activities were designed to develop research knowledge and skills, and prompt critical reflection. Critical reflection around identity is not a core theoretical component of CC, but recent qualitative research has suggested this may develop through a facilitated CC process (Boutwell, 2015). In Phase I, the group as a whole did not appear to have any identity characteristics in common, beyond the refugee status that prompted their inclusion. The group had diverse backgrounds in nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, and age. To gauge aspects of their identity, critical questions were posed throughout the early phases. As the facilitator, I introduced the concept of Participatory Research in Phase I by explaining that a lot of research is about people or problems, but the people are not always asked about their situation. I went on to use refugee research as an example of a group about which information exists, but refugees are not always asked to participate in deciding what information exists. For example, when discussing Participatory Action Research, youth were prompted to be specific about the participants in their research group, by labeling who was included and excluded. The following field note excerpt is an example of how they responded to a review of that conversation.

> Katie: Then we talked about our kind of research – 'participatory'. What is that?
> Everyone: Us! Participating.
> Katie: Ok, yes. But remember, we had to say how we describe our group. Is it everyone in the world?
> Everyone: No.
> They narrowed it down to teenagers, to Summer Place, to refugees, to age 13-18. When asked who is not included, they mention people who are not interested, people who live farther away. I notice when Rose says 'refugees?' she kind of makes a negative face. I say yes. I don't know if she wants to discard that label, or if she doesn't think of themselves that way. But it's an important part of why they were recruited for this, so it definitely is part of their group and I want her to keep it in mind as they develop their research topic.

This discussion unfolded as a funnel of identity, starting from identifying the group as "everyone" and funneling down to "teenagers," and further to "teenagers in [this city]," to "refugee teenagers." This funneling process was facilitated by probing questions such as, "all the teenagers?" and "all the teenagers in [this city]?" Youth were reluctant to label themselves as refugees and offered no additional identifying details about their residency status once they had funneled their responses that far. Auto-ethnographic field notes following those conversations describe feelings of justification for extensive probing of identity and an observation that youth seemed hesitant to identify as refugees. When given opportunities throughout Phases I and II to create a name (effectively, a collective identity) for their research group other than "YPAR," they declined immediately.

The other times that refugee status or identity was present in Phases I and II resulted from direct prompts to consider how specific research topics were relevant for refugee adolescents, and sample research questions that referred to refugee adolescents. The following excerpt is taken from that discussion.

> Katie: why is this [research] question important?
> Rose[2]: it is important so we can provide support because lots of people are refugees and lots of people make fun of refugees
> Radia: if we think school is important, all things about school are important
> Tam: yes because a lot of teens come from another country as refugees who may not feel socially supported

During an activity in which the youth researchers critiqued a sample research question (*"Do refugee teenagers feel socially supported at school?"*) on domains of relevance, clarity, and specificity, they identified its relevance by explaining the importance of supporting newcomers at school, as school is important. At one point, a youth researcher shared that lots of people are refugees and lots of people make fun of refugees. Another added that lots of teens come from

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[2] All youth names are pseudonyms.

other countries as refugees and may not feel socially supported. Observational data from that

discussion highlights that although the youth acknowledged refugee adolescents, they did not

identify themselves as such even in those discussions.

Some discussions unfolded in the first two phases in which youth interpretations or

explanations of concepts indicated their refugee background without making it an explicit

identity. During the community assessment activity, one youth researcher explained that

"government can decide" who is part of a community.

> Katie: Ok, who decides who is part of a community? Who can decide whether people are
> in or out?
> Someone: The parents, because they can decide to move the family away.
> Tam: Government can decide.
> Katie: How?
> Tam: They can raise taxes, so people can't afford to live there. Or they can do something
> bad that makes people leave.
> Tam keeps telling me that this second one is rare and doesn't really happen. I repeat both
> to the group to see if there's any response to these two. We briefly discuss taxes,
> Tam explains it is like when you buy something for $1 and you have to pay an extra
> .06. I clarify that it is extra money you have to pay the government for things. I also
> think his dismissal of the second reason is interesting because as refugees, they
> have all experienced being persecuted out of their home, usually by a government.
> But it's possible they haven't experienced that if they were born in a refugee camp,
> perhaps.

When asked how that would happen, the youth mentioned raising taxes and pricing residents out,

or "something bad that makes people leave." Once mentioned, the youth researcher was adamant

that the second explanation is rare and "doesn't really happen." Auto-ethnographic field notes

from that discussion note that other young people did not elaborate on that exchange and

although they have all been persecuted, usually by a government, they were not interested in

asserting that identity or experience.

Other discussions in which youth alluded to their refugee or newcomer status included

references to potential research topics involving "misunderstandings" when "people are trying to

explain things but their English isn't very good," for example. Although youth chose bullying as their research topic, occasionally their references for bullying would indicate a refugee background. For example, in one discussion immediately after narrowing the research topics and before determining the research question, someone explained that bullying can affect even people not directly bullied, suggesting "if a parent has a child who is being bullied because they don't speak English, and the parent doesn't speak English, then they won't know what to do about it. And now the parent is going to be upset or sad."

Outside of facilitated discussion, one youth researcher shared an unprompted explanation about her identity that may provide some insight to the level of complexity that identity discussions may hold. The conversation took place during the snack break when youth were casually chatting and was documented in my autoethnographic field notes after the session.

> I don't remember how Rose transitioned topics, but she explained that it's hard for her to answer, "where are you from?" because her dad is from Iraq, and her mom is from Palestine, but she was born in Jordan and raised in Lebanon.
> Katie: Where do you tell people when a stranger asks you where you're from?
> Rose: Mostly I say Jordan because I was born there. But really I'm Kurdish. Iraqi Kurdish. But I don't like them, I've never been there. They're trying to get independence or something, but I don't care.
> Katie: Yeah, didn't they vote on it last week, or 2 weeks ago?
> Rose: I don't know, I don't follow the news about them.

**Phase III identity assertion.** Here is a closer look at how identity developed within Phase III (action) of the yPAR process.

> ***Phase III Identity Assertion:*** *Facilitator directly references group's refugee background, but youth start drawing on different common identities (e.g., Muslim, action researchers).*

Phase III was designed to plan critical action youth would take to address bullying at their school. The main lesson plan activities in Phase III involved identifying institutional systems, identifying changemakers who could serve as allies, and planning a change to target a

root cause of bullying. By the end of the YPAR project, they were working their action plan through the school administration. In Phase III, several opportunities presented to claim a group identity. The last session included a reflection on critical consciousness concepts. They were generally asked to reflect on the project, what they learned, how they expect it has impacted their future, and their community roles. Observations of their reflections in the last phase suggest they had adopted new shared identities based on their discussions of shared experiences and as researchers.

During action planning in Phase III, youth researchers reexamined their data to look for other interpretations and root causes. Out of this reexamination came a discussion about shared experiences related to Muslim identity.

> Rose [interpreting]: She says she doesn't see Muslim students bullied at all.
> Katie: Oh, ok. Well that's good, I'm glad that you don't see that a lot. But I think other students do, and it's important that we think about their experiences too.
> Rose: It happens a lot. Especially to girls because we wear headscarves or hijabs.
> Aminah: Yes, that is something people talk about a lot.
> Katie: Yeah, do you think Muslim girls are bullied more than Muslim boys? Because it's easier to know their religion?
> Rose: Yes. It's happened to me a lot in school.

The youth researchers who attended that session were all girls, and most were Muslim girls who wear hijabs. The girls started talking about experiences being bullied by people at school and in internships where students or even other adults had tried to remove their hijab, or threatened to punish them for mentioning the Quran. This seemed to promote a sense of group identity, although they did not explicitly discuss a group identity.

Another discussion began during that session in which a reexamination of the data led one of the youth researchers to speculate that the bullying experiences of their research participants may be due to their newcomer status. However, they did not include newcomer

status in their survey, which provided an opportunity to discuss the limitations of their data. That was the last time they connected their targeted social issue of bullying with their own identity.

In the last session of critical reflection on their participation, they recommended future YPAR projects expand participation outside of refugee young people, because the topic should be one that "could apply to anyone." I responded, "Bullying is a topic that applies to everybody, right? Refugee is just something you all have in common with each other." He responded, "I guess, but I think other students should be in the group too."

When asked how they felt about themselves after participation and how they wanted others to perceive them, the youth researchers emphasized their research skills and ability to partner with powerful changemakers. They even identified as changemakers themselves and espoused a new sense of confidence in their efficacy.

> Katie: What do you want people to know about your group or the project?
> Hilary – Stop bullying because it hurts a lot of people. I have a friend who tried to kill himself because he was bullied. People need to know that it can really hurt people.
> Katie: Oh, I'm sorry. That's really important.
> Hilary: Yes it is.
> Student: We do research and then take action
> Student: We've all been working together to solve a problem
> Student (Brian?): We do research, and we're becoming a changemaker
> Student: Research

Overall, they wanted others to know they are researchers, who work together to solve problems and create change. In a post-YPAR debriefing session between the organization co-facilitator and me, the co-facilitator emphasized the value and novelty of being able to identify powerful allies and partner with changemakers or become changemakers. In particular, he noted that in their cultural backgrounds, many refugee families are from countries where their ability to speak out was repressed, "because you just, you risk your lives. You risk your own freedom." He continued to explain this group encouraged them to learn who to talk to and learn that "it's safe

to speak. And safe to share," and later acknowledged that, "they are working on a project that might change the whole school system, so I think they're taking it like, heavy, but I think that they were smiling all the time, and they were very happy, and they were learning." His interpretation of the way the youth may have considered their role underscores the gravity and enthusiasm behind their final group identity as action researchers and changemakers.

**Critical Reflection and Action: Power**

The second area of CC exploration was how the yPAR framework supported the development of critical reflection around power structures in the lives of the youth researchers, and the extent to which youth felt agency to take critical action. To answer this question, field notes were analyzed by phase. First, I present the overall assertion describing how critical reflections regarding power occurred throughout the YPAR project to build an awareness of existing power structures and develop a sense of efficacy to act within them as marginalized youth targeting systems change. Findings suggest that reflecting on power structures and structural solutions to social issues was challenging for youth, but that they generally felt optimistic about their agency when partnering with a powerful ally, or changemaker (see Appendix I). Below is the overall assertion for how ideas of power were associated with yPAR processes, and then I will present the assertions related to each phase of the yPAR process.

*Power Assertion:* *The YPAR facilitation introduced youth to the idea of partnering with a powerful ally to accomplish change that they felt would normally be impossible for young people to achieve. Although they felt they could not "solve" the problem of bullying, they expressed a general increase in sense of influence and agency.*

Youth entered the YPAR process with an understanding that they would be helping their community with a problem. Through a community assessment in Phase I, they identified a set of issues facing young people in their lives and then used a voting process to identify the leading issue they wanted to address. After determining the issue they would research, they began to identify the challenges they would face in making change. Observational data suggests as they progressed through the YPAR process and additional critical consciousness elements were introduced (e.g., structural power, critical reflection, etc.), they wrestled with the influence they could have to affect change compared to the influence certain powerful actors could have to affect change.

Through an intentional process of prompting moments of critical consciousness raising, youth researchers developed a sense of resignation that they could not end bullying completely. The process of critical reflection and systems thinking gave them the opportunity to strategize with powerful allies. Data suggests that youth researchers felt a stronger sense of agency when reflecting on their ability to strategize around an issue.

When analyzing the data excerpts related to power, two separate themes emerged during Phase III. Therefore, two separate power assertions were developed for that phase that identified the divergent thought patterns. The first assertion developed around data that suggested youth were thinking of power and social systems through a lens of critical reflection and action. In other words, this assertion developed from data that addressed *targeting* power structures and

individuals with power. The second assertion developed around data that suggested youth were internalizing new knowledge and skills and developing a sense of personal efficacy related to bullying in schools. This assertion developed from data around the youth *having* power.

**Phase I power assertion.** The following is a closer look at how ideas of power developed in Phase I (research basics and problem identification).

> ***Phase I Power Assertion:*** *Activities do not include an explicit focus on power; instead discussion prompts designed to assess who/what youth identify as having power or influence.*

Phase I was designed to guide youth into their role as researchers by introducing basic research concepts and methods. It was also designed to lay a foundation for critical consciousness by prompting basic critical reflections on their community. To that end, youth participated in a community assessment aimed at eliciting youth perceptions of community assets and issues. During this phase, critical consciousness facilitation around issues of power and power dynamics consisted mainly of prompts to elicit a better understanding of who or what the youth perceived to have power in their community. Examples of lesson plans that elicited this type of understanding included: Introduction to Participatory Action Research, practicing research methods, identifying their dream community, comparing their dream community to their current community, and identifying community issues of concern.

During this early phase, the youth identified "experts" as people with power, and power as the people who have control over decisions. For example, when asked what they would do if they tried to pick up neighborhood trash but it kept appearing, they said they would tell the [apartment complex] office. When asked who the community experts are, youth generally identified roles of power, such as government or school leaders.

While exploring issues of power in Phase I, youth also critically reflected on the role that adults might take in protecting them. For example, when discussing community violence as a potential problem to research, youth expressed an understanding that adults might prevent them from getting involved in the issue to keep them safe, but that without youth efforts, adults would not respond to the problem.

> Brian: Parents won't let you go do anything about shooting in the neighborhood.
> Katie: Ok, why not?
> Rose: It's not safe.
> Tam: They don't want you to get shot if you go up to someone who you know has a gun.
> Katie: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?
> Group: Both.
> Rose: Good because you are safe, and bad because if you don't try and solve the problem, who will?

Ultimately, they agreed that everyone would benefit if they focused their efforts on the issue of bullying in schools.

> Katie: Ok, what could be some benefits of doing the research?
> Group: We could learn about what is happening, so we can stop bullying.
> Tam: And maybe we can stop bullying from happening in the future if we find out what makes people bully other people.
> Katie: Ok, so you could even develop a plan for action about preventing the problem. Who will benefit from the research?
> Group: Everyone. Even bullies because maybe they feel like upset and that's why they bully and we can help them too.

**Phase II power assertion.** Following is a closer look at how ideas of power developed in Phase II (data collection and analysis).

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*Phase II Power Assertion: Activities and discussions focused on instilling sense of knowledge and ability among youth, and discussion prompts designed to reflect on their power.*

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Phase II activities were designed to expose youth to data research activities, and to begin prompting them to think more specifically about who influences bullying at their schools. Lesson

plans in this phase encouraged youth to collect data as researchers, and also to discuss critically the results of their data collection. These critical reflections prompted youth to learn more about bullying at their school and consider how to approach the issue as researchers (i.e., develop knowledge). Examples of lesson plan activities that were designed to promote knowledge generation in this phase included: Developing survey questions, revising the survey, and reviewing the summary of survey results.

Activities in this phase were also designed to promote a sense of ability within the youth researchers as a group; that they may be able to do more to address the issue of bullying than they originally thought in Phase I. The act of piloting and revising their survey and collecting actual data in their schools appeared to bolster their sense of efficacy about bullying more broadly. The excerpt below is from the discussion in which the youth created an introduction to read at the beginning of survey administration in their class.

> Katie: Brian said a problem might be people messing around, what would you tell them that could help that problem?
> Radia: We should explain that the survey is basic questions, not about their health or other parts of their life which might help them feel better about taking it.
> Brian: It's anonymous.
> Katie: How can you explain what anonymous means?
> Rose: People won't know who you are.
> Katie: Next question. What do you wanna tell me about what is the benefit to them for taking the survey?
> Rose: We will be able to help solve problems for them.
> Brian: We can convince the teacher to give us extra credit.

Examples of lesson plan activities that were designed to promote their sense of ability included: Piloting their survey, piloting their survey introduction for public speaking, and practicing their presentation of data findings.

In addition, some activities were able to provide opportunities for youth to practice expressing their knowledge, and data suggests this immediately boosted their efficacy. Examples

of lesson plan activities that included both knowledge and ability development components were: The interview vs. survey debate, survey data entry, and designing data presentations for the group of younger children. In each of these activities, youth immediately expressed interest in taking active roles to speak up or participate. Through their activity participation, they were able to develop skills that gave them confidence in addressing the changemakers with more power, whom they would identify in the next phase. The following excerpt is an exchange in which a Rose, a youth researcher who often took a leadership role, is discussing how she plans to facilitate the data activity with the group of younger children who will attend. Her younger brother, Brian, is chiming in with suggestions and advice.

> Katie: Ok, how do you want to facilitate? Do you want to ask them what they think is important from your presentation? Or do you want to ask them what actions they think you should take in your school?
> Rose: Actions.
> Katie: Ok. Do you want to have a poster where you put their sticky notes?
> Rose: yes.
> Katie: Ok, what do you want it to say?
> Rose: I don't know…
> Brian: How about 'action'?
> Rose: Yes, that's fine.
> Katie: Ok. I'll make that poster and bring it next week. What else do you want to tell them? What is important about doing this activity?
> Rose: Write their ideas on their notes. They can write anything.
> Katie: Ok, so you think it's important that they know they can write anything. Like I tell you it doesn't have to be only good ideas, it can be all of your ideas.
> Rose, Yes, that's good.
> Katie: Ok, and only one idea per sticky?
> Rose: Yes. Only 2 ideas.
> Brian: No, I think it should be however many they want.
> Rose: Ok, yeah, that's better.
> Katie: Ok, so as many ideas as they can? The next step is called 'theming' in research. Do you remember how to group the sticky notes? Can you lead that?
> Rose: Yeah, I'll just put the similar ideas together.

**Phase III power assertion.** Two different assertions emerged from Phase III data (action). Here, the first power assertion describes how youth developed ideas about targeting power structures.

> **Phase III Power Assertion:** *Activities structured around identifying root causes and powerful allies that have influence on root causes. Youth find it much easier to identify those with power, and causes, than structural solutions.*

Phase III was designed to engage youth in critical thinking around power structures and social change. This began with a series of lesson plans to identify the root causes of bullying, including: Discussion of institutional change, changemaker vs changestopper skits, a story in which they identify structural solutions to school problems, and a root cause analysis brainstorm. During the first activity to define institutional change, youth were actively involved in identifying institutions and institutional actors (e.g., schools, churches, governments, and associated personnel). They were also able to easily identify antecedents to bullying and bullying attitudes (e.g., family teachings). The following excerpt illustrates how youth thought about the challenge of confronting institutions that were supporting bullying.

