BRIDGING THE URBAN–RURAL DIVIDE THROUGH INTERGROUP DIALOGUE: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

By

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examined whether an urban–rural intergroup dialogue (IGD) curriculum intervention can improve participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide. Urban–rural IGD was intended to increase individual and collective learning centered on participants' social identities. Through six virtual sessions, participants explored and sought to grow their learning by cultivating an understanding of concepts related to urban–rural identity, individual/institutional oppression and privilege, and inclusive practices; developing skills for building inclusive communities, productive engagement across differences, and effective conflict management; and, finally, engaging in experiential learning that promotes development centered on social justice and inclusion.

To understand the breadth and depth of their urban–rural IGD learning experiences, participants were asked to provide survey responses before-and-after taking part in an urban–rural IGD curriculum centered on urban–rural identities. 27 students participated in the spring and summer 2024 semesters' urban–rural IGD (Cohort 1, n = 11; Cohort 2, n = 10; Cohort 3, n = 6). There were 8 urban (30%), 10 suburban (37%), and 9 rural (33%) participants. Participants self-identified gender identities were as follows: 20 women (74%), 5 men (19%), and 2 non-binary (7%). Regarding racial/ethnic identities, 16 participants self-identified as White (59%), 4 as African American/Black (15%), 2 as Hispanic/Latinx (7%), 2 as Middle Eastern American (7%), 2 as multiracial (7%), and 1 as Asian (4%). I expanded previous IGD before-and-after evaluation surveys (Gurin et al., 2013; Kaplowitz et al., 2023). I also included open-ended survey questions to substantiate the *t*-test for detecting statistical significance in all four factors.

I found that participants from urban, rural, and suburban areas showed statistically significant ($p < .05$) growth on all four factors through a 6-session urban–rural IGD curriculum. Qualitative open-ended responses are consistent with the quantitative results and further contextualize the understanding of participants' fuller experiences reported in urban–rural IGD's pre- and post-surveys. Ultimately, this dissertation intends to provide U.S. higher education institutions with IGD strategies to help narrow a divide, starting with urban, suburban, and rural college students and their meaningful interactions across social identities.

My dissertation is dedicated to my family members who raised or witnessed me grow from a small rowdy child to who I am today—still wild at heart. To my mother, Alice Liu; father, Mark Liu; brother, Andy Liu; and aunts, uncles, and cousins, thank you for loving me.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recent literature has indicated greater division than ever between urban and rural communities[1] in the United States (Kneis, 2019; Nemerever & Rogers, 2021). This divide has persisted since the late 19th century due to economic industrialization and the population shift from farms to cities (Bishop, 2008). With the rise of populism in the 19th century, the ideas of democratic economic industrialization moved into urban–rural separation (Bishop, 2008). Urban areas were often seen as industrialized, whereas rural areas were deemed idyllic and utopian (Bishop, 2008). Post-industrial cities also considered themselves progressive compared with the more conservative landscape of rural areas (Kneis, 2019).

Values, industrialization, and political ideology are key elements distinguishing urban and rural communities (Rodden, 2019). Tensions between urban and rural areas are well documented (e.g., Friedman, 1961) and enduring (e.g., Martínez, 2023). Scholars have explored numerous aspects of this divide. Examples include political affiliation (Gimpel et al., 2020; Rodden, 2019), voting patterns (Gainsborough, 2005; Scala & Johnson, 2017), social beliefs (Cramer, 2016; Gimpel & Karnes, 2006), access to education and broadband internet (McFarland, 2018), economic growth (Lichter & Ziliak, 2017; McFarland, 2018), and measures of health and well-being (Hanson et al., 2008; Singh & Siahpush, 2014; Swiecki-Sikora et al., 2019).

The urban–rural divide also most strongly affects communities of color. Rural communities of color are especially at risk of further harm, yet solutions to tough economic problems remain elusive (Love & Loh, 2020). For instance, rural Blacks, Latinos/as or

[1] I describe urban and rural communities in several ways. Phenomena that occur in communities are designated as "urban–rural"; either/or phenomena that happen in a particular community are labeled "urban/rural" that specifically address urban and rural.

Hispanics, and Native American and Indigenous communities are disproportionately marginalized in their lived experiences. Additional research has demonstrated that the media largely overlooks Black southern rural communities, and academia fails to observe these residents' lived experiences despite extensive economic contributions to America's rural landscape (i.e., in 600 counties in 11 states; Swain & Baker, 2021). The richness of racialized rural communities offers counter-stories/realities that deserve national and local attention to bridge the gap with urban racialized communities (Baker et al., 2023; Keehn, 2015; Love & Loh, 2020; Nett, 2024; Swain & Baker, 2021).

This divide has sparked debate and concern among these communities, including in the educational space. They have thus become self-isolated instead of collaborative (McFarland, 2018). In the case of students in general (i.e., at all educational levels), 25.2% of rural students across the United States identify as a race other than White (Baker et al., 2023). This percentage is notable because rural communities are home to a wide range of racial demographics. One scholar wonders whether society may continue to self-segregate in the absence of curiosity about various social identities, such as urban and rural communities (Bishop, 2008).

The political divide between urban and rural communities has lately been shown to shape how these groups see themselves (and "others" who differ from them) in educational spaces (Lunz Trujillo, 2022). Urban and rural self-segregation—including in higher education institutions—tears the social fabric of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness (Lyons & Utych, 2021). A clear sense of whether and how this division may apply to urban and rural college students illuminates steps towards bridging divides across social identities through intergroup dialogue (IGD).

Scholars have asserted that educational institutions could play a part in addressing these divisions (Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Wells et al., 2019). To close the gap between urban and rural communities, higher education institutions in the United States can acknowledge such divides and strive to bridge them. One suggested approach has been for high schools and universities to collaborate in erasing this divide through dialogue (Fregoso, 2020; Schmidt et al., 2020; Yaj & Tran, 2022). Researchers and practitioners have recommended using a critical-dialogic vis-à-vis IGD model to encourage relationship building between communities of difference (Fregoso, 2020; Yaj & Tran, 2022). IGD can lead to self-awareness and empathy (Schmidt et al., 2020). This dissertation examines these and other prospects using data collected before and after students participated in an IGD on urban–rural identities.

Statement of Problem

When undergraduates arrive on college campuses filled with people from diverse backgrounds, the socialization process may raise consciousness of others who are different from themselves (Verma, 2020). For example, geographic variation in college students' places of origin can cause students to realize how their urban/rural socio-backgrounds are like or unlike those of their peers. Studies on rural and urban college students have indicated that these students usually self-segregate upon entering university (Gimpel et al., 2020). Given this self-isolation, it is important to consider how higher education could bridge the urban–rural divide—beginning with college students who identify as hailing from either a rural or urban setting. Some discourse has focused on the urban–rural divide on U.S. college campuses (e.g., Verma, 2020). However, no empirical work seems to have described how higher education institutions can help narrow this divide across the United States. This study sought to determine whether IGD could bridge

the divide between college students who identify as urban or rural, with potential implications for urban and rural communities off campus.

Research Question and Measures

This dissertation considers whether IGD can bridge the so-called urban–rural divide at a public research university in the state of Michigan. The research question guiding this study was whether IGD can enhance (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) the capacity to advance equity and justice in bridging the urban–rural divide.

Quantitative Measures

I measured participants' changes in the above four factors using pre- and post-evaluation surveys that have been validated for use in assessing IGD outcomes. The sample size informed the results' statistical power. I attempted to collect survey data from participants to investigate changes among each of the intended IGD outcomes. Specifically, I collected data on respondent outcomes associated with IGD participation using evaluation surveys that included multiple-choice items. This method was intended to reveal whether IGD could improve the four focal factors (i.e., research questions) listed above.

Definition of Terms

Before attempting to study urban and rural peoples, it is necessary to describe relevant terms, albeit imprecisely (Tieken & Auldridge-Reveles, 2019). Colloquially, *urban* suggests a city, and *rural* implies a small town or sparsely populated area. However, both terms carry far greater connotations because urbanity and rurality manifest differently across the United States (Kneis, 2019; Nemerever & Rogers, 2021). Social scientists lack a uniform operationalization of "rural" and use various approaches to identify whether an area is rural, urban, or in transition

(e.g., a suburb or small metropolis; Nemerever & Rogers, 2021). Suburbia or suburban also emerged as a geographic bridge in between of the urban–rural separation categorized by communities and the U.S. government between city and country (Garner, 2017; Lichter & Brown, 2011). A common classification system, which the United States Office of Management and Budget uses, labels urban cores of more than 50,000 residents as "metropolitan," cores of 10,000–50,000 as "micropolitan," and counties with fewer residents as "non-core."[2] Each term's definition, for the purposes of this study, is provided below.

Urban College Students. Although the United States Department of Agriculture (2022) and the United States Census Bureau (2022) have identified urban and rural people based on population density[3], this study focused on how college students identify themselves; therefore, I relied on participants' self-definitions (i.e., in terms of urbanity).