> Katie: And what happens if you go to a place that has a lot of bullying and you're new?
> Rose: You learn it.
> Katie: Exactly. You learn how the society is. How the institution is. So we have to think about how to change the institution so that bullying doesn't happen. Because if we try to just stop the bully, it'll never work.
> Rose: I think this problem is impossible, we can't stop it.
> Katie: Well, I agree it would be too hard to stop a bully. But are there other things at the school that you could change? And other people who have power that you can work with?
> Everyone: [general agreement]
> Rose: Yeah, I guess.
> Katie: It is a big problem. It's hard. But we're going to spend all day talking about it so you don't have to know the answers now.
> Katie: What do you think about the solution being based on the people or on the school?
> Brian: It's mostly on the school.

The concepts of changemakers and changestoppers were introduced in Phase III. Changemakers were described as people who attempt to solve a social or institutional problem by focusing solutions on the people who experience the problem. In other words, they want to change one person's experience, but the problem will remain for others. This is typically referred to as a "blaming the victim" approach (Ryan, 1976). Changestoppers were described as people who attempt to prevent the social or institutional problem from occurring for everyone. This concept was well received by the youth, but when given vignettes of students experiencing a school (institutional) problem, youth researchers expressed frustration at not being able to identify changemaker solutions. The activities in this phase guided youth researchers to identifying powerful allies by considering who would be able to change such "hard problems" on an institutional level. The following excerpt illustrates that while it was hard for the group to identify changemaker solutions to bulling in school, the idea of institutional solutions was not beyond their grasp. Sasha was a 7-year-old visitor from the group that joined them during the cross-cultural data presentation session.

> Sasha: Every class could have a list of every person and they could give x's for if you bully and if you get 3 at the end of the week all of the kids who get no x's get a prize like candy or ice cream.
> Tam: Well that is impossible.
> Katie: Why is it impossible?
> Tam: It would cost too much money.
> Katie: OK, what could you do that doesn't cost as much money? How would you solve the money problem?
> Tam: Well. The government makes money. We can count all the money that the government makes. And then you know, count the money that goes to Medicare, or like paying for the older people who need medical care, and then the people who are retired who get money after that, and then the money that's left, they could give to education.
> Katie: Wow!!! That's an amazing idea. That is really a changemaker solution! That is amazing. I know we already finished this part, but can you write that down on a sticky note, so I can remember that you said that?

Two other activities that prompted this type of reaction in youth researchers were the word cloud presentation of their open-ended survey responses, and a discussion reviewing their data interpretations. During the word cloud presentation, youth researchers reviewed a word cloud of the responses to their question about the types of things about which their peers had been bullied. Youth researchers had already seen a themed list of responses by me prior to the word cloud review. The word cloud served as a more impactful way to address the experiences of students at their school. Youth expressed sadness after seeing the exact words their peers had submitted, and a sense of defeat that they were unable to stop these types of interactions.

> Hilary: I think the problem is important but like, it's too hard to solve. Because really, it's in people's minds. It's how they think. And we can't change people's minds. So it's really hard. I think really, it has to start with very little children, like young kids, to teach them that no, you cannot treat people like that. Everyone is equal, and you need to not talk to people if you're not going to say something good to them. So I think it's hard.
>
> Katie: yes, you're right. It is hard to change people's minds. So today we're going to talk about all the different kinds of ways we can make changes to help stop the problem. And it's also important to think about how we can reach a lot of people, because like you said, it's important to start with young people so they can spread these behaviors.
>
> Hilary: Like if someone tells a girl 'you're fat,' like, she knows. She doesn't need someone to tell her. That's just bullying. And then some girls hear that and they go home and they just want to take a knife and cut themselves to die. [imitates cutting wrist] It's bad. Like if someone comes up to me 'you're fat,' like, I know that. I don't need you to tell me that. And this is my body. You need to worry about you and your body.

Later, during a discussion where a small group of youth researchers discussed their data interpretation, youth researchers expressed defeat that they could stop cycles of family teaching. Moreover, one youth researcher described the institutional discrimination her family experienced prior to resettlement in the U.S. In the country her family had fled to, she described a practice of government discrimination against other nationalities and ethnicities that limited their ability to own property, drive cars, or participate in civic parts of society.

Katie: Oh. Is it like, better to be white?

Hilary: What do you mean?

Katie: Like are people more bullied if they are not white?

Hilary: Yes, because people see skin color and then sometimes they say things. Even though like it doesn't matter about what color your skin is. We are all the same, like black or white, it's not like a real difference. In this country, it used to be a problem. But now, it doesn't matter, it's ok if you're black or white. But like – when we lived in Jordan, because we were Syrian, we were not allowed to do anything. The king says because we are Syrian, and our skin is different, then we cannot own cars, we cannot have jobs, we cannot do anything. That is a big problem. There are a lot of Syrians there. And even the king says that. Like the king, of all people, says that that is bad. It is not like that here.

Katie: Yeah, if the king, who has a lot of power, says that it's ok to treat people like that, then it makes it seem ok for regular people, right? To treat each other like that?

Hilary: Well, not everyone does. Because a lot of people are still nice, and they don't care. They know that skin color is not important. But maybe like 10% of people still act like that.

This level of institutional control seemed impossible to overcome as the youth researchers described the ways cultural norms like bullying often are supported by those with power.

Through facilitated activities in Phase III, youth researchers identified a powerful ally at their school who would support their action plan to combat bullying. Once they had identified this ally, they were immediately galvanized to action. Their level of comfort in speaking with this changemaker encouraged them to reconsider their ability to engage in addressing bullying at school. Youth did not express belief that they would end bullying, but they were once again motivated to try.

**Phase III power assertion.** The second power assertion that emerged from data described how youth developed ideas about their own power in Phase III (action).

> ***Phase III Power Assertion:*** *Youth reflect that they feel they have more information and agency than they did prior to YPAR. Youth express belief that they gain power and influence by becoming involved in an issue.*

After a challenging process to identify changemakers at school who would be able to help the youth researchers address bullying, a different theme emerged around power at the end of Phase III. During the last session, youth researchers were asked to reflect on their YPAR experience and the way they felt about social change. When prompted very generally about what they thought of the project, youth immediately responded with pride.

The primary lesson plan activity in the last session was a reflection on critical consciousness concepts, although not presented in those terms to the youth researchers. They were generally asked to reflect on the project, what they learned, how they expect it has impacted their future, and their community roles. When framed this way, youth reflected almost entirely positively on the experience and their new knowledge and skills.

> Katie: What do you think of this project?
> Radia: We should be proud.
> Katie: Even if it doesn't happen, what about you as a person?  What do you feel?
> Heather: It was a good experience.
> Radia: Even if it doesn't help anybody, it helps us.
> Helena: We don't have to find a changemaker.  We can be the ones who make the change

Youth were prompted to consider how their participation has impacted the way they think about community issues now.

> Radia: I didn't care at all before. Now, everything is different.
> Layla: Other projects learn about research, but they never do action.
> Mateen: Bullying was a problem in my country too, but no one tried to stop it. That was new to think about.

Youth were also asked how they thought they would think about people and problems in the future. One youth researcher who had expressed controversial opinions in previous sessions, including admitting to bullying, said, "If I can change my mind, I can change someone else's." The main difference youth observed about themselves over the course of the project was their

ability and interest in identifying changemakers and allies to support their change efforts in the future.

> Helena: By making a group to focus on a problem and working together
> Brian: I will look for a changemaker who can help.
> Rose-I always stand up for what's right.  I talk to the changemakers.  I always stand for
>       what's right.

Moreover, the co-facilitator from the organization shared that it was also his first time learning about social change and research, and he also was proud of the new knowledge about changemakers.

## Critical Skills: Communication

The third area of CC exploration was the identification of critical skills that the yPAR framework helped youth develop in support of their action efforts. To answer this question, the same phase approach was taken to map development onto the distinct yPAR phases. Findings suggest that two main skills emerged through the process that helped youth gain the ability to take action; communication and giving and receiving critical feedback. Findings suggest that increased communication skills were connected to increased knowledge about the research process and bullying specifically, which strengthened their change efforts (see Appendix J). Below is the overall assertion for how communication skills were associated with the yPAR process. After a brief explanation, assertions and supporting evidence will be provided for how communication skills developed within each phase.

> *Communication Assertion: The YPAR phase structure includes lesson plans designed to build specific knowledge about action research and apply it to a youth-identified social problem. As youth gain knowledge about research and their social problem (bullying), they developed a shared language with which to communicate. Their communication skills*

*become more advanced, shifting from call-and response with facilitator, to engaging with*

*and challenging each other, to data presentations and advocacy to outsiders.*

Participating youth began the YPAR process with various levels of knowledge about their

community, and various levels of communication skills. For example, a couple of the youth had

lived in the United States for several years and were more familiar with American community

and school contexts. Two youth had just recently been resettled in the U.S. and required an

interpreter for each session. Even with the assistance of an interpreter, their knowledge of local

systems was undeveloped. The YPAR process was structured to build knowledge as a group

through each phase. Observational field notes suggest that the development of general research

knowledge and knowledge about bullying at their schools coincided with the development of

communication skills at the group level. In other words, youth were communicating more

frequently and more interpersonally as they developed new, shared knowledge. Power dynamics

between an American adult facilitator and the refugee adolescent youth likely contributed to the

persistence of the call-and-response dynamic throughout all phases. However, specific other

communication skills did develop. The following phase-specific assertions demonstrate how a

general assertion about YPAR and communication was developed.

**Phase I communication assertion.** The following assertion is a closer look at

communication in Phase I (research basics and problem identification).

> ***Phase I Communication Assertion:*** *Communication skills include call-and-response with*
> *facilitator, no engagement with each other; learning or development phase.*

The first phase of YPAR introduced youth to basic processes of research and ended with

a community assessment. The purpose of this phase was to introduce them to the potential of

research to address a community problem and provide a few feasible research methods. To

ensure everyone was grounded in the same knowledge base of action research, 65 percent of lesson plans include a large group format. These activities used a call-and-response structure to facilitate group learning. Examples of these lessons included: Establishing group rules, identifying and describing the components of Participatory Action Research, ordering the stages of Participatory Action Research, defining and discussing ethics, describing their dream community, and comparing it to their current community.

Most lesson plans in Phase I included a question posed to the group by me as the facilitator, and a series of responses from the youth (i.e., call and response). Typically, youth did not acknowledge through agreement or disagreement with each other during these activities but would simply respond to me in succession with their answers. The excerpt below is an example of that call and response dynamic that took place during the ethics activity discussion, in which youth responded to me as the facilitator but did not engage with each other's responses.

> Katie: What if you approach someone and say 'I'm doing research and I want to hit you with this stick.' What will happen?
> Rose: Why would someone agree to that?
> Tam: Why would you do that?
> Katie: Exactly – they probably will not agree – they will not consent [a research term we used frequently]. But what is a bad thing about that?
> Tam: they might try and hit you with the stick instead.
> Katie: Exactly! What rule with this should we have?
> Someone suggests "we should not do it."
> Katie: Exactly. I think we should agree that we will not do it. We will not hurt people. It's important for us to not hurt people with a stick, like physically, but we also don't want to hurt them like…
> Rose: their feelings
> Tam: Mentally
> Katie: we have to be careful that we do not hurt people physically or mentally, hurt their feelings.

Only about 30 percent of the lesson plan activities included moments or steps in which youth engaged with each other, even briefly. These could include brief acknowledgement of each other's statement or position, explicit agreement or disagreement with each other, or a facilitated

interaction. One example of this dynamic was the research method activity, which was a Phase I research activity that elicited a more interactive dynamic between youth. During the research method practice activity at the end of Phase I, two separate groups were given a practice activity for interview and photovoice methods. This activity facilitated interaction by asking youth to work together to either practice interpreting photos or developing interview questions. During the debrief portion of the activity, youth interacted with each other by sharing their small group discussion with the large group. That portion included some disagreement and clarification among each other regarding the nature of police arrests in the United States, prompted by a magazine photo of a man wearing handcuffs.

> Paul: [photo of someone being arrested.] This man is about to cry.
> Katie: why – is he sad? Is he scared?
> Paul: yes, he's scared.
> Tam: Why is he upset? He did a bad thing to be arrested so he can't really be upset about that.
> Rose: Maybe he is not guilty.
> Tam: What? Can you be arrested if you are not guilty?
> Rose: Yes, if you are a suspect.
> Tam, at me: Is this true?
> Katie: Yes.
> Tam: [looks shocked.] I thought you can only be arrested if the police are 100% sure you did a crime.

**Phase II communication assertion.** The following is a closer look at communication in Phase II (data collection and analysis).

> ***Phase II Communication Assertion:*** *Communication skills include interacting with each other, responding to each other's comments; testing and refining phase.*

The purpose of Phase II was to develop, collect, and analyze data. Youth had identified a research question and method of choice in Phase I, and Phase II included the development of a survey instrument, the collection of data, and the analysis. Phase II included fewer activities total, instead building in more time within each activity for discussion and interaction. The call-

and-response dynamic was observed in Phase II, but the addition of new communication skills

between peers was more prominent. About 92 percent of lesson plan activities in this phase

included some degree of interaction with each other, in which youth responded to each other's

ideas or positions. Examples of activities that included peer interactions were: Creating survey

questions, an interview vs. survey debate, a survey pilot that included a "red card/green card"

revision activity and designing their data presentations to an external audience. Only 30 percent

of the lesson plan activities in Phase I included peer interactions. One of the activities youth

seemed to be most engaged in was the red card/green card activity. Soccer is very popular among

newcomer adolescents, and many of them play on a local newcomer team. After they piloted the

survey by taking it themselves, we reviewed and revised each question by asking them to hold up

a red card if it needed edits, and a green card if it was 'good to go.' If anyone held up a red card,

we discussed it as a group. The following excerpt is from that discussion, specifically the

question asking students to report whether they had ever bullied someone.

> Radia: I am not even going to answer #8 because for #7, I'm not going to say yes. Even though I have bullied before, this group is small. There's only 8 of us. If I say yes, they'll know.
> Katie: Ok, so do we think that's possible? Will anyone be honest about #7?
> Brian: Yes. Some people will. They don't even care.
> Rose: Yeah, I think some will.
> Helena: Yes.
>   Rose: What if we write on number 7 to remind them to be honest?
> Helena: I agree that would be a good idea.
> Brian: Reminding them may make them not honest.
> Nicole: Why do you think they won't be honest?
> Brian: Some people are afraid.
> Helena: They don't want to get in trouble.
> Katie: What should we do about that?
> Brian: You can just write be honest.
> Katie: So we will say be honest, should we remind them that their name is not attached?
> Youth: That's too much, leave it at just the reminder.

Observational data from Phase II also suggested that youth were testing and refining their

knowledge about research with each other. Unlike in Phase I, in which youth primarily received

information from me; Phase II included activities in which youth were challenged to test that

information through practice and refine the way they used it. For example, youth learned about

three different research methods in Phase I (survey, interview, and Photovoice). At the end of

Phase I, they had identified their research question and voted to answer their question using the

interview method. However, there was one dissident in the group who insisted (albeit, quietly)

that was not the most appropriate method. To start Phase II, the group split into two factions; a

pro-interview and a pro-survey group. I assigned the strongest proponent of each method to the

opposite group and told each group to convince the leader that their method was best. The

following excerpt is part of that debate.

> Now the groups are trying to convince the leaders that their method is the best. Katie is
> acting more as an overseer for this project, not really helping as hands on as much.
> Both tables seem to be working actively. Tam and Layla argue a lot. She is easily
> exasperated, not very patient. Katie goes to the survey table and asks them to
> explain how they would recruit a sample, why, and how they'd conduct the survey.
> Brian: We will give the survey to parents and students.
> I probe a lot around how to recruit parents.
> Brian: Just give it to them.
> We go back and forth with me asking for more details about how he'd get to parents.
> After he decides he'd give it to the Summer Place parents and leave it in their
> mailbox, I probe around how he'd get it back. We have a discussion about whether
> we think parents really know the details about whether their children are bullied.
> They all agree that maybe parents will know something, but probably not
> everything. They decide just to ask students. Rose starts arguing for survey [the
> method she opposed] and I point out to her that it sounds like they might be
> changing her mind. She sheepishly nods.

This activity encouraged youth to draw on their knowledge from Phase I and test how well

it would work in a hypothetical data collection scenario. This activity refined their ideas about

methods and data and increased their peer communication by both groups concluded that a

survey was a better fit for their research question and their available resources. Youth were

instructed to guide the debate themselves, simply defending why they felt a survey or interview was a better choice for their research question. They drew on their research knowledge to defend their choice and prompted and probed each other to explain what they could or would learn about their social issue by using either method. As the facilitator, I interjected probing questions about logistical feasibility, but otherwise they debated directly with each other; a significant development of their communication skills.

      **Phase III communication assertion.** Below is a closer look at communication in Phase III (action).

> ***Phase III Communication Assertion:*** *Communication shifts away from the facilitator to more directly between each other, and to data presentations and advocacy outside of their group; explaining and teaching phase.*

      Phase III was primarily about action that would address bullying, the social problem chosen by the youth in Phase I and researched in Phase II. During this phase, the call-and-response communication strategy was still present, but it was used as a conversation starter that prompted youth to engage or think deeper about the lesson plan activity. Call-and-response prompts were used in the previous phases for me to elicit youth responses that would guide research activities. Youth spent most of Phase II conducting in-depth data activities, which gave them intimate knowledge of their issue (bullying) and the data, in terms of student experiences at their schools. In Phase III, my facilitator prompts encouraged them to think about the meaning of the data and the actions that would best address it. This deep thinking led to thoughtful, engaging, and personal discussions among the youth about their own experiences, which informed their interpretation of the data, in which I only needed to ask clarifying questions. In a conversation that tied their new knowledge of bullying data together with their experiences, the

group was reviewing their action plan with Rose, who missed the session where they determined their action plan and was upset about it. In the following excerpt, the group is refilling out a script of what to present to their identified changemaker, a teacher at their school. I'm prompting them through each question in the script.