Rural College Students. Again, while the United States Department of Agriculture (2022) and the United States Census Bureau (2022) have identified urban and rural people based on population density, this study focused on how college students identify themselves; therefore, I relied on participants' self-definitions (i.e., in terms of rurality).

Suburban College Students. While the United States Department of Agriculture (2022) and the United States Census Bureau (2022) do not currently identify suburban based on population density[4], this study focused on how college students identify themselves; therefore, I relied on participants' self-definitions (i.e., in terms of suburb).

[2] One caveat on land use as a classification tool: the difference in land use between urban and rural areas is becoming blurred as urban areas contain more green spaces that provide ecosystem services while more rural areas support manufacturing and other industries (Gren & Andersson, 2018).
[3] By the Bureau of the U.S. Census classification, an urban area has a population of 50,000 or more, while a rural area has fewer than 2,500 inhabitants.
[4] The National Center for Education Statistics classified suburban areas that has a population greater than or equal to 100,000 but less than 250,000 (Geverdt, 2019).

Urban and Rural Divide. Urban and rural communities possess distinct environments and socialization processes that mold residents' beliefs. These communities feature more than geographical density disparities (Accordino, 2019; Nemerever & Rogers, 2021; Ratcliffe et al., 2016); they can vary widely in their cultural construction (Kneis, 2019), economic industrialization (Lichter & Ziliak, 2017), political and social identities (e.g., Badger et al., 2016; Gimpel & Karnes, 2006; Gimpel et al., 2020; Kelly & Lobao, 2019; Mettler & Brown, 2022; Scala & Johnson, 2017), and education (Gimpel et al., 2020; Kelly & Lobao, 2019; Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Lunz Trujillo, 2022; Lyons & Utych, 2021; Mack & Levin, 2024; Rama et al., 2020; Salsbury & Hansen, 2022). Hailing from urban or rural settings fosters interpersonal division along with perceived opposition (e.g., Rodden, 2019). For example, the U.S. urban–rural political divide has stifled authentic policy dialogues between political parties and polarized ad hominem attacks (Rodden, 2019). This "divide," coupled with the divisiveness of urban–rural communities, could lead both sides to resent one another (Rodden, 2019).

Intergroup Dialogue (IGD)

In the present political moment, politicians are attempting to pit urban and rural populations against one another. U.S. higher education institutions can play a role in addressing the stark division between urban and rural communities, potentially preventing further tearing of the country's social fabric (Lyons & Utych, 2021). An IGD framework has been put forth as a potential solution (Gurin et al., 2013). IGD strives to find common ground between people of unique identities. The goal of IGD is to help connect people from diverse backgrounds to cultivate positive educational experiences and empathy for themselves and each other (Hicks, 2020). IGD is based on four stages: Stage 1 aims to form and nurture relationships; Stage 2 examines differences and commonalities in participants' experiences; Stage 3 explores and

dialogues about hot topics; and Stage 4 involves planning for action and building alliances (Zúñiga et al., 2007).

In a seminal study, Gurin et al. (2013) revealed that participating in IGD "increased the students' intergroup understanding, positive intergroup relationships, and intergroup action" (p. 5) to a statistically significant degree. Gurin et al. (2013) performed a mixed method study on IGD over 3 years and nine institutions: Arizona State University, Occidental College, Syracuse University, University of California (San Diego), University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of Michigan, University of Texas, and the University of Washington. The authors constructed a robust IGD framework for higher education institutions to implement as a co-curricular activity (e.g., Gurin et al., 2013) as well as curriculum design (e.g., Muller & Miles, 2017). The framework is meant to enhance the positive effects of diverse student identities in work across differences.

Gurin et al. (2013) specifically measured (a) affective positivity across differences; (b) cognitive openness to multiple perspectives; (c) intergroup understanding of social inequities; (d) intergroup relationships to bridge differences; and (e) intergroup collaboration and actions to address issues of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice. All these variables were statistically significant following IGD participation. I propose, therefore, an IGD approach (Gurin et al., 2013) may motivate urban and rural students to recognize and communicate their differences while prompting collective action to find mutual success.

Dialogue has been contextualized in Western culture as conversational patterns to close the gap between individual and collective human consciousness (Bohm, 1996; Slotte, 2006). IGD is a type of facilitated educational programming that may be used to address tensions inside and outside the classroom, whether local (e.g., campus conflict; Schrage & Giacomini, 2020),

national (e.g., race and racism; Rodríguez et al., 2018), or global (e.g., Israeli–Palestinian discourse; Yazbak-Abu Ahmad et al., 2015). IGD aims to improve intergroup understanding, relationships, and commitment to social action (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Gurin et al., 2013). As such, it can be applied in research to raise awareness of privilege, oppression, and structural discrimination (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Freire, 1970/2018) and to promote efforts around social justice (Gurin et al., 2013; Nagda & Gurin, 2007). The IGD framework emphasizes three components regarding intergroup conflict and social power, thus producing a critical consciousness of social inequities: 1) a critical-dialogic approach to understanding difference and dominance; 2) discursive engagement across differences; and 3) sustained and conjoint community building and conflict engagement (Gurin et al., 2013; Nagda & Gurin, 2007). I outline each aspect in the ensuing subsections.

Critical-Dialogic Approach

The term "dialogic" indicates relational communication "between self and other" (Gurin et al., 2013, p. 79). Put simply, the dialogic process enables people to explore thoughts and opinions among themselves and others. In the United States, the critical-dialogic approach draws on feminist inquiry to challenge dominant norms while highlighting marginalization and social injustice (Gurin et al., 2013). This lens "stresses the importance of power and privilege in shaping life experiences and outcomes of different groups of marginalized [*sic*] people" (Gurin et al., 2013, p. 81). Nagda and Gurin (2007) noted that the critical-dialogic approach causes individuals to become more conscious (i.e., conscientization; Freire, 1970/2018) of inequities that accompany personal identities—namely by seeing the intersectionality of injustices in institutional/structural power and privilege.

To effectively communicate using this approach, scholars have advocated for storytelling (e.g., narrative inquiry) that involves self-expression, affective connection, and open-mindedness towards lived experiences (Gurin et al., 2013; Nagda & Gurin, 2007). Storytelling grants marginalized narrators the authority to "foster critical reflection on the role of power and privilege among members… [of] less privileged groups in the dialogue" (Gurin et al., 2013, pp. 81–82). More recently, Schmidt et al. (2020) applied the critical-dialogic approach in a multicultural psychology course to generate understanding and engagement across diverse groups grounded in IGD.

Discursive Engagement Across Differences

The purpose of discursive engagement across differences is twofold: 1) to appreciate difference and 2) to engage with the self. Appreciating differences calls for listening intently and being open to learning from people whose views vary from the listener's (Bohm, 1996). Engaging with the self involves being curious/conscious of one's epistemological and ontological stances while taking risks to share cognitive and affective experiences (Gurin et al., 2013). Kaplowitz et al. (2019) discovered that people who engage across differences may explore each other's perspectives (e.g., by pausing for judgment, asking clarifying questions, listening closely to what is being said, and allowing space to offer additional input). Doing so can broaden viewpoints for all. Listening, posing questions, and sharing experiences are conducive to engagement and trusting relationships. Grounded in IGD, this process affords individuals a chance to encounter fresh perspectives and identify commonalities (Bohm, 1996; Gurin et al., 2013; Nagda & Gurin, 2007).

Sustained and Conjoint Community Building and Conflict Engagement

The benefits of IGD go beyond the critical multiculturalism of recognizing differences; this form of dialogue is also underpinned by a unifying goal of combating structural inequalities (Banks & Banks, 2019). Fraught topics related to inequity, such as racism (Rodríguez et al., 2018), may evoke feelings of sadness, fear, disgust, shame, or anger among IGD participants. The objectives of fighting inequities (e.g., racism) and building community do not align with debates and discussions that may amplify frustration around sensitive topics (Nagda & Gurin, 2007). Debates focus on flaws, assume one right answer, and argue to win while proving the opposing party wrong and not caring about their feelings (Keller et al., 2001, as cited in Nagda & Gurin, 2007); discussions aim to respect multiple opinions but assume all voices are right, paying little or no attention to identity, privilege, and power (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005, as cited in Nagda & Gurin, 2007). In contrast to both, sustained dialogue is rooted in shared inquiry—a way of thinking, reflecting, and acting in concert across differences (Gurin et al., 2013; Lee, 2025; Nagda & Gurin, 2007).

In brief, IGD explores attitudes about contentious societal issues in a safe environment and promotes cognitive and affective learning to function as a collective body (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Zúñiga et al., 2007). The goal is to maintain a dialogic moment (i.e., towards mutual understanding) when addressing difficult topics while allowing emotions to be felt and heard (Gurin et al., 2013). Although IGD is not akin to group therapy, the dialogic process enables community members to jointly confront strong emotions and to experience others' reactions (e.g., sadness). These outcomes can inspire empathy (even during group conflict), allyship, and collective understanding and meaning making (Lau et al., 2012). While educational scholars have not examined whether or how IGD can bridge the urban–rural divide, this study will

advance the field by empirically testing how the IGD curriculum affects urban, rural, and suburban college students (see Chapter 3 for details on the research design).

Overall, IGD fosters a sustained discourse between participants with unique identities to improve intergroup relationships, develop critical consciousness, and enhance actions across differences (Gurin et al., 2013; Hicks, 2020). In bridging the urban–rural divide, IGD can compel people to see themselves in a new light. They may then feel and act differently, collaborate more effectively, and solve problems together across their communities.

Theoretical Framework

To form the theoretical foundation of my study, I drew on Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory that grounds IGD. This theory asserts that intergroup harmony arises when members of different identities interact under a set of conditions (Allport, 1954). These conditions include but are not limited to people of equal status cooperating in pursuit of common goals, opportunities to get to know people who are different from oneself, and creating space for inclusive identities within a group (Allport, 1954). More than 1,000 studies have validated intergroup contact theory (for specific reviews, please see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005).

A review of the literature on intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005) yielded three approaches to establishing intergroup harmony. The first involves personalization (or decategorization) to get to know people who may be considered members of one's out-group or otherwise different from oneself. The second approach, group salience, encourages thinking about group cooperation and identities rather than personal gain. Finally, intergroup contact theory entails a common in-group identity (or recategorization): people once considered part of an out-group now belong to an in-group

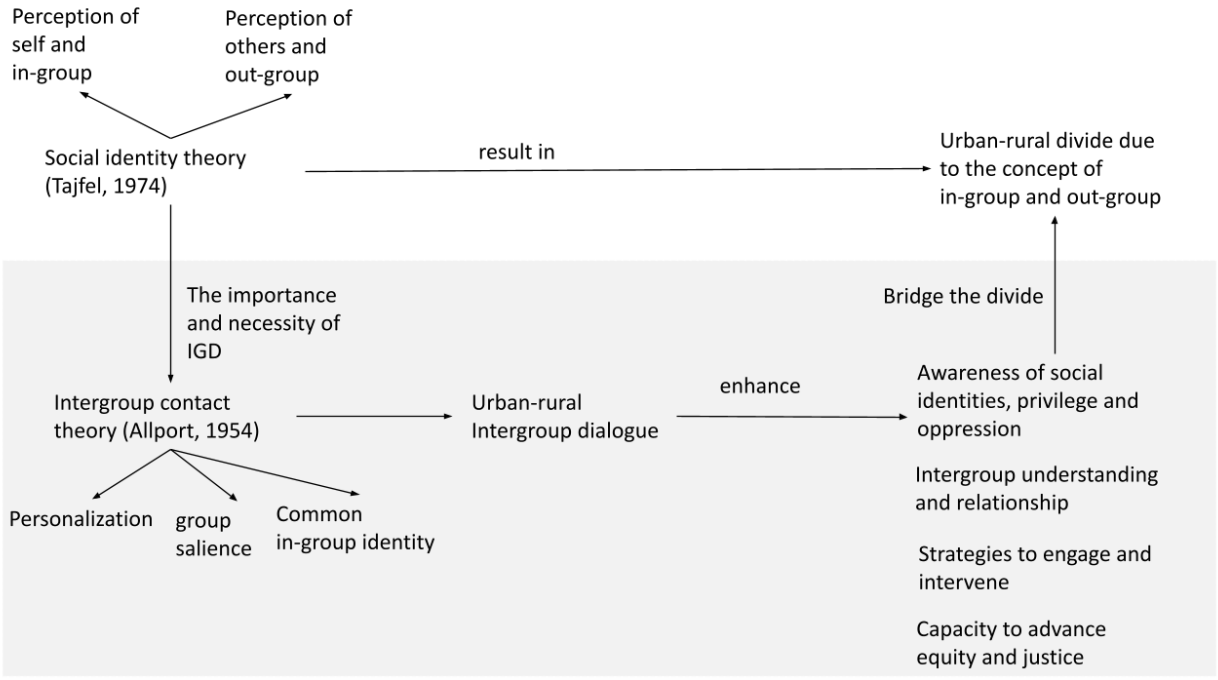
through shared activities (e.g., completing tasks together or having mutual interests). Put plainly, intergroup contact theory asserts that positive intergroup harmony increases positive attitudes and concurrently decreases negative stereotypes towards an outgroup through (a) personalization, where both groups have equal status; (b) cooperation between groups working towards a salient and mutual goal; and (c) authorization for groups to come together and form a shared in-group identity. The common in-group identity model employed in IGD has been found to reduce bias, stereotyping, and prejudice between people and towards former out-group members who have joined an in-group (Gurin et al., 2013).

By contrast, perceptions of 'the other' and out-groups elicit biases, stereotypes, and prejudices that further divide urban and rural communities (Tajfel, 1974). Tajfel (1974) stated that in-groups and out-groups are nested in social identity theory. In-group identities foster positive social outcomes because members work together towards solidarity, harmony, and equal relationships. Out-groups are comparatively less valued and seen as lower-status, perpetuating systems of power and inequality (Tajfel, 1974). In the context of this dissertation, the literature review (Chapter 2) will shed light on the urban–rural divide based on perceptions of the self and in-groups versus perceptions of others and out-groups. An urban–rural identity can be fluid, but a social aspect applies to how people (urban/rural) believe that others (rural/urban) think about/categorize themselves based on socially perceived urban or rural lifestyles. Social identity theory examines one's views of the self and others within in-group and out-group dynamics. Intergroup contact theory stresses the conditions conducive to productive social interaction (i.e., involving equal social status and interdependence to forge relationships and trust).

Conceptual Framework

With intergroup contact theory as a basis, I devised a conceptual framework to evaluate the importance and need for IGD to bridge the urban–rural divide (see Figure 1, shaded in grey). Perceptions of others and out-groups generate a divide that may be especially common between urban and rural communities. Tailored IGD could narrow this gap and heal divisions among a broader range of communities/identities. In particular, IGD aims to raise urban and rural communities' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) modes of engagement and intervention; and (d) pursuit of equity and justice.

Figure 1: Urban–rural intergroup dialogue conceptual framework based on Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory



First, awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression requires one to acknowledge and challenge stereotypes about urban–rural communities. One must also be open

to innovative ideas and ways of understanding. Additionally, a sense of one's own urban or rural social identities can convey one's power or oppression positionality. Second, intergroup understanding and relationships offer people (e.g., urban and rural college students) opportunities to engage with others who are different. Such exposure can lead people to form relationships across their social identities, contributing to group solidarity and harmony.

Third, people can engage and intervene by participating in activities that advance justice and equity. One may speak out against biased comments, jokes, and/or microaggressions towards people whose identities differ from one's own. For instance, a rural college student can be an ally of an urban student whose appearance or accent attracts ridicule. The reverse is also true. Fourth and lastly, to seek greater justice and equity, one must possess the knowledge and skills required to bridge the divide between urban and rural communities. Individuals who have a mental toolkit to interrupt bias or forge strong relationships with people of different social urban/rural identities can work together towards justice and equity. This cooperation can in turn benefit the collective good.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this dissertation examines whether IGD can enhance participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) the capacity to advance equity and justice in bridging the urban–rural divide. This chapter included a visual representation of the urban–rural IGD conceptual framework by drawing on intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) and social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974). The proposed framework aims to foster awareness, intergroup understanding, relations, and actions with which urban, rural, and suburban college students can narrow the divide. This work is intended to guide universities in building the

infrastructure to bridge the gap between urban and rural students and promote understanding across differences for all. Next, I provide a review of the literature on the development of and ways to bridge urban–rural divisions in the United States.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses the development of and ways to bridge urban–rural divisions in the United States. This coverage is meant to identify gaps in the literature regarding the U.S. postsecondary education milieu. I begin with an expansive overview of the urban–rural divide throughout the country. Next, I illuminate different and similar social identities between urban and rural college students. I follow by illustrating scholars' use of IGD to narrow the gap between college students with varied social identities.

Contextualizing the Urban–Rural Divide across the United States

Some education scholars have implored public universities to attend to urban–rural divisions in the United States (Koricich et al., 2020). This call has come at a time when rural communities are facing a hollowing-out effect of talented individuals disinterested in staying (Petrin et al., 2014) while others are left behind (Marcus & Krupnick, 2017; Means et al., 2016; PBS NewsHour, 2018; Tieken & Auldridge-Reveles, 2019). Researchers have also found that, compared with urban and suburban high school students, rural high school students are more likely not to attend college after graduation; they generally lack equal opportunities and college readiness preparation (Mader, 2014; Means et al., 2016). As such, some people who stay behind resent those who have left the community. This bitterness exacerbates the urban–rural divide.

The United States Department of Agriculture (2020) uses a set of rural–urban codes, with population size, degree of urbanization, and distance to an urban area constituting a 9-point continuum from urban to rural (1 = metro areas of 1 million persons or more, 9 = completely rural counties not adjacent to a metropolitan area with populations of less than 2,500). However, the granularity of classification matters (e.g., zip codes, census blocks, or counties). For instance, categorizing rurality or urbanity at the county level can be problematic, especially for spatially

large counties. As an example, San Diego County in California (a two-hour drive from one end to the other) is classified as urban due to the presence of the city of San Diego—yet this county also contains suburbs, small towns, and populated urban areas (Nemerever & Rogers, 2021).