> Katie: Ok, so let's write that in our paper. "African American students reported the most bullying." Let's see what's next. The type of bullying. Which type of bullying did they report the most?
> Rose: Mental
> Katie: Ok, so do we think that's important to tell her? Is that important for understanding the problem?
> Rose: Ok, yeah.
> Katie: Ok, so we can say "African American students reported the most bullying, and the most frequent type of bullying was mental." Should you also tell her that you asked about the other kinds? Even if you don't tell her the details?
> Rose: Sure.
> Katie: Ok, so let's just add that here next. "…was mental, but we also asked about physical and cyberbullying."
> Rose: And then we can show her the word cloud.
> Katie: Oh, that's a great idea. That's a good way to bring that in. Yes. Ok. Let's make a note in the worksheet that you want to show her the word cloud here at this point.
> Rose: I think a lot of it is really about newcomers. People who are not from the U.S.
> Katie: Ah, yes. Unfortunately, that's not something we asked about in our survey so it's hard to know. But in the future, or if you wanted to do another survey like this, that could be an important thing to ask about. It may be something that is a big bullying topic, but we don't have the data to support that.
> Rose: yeah. [looks kind of sad about that]

The communication between youth during this phase increased as they used their own experience and data interpretations to guide the development of their action plan. Lesson plan activities during this phase included increased communication with each other to prepare for and practice data presentations to outside audiences. Examples of activities that were focused on creating a data-based action plan included: Identifying 'changemaker' solutions to story problems, presenting their data to a group of younger children, root cause analysis, action preparation, and a discussion that reviewed their interpretation of the data.

One activity designed to help them practice identifying changemaker solutions, Rose and Layla were working together. They were two of the smartest, quickest learners in the group, but did not seem to like working together. The following excerpt describes our conversation when I joined the two of them working on applying changemaker solutions to a vignette about a group of youth who were taken to the police station after a fight broke out at their daily walk to the corner store after school. They had just suggested that parents pick up the students after school as a solution.

> Katie: Ok let's think about that. What are some barriers – remember we talked about barriers – that might get in the way for parents? What could be a reason parents can't do that?
> Rose: Jobs. They work.
> Katie: Exactly. So that might not work. Lots of parents have jobs.
> [Keep redirecting to what can be changed about the institution]
> Rose: This is too hard. I can't do it. Turn me on. I'm off today.
> Katie: Well, is there a switch I just flip on or what?
> Rose: [jokes] yes, just on my back, press that button.
> Katie: [laughs] But you make a good point. This is hard. If this was easy, we wouldn't have these kinds of problems in our society, right? But thinking of institutional solutions is hard work.
> Rose and Layla agree.
> Layla: They have to walk home. So maybe they need transportation. The buses.
> Katie: Ok, good. What could the school change?
> Layla: Have more buses.
> Katie: Good idea!

Field notes from this phase also suggest a shift in the group's communication dynamic, in which youth were observed taking on more of an explanatory and teaching role not observed in Phases I or II. This includes observations in which youth were explaining and teaching each other, but also were explaining and teaching to me at times. In one discussion where they were developing their action plan and connecting it to their root cause analysis, they began to disagree about its impact. That disagreement is below.

> Katie: Ok, so you think if everyone tries to make each other feel good, then they won't want to bully each other?

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Radia: yes, exactly.

Hilary: Ok but she saw this in a movie.

Heather: No, I don't like this idea.

Katie: Why not?

Heather: Why is it 3 people?

Radia: Because you help 3 people, and then those 3 people help 3 more people, and it's going to get like so big.

Heather: No, but why 3 people? Like why can you not go and help more people? You're going to help 3 people and then you see someone else who needs help and you're not going to help them?

Hilary: It doesn't have to be 3. 3 was just an example. It can be anything.

Heather: Ok.

The next week when Rose rejoined the group, we shared with her this action plan and she laughed and told us that she was the one who had put the notes on the lockers! Examples of lesson plan activities that facilitated this type of communication role included: Theming potential action ideas, root cause analysis, a discussion that reviewed their interpretation of the data, and their recommendations for future YPAR projects. One example of their increased open communication with each other is demonstrated here. The following excerpt is from a discussion about possible explanations for why their survey responses did not indicate more Muslim students experiencing bullying (e.g., sampling issues). The group was mostly hijab-wearing girls.

Rose: When I first moved here, I was in the cafeteria, in the lunch line with my friend. And this girl said to me, "Why do you wear that on your head?" and she tried to take it off. I was like, "I just do, you can't touch it." I don't know why people get so upset about it, it's a piece of cloth.

Katie: Mhmm.

Aminah: Yeah, that happened to me too. I was with my friend, and my friend is like, "What is a hijab? Why do you have to wear it?" And she tried to take it off. I stopped her. I don't know why she said that.

Katie: That was your friend?

Aminah: yeah. She was my friend. And another time, in class, a student was talking about the Qur'an and the teacher said, "Stop, you can never talk about the Qur'an in here. If I see it or you talk about it anymore, you will be kicked out."

Rose: The Qur'an is our holy book.

Katie: Yes, I know. A teacher said that?

Aminah: yes.

Katie: Wow, I'm sorry.

**Critical Skills: Giving and Receiving Critical Feedback**

The second critical skill that emerged through the yPAR process was the ability to give and receive critical feedback. Findings suggest that small group activities supported the development of critical feedback skills, increasing their ability to engage with stakeholders for change (see Appendix K). The following is the overall assertion describing the development of critical feedback skills in the yPAR process. Next are the assertions and supporting evidence for the critical feedback skill in each phase.

> ***Critical Feedback Assertion:*** *YPAR activities facilitated in large groups limit quantity of critical feedback among youth while communication skills are limited and increase in quantity and quality after communication skills have developed. Smaller group activities help to facilitate the development of communication skills, which carried over to large group feedback activities in the final phase, including higher quantity and quality of feedback.*

In the beginning of the YPAR process, youth researchers knew little about bullying or research, and most of the youth did not know each other. Most of the participants knew at least one other person, usually from other activities they had participated in at the community agency. Many of the young men had played soccer together, and there were several sibling pairs. This contributed to their comfort communicating with each other, and their comfort providing critical feedback to each other on activities. Once the YPAR process shifted to lesson plans that included more small group activities and interactions, their comfort level increased and they were able to express to each other ways to make their external actions more effective. As the end of the YPAR process drew the group back into more large group format activities, their ability to provide critical feedback continued, with a documented increase in quantity and quality.

**Phase I critical feedback assertion.** The following assertion describes critical feedback skills in Phase I (research basics and problem identification).

> ***Phase I Critical Feedback Assertion:*** *Feedback in early activities is limited in quantity by large group structure and limited in quality by level of communication skills.*

The lesson plans in the first phase of YPAR were designed to provide the same level of basic research knowledge to the full group. For that reason, 65 percent of the lesson plans include a large group format. In the large group format, youth were primarily communicating with me as facilitator, as described in the communication assertion. Because this phase was designed primarily to inform them about action research processes, and guide them through a problem identification, they did not participate in many activities that involved providing any type of feedback to each other. In other words, during Phase I, their quantity of critical feedback was limited by the activity structure. Examples of large group activities during this phase that did not involve a feedback component included: Identifying and describing the components of Participatory Action Research, introducing the three research method options, defining and discussing ethics, and describing their dream community.

Two activities during Phase I did involve feedback between youth. During the small-group activity in which youth practiced research methods, youth expressed support for each other's sample interview questions. One student, Mateen, who rarely spoke up during most sessions and faced a significant language barrier spoke up in this activity.

> Then I tell them to think about what other questions would be good. Tam comes up with several right away, and I write them down.
> Tam: What do you like about your community? What do you want to change about your community? I have 1000 ideas
> Mateen: What is a goal you have for a career?
> Tam: that's a good one.

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During the last session of Phase I, youth were narrowing their research topic, bullying, into a research question. To set them up for this activity, they completed a sample research question worksheet in which they critiqued a sample research question on domains of relevance, clarity, and specificity. After discussing in small groups of less than five, they brought their ideas back to the full group and provided positive feedback on each other's ideas. These examples suggest that although some level of feedback was provided, it remained positive and no negative critiques were shared during this phase.

Phase I involved more teaching than subsequent phases. Because the main goal was to ensure they were all working from the same understanding of action research, there was an emphasis on ensuring agreement. During the end of Phase I, as the group conducted a community assessment, there was an opportunity for more youth to share their opinions on the state of the community and their individual goals and dreams for the community. This could have led to an increase in quantity of feedback as youth could have critiqued opinions or perspectives that differed from their own. However, this shift in activities did not elicit feedback on each other's opinions. One potential explanation for this could have been that attendance was highest during the session where the bulk of the community assessment activities occurred. This meant that during the session where there was suddenly an opportunity to provide feedback, youth were now facing peers they did not know, and new participants were not equally invested in the structure of activities during the session. As youth arrived at the next session, a few of the more confident youth felt comfortable enough to tell me that the last community assessment session was not as productive as it could have been, and that the large group increased distractions.

**Phase II critical feedback assertion.** The following assertion describes critical feedback in Phase II (data collection and analysis).

> ***Phase II Critical Feedback Assertion:*** *Data activities conducted in smaller (N ≤ 5) groups elicited feedback in higher quantities. The goal-oriented nature of data activities elicited feedback of higher quality.*

The purpose of Phase II was to develop, collect, and analyze data. During this phase, more activities were conducted in smaller groups than in Phase I. Six (50%) of the activities in this phase included a small group component. Some of those activities ended by reporting out to the full group as well. The lesson plan activities that included a small group component were: an interview vs. survey method debate, an activity on identifying and correcting bias, designing their data presentations to an external audience, and practicing their presentations. These activities facilitated the development of *critical* feedback, in which youth challenged each other's ideas and expressed disagreement. This was a new development after the strictly positive support offered during Phase I. During these activities, youth were observed using their research knowledge to openly disagree and challenge each on the appropriateness of methods, the best way to clarify bias, and how to interpret and present their bullying data to an external audience. Although youth were prompted to provide critical feedback in some of these activities, they offered it freely, openly, and without hesitation. For example, each youth researcher practiced presenting some of the survey data in front of their peers the week before they were to present it to the younger children joining them in the cross-cultural meeting.

> Katie: Ok, 'age' group is next.
> Shahmeer and Tam go up.
> Shahmeer: Hi, I am Shahmeer.
> Tam: I am Tam. We will talk about age.
> Shahmeer: The smallest age group is 18 year olds.

Tam: We learned that 14 year olds reported the most bullying.  I thought most people
would say cyberbullying.
Katie: ok, what did you like about this one?
Brian: They introduced themselves.
Katie: What's one thing they could change?
Rose: They acted like they were reading off a post, they need to explain more. They talk
too fast

Another intentional shift in facilitation during Phase II helped to elicit critical feedback. The type of activities involved in Phase II centered on collecting very specific data and interpreting it in very specific ways. This overall goal was broken into activities that were also more tangibly goal-oriented for the youth than the general research knowledge or community assessment activities in Phase I. In Phase I, youth had not identified how they were using these activities to contribute to a common goal. In Phase II, all the activities contributed to their goal of better understanding the issue of bullying in their schools.

In the interview vs. survey debate, the goal was to establish the data collection method they would use. They were all invested because they understood this to be a critical turning point in designing their research. During the sessions on survey development and piloting, their clearly identified goals were to develop survey content and develop a script for presenting and administering it to their peers. They participated in a survey pilot activity, in which the goal was to critique their own survey, so their peers would take it seriously and respect the quality of their work. During the presentation design and practice activities, their goal was to create a script for presenting data finding summaries, and practice presenting those findings to the group so they would be ready to present to a confirmed audience the next week. Observational data from this phase suggests youth were more motivated to provide high quality feedback during these activities because they were clearly tied to goals that affected the outcome of their research project.

**Phase III critical feedback assertion.** The following assertion describes critical

feedback in Phase III (action).

> **Phase III Critical Feedback Assertion:** *Action activities conducted in small groups,*
> *generating greatest amount of feedback. Communication skills have advanced to direct*
> *feedback among each other and to the facilitators.*

Phase III was primarily to plan and execute action that would address bullying, the

problem chosen by youth in Phase I and researched in Phase II. Although the goal of Phase III

was action, one of the action sessions occurred during the middle of Phase II, and those activities

were coded as Phase III activities. Due to a miscommunication, the organization had scheduled a

joint session with the YPAR group and another group of younger children, with which the

organization had recently partnered. The joint session was intended to be separate from the

YPAR process, but after discussing together, we decided to offer it to the YPAR group as a

chance to practice their data presentation skills and receive some action brainstorming ideas from

these younger children. Ultimately, the YPAR group determined it would be helpful in preparing

them to speak to the adults at their school. In other words, they practiced a presentation they may

decide to present as part of their action plan, during their data phase. The preparation session was

spent reviewing their survey data closely and preparing the main summary findings and was

grouped in Phase II as part of data collection and analysis. The actual presentation to the external

group and the subsequent action brainstorming activity they facilitated was labeled part of Phase

III, as primarily an action session.

Most (75%) of the action planning activities included a small group component. In the

early sessions of this phase, that included activities such as: identifying a changemaker solution

to a hypothetical school-based problem, preparing their data presentations, and brainstorming

potential actions. During the middle sessions of this phase, attendance decreased due to several factors, including a snow day and a holiday break. The sessions where action planning took place were attended by three to five young women. The resulting small group activities included root cause analysis, identifying the changemaker target at school, preparing their action presentation, and reviewing and discussing interpretations of their bullying data. Observations suggest that these action sessions facilitated an environment in which youth researchers naturally progressed through lesson plan activities with little formal guidance from me in a facilitator role, and the youth researchers felt even more comfortable in providing critical feedback to each other and did so without being prompted. Examples of those dynamics can be seen in previous assertions.

Of all the activities in Phase III, seven (30%) included critical feedback that was directed at their peers or at the facilitator(s). This does not include activities in which youth simply agreed with each other; this refers to activities that specifically elicited disagreement or constructive criticism. Examples of lesson plan activities that elicited this type of feedback included: Identifying a changemaker solution to a hypothetical school-based problem, action theming (during joint session), reviewing and discussing interpretations of their bullying data, and making recommendations for future YPAR groups. For example, in the final session the youth who had taken their action plan to the changemaker were reporting back to the group and were challenged on whether their plan would be effective.

> Rose: Yes. Me and Hilary went and talked to her. She said ok, but we have to talk to the principal now and tell her what we're doing and she'll make the announcement about it.
> Katie: Ok, so the principal just needs to know what you want her to say? Rose: yes.
> Katie: ok. That's the plan!
> Tam: People don't listen to the announcements. They won't even know.
> Katie: Ok, what do you think we should do about that?
> Radia: Yeah, a lot of people don't care. And if they don't care, they just won't do it.
> Katie: Yeah, I remember you talking about this problem before. What can we do about that?

Hilary: If we just start writing our name and start doing it, other people will want to do it.
Katie: Yeah, I think that's what you said last time. That if you, in this group, start it, then other students will participate too. Do you think that will happen?
Radia: yes.
Tam: But no one listens and they won't even know what it is.
Katie: Ok, so you will have to explain it to them as part of this group – you can explain!
Tam: Oh, I don't want to do that!
Katie: Ok, so you'll have tell them to listen to the announcement.
Rose: It's going to be on every day for a week.

In the final session of Phase III, two small group activities were intended to be focused discussions among each other, in which they could continue their skill of critical feedback. These activities were an evaluation assessment activity, and a reflection on critical consciousness skills or perspectives. However, observational data suggests youth proactively and quickly extended their small group dynamic to the large group discussion by offering their thoughts to everyone, not just to their group. A new observation appeared during this session in which youth demonstrated a willingness to offer critique to adult leaders. In a brief activity soliciting their suggestions for the future, youth eagerly offered advice for what the community partner could do differently in future YPAR groups, even including some critique of the structure of the current YPAR group. For example, youth suggested including non-refugee participants, meeting more frequently and on the weekends, and choosing a different issue to address.

The critical feedback assertion was developed based on observational data that suggests that youth were not comfortable providing negative or critical feedback during Phase I. During Phase II, they worked on small, goal-oriented activities together that elicited some constructive criticism towards each other. In Phase III, youth researchers were freely disagreeing with each other, talking through their critiques, and offering suggestions and feedback to the adult facilitator(s).

**Critical Reflection: Inequity**

The fourth and final area of CC exploration was how the yPAR framework supported critical reflection of inequity in existing social structures. To answer this question, the same phase approach was taken to map development onto the distinct yPAR phases. Contrary to what was expected from CC literature, findings do not suggest that youth shifted their critique of inequality through participation in the yPAR process. YPAR and CC literature emphasize the potential of interventions to promote critical reflection around inequity. This YPAR project yielded support that youth identify and experience inequity, but not sufficient support for documenting a shift in the way youth think about inequity over the course of the intervention. They did discuss the value of equality, but no shifts were documented through phases (see Appendix L). Below is the overall assertion describing how youth researchers understood and discussed inequity over the yPAR process. Unlike the other assertions, there was insufficient evidence to develop phase-specific assertions.

> ***Inequity Assertion***: *Youth explicitly endorse equality; but understanding of inequity is less explicit. Their reflection is implied through descriptions of discrimination based on race, religion, country of origin.*

One of the theorized core components of critical consciousness is critical reflection around issues of inequity. Specific prompts deployed throughout this YPAR project aimed to understand how youth researchers critically reflected on inequity in their lives and whether or not this reflection shifted throughout the course of YPAR participation. Although youth described specific instances of discrimination, a product of attitudes endorsing inequity, they were less explicit about societal inequity. There was not sufficient data to support a shift in youth perspective over time regarding inequity.

Towards the end of Phase I, youth researchers conducted a community assessment. During that assessment, youth identified "not being afraid" as part of their ideal community, in contrast to their current community. When asked why they or others would be afraid, a youth researcher described how some people "don't like some people because of their religion." When asked what religion people would not like, observational data describe an exasperated, eyerolling response (not unlike typical teenage responses to adult questions) of "Muslim people." They went on to describe racism as another community factor that might make some people afraid. When prompted to describe what racism looks like in [the city], they "prefer[ed] not to say." Probing around how they perceived or experienced inequity during the first two phases of YPAR did not yield detailed responses. In fact, auto-ethnographic field notes suggest probing questions seemed to discourage elaboration and led to my decision to not "push the conversation." Notably, the youth researchers most engaged during most discussions of discriminatory experiences were Muslim girls. All of the Muslim girls in the group wore hijabs, which made them more visible targets of discriminatory attitudes, and perhaps able to relate more personally to discussions of inequity.