Nemerever and Rogers (2021) advised that the chosen classification system must be "theoretically relevant to the question at hand" (p. 3). While this guidance is helpful for researchers, it does not render rural–urban issues meaningful for the public. Nemerever and Rogers (2021) suggested that scholars could refer to suboptimal data in order to capture better-quality information and more accurately measure urban–rural identification. Scholars have pointed out a few ways to consider urban/rural participants. In particular, to differentiate between rural locations and rural social identities, they recommended operationalizing "rural" and theorizing the notion of rurality to match the measurement approach. Therefore, Nemerever and Rogers (2021) advocated for critically examining how rurality is contextualized and assessed compared with the "urban" classification. For instance, a simple binary of urban versus rural may not fully reflect one's urban/rural identity. To advance this line of research, I describe contextual nuances throughout this dissertation regarding urban and rural social identities to transcend geographic boundaries or defined population sizes.

Differing Urban and Rural Social Identities

The theory of social identity, based on "self vs. other," has been discussed elsewhere in this dissertation (i.e., Tajfel, 1974). Some individuals see themselves as "rural" or "country" people, whereas others are "urban" or "city" people (e.g., Lichter & Brown, 2011). Borer (2006) discussed a strong social identity wherein urban people describe urbanism as the way of life in metropolitan areas. Borer (2006) further outlined six themes from the urban culturalist perspective: 1) images and representations; 2) community and civic culture; 3) place-based

myths, narratives, and collective memories; 4) sentiments and meanings of and for places; 5) identities and lifestyles; and 6) interactions between places and practices. These themes shape one's sense of who one is in an urban context. Just as researchers have focused on urban cultures, studies have revolved around place-based social identities in rural areas (Lyons & Utych, 2021). Lyons and Utych (2021) found that the perception of a rural (vs. urban) social identity is stronger, in part because "urban locations are more transient in nature, with many people coming and going from city to suburb, or one city to another city, while people tend to have lived in their rural community for a longer period of time and be less likely to want to move" (p. 24).

The idea of rural consciousness correlates with a rural social identity (Cramer, 2016; Walsh, 2012). Walsh (2012) put forth eight components of rural consciousness:

1. It is a set of ideas about what type of geographic place one is from and where that place stands in relation to others in terms of power and resource allocation.
2. It contains ideas about what people are like in rural places—that is, their values and lifestyles—with a particular emphasis on the importance of hard work in rural areas.
3. It operates as a lens through which people think about themselves, other people, and public affairs, among other things.
4. As a form of group consciousness, it contains social identification with rural residents, as well as a perception of distributive injustice towards this group.
5. This sense of injustice is a perception of deprivation relative to other groups—in this case, residents of metropolitan (i.e., urban and suburban) areas.
6. This injustice is perceived as the fault of political elites located in urban areas.

7. Rural consciousness encompasses orientations towards the government. In particular, it entails political (mis)trust because it contains judgments about the government's past performance and an expectation that future actions will not align with rural interests (e.g., Hetherington, 2006; Kenny & Luca, 2021).
8. Rural consciousness also involves political alienation, which includes a lack of support for the system as well as a sense of political isolation from others. (p. 517)

Scholarly research has also described that people with rural identities and lifestyles stand at the margins of a more urbanized (and suburbanized) society (Hochschild, 2018; Lunz Trujillo, 2022). They may feel alienated/othered/misunderstood/stereotyped and more compelled to assert a certain identity in a way that people without rural identities do not (Hochschild, 2018; Tajfel, 1974). Put differently, urban or suburban people might enjoy the privilege of not feeling the need to express a particular urban identity out of perceived 'urbancentrism' (Hochschild, 2018). Lunz Trujillo (2022) noted that such strong identities can affect political behavior and lead to urban resentment where "[rural] group-based orientations that foment anti-intellectualism, and how this link depends more on subjective psychological identification than objective group membership" (p. 2). Goldberg (2024) further cautioned that rural White resentment may lead to rural White rage and unjustifiably spark anger towards broad ideologies, resistance to pluralism, and the embrace of conspiracies against urban communities.

These types of views on urban and rural identities include in-groups and out-groups and develop from lived experiences (Tajfel, 1974), similar to urban and rural social identities. One's surrounding social environment molds their values (Borer, 2006; Kelly & Lobao, 2019). For instance, perceptions of unequal positioning and power were clear in Walsh's (2012) conversations with rural residents. Rural and urban residents socially hold (distinct) shared

values. Differences also proliferate at the policy level across the United States; economic development is one such example.

Urban–Rural Economic Separation

Before the rise of industrialization in the late 19th century, most people in the United States lived in small towns and rural areas (Kneis, 2019). Rural areas lost residents and workers when people migrated to cities in pursuit of employment. Using a document analysis method, Kneis (2019) examined public historical and government records to see how urban and rural communities were constructed in the United States. Kneis (2019) explained that the American industrial revolution changed U.S. society from an agricultural to an industrial economy, prompting a divide between rural and urban spaces. Agriculture began declining at the same time. By the 1920s, the U.S. Census classified most Americans as urban. People no longer had or prioritized the same concerns in urban and rural life. Lichter and Ziliak (2017) proposed that, in addition to the urban–rural divide, researchers must consider the development of the rural–urban interface. This nexus has emerged from the increasing back-and-forth flows of capital, labor, populations, information, ideas, and material goods between rural and urban communities across the country. Viewing rural and urban as competing rather than complementary characteristics obscures the "fundamental spatial interrelationships that often drive economic development" (Lichter & Ziliak, 2017, p. 8).

Population growth shifted—and created tensions—between rural and urban communities in the 20th century and subsequently into the 21st century. Brown and Schaff (2019) pointed out that rural populations in the United States declined from 21% in 1990 to 14% in 2015. Partly, the rural population's move to suburbanization in the middle 1900s was sustained "through [the] multiplication of the number of cities" (Brown & Schaff, 2019, p. 20). Where urban and

suburban areas increase population; rural area decreases their population density. Hence, suburban communities emerged as a fringe space between the urban and rural geographic, economic, cultural, and social boundaries (Garner, 2017; Lichter & Brown, 2011).

While the rural population comprises only about 14% of the total population in the United States, Brown and Schaff (2019) identified poverty as a challenging issue in rural and urban communities alike. This matter is pertinent across all racial demographics in the United States, with poverty having disproportionately marginalized rural and urban poorer communities (Barber & Wilson-Hartgrove, 2024). Yet many poorer rural populations receive little or no assistance from the U.S. federal government (e.g., the Temporary Aid to Needy Families program). By contrast, some urban populations enjoy reasonable access to social services, job training, and other support (Brown & Schaff, 2019). Due to an imbalance in governmental assistance *prima facie*, rural communities have begun to express resentment towards (and further division from) urban communities.

Bornschier et al. (2021) and Gimpel and Karnes (2006) reframed rural economic beliefs in terms of residents' values and overarching community conditions. For example, Bornschier et al. (2021) revealed that reaching a certain educational level (e.g., a college degree) affects urban and rural residents' identity-based political beliefs—educational levels appear to affect broadening political perspectives and worldviews while presenting opportunities to challenge assumptions about oneself and each other. In a different study, Gimpel and Karnes (2006) observed a relatively narrow income band in most rural communities, such that egalitarianism is a low priority: rural residents seldom face income and access disparities, causing these matters not to be of concern. Rates of home ownership and self-employment are also higher than in

urban areas; individualism aligns well with these residents' lived experiences. These shared conditions further promote social identity development.

When assessed based on geographic boundaries, the urban–rural divide in the United States encompasses a suite of differences among social identities, economic development, and government investment (or lack thereof). These variations are rooted in social identity (Bornschier et al., 2021) and heavily influence one's perceptions of the self and others. These circumstances breed mistrust and conflict—especially given the relative lack of empathy between people holding distinct urban and rural social identities. In turn, *prima facie* perceptions between urban and rural communities affect how each views the other (Lyons & Utych, 2021).

Urban and Rural Communities' Perceptions of the Other

As for disparities in urban and rural communities' opinions of one another, both groups are more apt to believe they share values with their own community versus with other types. They even evaluate job applicants from within their own community more favorably than those in other communities (Lyons & Utych, 2021). Shared values can differ locally at the policy level as well. For example, regarding environmental policy, urban residents tend to be more amenable to protecting the environment due to their greater exposure (vs. rural residents) to environmental degradation (e.g., Tidwell, 2016). Rural residents are more accustomed to natural resources, such as agricultural farming, because they tend to live in fairly unspoiled areas (Salka, 2001). In terms of government funding, rural residents are more apt to see themselves as underfunded and urban areas as overfunded (Lyons & Utych, 2021). Rural residents also typically see urban residents as apathetic about rural plights (Walsh, 2012). Meanwhile, many urban dwellers perceive rural residents as White, poor, and uninformed (Love & Loh, 2020). These views of urban and rural communities also extend to educational attainment.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2023), more urban than rural residents hold a bachelor's degree or higher. College completion rates indicate that 25% of residents from rural areas possess a bachelor's versus 44% from urban areas (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). In 2024, a study from the American Institutes of Research demonstrated that a subset of student veterans in rural areas, compared with urban areas, were more likely not to use their military educational benefits and not to complete a college degree. These rural student veterans would in turn be apt to earn less income. Such patterns are consistent with national data on average earnings in rural communities (Radford et al., 2024). These data reveal that gaps between rural and urban college attainment may contribute to differing perceptions between urban–rural communities. Given vastly disparate college completion rates between urban and rural communities, scholars have posited that higher education institutions can seek to bridge this divide by working in concert with community partners (Accordino, 2019; Radford et al., 2024; Tate & Khademian, 2019). Higher education institutions across the United States situated in suburban areas that have strong historical ties with land-grant charters or urban-anchored values of rural and urban community engagements to effect change—that is, to bridge the urban–rural divide (Grant & Kniess, 2022; Tate & Khademian, 2019).