During the action planning sessions, youth researchers were struggling with the feasibility of ending bullying, and the importance of ending discriminatory attitudes. Youth researchers endorsed ideas of equity with statements like, "Everyone is equal and you need to not talk to people if you're not going to say something good to them." They also felt that "we can't change people's minds. So it's really hard." Part of that conversation included reflections on the impact of racist attitudes and beliefs. Some youth researchers had observed racist interactions among their peers at school. Interestingly, youth described the impact of discrimination endorsed by government powers, but not in the United States. Specifically, youth described living in a pre-

resettlement country and experiencing laws that discriminated against residents of other nationalities. It was unclear whether youth were aware of their own views about inequity because they had not yet critically examined them. In passing, a youth researcher shared "There are girls who think like they aren't pretty enough, or they aren't smart enough, or not White, or good, and then those girls are more upset when they are bullied." A different youth researcher clarified that yes, she meant girls who are not White experience more bullying. Auto-ethnographic notes expand on the facilitation decision to balance a deeper dive into structural inequality with their action research in the school context. The decision to guide them towards applications in the school context was intended to promote school-level intervention strategies. During the post-YPAR debrief discussion between the co-facilitator and me, he noted the decision to focus on bullying may have occurred even if it had been a different group of youth researchers because "for kids, what they hate the most at this point is being bullied or being an outcast from the group. Being different. They just, for them, you know it's just, as a kid they hate being different."

In a unique opportunity to critique systemic inequity and promote critical reflection, one youth researcher described an extremely offensive experience while job shadowing. The doctor with whom the youth was job shadowing defended the youth's right to be present, although the youth ended up deciding to leave the room. The following excerpt describes how I tried to facilitate a reflection about how discriminatory experiences themselves may not be equitable and alluded to intersectional experiences.

> Katie: Wow. Did the doctor stand up for you?
> Rose: Oh, yes. He's Arab too.
> Katie: Oh, so he must experience this sometimes too.
> Rose: Yeah, maybe but…
> Katie: Probably not about a hijab.
> Rose: [chuckles] No. I thought he was Mexican at first. But he said he's Arab so [shrugs shoulders]
> Katie: I'm sorry those things happened to you both.

Rose: Oh, it's ok. I'm used to it.

Katie: No, that's no reason it should be ok! It's not ok.

Rose: Well I guess not.

Katie: And I'm glad you [facing Heaven] don't see that often. But I think that is an example of how the data we have here and data like this tells us more about what people think of you, than you. Do you know what I mean? Because for a woman, it can be easy to tell if she's wearing a hijab, but for men, or boys, they are probably just looking at their skin color and they guess about where they are from. And we know that there are lots of brown skin colors that can be from Mexico, or maybe from…

Rose: Anywhere in the Middle East.

It should be noted that conversation occurred in one of the action planning sessions in which only female researchers attended. The openness about identity experiences was never elaborated on with as much detail when the group included mixed genders.

# CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The challenges of navigating adolescence in the face of extreme loss may be hard to imagine. Resettled refugee youth are developing a sense of identity while separated from some of the things that commonly shape adolescence; home land, language, traditions, food, entertainment, friends, and family. In addition, refugee youth resettled in the U.S. are entering school systems in which they experience marginalization based on the very same aspects of identity; language, food, entertainment, traditions, and of course prior educational experiences (Hastings, 2012; McNeely et al., 2017). Critical consciousness is a construct rooted in equity and social justice paradigms that theorizes how sociopolitically disempowered groups can critique and challenge systems to increase access to resources, rights, and equitable power. As such, it offers one approach to providing skills and agency to a disempowered group like refugee youth. This study examined how critical consciousness developed as a group of refugee youth conducted a participatory research project to improve their school environment. Youth researchers were trained using the three general phases of a yPAR research cycle. In Phase I, they were trained in participatory action research, research methods, community assessments, and research problem and question identification. In Phase II, they were trained in data collection and analysis, and in Phase III they were trained in strategic action. Within each phase, the youth researchers applied their training to advance their research project. The youth researchers identified bullying as the issue they wanted to address within their school and recruited a school faculty ally to help them approach the principal to start a public kindness campaign.

**Contributions to refugee youth literature**

Identity development was a central aspect of exploration in this study. Scholars around the globe describe the 'refugee' label as limiting (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002; Boutwell, 2015;

Neikirk, 2017). The public perception that refugee residents are helpless is found worldwide. In the UK, refugee self-help groups frame themselves as empowered and capable (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). The political, social services, and media narratives frame refugees as dependent, demanding, or untrustworthy. Even the framing of 'refugee communities' by service providers maintains their status as a marginalized community and prevents refugees from participating fully in society (Tomlinson & Egan, 2002). In Australia, the government narrative frames refugees as traumatized and helpless (Neikirk, 2017). Refugee families learn that traumatic experiences legitimize their presence to Australians and support the public perception of themselves as 'real' and 'deserving' refugee residents. Therefore, they lead with their trauma in cross cultural encounters, limiting the extent of meaningful relationships with Australian citizens and maintaining a sense that refugees are impaired (Neikirk, 2017). Refugee youth and families wish to be authentic participants in their communities, and the 'refugee' label can be stigmatizing and limit opportunities to be included in equitable ways.

Findings from this study suggest the yPAR approach is one vehicle to develop different, new identities based on shared skills and strengths-based experiences. Boutwell's (2011; 2015) multi-year community-engaged study of refugee adolescent girls in the U.S. described the way in which adolescent girls resisted and critiqued the label of 'refugee girl.' The participating youth researchers in that study saw the label 'refugee girl' as imposed by others, as a way for American culture to 'rescue' them. Youth did not refer to themselves as refugee girls, but felt the label was imposed by others. Consistent with Boutwell's findings, the group of youth researchers in the current study was also resistant to the 'refugee' identity label, although they did not elaborate on their motivations for resistance. They resisted defining themselves that way at the group level,

and instead developed a new shared identity as a group of researchers and changemakers working to improve their school environment.

It is also interesting that the youth framed their issue of concern as a school-wide bullying problem, a problem that did not only affect refugee students. As they developed a survey to administer to students of all backgrounds, they considered how to measure experiences that might be common across differences. They wanted to frame their survey as a way to understand and improve the school community overall. In other words, the youth did not want to frame the survey as a survey only for or by refugee students, and they expressed concern during survey design that they would be taken seriously by their peers. During their planned action, they decided not to frame their kindness campaign around their identity at all and emphasized the goal of creating a new social norm that made it cool to be kind. It is possible they wanted to minimize using the 'refugee label' to increase buy-in from more of their peers and school staff. In fact, during a program debrief discussion, the youth shared their hope that the organization would do this type of program again, and that they wanted to tackle a different problem that wasn't "just a refugee problem."

Specifically advocating for the inclusion of refugee young people in research, Couch & Francis (2006) wrote, "…The marginal social and economic status of this population makes it even more important that inclusion is meaningful and not piecemeal. …The participation of young people requires more than 'having a voice.' It is about the right and the ability to advocate on one's own behalf, to be in control and involved in decision-making processes and interventions." (p 279, p 285). The current study's yPAR approach offered a meaningful way for refugee adolescents to participate in research, and the issue of bullying was meaningful and personal to them, despite their reluctance to form a group identity around those negative

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experiences. Recruitment into the study was framed as a chance to advocate for their community (later defined by youth researchers as their school) and they created and advocated within the school for a kindness intervention to benefit all students. In this sense, the current study demonstrates possibilities for how to meet Couch and Francis' (2006) call to promote authentic and impactful research participation by refugee young people.

**Contributions to CC literature**

This study advances the literature on CC by explicating the process by which youth develop critical reflection and critical action.  To date, much of the research on CC with youth has used quantitative assessments, and this qualitative study provided a much-needed exploration into the underlying process. For instance, quantitative measures have been refined and validated with several large adolescent samples (Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Diemer & Hsieh, 2008; Diemer et al., 2010; Thomas et al., 2014; Diemer et al., 2016; Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017), and adapted for Latinx adolescents (Luginbuhl et al., 2016; McWhirter & McWhirter, 2015). Those quantitative studies measured CC at one point in time and did not address how it develops over time. Although this was a small qualitative study, it demonstrated changes in specific skills (e.g., general critical thinking, critical reflection, analyses of power structures) and knowledge (e.g., bullying experiences, power structures within their school) over time. The analytic induction methods used in this study revealed how these skills developed throughout he multi-phase yPAR process. However, qualitative interpretations of CC need more empirical support. No universal operational definitions exist for documenting CC components qualitatively, and I implemented definitions specific to this study. Future research could integrate these operational definitions to see how robust they are when used with different populations or in different contexts. However, refining operationalization of the components across populations or contexts could lead to a

more nuanced understanding of CC development. This type of conceptual clarity would support an overarching aim of community psychologists to attend to the diversity of contexts as well as the value of qualitative research broadly (Trickett, 1996).

To date, the CC literature has not identified ways to shift adolescents from thinking to intention to action (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015) and no examples currently exist to demonstrate such a process among refugee adolescents. The current study's findings identified two key skills that that supported critical action and developed over the course of the transition from reflection to action. Communication and giving and receiving critical feedback facilitated youth researchers' ability to engage in action. For example, communication skills helped youth to confidently articulate their position and defend their knowledge of bullying experiences to those in power and giving and receiving feedback helped them to engage in reciprocity of ideas related to their research and action. However, the identification of these skills does not necessarily explain *why* youth take action based on new knowledge about community issues, such as bullying.

Some key elements of CC (e.g., critical self-reflection, awareness of oppressive systems, identity) have been explored with diverse groups. In the current study, two key CC constructs were particularly salient for refugee youth: identity and inequity. The youth researchers focused on understanding the issue of bullying in schools, which seemed to lend itself to exploring issues of inequity. Bullying provided a lot of potential to explore systemic inequity and critique the ways in which people (especially young people) experience inequity. When prompted to consider systems or individual experiences of inequity, youth consistently endorsed general values of equality, with statements like "everyone is equal." However, this remained constant

throughout the project and youth did not shift the way they described or explained inequity through the phases of yPAR, a slightly unexpected finding explored here.

It seemed difficult for youth to reflect on inequity both in abstract and tangible ways. Despite the structure of yPAR, youth shared ambivalence about how inequity impacted their lives and the lives of their classmates. They could identify what 'unfair' treatment looked like (e.g., Islamophobia, racism) but did not attribute this to a system designed to maintain a hierarchical status quo. In one action brainstorming session the youth researchers and their cross-cultural guests talked through issues of school power dynamics that reinforced the acceptability of bullying behavior, but they did not consider that a result of a broader system of inequity. This supports the idea that one can be conscious in one aspect but not others (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). Overall, this study did not yield enough evidence to document *changes* in the way youth reflected on inequity. It remains unclear from this study how to use YPAR to facilitate additional development of the component of critical reflection around inequity.

Interestingly, youth were able to identify discriminatory experiences both in the host country (where they first fled) and the country of resettlement (the U.S.) but resisted saying inequity is structural and intentional. Some experiences of being personally discriminated against were likely intersectional, the idea that experiences of different systems of oppression (such as race and gender) intersect to create unique experiences of systemic and political oppression (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality was not a concept explicitly discussed with this group. For example, Muslim girls shared the most discriminatory experiences. It is hard to know how much discrimination was due to their status as members of a minoritized religion, racial or ethnic group, gender, or status as newcomers. Towards the end of the action phase, one youth researcher raised the possibility that a primary bullying target in their school may be newcomers

and expressed disappointment that they collected no data on newcomer status. This offered an opportunity to connect their critical reflections to the value and limitations of research but since it was raised as a concern late in the yPAR cycle, they did not get a chance to connect it to other group discussions throughout yPAR.

The nature of the group dynamics may offer another explanation for the lack of demonstrable change in inequity conceptualization. Most explicit reflections about inequity and discriminatory experiences came from all-girl sessions, most of whom wore hijabs. This offers valuable insight for scholars to consider as they weigh the tradeoffs in cultivating productive groups of young researchers. A group of mixed experiences and identities may expose the youth researchers to diverse critical reflections, but a safe within-group space may serve to help explore specific shared identity experiences. The politics of identity may not be conducive to this kind of verbal reflection in a mixed group. Crenshaw's (1991) groundbreaking writing on intersectionality addresses this very issue, in which the politics of identity fail to recognize the intra-group differences that may impact both experiences of an issue and solutions to the issue. It may be that the group members conceptualized experiences of inequity differently, and only when surrounded by others they felt shared their exact experiences were they comfortable in sharing and critiquing them.

This study also adds a significant contribution to the CC literature regarding critical reflections on issues of power. CC's emphasis on power comes from the critical pedagogy of Paolo Freire, including his notion of conscientização (or conscientization). Freire stopped using the term conscientization after the 1970's, but at the core of Freire's concept of empowerment was a person who was aware of their place in the world and an ability to transform it (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009). A review of empowerment programs around the world identified five common

themes between his pedagogy and contemporary programs (Mohajer & Earnest, 2009, p 429). Each of these themes was present in the yPAR program facilitated for this study.

The first theme asserts programs had a clear vision of the goals of empowerment that are agreed upon by all stakeholders. In the current yPAR project, youth were informed during recruitment and informed consent that they would have a chance to use their experiences to create community change. The participatory, youth-driven nature of yPAR necessitated that the goal during this stage remain vague in order to adapt to the direction of their project. The second theme among worldwide programs was the formation of groups that developed CC in a process of dialogue and problematization. The yPAR lesson plans provided a structure in which the full group could dialogue and problematize their community (school) problems together, as well as in smaller groups. The third theme shared among programs was a skills development component. In this yPAR project, specific communication and feedback skills were identified and documented, and lesson plans supported their ongoing development throughout the project. The fourth theme describes program content that examines culture, beliefs, and values of facilitators and participants. The yPAR activities emphasized the youth researchers' culture, beliefs, and values, with personal examples provided by the facilitators to guide their reflection. The ethnographic nature of this study provided a way for me to reflect on culture, beliefs, and values separately. The final theme put forth by Mohajer and Earnest (2009) was community involvement. By its very design, yPAR seeks to address community needs as defined by youth researchers and support action to promote community involvement and improvement. This was true for the current yPAR study as well, as they narrowed their scope of interest and impact to their school and they sought to leverage their school involvement to promote bullying research and action.

The research question that addressed power in this study also aimed to understand the extent to which youth felt they could engage with those power structures and take action for social change. Overall, youth researchers reflected at the end of the program that their knowledge gave them more of an *ability* to engage in action. This suggests the yPAR curriculum was likely impacting aspects of psychological empowerment, including competence in sociopolitical environments and the skills and knowledge necessary to influence those environments (Christens, 2012). Because this group was multiply marginalized (language barriers, reports of racism, misogyny, and Islamophobia), it is difficult to determine whether there was a sense at the group level of having more structural power at the end of the program. According to Christens (2012), it would be more difficult to ascertain from this study whether youth researchers will continue to go forth and engage in behaviors that will influence sociopolitical environments, although their shared identity as changemakers and the support available through the network they created promotes a sense of relational empowerment that may sustain beyond the project.

**Contributions to yPAR literature**

This study also contributes to the growing literature on yPAR by highlighting how a structured, multi-phase process can support the development of CC. Whereas previous literature assumed the promotion of CC as a natural development of yPAR projects, this study documented precisely which facilitated activities within specific phase structures promoted CC components. yPAR provides structure and time to scaffold specific skills that promote reflection and critical action. Two of the skills that were found to reduce school and future stress among refugee adolescents in India were effective communication skills and critical thinking, two skills promoted by the yPAR approach in this study (Yankey & Biswas, 2012). The promotion of these skills in yPAR supports its potential to impact the lives of refugee youth.

Specifically, the refugee youth researchers in the current study improved their communication skills, demonstrated by their ability to convey ideas with increasing confidence as the program progressed. However, findings also suggest that confidence in communication skills may be insufficient for rallying a group to confront power. Only two students confronted the stakeholder with the most power at school, their principal. They were able to give and receive critical feedback, a skill that was also intentionally promoted to support a discussion with powerful stakeholders. These were the two skills that were most closely documented in the analytic induction process, but not necessarily the only skills developed by the youth researchers in this yPAR project. More research is needed to operationalize the skills promoted in yPAR that are specifically connected to CC constructs. It may be the case that a separate set of critical skills is more likely to promote action and social change by youth researchers.

The factors impacting the low turnout in the youth researchers' meeting with the school principal remain unclear. It may be that not all youth felt competent in their ability to communicate their call to action. Other logistical challenges may have contributed to the low rate of participation in that phase as well, such as scheduling conflicts. Regardless, this supports research that determined the action phase is one of the most constrained phases of school-based yPAR (Ozer et al., 2013). Ozer and colleagues (2013) identified factors that helped to manage some of the action phase constraints by looking to cohorts with high levels of decision-making power. In yPAR cohorts that retained elevated levels of power throughout their project, teachers helped navigate external barriers (e.g., resistance from school faculty) and students managed to retain a sense of psychological empowerment despite lacking power in other aspects of their school experience. The youth in the current study's yPAR group met almost entirely out of school but conducted their data collection and action inside the school. This disconnect between

the yPAR facilitators and the school staff was a barrier to implementing some of the effective strategies for overcoming tensions in school-based yPAR and strategically challenging some of the structural challenges related to hierarchical power in school (Kohfeldt, Chun, Grace, & Langhout, 2011; Ozer et al., 2013).

**Limitations**

The findings of this study highlight the potential benefits and challenges of yPAR as a process for developing CC.  There were, however, several limitations of this project that limit the strength of the conclusions that can be drawn from this work. First, I will address limitations inherent to yPAR methods and the implementation of yPAR in this project.  Then I will address specific methodological limitations encountered during data collection in this project.

In general, yPAR methods can be adaptable to contextual needs and restricted resources as long as supporting organizations or environments are able to provide necessary support (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Ozer et al., 2010). Typically, yPAR studies in school settings have experienced challenges in accessing resources for non-academic activities; in this study, I experienced the reverse problem whereby I had resources for a community-based yPAR project, but limited access to some of the benefits of school settings. For example, school-based yPAR often has the benefit of a full semester or year of class time in which to adapt to the group's needs and connect with other stakeholders. The time constrained nature of this community-based yPAR project limited opportunities to adapt to the group's developing needs. In addition, barriers to full participation, including language barriers and inconsistent attendance may have limited the strength of the conclusions.

During initial negotiations with the community organization's executive director, we discussed how the yPAR program could be integrated with the organization's schedule for other

fall programs. We compared the resource needs for each session and estimated contributions from funding sources. I agreed to provide all the funding through grants and could fund the program through ten sessions to align with their program schedule. The ten phases were expanded to 11 to include the cross-cultural session during Phase II (and later to 12 to accommodate gaps in attendance, described below). Therefore, we had to schedule lesson plans and activities strategically to consistently build skills and move their project forward within the allotted time.

The ability to expand the yPAR curriculum would have been a valuable opportunity for these youth researchers to explore ideas and refine skills. Findings of the study suggest that youth were interested in continuing to explore some of their ideas around bullying and action. They were motivated to learn more about student experiences, particularly for newcomers. Unfortunately, this issue was not raised until youth researchers were revisiting their data interpretations to present in their call to action with the principal. The final session also included an activity for youth researchers to discuss the value of evaluation and the logistics of incorporating an evaluation phase into a project like theirs. One of the limitations of the time-constrained partnership was the strict session limit prevented any further expansion of the curriculum.

As a facilitator and researcher, I also observed areas where youth may benefit from an expanded curriculum. For example, in an activity to assess CC conducted at the beginning and end of the program, youth were read statements about reflection (e.g., "I know what the biggest problem at my school is,") and efficacy (e.g., "I can change my school"). Responses were limited to 'agree/disagree.' Observational data from this activity in the last session indicated the majority of youth felt they did not know enough about the problems in their school and community and

wanted to learn more about those issues. However, the majority also felt they could not affect change. This suggests that youth may have benefitted and been interested in participating in the program longer to continue to explore these issues. This was confirmed during a follow-up discussion in which youth said they would definitely participate again and suggested alternative days for meeting that would fit in their schedules better, and ways to diversify the participants. Continuing with the current program was not feasible because the youth were already enrolled in other programming by the end of our yPAR sessions.

The time constrained nature of the partnership also prevented the group from using a cyclical process to return to Phases or activities and spend additional time and efforts. For example, the yPAR research phases are intended to be cyclical in that action should lead to some type of impact assessment to determine the state of the problem after action and whether additional data or action is necessary (Ozer et al., 2010; Ozer, 2016). Given more time, youth could have explored the impact of their kindness campaign and could have collected additional data around newcomer experiences. For example, one data collection issue that reemerged during Phase III was the limitations of the youth researchers' convenience sample. Their results reflected their sample demographics, and they did not consider the implications of their specific sample during their research design. One challenge in implementing the yPAR model is the balance between researcher expertise and youth-led research (Kohfeldt et al., 2011; Ozer, et al., 2013). In this study, the youth led the sampling decisions with very minimal critical feedback from me. Given this tension, their research results reflected their sample demographics and they later interpreted this as a limitation in Phase III. At that point, they were prepared to have a more in-depth discussion of the impact of their sampling choice and how they would change their sample if they administered a similar survey in the future. Additionally, they used that discussion

to critique their own survey measure, noting that newcomers may experience higher rates of bullying, but there were no survey items regarding newcomers. A cyclical design would have also given me more time to identify emergent findings in our research that could be probed upon returning to certain Phases or activities (for example, expanding critical reflection of inequity or expanding their survey findings).

Expanding the curriculum to include more activities to develop critical reflection of inequity would be a valuable addition to current research on refugee youth, CC, and yPAR literature. We were unable to collect enough data to support any change in the youth researchers' reflections on inequity. This particular issue was not just a limitation of the study. The curriculum itself was limited in the extent to which it offered ways for youth to engage actively with issues of inequity. To elaborate, our observations indicate the most engaging activities for youth were the curriculum's task-oriented activities. The curriculum did not include a task-oriented activity to dive deeper into perceptions and experiences of inequity. The excerpts that address inequity largely resulted from specific CC probing questions based on the model integrating CC into a yPAR framework (Figure 1). Although they were integrated throughout the phases of yPAR, the interest in understanding inequity development is primarily part of understanding CC development. yPAR is a useful method for groups who are already motivated to address an issue that affects them, and more activities should be developed and integrated that provide resources for facilitators to guide youth through reflections on inequity.

In this project, there were also contextual barriers to full participation. Language barriers were still a barrier to full participation, and we discussed ways to limit this barrier prior to the start of the study. In order to form a group of diverse youth, we offered to arrange an interpreter for anyone who wanted to have one in the sessions. Those youth researchers who did have an

interpreter inevitably had a different participation experience. Their experience would have been slightly delayed, as the group level conversation would have moved faster than interpreters could interpret at times. Our observations reflect lower rates of vocal, proactive (not being called upon individually) participation among youth researchers with an interpreter. Other youth researchers may have benefitted from working with an interpreter but did not want one.

Paul was an example of one such youth researcher. No other researchers in the group spoke his first language, and he had a basic level of English skills. He seemed to enjoy participating, but had trouble understanding everything. During a snack break, we offered to get him an interpreter for future sessions. He declined, saying there was no way we could find one, very few people spoke his language. It was true that very few people spoke his language, but my co-facilitator was confident we could find someone who would be willing and able to support him. He eventually said he wanted to work without one to improve his own English. He said he would ask for definitions and clarification whenever he needed it, which worked for a short time. It is impossible to know from our data how this strategy impacted his quality or quantity of participation. Other youth may have also benefitted from the presence of an interpreter, as observations reflect that youth were occasionally interpreting for each other, especially during discussions about more personal experiences.

Another barrier to full participation was differential participation across the yPAR phases. Variance in attendance suggest that some sessions were better attended than others. Average participation was 12 youth across Phase I sessions, nine youth across Phase II sessions, and eight youth across Phase III sessions. Attendance by phase reflects particularly low attendance during the action sessions. This may have influenced the group-level perception of the impact of their action during the final debrief session. Not all the youth present during the

final debrief session were part of the action planning or the group that approached the identified changemaker. This may have limited action buy-in from some youth who were not part of that process, although there is no data to suggest that was a problem. This differential participation may also have limited within-person change, if individual youth were unable to engage in the same level of reflection across all phases. Analysis of observations at the group level limit the ability to make such an assertion. Observations also show that sessions with lower attendance had much higher peer engagement, especially when the group was homogenous. These small-group dynamics were described above and suggest that smaller group size does not necessarily equate to less or less meaningful engagement in the yPAR process.

To limit attrition during Phases, the sessions took place in the clubhouse of the apartment complex where most youth lived. The co-facilitator arrived early each week to knock on doors and remind youth that the session was starting soon. Possible explanations for decreasing attendance were considered. The language barrier described above may have been one factor that discouraged youth from attending. The action phase also took place during a time of many school holidays, cultural or religious holidays observed by certain families, and inclement weather. To support the full participation of everyone, we arranged for a 12th session to allow youth to reconvene after the holidays and review their action plan again before implementation. There was low attendance in that session as well, but almost every youth who had participated returned to the final debrief session.

These limitations are contextually dependent and could vary in other yPAR groups, even with refugee youth. Programs to support refugee youth typically address a common set of needs (e.g., language skills, academic adjustment, cultural orientation) and adhere to similar positive youth development, ecological, or empowerment models (Khadka, Yan, McGaw, & Aube,

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2011). These limitations may or may not be present in other programs but yPAR methods offer flexibility for scholars and practitioners in adapting to various contextual constraints.

Turning now to the specific methodological limitations of this study, it is challenging to capture a dynamic process in real time, and several data collection strategies were attempted, but some were unsuccessful. The structured observation protocol was not a comprehensive list of the possible CC events and therefore was not an effective tool for quantifying CC over time. Moreover, no comparison could be made to strengthen validity and reliability of the observations because the quality of the audio recording was not sufficient for an off-site 'observer' to use. This may have made an interpretation of the frequency of CC discussions over time more difficult to discern. There are limitations to the strength of the nonparticipant observations as well. Although there were two observers in this role each session, it was difficult for them to follow each interaction and they inevitably missed some contextual details. It was especially difficult for the nonparticipant observers in this study, because sessions included small group activities and the observers were not required to capture observations of those discussions. It was not possible for them to be fully attuned to both the large group setting and the multiple moving small groups. As a participant observer and facilitator, the strength of my observations was limited as well. As the facilitator, it is possible that my observations include bias in what was recalled from each session and how it was interpreted in my field notes. Audit trails and memos helped to identify and minimize any negative impact resulting from bias (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). All of the data collected was subject to the observer's skills in observation, note taking, and interpretation during field note writing (Singleton & Straits, 2010). This study moved very quickly once I obtained IRB approval, and research assistants had only two weeks to be learn and practice the method. Observers were also

unable to observe the setting prior to their data collection. These factors limit the strength of the conclusions that can be made from these field notes because the quality of observations changed over time. As practice and familiarity increased, later sessions likely included more complete and accurate details than earlier sessions.

**Implications**

yPAR can be a useful tool for developing CC among youth, and this study explored how these two frameworks can be connected. The data collection and analysis techniques used in this study demonstrated a process by which specific CC components could be mapped onto yPAR phases and lesson plans, a level of detail not explicated in previous methodology and theory literature. The clarity provided in this approach allows interventions to target the development of specific CC components by expanding specific yPAR lesson plans or session topics in which observable change is documented.

This study applied the integrated CC-yPAR model in a participatory research project with a multiply marginalized group. Refugee youth experience linguistic, racial, ethnic, and religious marginalization, among others (Hastings, 2012; Garakani, 2014; Corley, 2016; McNeely et al., 2017). CC is a social justice-driven approach to critiquing social systems and advocating for equity (Nelson, 2010; Diemer, 2012; Thomas et al., 2014; Diemer & Rapa, 2016). The analytic process articulated in this study specifically focused on CC components that were relevant for this population. Identity and communication skills were particularly relevant for these refugee youth as refugee adolescents navigate adolescent development in marginalized and unfamiliar environments, where they may lack the skills to communicate their hopes, dreams, and community calls to action effectively. The strengths-based nature of yPAR promoted existing

skills and encouraged the youth researchers in this study to advocate for the social change they desired.

A few specific recommendations for community-engaged researchers and scholars can be drawn from these findings. These recommendations are intended to serve as supportive procedural recommendations for researchers seeking to conduct similar projects. The first lesson learned for successful community-engaged scholarship is that researchers and scholars should build in plenty of time to develop a collaborative relationship with the community partner based on trust. I volunteered with the organization for over a year before I approached them proposing a research partnership. In this study, our partnership was successful because the community partner felt equally valued in decision making and problem solving and was able to use the project and its impact to promote their work. One specific example of this equal role was our early discussion on how to recruit a group of youth who would be engaged and invested in the process. The community partner drove the decision-making process around who should be recruited and led that effort. They included me in recruitment home visits because I wanted to reassure vulnerable families that I was invested in the success of their children and that I respected their needs, and demonstrated the support and trust of the organization. This was another exception to their typical approach, in which non-staff affiliated with the organization were not allowed to visit families' homes. The collaboration involved in our sampling approach alone built a trusting dynamic that emphasized the participatory nature of the research. Sampling, in particular, is one decision that should be driven by community partners who may feel protective of their constituents and are invested in their long-term relationship with community members.

A second lesson learned for successful community-engaged scholarship is that the relationship building efforts invested early in the project can ease the tensions in troubleshooting obstacles later in the project. One major obstacle encountered later in the project was that the youth researchers were scheduled to participate in a new cross-cultural community activity because the executive director believed the program had ended (we were in Phase II). They were effectively double-booked and we had one week to troubleshoot the misunderstanding. She, the program co-facilitator, and I met as a group to discuss how to continue the program and honor the commitment that had been made to meet with the group from the cross-cultural activity. We looped in the director of that group and were able to use the next meeting to meet as a large group in which the youth could practice presenting their data and leading their own action brainstorming and theming activity. Without the positive and collaborative foundation in our relationship, the program could have ended halfway through, with no data analysis or action.

The prior examples illustrate an overall recommendation for community-engaged scholarship: Be flexible. Rigorous research methods training often does not prepare community-engaged scholars for having to compromise in research design decisions. I recommend that sampling be a decision driven by the community partner, but I strongly defended our agreement on the duration of the program and advocated strongly for the extension of the program by two sessions, so the youth researchers could complete all phases of the yPAR research cycle. Individual lesson plans were adapted based on the co-facilitator's input, but the session goals and overall research aims of the study were never compromised. One helpful collaborative tool is the collaboration abacus (Doberneck & Dann, 2016). The abacus identifies eleven steps in a community-engaged research process (e.g., Decide on research question, develop instrument/process, disseminate findings), with a sliding abacus tool anchored by the voice and

responsibility of either the community or university partner. An explicit discussion between the community and research partners to identify the degree to which they wish to have responsibility and voice in each step supports a collaborative relationship that benefits all.

A few specific recommendations for refugee youth-serving programs can be drawn from these findings. Scholars have identified the importance of personal characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and environmental characteristics for refugee adolescent identity development (Ndengeyingoma, Montigny, & Miron, 2014). Self-reflection, one valuable personal characteristic, was fostered in this study through intentional probing questions. Programs should cultivate an environment in which youth have opportunities to reflect on their experiences and feelings and feel comfortable to share their reflections openly and with each other. In this study, self-reflection was a starting point that helped youth build interpersonal relationships with each other, another important characteristic for identity development. Study findings suggest that using these opportunities to develop shared experiences may make youth more comfortable providing supportive feedback to each other to strengthen their bond as a group. Ndengeyingoma and colleagues (2013) also found that youth value opportunities to develop and exercise their identities in multiple cultural spaces. Based on this study, refugee youth-serving programs should seek opportunities to promote youth engagement in cultural spaces that might be more familiar, such as neighborhoods, and spaces that might be less culturally familiar, such as new schools.

Refugee youth also experience challenges adapting to new educational systems. Scholars have consistently documented experiences of bullying among refugee students, and this study adds to those experiences (Lockwood, 2010). Instead of focusing on their own experiences, the youth researchers in this study preferred to expand their focus to the shared experiences of students at their schools. This research focus guided their interest in developing solutions that

would impact the school setting as a whole to improve the experiences of all students. Refugee youth-serving organizations should consider how to amplify the contributions of refugee students in school contexts so that they are able to participate as peers who are equally invested in the school environment as their peers.  In a similar vein, youth in the current study recommended that future yPAR projects hosted by the community organization included youth who were not refugees as well. This contrasts with previous research that emphasized the positive effects of similar peer relationships for refugee students (McGregor, Melvin, & Newman, 2016). This emphasis may be specific to educational contexts or may depend on group dynamics and individual preferences. However, the youth in this study were determined to reach out to their American peers and consistently reminded me that all students should be equally valued. Refugee serving organizations should allow for variation in individual and group interests in how they engage with non-refugee peers and support the development of relationships with non-refugee peers if appropriate. The availability of staff or program collaborators who are trained in organizational or systems change would be important for groups or individuals seeking to affect change at the organizational or school level, like the youth in this study.

Previous research also established the interest of educational staff and policymakers in learning more about refugee students (McNeely et al., 2017). This study is an example of one way to bridge multiple contexts, because it was hosted by a community organization, took place primarily in the apartment complex where youth lived, and youth conducted research and action in their school. I facilitated as a university-affiliated researcher, and the co-facilitator was involved as an organizational staff member. Refugee youth-serving organizations and schools with refugee students should find ways to connect these contexts. Models of school, family, and community partnership are one way to connect the school, family, and community in one setting

that promotes the involvement and engagement of everyone (Epstein, 1995). Youth in this study targeted action at the school level, but they used their family and community experiences to drive their reflection around community problems and intervention. Community groups or schools who are interested in supporting the engagement of refugee students and their families may have more positive outcomes if they can connect these youth settings.

Refugee youth-serving organizations interested in promoting community or civic engagement of refugee youth can draw specific recommendations from this study as well. The youth in this study were immediately and consistently interested in contributing to their community, which they later defined as school. This supports previous findings that newcomer students exhibit a willingness to engage in various civic or community activities (Perez, et al., 2010). Immigrant youth have been more likely to become involved in activities that address discrimination, another finding supported in this study (Stepick, Stepick, & Labissiere, 2008). Youth-driven community or civic engagement may be likely to focus on issues of discrimination, so it is important that refugee-serving organizations supporting them have staff trained and available to support those efforts.

Finally, the findings of this study underscore that it is important for refugee youth serving organization to partner with schools. This is not to say that programs should focus on academics, or even on school issues or needs. However, adolescents spend the majority of their day in school, and the youth in the current study were strongly impacted by their school experiences. Partnering with schools offers several benefits, including bridging community and school resources and social supports. For example, organizations should seek to establish flexible relationships that allow access to school space after school to conduct participatory projects or workshops. It requires some school resources (e.g., space) but offers the benefit of allowing

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school faculty or staff to become more familiar with the ecologies of refugee youth (Hastings, 2012). Programs for refugee youth development should consider how to promote skills for navigating local school contexts and developing leadership roles in schools that allow refugee youth to be active, influential participants in those contexts. These programs should be open to all, which may require interpretation resources to overcome some linguistic barriers. Organizations may be reluctant to partner with researchers who have not established an "eco identity" built on respect and knowledge about the organization and the community it serves (Kelly, 1971). Findings from this study support partnering with community-engaged scholars who have been trained in community engagement and also have access to additional funding streams to support the resource needs of recommended programs. Community-engaged scholars should be prepared to invest their time and resources into developing and sustaining this eco identity for a mutually beneficial partnership.

**Conclusion**

The specific model implemented in the current study intentionally intertwined CC components into the yPAR method. It offers evidence of its utility to scholars seeking to promote CC among sociopolitically disempowered groups, scholars seeking to integrate research into the lives of young people, and the overall benefit of increasing the ability of refugee youth to participate meaningfully in their schools. "Until the lion learns to speak, the tales of hunting will be weak," as the Somali refugee rapper K'Naan said. He ends that track by asking "The past can we overcome, I ask can we be the ones, to actually be the ones to free our people from guns." The youth researchers in this study used their backgrounds and experiences to conduct critical research and take critical action to free their school from the school bullying they witnessed regularly. The lions spoke.

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: General Integration of yPAR and CC**

*Table 4.* General Integration of yPAR and CC

| Problem Identification | Methods | Social Action |
|---|---|---|
| **Privileged Perspectives:**<br><br>• Whose perspective is privileged in this research process? Whose is not?<br>• Whose perspective is privileged in the current power structure? Whose is not?<br>• How might different ecological levels identify this problem?<br><br>**Problem Impact:**<br><br>• How are youth shaping problem definition?<br>• How does this problem impact youth involved?<br>• How does it impact the group?<br>• How does it impact youth not represented in group? | **Youth Engagement:**<br><br>• How are youth typically engaged in this issue?<br>• What are the barriers youth face engaging with this data?<br>• What are barriers imposed by adults?<br>• What are barriers imposed by power structures?<br><br>**Sustaining Engagement:**<br><br>• What are the skills needed by youth to engage in this issue?<br>• How can we embed these skills in the setting? | **Action Impact:**<br><br>• Why are youth motivated to act?<br>• What impact can particular youth actions have?<br>    ○ On immediate setting<br>    ○ On larger system<br>• Which youth will be impacted by particular actions? (Benefit/risk)<br>• Which youth will not be impacted by particular actions? (Benefit/risk)<br>• What is in place in the setting to support the action?<br>• What do we need to create in the system to support the action? |

**APPENDIX B: Research Participant Information and Consent/Assent Form**

You/your child is being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form to inform you about the research study, to explain that participation is voluntary, to explain risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have.