Differences in Urban and Rural College Students

This section concerns urban and rural college students in the United States. I have referred to the literature to describe this landscape; research shows that educational attainment, including attending higher education, drives the urban and rural divide. I begin by describing the dispositions of urban and rural college students. I then address variation between these populations across three categories: 1) demographics, 2) politics, and 3) education.

The Disposition of Urban College Students

Scholars have long documented that urban students enroll in colleges and universities at significantly higher rates than rural students (Brown & Schafft, 2019). Auerbach's (2007) qualitative research showed that urban students' educational success is well-supported when they have strong emotional connections, open communication, and home-based assistance with school projects. Still, urban students are less likely than suburban students to attend college (Kantor & Brenzel, 1992).

Empirical studies have also revealed that urban students, especially minoritized populations who self-identify as Black and Latina/o, lack college readiness due to numerous factors (e.g., Kantor & Brenzel, 1992). Relevant factors include a lack of intentional outreach (Dache-Gerbino, 2018), poor social infrastructure (e.g., education) to support urban neighborhoods (Galster & Killen, 1995), underfunded and ill-equipped educational infrastructure to support teachers and students (Hales & Hampton, 2024; Kantor & Brenzel, 1992; Krei, 1998), limited awareness of geospatial educational opportunities (Kelly, 2019), inequitable access to educational resources (Marciano, 2021), and few culturally relevant interactions supporting urban communities (Marciano, 2017). Individuals' college readiness can therefore suffer, particularly among high school graduates who are urban residents, minoritized, or of low socioeconomic status (Sokatch, 2006). Nevertheless, urban students still have higher rates of college attendance than rural students (Brown & Schafft, 2019). Understanding urban college students requires understanding their urban communities. PBS NewsHour (2023, 2024) reported that urban resentment towards the government, similar to rural communities, is due to the lack of economic support that has been provided in the past. For example, many urban communities—once powerhouses of American steel manufacturing—are now struggling to maintain economic

growth. What's worse, the sharp decline in their population census presents a bleak outlook on whether pursuing a college education is worth their time.

The Disposition of Rural College Students

Rural students have lower educational attainment than other students across the United States in general (Brown & Shafft, 2019). Poverty is a pronounced barrier for rural college students (Gurley, 2016; Koricich et al., 2018). According to Gurley (2016), rural poverty negatively affects the college readiness of White, African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, and Indigenous peoples. Politically, the Obama Administration strove to raise funding for supplemental nutrition assistance (i.e., food stamps) under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide a safety net for rural communities facing poverty (Gurley, 2016). Historically, however, U.S. politicians have not aimed to lift rural communities out of poverty (Gurley, 2016). Koricich et al. (2018) determined that rural communities' socioeconomic status is partly apparent in students' decision-making processes about college. Other scholars have examined the geography of inopportune rural communities that cannot necessarily attend nearby colleges or universities, resulting in educational deserts (Hillman, 2016; Hillman & Weichman, 2016; Johnson et al., 2005). This phenomenon hurts rural families and hampers the educational capacity of the next generation of rural students/leaders (Gurley, 2016; Hillman, 2016; Hillman & Weichman, 2016; Koricich et al., 2018; Mack & Levin, 2024).

In exploring rural communities, research has stressed social and economic factors that promote college readiness (Bickel et al., 1991; Byun et al., 2012; Gagnon & Mattingly, 2016; Means et al., 2016; Wheeler, 2024). Bickel et al. (1991) focused on how rural high school students' social and economic backgrounds affect college enrollment. Byun et al. (2012) expressed a similar sentiment that specific constraints, such as socioeconomics, affect rural

students' pursuit of higher education and cause these students' college degree attainment to lag. In a pair of studies, Means et al. (2016) found that rural community residents with marginalized race/ethnicity identities encounter numerous barriers to accessing postsecondary education. Gagnon and Mattingly's (2016) regression analysis further revealed that smaller and more remote rural schools are considerably less likely to offer advanced placement courses than urban or suburban schools. Wheeler (2024) concluded that 85% of U.S. counties with low educational attainment (e.g., a college degree) are from rural areas.

Rural educators have posited that "creating dialogue and promoting a call-to-action around equity, access, and educational opportunities" is essential for rural college students to diversify their learning skills to work outside their (traditional) rural community (Hallmark et al., 2023, p. 130). Charles (2023) reported that rural students seldom "stray far from home" because their farming communities are close-knit, and these students are expected to work on their farmland as soon as possible (p. 9). Rather than moving away from their families, rural students focus more on practical skills (e.g., welding) to have immediate economic and social impacts. These capabilities partly combat high poverty rates and are helpful upon returning to a rural farming community, as rural communities are trying to resolve local issues on their own while calling for governmental support in an already depleted resource environment (Hales & Hampton, 2024; The Atlantic, 2019). Understandably, the initial goal for rural students is to gain hands-on skills in college (e.g., Weissman, 2024) and not soft skills per se (e.g., IGD across intersectional differences). Yet some reports suggest that, for rural students, obtaining a college degree will grant these individuals not only practical skills but also social/soft skills; such abilities are believed to open up their worldview and opportunities by learning from diverse

groups of people, backgrounds, and experiences that differ from those around which they were raised (Blake, 2024).

In summary, many rural students grapple with myriad obstacles. These communities are more inclined than urban ones to be of lower socioeconomic status (Bickel et al., 1991; Byun et al., 2012; Hallmark et al., 2023); to have less access to higher education (Hales & Hampton, 2024; Hillman, 2016; Hillman & Weichman, 2016; Johnson et al., 2005); to lack sufficient college readiness after high school (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2016; Wheeler, 2024); to depend heavily on family and community support and (re)connection (Farmer et al., 2006; I. A. Nelson, 2016; Irvin et al., 2010; Petrin et al., 2014); and to be overlooked and understudied (Gurley, 2016; Koricich et al., 2018), especially when residents hold marginalized identities (e.g., rural African Americans; Means et al., 2016). Despite these difficulties, an empirical study concluded that rural and urban communities' changing contexts influence members' postsecondary academic trajectories and outcomes (Wells et al., 2019). Wells et al. (2019) anticipated that the rural–urban divide will narrow if practices are implemented to support these students' reciprocal engagement.

Demographics

A chief difference between urban and rural college students lies in their demographics. College students in rural areas are likely to be White, older, and more politically conservative with traditional values (e.g., Gimpel & Karnes, 2006). Those residing in urban areas tend to be more diverse in race, gender, and nationality (e.g., Frey, 2023). These characteristics can produce distinct political leanings and social norms. Yet researchers (Gimpel et al., 2020) have contended that rural and urban college students' disparities are not solely attributable to demographic variation. Rather, remoteness and population density may serve as distinguishing features that

help explain the geographic gap in political beliefs; the urban–rural divide is not merely an artifact of community members' backgrounds.

Others, mainly rural sociologists such as Kelly and Lobao (2019), have also argued that individual differences go beyond demographic markers. Structures at the intersection of social power and race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, and socioeconomic position contribute as well. Kelly and Lobao (2019) proposed that these statuses undergird disparities between urban and rural populations, work and employment, and sociocultural beliefs.

Politics

The political divide is growing between urban and rural areas from which college students hail (Badger et al., 2016; Gimpel et al., 2020; Scala & Johnson, 2017), with urban areas leaning more Democratic and rural areas leaning more Republican. For instance, the rural South was previously trending towards the Democratic party (Gainsborough, 2005; Gimpel & Karnes, 2006; Mettler & Brown, 2022). However, a recent analysis (Mettler & Brown, 2022) showed that rural residents are now less likely to endorse liberal democratic values such as freedom of the press or the balance of power between the three federal branches. Mettler and Lieberman (2020) also view such patterns, combined with increasing political polarization, as a true threat to democracy.

The effects of voter turnout and voting patterns also differ with population size. Durkan (2022) found that, in Michigan elections held between 2012 and 2020, percentage changes in more urban voter turnout were relatively smaller (compared with a larger increase among rural voters) but persistent because the number of people in urban areas influenced voting outcomes. Durkan (2022) further observed that areas with more substantial populations showed more significant increases in voter turnout. Even so, as mentioned, the rural–urban divide transcends

demographics and political views. It often reflects fundamental differences in each community's opinion of the other (e.g., Kneis, 2019). Political ideology thus often affects college students' personal values and perceptions of others.