Study Title: Until the Lion Learns to Speak: Refugee Youth-led Participatory Research towards Critical Consciousness
Researcher and Title: Katie Clements, M.A.
Department and Institution: Psychology Department, Michigan State University
Address and Contact Information: 316 Physics Rd., East Lansing MI, 48824 /
vadnais3@msu.edu / 505.440.7818

**1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**
You are being asked to give permission for your child to participate in a research project of youth-directed, community-based research about a social issue that is important to your child and his or her peers. If your child is under 18, they will need your permission to participate. The project will help fulfill the requirements of a Doctorate of Philosophy at Michigan State University. From this study, the researcher hopes to primarily learn how much youth's understanding of social systems develops, and what actions they take because of that development. She also hopes to learn what issues refugee youth find important, how they choose to learn about them, and what they choose to do with the information they learn.

Your child's participation in this study will involve attending 10 weeks of sessions at RDC. Your child has been selected to participate in this study because of their participation in the RDC's Summer GLOBE camp. This information will also be shared with your child and they must also agree to participate. He or she cannot be in this study without parental permission. In the entire study, about 15 people are being asked to participate. This study is being conducted collaboratively by Michigan State University and the RDC.

**2. WHAT YOUR CHILD WILL DO**
The rest of this form will say "you/your child" so you can both understand what is involved, but only your child is being asked to participate. Before attending the session, you/your child will answer some questions regarding their current thoughts about society and their experiences so far. You/Your child will attend 10 sessions at RDC, where he or she will be in a group of other children of similar age who also attended the GLOBE camp.

Phase 1: The group will learn about research, including what it is, different ways to collect data, and how to do it in a respectful way. At the end of this phase, they will choose one issue to focus on for the rest of the sessions. Katie and RDC do not know what topic they will choose, and it may be about current issues or sensitive experiences. They will choose a research question they want to know about the issue, and decide which method of collecting data will help them answer the question. They will choose how to collect the information, using existing data, a survey, an interview, or visual methods like photos.

Phase 2: The group will collect data on the issue, using the method they chose in Phase 1. Katie and RDC staff will provide equipment for them to collect data, and each session they will discuss what information they learned. Each child will be responsible for collecting some information, sharing with the group, and helping others talk about their information. They may choose to approach other people in or outside of the refugee community to collect information about their issue. Anyone they approach may decide to participate or can say no. Youth will work collectively as a group to describe how an issue they feel is important affects their community. Phase 3: The group will decide what to do with the information and come up with a plan for how to do it. They may choose to share their information with others. The information will always be discussed as a group, and everyone's perspective will be important. RDC staff and Katie will discuss the potential positive and negative things about choosing to share information.

After participation in the sessions, each child will answer the same questions they did in the beginning regarding critical consciousness; or their thoughts about society and their experiences, to see if their thoughts have changed or if they have gained new experiences. Katie and RDC will have information about these questions and you/your child can find out about these changes if they would like.

**3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**
The potential benefits to your child for taking part in this study include learning new skills about information and data, and understanding their community. They will also learn how to share information with others to achieve their goal. There are no known potential risks of participating in this study beyond what they might experience talking about a social issue in a group of refugee youth, or in a group of people with whom they share their findings. Your child may feel discomfort or distress if the group raises sensitive issues. Katie and RDC staff are trained to help youth discuss many topics, including sensitive topics. There will be additional counseling resources available if necessary. Your child may choose to tell people about his or her involvement in the project, and Katie and RDC staff will help the group talk about possible effects of sharing their information.

**4. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**
Your/Your child's participation and information will be kept confidential by Katie and RDC to the extent that your child and the group chooses to keep it private. Katie and RDC staff will not discuss any of their participation or information outside of the group unless the children of the group agree together that they want their information shared. Your/your child's data on the questions before and after participation will always remain confidential, and no one will know your/your child's responses. This process is being used for research, but your/your child's identity will never be shared outside of the group without their permission. For example, the results of this study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain anonymous.

The data for this project will be kept confidential. All information will be kept in password-protected electronic files only accessible by Katie, the research team (including RDC staff) and the Institutional Review Board at Michigan State University, who is responsible for protecting the rights of research participants. All participants in the group must agree to keep information private before participation. For the questionnaire before and after the project, data will be kept

on password-protected files and only accessible by Katie. No names will be stored with their responses. Findings about their data will never be associated with identifying information.

Information about you/your child will be kept confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law. Although we will make every effort to keep your/your child's data confidential, we may have to disclose your/your child's information if you/your child reveals information about a credible threat of harm to his or herself or others (including child abuse, suicide, or homicide).

## 5. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW, COMPENSATION

Participation is voluntary. Your/your child's participation in this project has no effect on your participation in any other RDC program. You/Your child may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he or she is otherwise entitled. You/Your child has the right to say no. You/Your child may change his or her mind at any time and withdraw. You/Your child may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. You/Your child will be provided compensation for travel to and from RDC for each session. There are no other costs to you or your child for participation.

## 6. CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues or how to do any part of it, please contact the researcher:
Katie Clements
316 Physics Rd, Rm 262, East Lansing, MI, 48824
Vadnais3@msu.edu
505-440-7818

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

**APPENDIX C: Overview of Ypar Lesson Plans**

*Table 5*. Overview of Lesson Plans within Sessions of each yPAR Phase

| Phase I<br>Research Basics and Problem Identification | Phase II<br>Data Collection and Analysis | Phase III<br>Action |
|---|---|---|
| Session 1<br>• Setting Ground Rules<br>• Introduction to PAR<br>• What is Research?<br>• Intro to Research, CC (pre)<br><br>Session 2<br>• Intro to Research Methods<br>• Research Method Practice<br>• Mirror Game<br>• Stages of PAR<br>• Ethics<br><br>Session 3<br>• Dream Community<br>• Current Community<br>• "In my neighborhood/city…"<br>• What is our Community? (current)<br>• Community Issues & Assets<br><br>Session 4<br>• Developing Research Questions<br>• Issue Identification<br>• Icebreaker<br>• What Makes Good Research Questions<br>• Choosing Specific Issue<br>• Troubleshooting Group Distractions | Session 5<br>• Interview vs. Survey Debate<br>• Bias in Research<br>• Developing Survey Questions<br><br>Session 6<br>• Pilot Survey<br>• Red Card/Green Card Revisions<br>• Creating Survey Introduction<br>• Pilot Introduction<br><br>Session 7<br>• Survey Data Entry Activity<br><br>Session 8<br>• Survey Results Summary<br>• Cross-Cultural Meeting Introduction<br>• Cross-cultural Presentation Design<br>• Presentation Practice | Session 7ᵃ<br>• Institutional Change<br>• Changemaker/Changestopper Skits<br>• Changemaker/Changestopper Story<br>• Root Cause Analysis<br><br>Session 9<br>• Cross-Cultural Introductions<br>• Cross-Cultural Data Presentation<br>• Action Brainstorming<br>• Action Brainstorm Theming<br><br>Session 10<br>• Word Cloud Presentation<br>• Root Cause Analysis (cont'd)<br>• Identifying Changemaker<br>• Action Presentation Preparation<br><br>Session 11<br>• Review Word Cloud<br>• Review Data Interpretation<br>• Review Action Plan<br><br>Session 12<br>• Potluck<br>• Action Update<br>• Completion Certificates<br>• Evaluation Assessment<br>• Intro to Research, CC (Post)<br>• CC Reflection Discussion<br>• Future yPAR Recommendations<br>• Data Sharing Discussion<br>• Exit Survey |

*Note.* ᵃSession 7 included activities from both Phase II (data) and Phase III (action).

**APPENDIX D: Observational Data Collection**

*Table 6*. Summary of Observational Data Collection Plan

| Execution | Unstructured Observation | Structured Observation | Structured Observation – Audio Only |
|---|---|---|---|
| Where | At community site | At community site | In lab office |
| When | During each yPAR session | During each yPAR session | Day after each yPAR session |
| How | Ethnographic fieldnotes | Structured Protocol | Structured Protocol |

**APPENDIX E: RA Training Plan – Unstructured Observation**

**Week 1**

*Read*:

Patton, M. (2014). Fieldwork strategies and observational methods. *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods, 4th Edition* (pp. 329-335, 364-367, 371-374). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. (pp. 29 – 35; 51-57). University of Chicago Press.

Diemer, M. A., Rapa, L. J., Park, C. J., & Perry, J. C. (2017). Development and validation of the Critical Consciousness Scale. *Youth & Society*, *49*(4), 461-483.

*Practice:*

Memory Exercise 1: Think of a familiar place, such as a room at home, and make field notes to describe it. Include a map of the setting and a physical description of everything you can remember about what is in the setting. Afterwards, write up a comparison of the things you did not include in your memory field notes. The purpose of this is to help you realize how easy it is to overlook ordinary things – building *explicit awareness*.

Memory Exercise 2: Agree with at least one other observer on an ordinary, everyday thing to describe (e.g., doing laundry, shaving, picking out produce at the grocery store, etc.). Separately, write detailed descriptions of the activity. Afterwards, compare descriptions and see how many details others saw that you didn't and vice versa.

Memory Exercise 3: Walk past a store window at a normal pace. When you get beyond it and can't see it at all, write down all the things that were in the window. Afterwards, write up a comparison of the things you did not include in your immediate memory. Repeat with another window. Write up a comparison of the things you did not include in your immediate memory the 2nd time. Now, compare how many things you missed the second time and the first time. The purpose of this is to increase memory skills.

*Debrief:*

Meet with Katie as a group to discuss the practical learning from these exercises. What things improved? What surprised you about your recall ability? How can you practice this over the coming week? What do you want to improve about your writing?

**Week 2**

*Read:*

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. (pp. 57 – 68). University of Chicago Press.

Patton, M. (2014). Fieldwork strategies and observational methods. *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods, 4th Edition* (pp. 387-390). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Singleton, R. A. & Straits, B.C. (2010). Field research. *Approaches to Social Research, Fifth Edition* (pp. 381-385). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Watts, R. J., Abdul-Adil, J. K., & Pratt, T. (2002). Enhancing critical consciousness in young African American men: A psychoeducational approach. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *3*(1), 41-50.

*Practice:*

Fieldnote Practice:

As a team of observers, decide on a setting and topic for observation (e.g., restaurant, mall, park, etc.). Identify a specific type of event, concept, or question to focus your observation. For example, at a restaurant you might focus on things like: how people maintain privacy in public; the norms of forming lines, ordering rules and rituals, managing dissatisfaction, gendered behaviors, or power dynamics. Discuss with the team how to approach the setting in a respectful and ethical manner. Once Katie has approved the setting and discussed ethical observing with you, individually conduct a 10-15-minute observation. Write up your fieldnotes and share your jottings and fieldnotes with your fellow observers. Review their jottings and fieldnotes and write up a general observation about similarities and differences. You and your observers may choose to repeat the exercise for practice.

*Debrief:*

Meet with Katie as a group to discuss the practical learning from these exercises. Each observer will rate their success with jottings and field notes with an improvement orientation: What areas were difficult? What stuck out to you about the differences in fieldnotes? What areas do you plan to practice? The group will repeat the exercise if necessary.

RA Training Plan – Structured Observation

**Week 1**

*Read:*

Patton, M. (2014). Fieldwork strategies and observational methods. *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods, 4th Edition* (pp. pp. 329-335) . Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Phellas, C. N., Bloch, A., & Seale, C. (2011). Structured methods: interviews, questionnaires and observation. C. Seale, (Ed.) *Researching society and culture, Third Ed.* (pp. 198-202). Sage.

Diemer, M. A., Rapa, L. J., Park, C. J., & Perry, J. C. (2017). Development and validation of the Critical Consciousness Scale. *Youth & Society*, *49*(4), 461-483.

*Practice:*

Memory Exercise 1: Think of a familiar place, such as a room at home, and make field notes to describe it. Include a map of the setting and a physical description of everything you can remember about what is in the setting. Afterwards, write up a comparison of the things you did not include in your memory field notes. The purpose of this is to help you realize how easy it is to overlook ordinary things – building *explicit awareness*.

Memory Exercise 2: Agree with at least one other observer on an ordinary, everyday thing to describe (e.g., doing laundry, shaving, picking out produce at the grocery store, etc.). Separately, write detailed descriptions of the activity. Afterwards, compare descriptions and see how many details others saw that you didn't and vice versa.

Memory Exercise 3: Walk past a store window at a normal pace. When you get beyond it and can't see it at all, write down all the things that were in the window. Afterwards, write up a comparison of the things you did not include in your immediate memory. Repeat with another window. Write up a comparison of the things you did not include in your immediate memory the

$2^{nd}$ time. Now, compare how many things you missed the second time and the first time. The purpose of this is to increase memory skills.

*Debrief:*

Meet with Katie as a group to discuss the practical learning from these exercises. What things improved? What surprised you about your recall ability? How can you practice this over the coming week? What do you want to improve about your writing?

**Week 2**

*Read:*

Bernard, H. R. (2011). Direct and indirect observations. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (pp. 316-321, 323-325). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Watts, R. J., Abdul-Adil, J. K., & Pratt, T. (2002). Enhancing critical consciousness in young African American men: A psychoeducational approach. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, *3*(1), 41-50.

*Exercise:*

As a team of observers, decide on a setting and then narrow down to a specific event that will occur within that setting (e.g., restaurant, mall, park, etc.). For example, at a restaurant you might focus on customers relaying their orders, customers paying their bill, or the interactions of the server approaching the table. Note you must choose a place you can all observe the same interactions. Create a structured observation plan like the one in the example coding sheet below. Discuss with the team how to observe unobtrusively in a respectful and ethical manner. Once Katie has approved the setting and protocol and discussed ethical observing with you, individually conduct a 30-minute observation, completing an edited sample coding sheet like the example below. Afterwards, compare your notes with those of the other observers. Calculate how many of your observations were the same and how many were different. Discuss any discrepancies. You and your observers may choose to repeat the exercise for practice and to improve your agreement score.

*Debrief:*

Meet with Katie as a group to discuss the practical learning from these exercises. Each observer will rate their success with the observation protocol with an improvement orientation: What areas were difficult? What stuck out to you about the differences in coding? What would provide additional practice? The group will repeat the exercise if necessary.

Example Coding Sheet

| Observation | Target Member | | Topic | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| #, Time | Customer | Employee | Service | Food | Money |
| 1, 3:15 pm | | ✓ | ✓ | | |

**APPENDIX F: Unstructured Observation Protocol**

Your role as an unstructured observer is to document both context and conversation, especially as it relates to critical consciousness concepts (inequality, systems, power, privilege, marginalization, etc.). You will only be documenting conversation at the large group level. You are not responsible for documenting small group conversations. Below is the general process you should follow each time you arrive for an observation.

**Arrival**
1) Set up your observation station. You will need some paper and a pen or pencil. You may take your notes on a laptop but you may only have the Word screen open. You will introduce yourself to any of the facilitators and start diagraming the room.
2) Diagram the room. Draw out the general table placement, where the facilitator(s) are standing, and where the other observers are. As the youth arrive, diagram out where they sit around the room. Number the tables in your diagram so you can refer to them later in your field notes.
3) Begin your jottings as soon as youth arrive. Remember that jottings are the rough, incomplete way to note what conversations are occurring and who is speaking.

**Jottings**
Jottings can also include notes on:
   a) The tone of speakers
   b) The temperature
   c) The energy of the group
   d) Things that stand out to you that you want to remember later.
1) You will be responsible for filling in your jottings with more complete details later.
2) You should not worry about documenting every single group level statement. You should, at minimum, be documenting the topic of conversation. If conversation moves too fast for you to note what is being said, you should focus on the conversations where youth speak on any of the critical consciousness concepts discussed during training.
3) Youth may discuss critical consciousness concepts without using the terms of researchers. Remember their perceptions may present as instances of fairness or unfairness, rights or respect, or instances of feeling or being treated differently. This could present as experiences done unto them, or the way they feel about others. Critical consciousness concepts to pay particular attention to include:
   a) Power
   b) Systems – school systems, food systems, governments, other levels of institutional power
   c) Marginalization
   d) Rights
   e) Privilege
   f) Oppression
4) For any critical consciousness conversations, you should be documenting as much about the context as possible. For example:
   a) Are youth engaged in the conversation? Are some tuning out?
   b) Are certain people dominating the conversation? Do others seem confused?
   c) Is the speaker upset? Is the speaker sad?
   d) How do others respond to the speaker's thought?

**Field notes**

Once the session is over, you should start filling in basic details you did not have time to include in your jottings. Start by filling in:

1) Any abbreviations you used – what did they stand for?
2) Make notes on your diagram – where did most of the conversation come from? Were there full tables and tables with fewer people? Say more about what that looked like.
3) What was the most interesting thing you observed?
4) What was the most dull part of the session?
5) Was there a lot of down time? What happened during the down time?

After the session, go home and write as much detail expanding your jottings as possible. For every line of jotting, you should have at least two or three lines that explain more about it. You may use the office space on Friday to fill in your field notes.

**Lab meeting**

At the lab meeting, you will exchange your field notes with the other unstructured observer. Review each other's notes for clarifications or details you think are missing. Katie will review them to ensure they include sufficient detail.

<center>Structured Observation Protocol</center>

**Event Sampling Guidelines**

Event sampling occurs whenever a group participant makes a verbal, audible reference to the constructs in Critical Consciousness (CC) in English. Events will be coded for speaker characteristics, CC reference, and person to whom they are speaking.

Each time an event occurs, you will fill in on the coder sheet the number of the observation (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) and the time in the first box of the observation record (see pink section of the sample record below). In the "speaker characteristics" section (see green section), note whether they are male or female, their country of origin, and age. Fill as many as possible, although you may not know each box. If you know the name of the speaker, you may write that instead. Next, in the "CC reference" box, place a tally mark in the appropriate box for a reference to inequity, self-efficacy, or action (see blue section). Lastly, there is a space underneath the observation record for notes. Here, jot a quick topical note, marked by the observation #, with any other details about the reference that may help describe it to others.

| Observation | Speaker Characteristics | | | CC Reference | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| #, Time | Youth | | | Inequity | Self-efficacy | Action |
| | Gender – Male/Female | Age | Origin | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Notes:

The speaker should be coded as a youth if the speaker is clearly a child attending the group as a participant researcher, usually sitting around the table. The speaker should be coded as a facilitator if the speaker is Katie or the other adult co-facilitator. 'Speaking to' should be coded as peers if the comment is directed towards other youth and should be coded as 'facilitator' if it is directed towards Katie or the other adult co-facilitator.

| Critical Consciousness (CC) References | |
|---|---|
| Inclusion criteria | Exclusion criteria |
| References to unfair experiences based on race, language, nationality, or religion | General comments about having a bad day |
| References to systemic inequality in which one group seems to be treated differently than another | General comments about friends |
| References to feeling able or interested in learning about inequity or systems | |
| References to feeling able or interested in changing settings, experiences, or systems that are unfair or unequal | |
| References to what actions could be taken to remedy inequality | |
| References to feelings of hopelessness or apathy about changing inequality | |

| CC reference by type | Inclusion criteria |
|---|---|
| Inequity | <ul><li>References to witnessing unequal treatment</li><li>References to experiencing unequal treatment</li><li>References to systems that seem to be unfair (i.e., school policies)</li><li>References to groups receiving different treatment on the basis of group membership</li><li>References to privilege of being heard in a group</li><li>References to people without privilege</li><li>References to people with more power to make decisions</li></ul> |
| Self-efficacy | <ul><li>References to feeling powerful</li><li>References to feeling hopeful</li><li>References to feeling like change is possible because of youth</li><li>References to feeling motivated to address inequity</li><li>References to other youth feeling motivated</li><li>References to other youth feeling empowered</li><li>References to relating to other youth who have accomplished change</li></ul> |
| Action | <ul><li>Ideas for how to address inequity</li><li>Ideas for how youth can be involved</li><li>References to actions other youth have taken to change inequity</li><li>References to actions that can not be taken</li><li>References to consequences of actions</li><li>References to impact of actions</li><li>References to ability to participate in action</li></ul> |

**Procedures**
Before beginning observations, Katie will introduce you to the group and clarify your role as a researcher but not a participant in any group activities. Be sure that you are seated in an area where you are far enough to be removed from the group activities but near enough to hear what is said in group discussion. You will need to be able to identify the speaker of each comment, so ensure you are seated in a space that allows that differentiation, either audibly or visually. You will also need to be able to note time, so sit in view of a clock or have a visual of the time situated close to your seat (i.e. a watch or small clock). You will be noting the time of each observation.

Youth in the group may be curious about the presence of an observer. If prompted, you may tell them you are there to watch the activities but not participate. You may explain it is a research class assignment. No further details should be given before or during the observation periods.

To begin coding, write the start time at the top of the coding sheet. Write the location of your group observations. Write your name as the 'Observer.'

Begin recording the first block of observations 15 minutes prior to the start of the group to record pre-group interactions. Fill out a record of each event as it occurs according to the above criteria. During group breaks, you may stop the observations and note the 'End time' at the bottom of the coding sheet. Begin the next block of observations on a new coding sheet, following the same procedure. Observations should continue to the end of the group or all of the youth or facilitators leave, whichever comes first.

## APPENDIX G: Trustworthiness Table

*Table 7.* Criteria for Trustworthiness

| Criteria | Sub-criteria | Ways I addressed this criterion |
|---|---|---|
| **Credibility** - the level of confidence in the 'truth' of the findings | • Prolonged Engagement<br>• Persistent Observation<br>• Triangulation<br>• Peer debriefing<br>• Negative case analysis<br>• Referential adequacy<br>• Member-checking | • Prolonged engagement<br>  o I spent 1.5 years volunteering in organization programs to understand the perspectives and interests of community youth.<br>  o yPAR project designed in collaboration with organization staff over period of several months, collaboration continued throughout program<br>  o yPAR itself occurred over six months, so I had extended contact with youth researchers and org staff<br>• Persistent observation<br>  o Sessions were observed for up to 3 hours each week for three months and an average of once a month for 3 months after that<br>• Triangulation - this was not possible in this study<br>• Peer debriefing<br>  o Talked through analytical decisions and each phase of analysis with faculty advisor<br>• Negative case analysis<br>  o Analytic induction necessarily requires inclusion of negative or disconfirming cases. Thorough process undergone for integrating or revising assertions based on negative cases.<br>• Referential adequacy – not used in this study. All data relevant to assertions was analyzed during induction process.<br>• Member checking<br>  o Youth researchers did not review assertions, but specific assertion topics were presented and discussed with them as part of the research process |
| **Transferability** - showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts | Thick description | Thick description used to infer applicability across contexts<br>  o Participatory nature suggests findings may differ<br>  o Thick description used in fieldnotes and analysis to understand context of these findings |
| **Dependability** – showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated | Inquiry audit | Inquiry from participatory research necessarily depend on the context of the participating members. |

*Table 7.* (cont'd.)

| Confirmability – a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest | • Confirmability audit<br>• Audit trail<br>• Triangulation<br>• Reflexivity | • Confirmability audit – see audit trail<br>• Audit trail – maintained audit trail documenting coding and analysis decisions throughout study.<br>• Reflexivity – detailed reflexivity conducted before and throughout research process |
|---|---|---|

| **Assertion 1: Identity** |
| --- |
| For Phases I & II, youth have hesitation in claiming shared refugee identity, but offer interpretations and explanations during discussion that indicate their refugee background. In Phase III, youth are more actively resisting the refugee identity by claiming other shared identities based on experiences (e.g., Muslim, action researchers). |

| **Phase 1 & II Identity Assertion** |
| --- |
| Facilitator uses prompts to try to draw out collective identity, referencing refugee background. Youth interpretations/explanations to prompts indicate their refugee background. |

**[Phase 1 excerpt]**

Katie: Then we talked about our kind of research – 'participatory'. What is that?

Everyone: Us! Participating.

Katie: Ok, yes. But remember, we had to say how we describe our group. Is it everyone in the world?

Everyone: No.

They narrowed it down to teenagers, to Summer Place, to refugees, to age 13-18. When asked who is not included, they mention people who are not interested, people who live farther away. I notice when Rose says 'refugees?' she kind of makes a negative face. I say yes. I don't know if she wants to discard that label, or if she doesn't think of themselves that way. But it's an important part of why they were recruited for this, so it definitely is part of their group and I want her to keep it in mind as they develop their research topic.


**[Phase I excerpt]**

Katie: Ok, what religion do they not like?

Rose: Muslim people. (She has a look on her face kind of like, 'duh.' She wears a head scarf)

Katie: Ok, what do people think about Muslim people?

Hilary: They think that they are bad, their parents tell them that those people are bad, they are just terrorists, they want to hurt everyone.

The Nepali and Syrian kids seem to be paying a lot more attention now.

Katie: ok, so those are some of the things that other people believe and maybe tell their kids. And you might see those people in public. Are there other things that make you afraid? Or would make someone afraid?

Brian: Racism

Katie: Ok, racism. What is racism, do you know what that is?

Brian: About skin color.

Rose: Or religion.

Katie: yes, racism is when people don't like some people because they have dark skin. When people don't like someone because of their religion, we have a whole name for that – it's called faithism. And when it's about their skin color, we call that racism. What does racism look like in Lansing? Is this something that you've thought about before?

**[Phase I excerpt]**

Katie: yes, racism is when people don't like some people because they have dark skin. When people don't like someone because of their religion, we have a whole name for that – it's called faithism. And when it's about their skin color, we call that racism. What does racism look like in Lansing? Is this something that you've thought about before?

Rose: I prefer not to say.

Katie: Ok, that's fine. Of course. You guys are young, but you already know about the bad things in the community and you aren't even adults. There's a lot you have to think about but you can change what happens. Does anyone else know what racism is like in Lansing?"

The conversation kind of loses steam here. There were only a few people participating in the faithism conversation – and almost entirely girls wearing headscarves or hijabs. I assume they have felt a very specific kind of discrimination because of their visible markers of religiosity. I remember reading about this conversation in a different yPAR project – the girls were more aware of how their religion othered them because there were visible markers of difference. I don't push the conversation.


**[Phase I excerpt]**

Katie: why is this [research] question important?

Rose: it is important so we can provide support because lots of people are refugees and lots of people make fun of refugees

Radia: if we think school is important, all things about school are important

Tam: yes because a lot of teens come from another country as refugees who may not feel socially supported


**[Phase I excerpt]**

Katie: Ok, who decides who is part of a community? Who can decide whether people are in or out?

Someone: The parents, because they can decide to move the family away.

Tam: Government can decide.

Katie: How?

Tam: They can raise taxes so people can't afford to live there. Or they can do something bad that makes people leave.

Tam keeps telling me that this second one is rare and doesn't really happen. I repeat both to the group to see if there's any response to these two. We briefly discuss taxes, Tam explains it is like when you buy something for $1 and you have to pay an extra .06. I clarify that it is extra money you have to pay the government for things. I also think his dismissal of the second reason is interesting because as refugees, they have all experienced being persecuted out of their home, usually by a government. But it's possible they haven't experienced that if they were born in a refugee camp, perhaps.


**[Phase II excerpt]**

I don't remember how Rose transitioned topics, but she explained that it's hard for her to answer, "where are you from?" because her dad is from Iraq, and her mom is from Palestine, but she was born in Jordan and raised in Lebanon.

Katie: "Where do you tell people when a stranger asks you where you're from?"
Rose: "Mostly I say Jordan because I was born there. But really I'm Kurdish. Iraqi Kurdish. But I don't like them, I've never been there. They're trying to get independence or something, but I don't care."
Katie: "Yeah, didn't they vote on it last week or 2 weeks ago?"
Rose: "I don't know, I don't follow the news about them."

## Phase 3 Identity Assertion
Facilitator directly references group's refugee background, but youth start drawing on different common identities (e.g., Muslim, action researchers).

Rose [interpreting]: She says she doesn't see Muslim students bullied at all.
Katie: Oh, ok. Well that's good, I'm glad that you don't see that a lot. But I think other students do, and it's important that we think about their experiences too.
Rose: It happens a lot. Especially to girls because we wear headscarves or hijabs.
Aminah: Yes, that is something people talk about a lot.
Katie: Yeah, do you think Muslim girls are bullied more than Muslim boys? Because it's easier to know their religion?
Rose: Yes. It's happened to me a lot in school.


Katie: Wow. Did the doctor stand up for you?
Rose: Oh, yes. He's Arab too.
Katie: Oh, so he must experience this sometimes too.
Rose: Yeah, maybe but…
Katie: Probably not about a hijab.
Rose: [chuckles] No. I thought he was Mexican at first. But he said he's Arab so [shrugs shoulders]
Katie: I'm sorry those things happened to you both.
Rose: Oh, it's ok. I'm used to it.
Katie: No, that's no reason it should be ok! It's not ok.
Rose: Well I guess not.
Katie: And I'm glad you [facing Heaven] don't see that often. But I think that is an example of how the data we have here and data like this tells us more about what people think of you, than you. Do you know what I mean? Because for a woman, it can be easy to tell if she's wearing a hijab, but for men, or boys, they are probably just looking at their skin color and they guess about where they are from. And we know that there are lots of brown skin colors that can be from Mexico, or maybe from…
Rose: Anywhere in the Middle East.


Katie: Ok, there are two more things we need to discuss. First, do you think RDC should do this program again in the future?
Everyone said "Yes!"

Katie: Ok, so if they do, what are some things you think should be different? What would you want them to do? Same people, different people, different problem?

Several students responded it should include different people.

Hilary: Different people would create new ideas. It might be a different problem.

Tam: It should not just be refugee students. It should be a topic that could apply to anybody.

Katie: Bullying is a topic that applies to everybody, right? Refugee is just something you all have in common with each other.

Tam: I guess, but I think other students should be in the group too.


What do you want people to know about your group or the project?

Hilary – Stop bullying because it hurts a lot of people. I have a friend who tried to kill himself because he was bullied. People need to know that it can really hurt people.

Katie: Oh, I'm sorry. That's really important.

Hilary: Yes it is.

Student: We do research and then take action

Student: We've all been working together to solve a problem

Student (Brian?): We do research, and we're becoming a changemaker

Student: Research

**APPENDIX I: Power Assertion Evidence**

<table>
<tr><td><strong>Assertion: Power</strong><br>The YPAR phase structure includes lesson plans designed to build specific knowledge. As youth gain knowledge, their communication skills become more advanced, shifting from call-and response with facilitator, to engaging with and challenging each other, to data presentations and advocacy to outsiders.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Phase 1 Power Assertion<br>Activities do not include an explicit focus on power; instead discussion prompts designed to assess who/what youth identify as having power or influence.</td></tr>
</table>

Katie: Yes – these are all actions we can take to solve problems. What about if we have a community problem like a lot of trash?

Paul: Pick it up.

Katie: What if you pick it up but then there's always more and more trash?

Paul: Tell the office.

Katie: You can tell the office because maybe they can do something to clean up all the trash or to prevent a lot of trash from being there at all. They have more power to do that.

Katie: Who are the experts of the community? What are experts?

Brian: They are people who are really good at something.

Katie: Yes, people really good at something, or they know a lot about it. So who are the experts of our community?

They identify leaders in general – a principal, the government, congress. I probe them to think more local and they come up with the mayor and the governor.

Katie: Do these people (name them) know about your lives here, in Summer Place? Are they experts about what your life is like?

Everyone: No!

Katie: Ok, so who are the experts about what your lives are like?

Everyone: Us. We are.

Katie: I agree. You are the experts of your lives.

Katie: What gets in the way of youth solving the problem of bullying?

Student: If you try and get involved maybe you become bullied

Katie: What are some barriers that adults create?

Brian: What you can do and how far you can go with it

Rose: adults might get tired of it if no one is listening

Brian: Some teenagers want to stop bullying by fighting and adults won't let you do that. Parents won't let you go do anything about shooting in the neighborhood.

Katie: Ok, why not?

Rose: It's not safe.

Tam: They don't want you to get shot if you go up to someone who you know has a gun.

Katie: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Group: Both.

Rose: Good because you are safe, and bad because if you don't try and solve the problem, who will?

Katie: What is a good and bad thing about adults creating a barrier to stopping neighborhood shootings?

Rose: A good thing, it is solving problem, and bad because if you don't try and solve the problem, who will?

## Phase 2 Power Assertion
Activities and discussions focused on instilling sense of knowledge and ability among youth, and discussion prompts designed to reflect on their power.

Katie: Brian said a problem might be people messing around, what would you tell them that could help that problem?

Radia: We should explain that the survey is basic questions, not about their health or other parts of their life which might help them feel better about taking it.

Brian: It's anonymous.

Katie: How can you explain what anonymous means?

Rose: People won't know who you are.

Katie: Next question. What do you wanna tell me about what is the benefit to them for taking the survey?

Rose: We will be able to help solve problems for them.

Brian: We can convince the teacher to give us extra credit.


Katie: Ok, yeah, parents even because some kids learn bullying behavior from their parents. [some nodding from other youth] And what kind of skills will you have after this that can be useful to other young people who want to do something about the problem?

Brian: Research skills.

Katie: Ok, so what could you do to help give those skills to other people?

Brian: Maybe we could do presentations for them to teach them about the kinds of things they can do.


Helena arrived next with her packet of surveys. She said she was taking out the blank ones that were extra.

Katie: Oh, you brought your surveys. Did you get them done?

Helena: Yeah. It was a lot of fun. I actually really enjoyed it.

Katie: You did? That's awesome.

Helena: Yeah. I was nervous to talk but I really liked it.


There weren't a lot of substantive small group conversations I was part of, because I mainly made sure they knew how to answer the questions. I wanted their presentation to be their own ideas and for them to receive authentic feedback from each other. Part of my yPAR facilitation strategy recently has been to facilitate less specific discussions and let them guide their own ideas.

I ask her if she would be ok being a leader for a different activity next week. I tell her that I'd like to get the other group of younger kids involved in the action phase of our research. I explain to her that one way we can do that is to do a sticky note activity like we've been doing in our group. She agrees to facilitate.

Katie: Ok, how do you want to facilitate? Do you want to ask them what they think is important from your presentation? Or do you want to ask them what actions they think you should take in your school?

Rose: Actions.

Katie: Ok. Do you want to have a poster where you put their sticky notes?

Rose: yes.

Katie: Ok, what do you want it to say?

Rose: I don't know…

Brian: How about 'action'?

Rose: Yes, that's fine.

Katie: Ok. I'll make that poster and bring it next week. What else do you want to tell them? What is important about doing this activity?

Rose: Write their ideas on their notes. They can write anything.

Katie: Ok, so you think it's important that they know they can write anything. Like I tell you it doesn't have to be only good ideas, it can be all of your ideas.

Rose, Yes, that's good.

Katie: Ok, and only one idea per sticky?

Rose: Yes. Only 2 ideas.

Brian: No, I think it should be however many they want.

Rose: Ok, yeah, that's better.

Katie: Ok, so as many ideas as they can? The next step is called 'theming' in research. Do you remember how to group the sticky notes? Can you lead that?

Rose: Yeah, I'll just put the similar ideas together.

Katie: Mhmm. So do you want to read them out loud when they're done and then group them?

Rose: Yes. If I can read their handwriting. Some of the letters were hard to read.

Katie: Ok, we can ask if we need them to explain anything.

Rose: Ok. Can I take this paper?

Katie: Yes, of course.

## Phase 3 Power Assertion

Activities structured around identifying root causes and powerful allies that have influence on root causes. Youth find it much easier to identify those with power, and causes, than structural solutions.

Katie: Ok let's think about that. What are some barriers – remember we talked about barriers – that might get in the way for parents? What could be a reason parents can't do that?

Rose: Jobs. They work.

Katie: Exactly. So that might not work. Lots of parents have jobs.

Rose: This is too hard. I can't do it. Turn me on. I'm off today.

Katie: Well, is there a switch I just flip on or what?

Rose: [jokes] yes, just on my back, press that button.

Katie: [laughs] But you make a good point. This is hard. If this was easy, we wouldn't have these kinds of problems in our society, right? But thinking of institutional solutions is hard work.

Rose and Layla agree.