A dark political divide emerged between rural and urban voters during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Durkan, 2022). A general sentiment across the dichotomous spectrum no longer aims for consociational democracy for the common good; instead, resentment leads to a zero-sum partisanship approach, conveying a sole-winner or loser-takes-all mindset (e.g., Carcasson, 2016; Goldberg, 2024). In another instance, federal and state mask mandates during the COVID pandemic entangled public health with the individual right to freedom, sharply contrasting compliant urbanites and contrarian ruralites. Untruthful media reports further pushed the agenda between extreme left- and right-wing politicians to divide their constituents (e.g., higher education institutions) in order to remain in power (e.g., Taylor et al., 2020). In layman's terms, the more people are divided, the more they commit to their own ways and blame one another for social issues (Mehl, 2024).

Education

Although the government has invested in rural college areas' economic development (e.g., Ross & Parilla, 2023), enduring aspects of the urban–rural divide continue to shape the educational milieu (Bickel et al., 1991; Gimpel et al., 2020; Kelly & Lobao, 2019; Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Lunz Trujillo, 2022; Lyons & Utych, 2021; Mader, 2014; Marré, 2017; Rama et al., 2020; Salsbury & Hansen, 2022). For example, as the gap in urban and rural communities' college completion widens, degree attainment (or the lack thereof) may compromise economic effects (Mader, 2014; Marré, 2017; Nelson, 2010). Bickel et al. (1991) have begun to point to contextual factors as key determinants of educational outcomes for urban and rural students—

especially among students transitioning from high school to postsecondary education. Context matters when experts examine urban and rural students' characteristics (or predispositions) in attending college. Regarding the overall composition (e.g., race, religion, education, income, technological capacity) of people living in urban or rural locales, Gimpel et al. (2020) uncovered that educational attainment (compounded with population density in each region) drives political partisanship.

Two empirical studies have suggested that urban and rural residents who live far apart and rarely interact (e.g., when attending separate schools) intensify community opposition (Kelly & Lobao, 2019; Lyons & Utych, 2021). Lunz Trujillo (2022) indicated that rural social identification partly predicts one's attitude about anti-intellectualism. Living in a rural area alone is not significantly associated with anti-intellectualism; instead, rural psychological attachment affects this outlook (Lunz Trujillo, 2022). Gimpel et al. (2020) noted that, as people in urban and rural areas earn more degrees, their political views become more similar with increased contact across differences. Essentially, an educational environment that encourages dialogue across differences (e.g., IGD) gives people space to ponder various opinions and potentially embrace new perspectives.

Lopez and Nastasi (2012) identified persistent patterns of re-segregation in education as early as high school. These trends can color youth's views of their race, ethnicity, and class—all of which traditionally divide urban and rural communities. Rama et al. (2020) confirmed educational attainment as a main factor separating these communities on the basis of national census data. As the education sector seeks to lessen the division between urban and rural students, universities and high schools could collaborate in bridging this divide through dialogue (Lopez & Nastasi, 2012). Schmidt et al. (2020) contemplated this issue in an educational setting

and recommended that Gurin et al.'s (2013) critical-dialogic model be used to sustain relationship-building communication. The model can also spur social actions that inspire self-awareness while promoting empathy among people of different backgrounds.

In addition, there is a dearth of research on urban–rural–suburban divides and ways to bridging the divide in U.S. higher education. Still, suburban communities affect urban/rural social, economic, and cultural connections that link the rural–urban divide (Checkoway et al., 2017; Grant & Kneiss, 2022; Lichter & Brown, 2011). Through intergroup dialogues, suburban communities can become more aware of diverse perspectives of urban issues (e.g., Checkoway et al., 2017) concurrently embrace rural communities as part of their social network (i.e., Grant & Kneiss, 2022) thus bridging the divide between urban and rural communities.

Bridging the Urban–Rural Divide

Given the stark differences between urban and rural communities, U.S. higher education institutions could invest in educational programs to narrow this divide. One approach to narrowing divides entails bringing both sides closer together (e.g., Kelly et al., 2024; Weisman, 2024). The word "bridge" implies the possibility of building trust—through personal stories and co-learning—across differences and with each other (Kelly et al., 2024). Weisman (2024) expanded on the notion of relationship building in deeming it key to finding common ground between urban and rural communities. An IGD framework may be useful in this respect (see Figure 1).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Gurin et al. (2013) adopted mixed methods to examine nine participating U.S. institutions that engaged in IGD over a 3-year period. The authors measured several factors: (a) affective positivity across differences; (b) cognitive openness to multiple perspectives; (c) intergroup understanding of social inequities; (d) intergroup relationships to

bridge differences; and (e) intergroup collaboration and action to address issues of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice. All five variables were statistically significant following IGD participation. This dialogic approach (Gurin et al., 2013) may therefore motivate urban and rural students to dialogue across differences and spark collective action to find common ground.

Scholars have suggested that people with differing backgrounds and views are stronger together when working across differences (e.g., Crews et al., 2024; Gurin et al., 2013; Kaplowitz et al., 2019). Understanding and acceptance are necessary, and IGD represents a viable strategy. As a form of communication, IGD helps people from diverse backgrounds recognize similarities and honor discrepancies to engage/work across differences. Put simply, IGD is a process of genuine interaction through which humans listen to each other closely enough to be changed by what they learn. Such change breaks down stereotypes and reduces prejudice across multiple identities while promoting optimism and the pursuit of mutual goals as well as a common in-group identity (Allport, 1954). Rather than listening to find flaws or arguing to defend one's points (as in a heated debate), calm and relaxed dialogue focuses on broadening differing perspectives and fostering understanding to heighten empathy, connection, and community (Nagda et al., 2012). Dialogue is necessary for working across differences towards a common understanding—even with occasional disagreements and dissension—that begins with asking questions, listening deeply, and sharing authentically. Subsequent action planning and coalition building can bridge social divides (Lee, 2025; Schrage & Giacomini, 2020; Schwartz, 2024).

Engaging in Intergroup Dialogue to Bridge Social Divides

Working across differences between urban–rural communities, namely through IGD, may help construct inclusive spaces to better understand how intersecting differences/commonalities can be celebrated as a source of strength. This recognition can encourage understanding,

compassion, and government policies and practices which support the needs of urban and rural communities alike. For example, as mentioned, state government policy affecting high-speed internet in rural communities is prevalent in the higher education milieu; this space also bears contextual complexities in culture, politics, economics, and demographics (e.g., Whitmer, 2022).

In contrast to breeding resentment or division among individuals with varying social identities, Bohm (1996) saw dialogue as a way to engender empathy across communities of people by being consciously aware of the effects of conversational patterns. Dialogue, which is grounded in relationship building, seeks to find common ground (or bridges) across diametric social divides (e.g., Weisman, 2024). In situations where differing opinions breed conflict, IGD serves as a way to engage diverse perspectives in an authentic space of sharing (Dai & Chen, 2023). Dai and Chen (2023) stated that the goal of IGD is to co-learn from divergent perspectives; doing so can generate collective ideas while maintaining the dignity of all parties. Studies have demonstrated that IGD can lessen division and hate (Gurin et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2023b). Liu et al. (2023b) observed in a qualitative study that participants (i.e., Chinese international students) reported the value of cultivating IGD for themselves and others to share feelings, identities, and experiences. Participants also reported that hate decreased from them as a minoritized student population at a predominantly White institution.

To fully grasp the idea of bridging the divide between urban and rural communities, people need opportunities to practice this process in a semi-structured environment (e.g., Dunn, 2022). IGD, as a way to engage and intervene against urban–rural bias (e.g., microaggressions), offers a space where participants can demystify the wrongful portrayal of all urban residents as left-wing “hoodlums” or of all rural people as right-wing “trailerhoods.” More plainly, IGD opens spaces to practice a curriculum that includes real-life scenarios: people can proactively

apply strategies to intervene against bias (e.g., by using the Pause, Acknowledge/Ask, Listen, and Share [PALS] strategy) or to genuinely apologize (e.g., Dunn, 2024).

Lopez and Nastasi (2012) reported that educational programs (e.g., IGD) centered on participants' experiences, coupled with content-based education (e.g., on structural racism), serve as the leitmotif to bridge social divides by increasing intergroup contact. Particularly, Lopez and Nastasi's (2012) participatory action research revealed that intergroup dialogue across urban and suburban schools improved their awareness of structural inequalities, abilities to express their voice or agency, and keen interest for further engagement or intergroup contact in dialogues. In Chapter 1, I emphasized intergroup contact theory as vital for ensuring harmony in spite of differences (Allport, 1954). Students can be taught to increase their intellectual and affective senses of diverse perspectives through critical-dialogic communication (Jackson, 2022). IGD also reduces implicit and explicit biases while acknowledging that people are not free from them (Stephan & Stephan, 2013). IGD proponents largely agree that university educational programming (e.g., to foster IGD across differences) helps high school and college students from various backgrounds be better aware of inequalities and reflect on their agency and interests to engage productively with each other (Frantell et al., 2019; Fregoso, 2020; Gurin et al., 2013; E. Hicks et al., 2023; Jackson, 2022; James-Gallaway et al., 2023; Kaplowitz et al., 2019; Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Maxwell et al., 2011; Stephan & Stephan, 2013; Yaj & Tran, 2022).

In studying IGD participation, Lopez and Nastasi (2012) discovered that students from urban and suburban backgrounds were more likely to try to understand differences between themselves and their peers. Students can develop unique voices, make social impacts, and urge activism to bridge social divides (E. Hicks et al., 2023; Jackson, 2022; James-Gallaway et al., 2023). In other words, IGD is a praxis that cultivates reflection coupled with action leading to

(social) change (Canady, 2023). IGD has already been identified as one of many educational opportunities to narrow social divides between urban and rural high school students (Lopez & Nastasi, 2012). Some limitations apply to this approach even though it is helpful for igniting collective action.

Chief among these limitations (e.g., sidestepping difficult conversations; James-Gallaway et al., 2023) is that urban and rural college students are usually studied in isolation (Brown & Schaff, 2019; Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Rodden, 2019). No consensus exists regarding how to close the gap between these two groups other than finding common interests (e.g., farmers' markets) in public spaces (Warsaw et al., 2021). Additionally, an urban or rural social identity is often neglected as part of intersectionality during IGD with respect to social learning and group norms (e.g., Gurin et al., 2013; Jackson, 2022). Of equal importance, suburban social identity is often accepted as the norm and not explicitly illuminated as intersection to urban and rural identities. This quantitative dissertation seeks to rectify this void in the U.S. higher education milieu. As such, this study has advanced previous work by administering pre-/post-surveys for six IGD sessions to further reveal how each participant worked towards alliance building for social change.

Chapter Summary

This literature review synthesized how scholars evaluated the urban–rural divide in the United States. For instance, Kneis (2019) contextualized the cultural construction of urban and rural identities in this country and corresponding social gains, which advance economic and political agendas. Nemerever and Rogers (2021) also cautioned that quantitative researchers should be careful not to inadvertently mislabel rural identities based on geography alone.

Kneis (2019) and Nemerever and Rogers (2021) underlined the need for urban and rural studies to be consistent in how people define themselves. Scholars such as Lunz Trujillo (2022) then discussed how psychological attachment to one's urban or rural identity affects one's attitude towards anti-intellectualism. Others have suggested that urban and rural fissures are additionally grounded in partisanship and educational attainment (Gimpel et al., 2020). Nevertheless, education scholars such as Lopez and Nastasi (2012), Gurin et al. (2013), and Jackson (2022) have identified several ways to bridge divisions between people with different social identities—urban, rural, or suburban—using an IGD approach. Yet no studies appear to have employed IGD processes to narrow the urban–rural divide, particularly among college students in the United States. So, my study adds to this body of literature.

Meaningful IGD experiences involving urban and rural communities could bridge the gap between personal and collective beliefs about each group, thus fostering mutual understanding. The next chapter describes a quantitative design intended to determine whether IGD can improve participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter, I outline my quantitative research design to extend other scholars' examinations of IGD across differences (i.e., Gurin et al., 2013) and to bridge the urban and rural divide. In summary, after I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board, I began recruiting undergraduate students to participate in IGD. I asked participants to self-identify as urban, rural, or suburban. Second, I asked participants to complete a pre-survey. Third, I invited participants to engage in a 6-week urban–rural IGD. Fourth, I requested that participants complete a post-survey. I then analyzed these data and tested for statistically significant differences in students' self-reported changes. In the sections below, I provide details of the research design, participant recruitment, study setting, and data collection and analysis procedures.

Research Design

I used a quasi-experimental design, including pre- and post-survey components, which was completed during the spring 2024 and summer 2024 academic semesters at the research site (i.e., Michigan State University [MSU]). The study design entailed a 6-week intervention involving an urban–rural IGD curriculum (see Appendix G) to answer several research questions: whether IGD can enhance participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) the capacity to advance equity and justice in bridging the urban–rural divide.

Participants

I sent an electronic invitation to current enrolled MSU undergraduate students. I invited MSU students who decided to take part in this dialogue program to voluntarily enroll in the 6-week urban–rural IGD study. Participants were rewarded a $100 Amazon gift card if they

completed the entirety of the 6-week urban–rural IGD study.[5] I asked students to complete a (a) sign-up form, (b) consent form, and (c) pre-survey form. The templates for these three forms are respectively provided in Appendices B, C, and D. I then chose participants for urban–rural dialogues according to the study's inclusion criteria. Eligible students were (a) between 18 and 30 years old; (b) self-identified as either urban, suburban, or rural on the initial screening form; and (c) self-identified as full-time undergraduate students at the university.

Exclusion criteria were that participants did not specify if they enrolled in MSU as undergraduate students at the time of the study. No international students, graduate students, or students whose identities were neither urban, suburban, nor rural were eligible to take part.

I recruited three student cohorts for the urban–rural IGD study (N = 27 students). The first cohort, in the spring 2024 semester, contained 12 students; 10 students constituted the second cohort. The third cohort, in the summer 2024 semester, had 9 students. All participants completed the study in its entirety by finishing both pre-tests/post-surveys and the 6-week urban–rural dialogue program.

Setting

I selected MSU as the study site because this higher education institution was originally established to stimulate a rural and agricultural economy that was rapidly industrializing (MSU, 2020). The university has extended its mission since its founding and now aims to address issues for urban communities and to recruit students from urban areas. Furthermore, MSU has a large student population in a suburban area: the university is in East Lansing, Michigan, which is geographically categorized as suburban. Politically, Michigan is a "swing state" that varies in

[5] The study is funded by the larger Urban-Rural Dialogue Project, housed in the Department of Community Sustainability, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR), Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824. The Project PI is Michael D. Kaplowitz, J.D., Ph.D., who is supported, in part, by USDA Agriculture Hatch Project #7001093.

political character across urban and rural areas, and the university educates the largest number of Michigan high school graduates of any public university in the state.

I co-facilitated the dialogues with MSU students via Zoom©. I specifically adopted the University of Michigan's IGD model (Gurin et al., 2013) for this urban–rural IGD study. This urban–rural IGD was a non-credit-bearing curriculum, meaning that participants were not assigned an academic grade at the end of the dialogue sessions. Participation over the course of the urban–rural IGD study was voluntary: students could withdraw at any time for any reason or for no reason at all. Table 1.1 presents a summary of the 6-week urban–rural IGD curriculum.

Table 1.1: Overview of urban–rural IGD curriculum

	Session Objectives	Activities
Session 1: Dialogue Foundations and Relationship Building	● Define dialogue and active listening, distinguish dialogue from debate, and understand the benefits of dialogue ● Practice dialogue and active listening skills ● Develop group rapport and connection ● Share individual and group hopes and fears related to the dialogue experience and acknowledge fear as normal/common and something we can work from	● Guided imagery framing exercise ● Small-group activity ● Large-group discussion ● Active listening ● Hopes and fears
Session 2: Understanding Our Social Identity	● Define concepts related to identity, diversity, and privilege ● Deepen understanding of self and others, especially those who value different identity descriptors for themselves and others ● Recognize reactions we have (e.g., feelings in our body) during difficult conversations and interactions; practice being able to stay brave in response to hot buttons	● Guided imagery framing exercise ● Social identity box ● Community aspirations ● Core concepts ● Social identity wheel

Table 1.1 (cont'd)

Session 3: Historical Read-around and Interrupting Bias	● Illustrate historical events in the United States relating to power, privilege, and oppression ● Define and explore interrupting bias through reflection and dialogue with others (e.g., introduction to the PALS technique)	● History read-around ● Centering exercise ● Share one word in chat ● Small-group activity ● Large-group discussion ● Moments of hope ● PALS ● Interrupting bias around urban–rural identities
Session 4: Individual Oppression: Stereotypes, Microaggressions, Bias, and Perspective Taking	● Dialogue about early learning experience around urban/suburban/rural identity ● Understand urban–rural identity inside cycle of socialization ● Define individual oppression, its link to institutional oppression, and key concepts related to individual oppression ● Reflect and dialogue about how we act around issues of exclusion/othering in urban/suburban/rural communities (using Four Corners activity) ● Recognize our difficult thoughts/emotions tied to these challenging moments and how to make space for them to respond rather than react (e.g., perspective taking)	● Community aspirations ● Perspective taking ● Large-group discussion on early learning experience around urban/suburban/rural social identity ● Core concepts ● Cycle of socialization ● Small-group dialogue ● Institutional oppression and individual–institutional connection ● Small-group activity on four corners

Table 1.1 (cont'd)

Session 5: Group Privilege and Creating Inclusive Spaces	● Explore and develop awareness on how our social identities and privileges, or lack thereof, impact our life experiences ● Debunk commonly held myths/values in urban/suburban/rural identities ● Explore how privilege relates to institutional and individual oppression ● Evaluate the ways we have (or don't have) social privilege through privilege tally activity ● Consider and imagine what power we have to spark change given our social privilege	● Community aspirations ● Core concepts ● Social identity chart ● Small-group dialogue on urban–rural identity privilege and obstacles ● Myths that discount social privilege ● Centering exercise ● Large-group activity on privilege tally ● Large-group fishbowl activity
Session 6: Hot Topics and Actions to Allyship	● Define and productively discuss hot topics most relevant to the group practicing dialogue skills and processes ● Introduce concepts of equality, equity, and social justice ● Define allyship and explore ways to be an ally within our spheres of influence ● Understand aspects of creating inclusive spaces and draft an action plan to bridge the urban–rural divide ● Celebrate the learning, growth, and bravery of the group through our process	● Community aspirations ● Brave space ● Hot topics ● Introduce concepts of equality, equity, and social justice ● Core concepts in allyship ● Common mistakes we make when trying to help others – "stepping on toes" ● Action continuum ● Spheres of influence ● Self-reflection on goal setting and action planning ● Large-group discussion ● Closing activity and future opportunity

Appendix G contains the full curriculum design.