Layla: They have to walk home. So maybe they need transportation. The buses.

Katie: Ok, good. What could the school change?

Layla: Have more buses.


Katie: And what happens if you go to a place that has a lot of bullying and you're new?

Rose: You learn it.

Katie: Exactly. You learn how the society is. How the institution is. So we have to think about how to change the institution so that bullying doesn't happen. Because if we try to just stop the bully, it'll never work.

Rose: I think this problem is impossible, we can't stop it.

Katie: Well, I agree it would be too hard to stop a bully. But are there other things at the school that you could change? And other people who have power that you can work with?

Everyone: [general agreement]

Rose: Yeah, I guess.

Katie: It is a big problem. It's hard. But we're going to spend all day talking about it so you don't have to know the answers now.

Katie: What do you think about the solution being based on the people or on the school?

Brian: It's mostly on the school.


Sasha: Every class could have a list of every person and they could give x's for if you bully and if you get 3 at the end of the week all of the kids who get no x's get a prize like candy or ice cream.

Tam: Well that is impossible.

Katie: Why is it impossible?

Tam: It would cost too much money.

Katie: OK, what could you do that doesn't cost as much money? How would you solve the money problem?

Tam: Well. The government makes money. We can count all the money that the government makes. And then you know, count the money that goes to Medicare, or like paying for the older people who need medical care, and then the people who are retired who get money after that, and then the money that's left, they could give to education.

Katie: Wow!!! That's an amazing idea. That is really a changemaker solution! That is amazing. I know we already finished this part, but can you write that down on a sticky note so I can remember that you said that?


Hilary: I think the problem is important but like, it's too hard to solve. Because really, it's in people's minds. It's how they think. And we can't change people's minds. So it's really

hard. I think really, it has to start with very little children, like young kids, to teach them that no, you cannot treat people like that. Everyone is equal and you need to not talk to people if you're not going to say something good to them. So I think it's hard.

Katie: yes, you're right. It is hard to change people's minds. So today we're going to talk about all the different kinds of ways we can make changes to help stop the problem. And it's also important to think about how we can reach a lot of people, because like you said, it's important to start with young people so they can spread these behaviors.

Hilary: Like if someone tells a girl 'you're fat,' like, she knows. She doesn't need someone to tell her. That's just bullying. And then some girls hear that and they go home and they just want to take a knife and cut themselves to die. [imitates cutting wrist] It's bad. Like if someone comes up to me 'you're fat,' like, I know that. I don't need you to tell me that. And this is my body. You need to worry about you and your body.


Katie: Oh. Is it like, better to be white?

Hilary: What do you mean?

Katie: Like are people more bullied if they are not white?

Hilary: Yes, because people see skin color and then sometimes they say things. Even though like it doesn't matter about what color your skin is. We are all the same, like black or white, it's not like a real difference. In this country, it used to be a problem. But now, it doesn't matter, it's ok if you're black or white. But like – when we lived in Jordan, because we were Syrian, we were not allowed to do anything. The king says because we are Syrian and our skin is different, then we can not own cars, we cannot have jobs, we cannot do anything. That is a big problem. There are a lot of Syrians there. And even the king says that. Like the king, of all people, says that that is bad. It is not like that here.

Katie: Yeah, if the king, who has a lot of power, says that it's ok to treat people like that, then it makes it seem ok for regular people, right? To treat each other like that?

Hilary: Well, not everyone does. Because a lot of people are still nice, and they don't care. They know that skin color is not important. But maybe like 10% of people still act like that.

## Phase 3 Power Assertion

Youth reflect that they feel they have more information and agency than they did prior to YPAR. Youth express belief that they gain power and influence by becoming involved in an issue.

Katie-: What do you think of this project?

Radia: We should be proud.

Katie: Even if it doesn't happen, what about you as a person?  What do you feel?

Heather: It was a good experience.

Radia: Even if it doesn't help anybody, it helps us.

Helena: We don't have to find a changemaker.  We can be the ones who make the change.


Katie: Do you think differently about these things now?  How?

Radia: I didn't care at all before. Now, "everything is different."

Layla: Other projects learn about research, but they never do action.

Mateen: Bullying was a problem in my country too, but no one tried to stop it. That was new to think about.

Katie: Oh, so you had bullying too and you knew about that problem? What is your country again?

Mateen: Afghanistan.

Katie: Ok, but just no one tries to stop it there.

Mateen: No.

Do you think this will affect how you think about problems and people in the future?

Radia: yes. "If I can change my mind, I can change someone else's.

Helena: By making a group to focus on a problem and working together

Brian: I will look for a changemaker who can help.

Rose-I always stand up for what's right.  I talk to the changemakers.  I always stand for what's right.

Katie-Do you think about changemakers differently now?

Brian-I didn't go to the changemakers.

## Assertion 1: Communication Within and Outside Group
The YPAR phase structure includes lesson plans designed to build specific knowledge. As youth gain knowledge, their communication skills become more advanced, shifting from call-and response with facilitator, to engaging with and challenging each other, to data presentations and advocacy to outsiders.

## Phase 1 Communication Assertion
Communication skills include call-and-response with facilitator, no engagement with each other; learning or development phase.

Katie: What if you approach someone and say 'I'm doing research and I want to hit you with this stick. What will happen?

Rose: Why would someone agree to that?

Tam: Why would you do that?

Katie: Exactly – they probably will not agree – they will not consent. But what is a bad thing about that?

Tam: they might try and hit you with the stick instead.

Katie: Exactly!  What rule with this should we have?

Someone suggests "we should not do it."

Katie: Exactly. I think we should agree that we will not do it. We will not hurt people. It's important for us to not hurt people with a stick, like physically, but we also don't want to hurt them like…

Rose: their feelings

Tam: Mentally

Katie: we have to be careful that we do not hurt people physically or mentally, hurt their feelings.


Katie: Not exactly. It's more about pictures. It's when you ask a question, and you answer it by taking a picture of the answer. The picture becomes the data. If you come from a beautiful place you can either tell somebody you come from a beautiful place or you can take a beautiful picture and give that to them.  The highlight here is that it's a different way to tell the same information.  What if I ask you - what is the best thing about Lansing? Or the most beautiful thing? The most beautiful thing in Lansing. What would you take a picture of?

Helena: Potter Park Zoo

Mateen: the beach

Tam: A lake. Flowers

Rose: Sunset

Someone: The capital. [building]

## Phase 2 Communication Assertion

Katie: Ok, remember last week we had some people who wanted interview and some who wanted survey. Who wanted interview? [raise hands] Who wanted survey? [raise hands] Ok, if you wanted interview, come to this table. If you wanted survey, go to this table.

The groups are pretty uneven, there are only 2 people at the survey table. I identify Rose and Layla as leaders for this activity. Mung has discussed this with them already, but not told them anything about their leadership role. I ask them to go to the opposite table from what their choice was. They stare at me and drop their jaws. I encourage them to move, and let them know that their task is to find out why the group thinks their method is best, and to try to explain why they think theirs is better. They commit to the task! I reiterate to everyone that they need to choose the method that will help them answer their research question best.

Since they believe in their ideas so strongly they are going to see people's reasoning for the opposite idea. Katie explains that each group will debate with the leader of the opposite group. Katie asks if anybody from the interview group isn't super serious about their choice, in which case Radia moves to the Pashtu table.

Now the groups are trying to convince the leaders that their method is the best. Katie is acting more as an overseer for this project, not really helping as hands on as much. Both tables seem to be working actively. Tam and Layla argue a lot. She is easily exasperated, not very patient. I go to the survey table and ask them to explain how they would recruit a sample, why, and how they'd conduct the survey.

Brian: We will give the survey to parents and students.

I probe a lot around how to recruit parents.

Brian: Just give it to them.

We go back and forth with me asking for more details about how he'd get to parents. After he decides he'd give it to the Summer Place parents and leave it in their mailbox, I probe around how he'd get it back. We have a discussion about whether we think parents really know the details about whether their children are bullied. They all agree that maybe parents will know something, but probably not everything. They decide just to ask students. Rose starts arguing for survey and I point out to her that it sounds like they might be changing her mind. She sheepishly nods.

At the interview table, I ask them to explain who they would ask.

Hrun: students.

Katie: Ok, you'll need a quiet, private place to do an interview, where would it be?

Hrun: The principal's office

I point out they might need to do work there. They have no response. I ask Layla to keep asking them questions like this to convince them that survey is better.

Katie: Ok time's up. Rose had a strong opinion on interviewing being better. Is it still the best option?

Rose: Both. If I'm interviewing I can ask a question then write it down.

Katie: So are you on team interview or team survey?

Rose: Team survey.

Katie explains the effectiveness of surveys.

I ask the other group if they have been convinced that survey is best. They seem defeated but not over-invested. I ask the group if they changed their mind to survey - unanimous agreement!

Katie: Ok, it looks like our new plan is to do a survey about bullying to find out who is bullied and what things they are bullied about. What is the problem with the survey if it's in English?

Tam: They won't put anything if they don't understand the question.

Somebody: maybe we should make the survey in multiple languages.

Katie: We only have 5 more meetings…


Radia: I am not even going to answer #8 because for #7, I'm not going to say yes. Even though I have bullied before, this group is small. There's only 8 of us. If I say yes, they'll know.

Katie: Ok, so do we think that's possible? Will anyone be honest about #7?

Brian: Yes. Some people will. They don't even care.

Rose: Yeah, I think some will.

Helena: Yes.

Rose: What if we write on number 7 to remind them to be honest?

Helena: I agree that would be a good idea.

Brian: Reminding them may make them not honest.

Nicole: Why do you think they won't be honest?

Brian: Some people are afraid.

Helena: They don't want to get in trouble.

Katie: What should we do about that?

Brian: You can just write be honest.

Katie: So we will say be honest, should we remind them that their name is not attached?

Youth: That's too much, leave it at just the reminder.


Katie: What's interesting to you about the types of bullying students experienced?

Tam: That there's not more cyberbullying.

Katie: Ok. And it looks like most cyberbullying is happening to 16 year olds.

Brian: Yeah, like maybe they're on the computer more.

Someone: Yes, they're older, maybe they can be on the internet more.

Katie: Like they are more likely to have their own phone or a computer?

Group: yes.

Katie: That's a good idea.

Tam: But I think more younger students would be bullied online because they don't have as much homework and stuff so they can be doing other things like video games or social media.

Katie: So that's what you think, but the data shows that's not true – they experience it less…

Tam: Yeah, I don't know what to think about that.

Brian: Maybe they have more time but like they have older siblings who don't let them use it.

## Phase 3 Communication Assertion

Katie: You said a lot of really interesting and important things there – our group talked about how serious bullying is. When we talked about why bullying was important, someone in the group said because it happens to a lot of people, and sometimes students have been hurt or kill themselves because of it. So it's a very serious problem. And you also mentioned that it might be different for girls. Do you think that there is a difference in how girls think about bullying? Or the way that people bully girls and their bodies?

Hilary: Yes, because girls think about that much more. They are more concerned about stuff like that.

Radia: There are girls who think like they aren't pretty enough or they aren't smart enough, or not white, or good, and then those girls are more upset when they are bullied.

Katie: Did you say not white or not right?

Radia: White.

Helena: White, like color.


Katie: Ok, so let's write that in our paper. "African American students reported the most bullying." Let's see what's next. The type of bullying. Which type of bullying did they report the most?

Rose: Mental

Katie: Ok, so do we think that's important to tell her? Is that important for understanding the problem?

Rose: Ok, yeah.

Katie: Ok, so we can say "African American students reported the most bullying, and the most frequent type of bullying was mental." Should you also tell her that you asked about the other kinds? Even if you don't tell her the details?

Rose: Sure.

Katie: Ok, so let's just add that here next. "…was mental, but we also asked about physical and cyberbullying."

Rose: And then we can show her the word cloud.

Katie: Oh, that's a great idea. That's a good way to bring that in. Yes. Ok. Let's make a note in the worksheet that you want to show her the word cloud here at this point.

Rose: I think a lot of it is really about newcomers. People who are not from the U.S.

Katie: Ah, yes. Unfortunately, that's not something we asked about in our survey so it's hard to know. But in the future, or if you wanted to do another survey like this, that could be an important thing to ask about. It may be something that is a big bullying topic, but we don't have the data to support that.

Rose: yeah. [looks kind of sad about that]

**APPENDIX K: Critical Feedback Assertion Evidence**

## Assertion 1: Giving and Receiving Critical Feedback
YPAR activities facilitated in large groups limit quantity of critical feedback among youth while communication skills are limited and increase in quantity and quality after communication skills have developed. Smaller group activities help to facilitate the development of communication skills, which carried over to large group feedback activities in the final phase, including higher quantity and quality of feedback.

## Phase 1 Critical Feedback Assertion
Feedback in early activities is limited in quantity by large group structure and limited in quality by level of communication skills.

Then I tell them to think about what other questions would be good. Tam comes up with several right away, and I write them down.

Tam: What do you like about your community? What do you want to change about your community? I have 1000 ideas

Mateen: What is a goal you have for a career?

Tam: that's a good one.

## Phase 2 Critical Feedback Assertion
Data activities conducted in smaller (N ≤ 5) groups elicited feedback in higher quantities. The goal-oriented nature of data activities elicited feedback of higher quality.

Katie: Ok, 'age' group is next.

Shahmeer and Tam go up.

Shahmeer: Hi, I am Shahmeer.

Tam: I am Tam. We will talk about age.

Shahmeer: The smallest age group is 18 year olds.

Tam: We learned that 14 year olds reported the most bullying. I thought most people would say cyberbullying.

Katie: ok, what did you like about this one?

Brian: They introduced themselves.

Katie: What's one thing they could change?

Rose: They acted like they were reading off a post, they need to explain more. They talk too fast

## Phase 3 Critical Feedback Assertion
Action activities conducted in small groups, generating greatest amount of feedback. Communication skills have advanced to direct feedback among each other and to the facilitators.

Rose: Yes. Me and Hilary went and talked to her. She said ok, but we have to talk to the principal now and tell her what we're doing and she'll make the announcement about it.

Katie: Ok, so the principal just needs to know what you want her to say? Rose: yes.

Katie: ok. That's the plan!

Tam: People don't listen to the announcements. They wont' even know.

Katie: Ok, what do you think we should do about that?

Radia: Yeah, a lot of people don't care. And if they don't care, they just won't do it.

Katie: Yeah, I remember you talking about this problem before. What can we do about that?

Hilary: If we just start writing our name and start doing it, other people will want to do it.

Katie: Yeah, I think that's what you said last time. That if you, in this group, start it, then other students will participate too. Do you think that will happen?

Radia: yes.

Tam: But no one listens and they won't even know what it is.

Katie: Ok, so you will have to explain it to them as part of this group – you can explain!

Tam: Oh, I don't want to do that!

Katie: Ok, so you'll have tell them to listen to the announcement.

Rose: It's going to be on every day for a week.

## Assertion 1: Inequity
**Youth explicitly endorse equality; but understanding of inequity is less explicit. Their reflection is implied through descriptions of discrimination based on race, religion, country of origin.**

Rose: Some people, you walk around and they say they don't like some people because of their religion.

Katie: Ok, what religion do they not like?

Rose: Muslim people. (She has a look on her face kind of like, 'duh.' She wears a head scarf)

Katie: Ok, what do people think about Muslim people?

Hilary: They think that they are bad, their parents tell them that those people are bad, they are just terrorists, they want to hurt everyone.

The Nepali and Syrian kids seem to be paying a lot more attention now.

Katie: ok, so those are some of the things that other people believe and maybe tell their kids. And you might see those people in public. Are there other things that make you afraid? Or would make someone afraid?

Brian: Racism

Katie: Ok, racism. What is racism, do you know what that is?

Brian: About skin color.

Rose: Or religion.

Katie: yes, racism is when people don't like some people because they have dark skin. When people don't like someone because of their religion, we have a whole name for that – it's called faithism. And when it's about their skin color, we call that racism. What does racism look like in Lansing? Is this something that you've thought about before?

Rose: I prefer not to say.


Katie: Ok, what did your table say is the issue?

Groups: Bullying, racism (variations)

Katie: Why is it an issue?

Groups: Because lots of people experience this (variations)

Katie: Who is affected by the issue?

Groups: Teenagers. Students.

Rose: And some people who aren't involved.

Katie: Like who?

Rose: Like, if a parent has a child who is being bullied because they don't' speak English, and the parent doesn't speak English, then they won't know what to do about it. And now the parent is going to be upset or sad.


Katie: Oh. Is it like, better to be white?

Hilary: What do you mean?

Katie: Like are people more bullied if they are not white?

Hilary: Yes, because people see skin color and then sometimes they say things. Even though like it doesn't matter about what color your skin is. We are all the same, like black or white, it's not like a real difference. In this country, it used to be a problem. But now, it doesn't matter, it's ok if you're black or white. But like – when we lived in Jordan, because we were Syrian, we were not allowed to do anything. The king says because we are Syrian and our skin is different, then we can not own cars, we cannot have jobs, we cannot do anything. That is a big problem. There are a lot of Syrians there. And even the king says that. Like the king, of all people, says that that is bad. It is not like that here.
Katie: So how does that seem similar to what happens in schools here?
Hilary: If you're not gonna say the right thing then don't talk.  So many people here say lots of things


Katie: Were these words that you hear words that you didn't know?
Hilary: I hear the words others say to each other and they hurt each other without even knowing.
Katie: If you think about this list, what are important things in this list.
Radia: You don't want anyone to say it.
Katie: Yea, that's a mature response.  It's hard for people to say that at your age.
Hilary: They think I'm weak and can't talk.  They'll just say it more and more.
Katie: Ok, what does it make you think about?
Hilary: I don't know how boys think.
Radia: There is too much difference with boys.  They have no feeling.  A Black boy said to a White boy "you are a nigger".  The White boy said it back to the Black boy.  They have no feeling.
Katie: Were they saying it to hurt feelings?
Radia: I don't know
Katie: Because that's a really bad word here.  Sometimes Black Americans can say it to each other.
Katie: Is it different with girls because we have different relationships with each other?
Hilary: Yea
Hilary: What do you think (to Radia)
Radia: Girls can't' feel bad because she's white and the other isn't.
Hilary: There's bullying with or without skin color.  Color doesn't matter.
Katie: Is it better to be a certain skin color?
Hilary: America is a great country, but now there's some people that used to be racist.
Radia: Nobody asked to be a certain way.  A color of skin is normal.  My friends, no matter the skin color, are all caring of each other.

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