Data Collection

I collected data in two rounds with each of the three cohorts of urban–rural IGD participants. Each participant completed a consent form and pre-survey before beginning the urban–rural IGD, took part in a 6-week IGD co-led by me, and finally completed a post-survey. I compared results to determine whether urban–rural IGD enhanced each participant's (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice in bridging the urban–rural divide. The Institutional Review Board at my home institution of MSU has approved this study (Appendix A). This dissertation study is a part of the larger Urban–Rural Dialogue Project (https://www.urban-rural-diaogue.org). It is housed in the Department of Community Sustainability, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824. The Project PI is Michael D. Kaplowitz, J.D., Ph.D., who is supported, in part, by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Hatch Project #7001093. I am listed as a co-PI for this Ph.D. dissertation study.

I used convenience sampling to recruit participants because urban–rural community development is a key curriculum embedded in MSU students' Community Sustainability degree program. I, a doctoral student, explained the study purpose, answered questions, and administered consent forms (Appendix C). I informed participants that they had the right to decide whether they wanted to take part in the study. Using the USDA Hatch Project fund, each student was compensated $100 after completing the study. I sent participants a link to a Qualtrics® survey, addressing demographics and other measures, immediately after consent was obtained (i.e., before the urban–rural dialogue, thus serving as baseline data) and on the last day of the urban–rural dialogue (i.e., post-data). I repeated this process for all cohorts during each

semester to obtain an adequate sample for data analysis. Open-ended questions in the evaluation survey offered participants an opportunity to describe in their own words whether the IGD program influenced their perspectives on bridging the urban and rural divide. These details enabled me to verify whether students' knowledge matched what they reported having learned through the urban–rural IGD curriculum to narrow this divide. The information-check prompt provided strong validity for, and feedback on, students' knowledge acquisition and the program's impacts. I secured and maintained all electronic and physical forms in a safe location: physical forms were kept in a locked drawer, and electronic forms had a high level of security access.

Measurement Instrument: Reliability, Validity, and Verification

The study measure was adapted from an instrument developed by Dr. Michael Kaplowitz in 2017 and has been used in several IGD curricula (Appendices D and E). The original instrument demonstrated acceptable readability for high school students, and the study results were robust against potential biases of internal and external validity (Kaplowitz et al., 2023). This instrument included four factors: 1) awareness of social identities ($\alpha = 0.701$, 5 items); 2) intergroup understanding and relationship ($\alpha = 0.724$, 5 items); 3) tools to engage and intervene ($\alpha = 0.857$, 5 items); and 4) capacity for greater equity ($\alpha = 0.808$, 5 items). Items were scored on a 5-point scale (*strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree/nor disagree, agree, strongly agree*) and covered respondents' awareness, intergroup understanding, strategy to intervene, and greater equity.

Data Analysis

I took a deductive, hypothesis-testing approach when analyzing the data (see Table 1.2 for a summary). I conducted paired *t* tests of means and regression analysis in standard statistical software (i.e., IBM® SPSS). In particular, I performed paired *t* tests to determine whether

participants' awareness of social identities, intergroup understanding, strategy to intervene, and greater equity were systematically different before and after completing the urban–rural IGD program.

$$H_0: u_{pre} = u_{post}\ ;\ H_A: u_{pre} \neq u_{post}$$

I used Cronbach's alpha to estimate the internal consistency reliability. Cohen's (1988) power analysis revealed the required sample size based on the effect size of a previous IGD intervention (Cohen's d = 1.34, m1 = 3.87, m2 = 4.69, standard deviation [sd] of the mean difference = 0.61). At least seven participants were needed to detect a significant finding from the focal IGD program (at a statistical power of 0.8 and an alpha level of 0.05). My sample size of 27 was thus adequate to reject the null hypothesis of no urban–rural IGD program effect when urban–rural IGD can improve participants' outcomes across the four target areas. Beyond statistical power concerns, my dissertation benefitted from a moderate sample in several respects. First, small samples produced large sampling variability, which resulted in an observed sample either having significant or non-significant results simply due to chance (i.e., sampling error). Second, greater sampling variability caused statistical estimates to be less precise in approximating true values. Third, larger samples offered across groups and contexts better generalizability (i.e., external validity), such as for the urban–rural IGD intervention, across groups and contexts. My sample of 27 participants included students of different races, genders, and urban–rural identities. It also spanned three cohorts. These parameters rendered the study results more generalizable than a sample of only seven participants determined solely based on adequate statistical power.

Finally, I conducted sensitivity analyses on the *t*-test results to quantify inferences' robustness; that is, I tested the extent to which my results were due to bias to invalidate the

inferences (Frank et al., 2013). Furthermore, I used a generalized linear model (GLM) rather than binary logistic regression. I chose the GLM method given my assumption that each outcome for the dependent variables (i.e., awareness, relationship, engagement, and social justice) would be generated from the exponential family of distributions (including normal, binomial, Poisson, and gamma distributions), which GLM accommodates. This study involved a small sample; GLM maximum likelihood estimation was germane to determine model parameters for the exponential family distributions. I thus used GLM to estimate differential learning growth among college students based on the participants' 1) gender identities, 2) racial identities, 3) academic class level, and 4) urban–rural identities. The score differences in students' pre/before and post/after ratings of urban–rural dialogue reflected actual learning growth.

I then estimated the GLM of students' scores differences on the four aforementioned categorical variables; the respective reference groups consisted of students identifying as rural, White, male, and first-year. I controlled for participants' pre-test scores in this analysis: growth in students' learning and skills tended to correlate with students' initial levels (Seltzer et al., 2003). For instance, students who were relatively less familiar with the current status of the urban–rural divide may have learned more than who possess a greater understanding at the outset. To contextualize the statistical data, I have provided samples of open-ended responses for the four subscales/factors: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide.

Table 1.2: Quantitative data analysis process

	Quantitative Deductive/Analytical Process
Step 1	Identify independent and dependent variables from survey responses in Microsoft Excel
Step 2	Conduct inferential statistical tests (e.g., hypothesis testing) using paired samples *t* tests of the mean, effect size, and confidence intervals; check for statistical assumption violations
Step 3	Use generalized linear model analysis of participants' learning growth on the four variables (i.e., to address the research questions)
Step 4	Use the same instrument simultaneously for the pre- and post-survey measures to eliminate threats to internal and external validity
Step 5	Ensure results' consistency using the instrument repeatedly for each cohort's data and analysis
Step 6	Check for response and interpretation bias to the researcher's positionality and role

Note. This quantitative analytical process was adapted from Hahs-Vaughn and Lomax (2020).

Positionality Statement and Role of the Researcher

As Saldaña (2015) noted, "Reflection... is the act of pondering various components of the research project to make sense of and gain personal understanding about their meanings" (p. 8). Through reflexivity, I indicated my prior connection to the topic, people, or setting I was studying. I noted my historical thinking and feelings about this dissertation research. I concluded by acknowledging that I have much to learn about the urban–rural social identity continuum.

Researcher's Worldview

Under my pragmatic worldview, the interpretive perspective resonated strongly with me (Sipe & Constable, 1996). I am convinced that reality is subjective and contextualized with multiple truths that inform my epistemology, axiology, and approach to a methodological way of being (e.g., Shahjahan, 2020). As I grew into adulthood, I expanded my worldviews to become

more pragmatic—especially after returning from Iraq and being honorably discharged from my more than 8 years of service in the United States Marine Corps (USMC). Upon entering my Ph.D. program, I embraced myriad new perspectives that are intellectually harmonious between Western and non-Western ways of sensing, thinking, and knowing. I now align more with a pragmatic worldview to explore multiple ways of knowing as well as meaning-making processes. My personal experiences and worldview inevitably shaped how I engaged with each participant during the 6-week urban–rural IGD program and how I interpreted pre- and post-survey data from this study (Frantell et al., 2019).

Reflexivity of Researcher's Positionality in Urban–Rural IGD Study

I believe practicing reflexivity is a vital part of educational research because I can articulate my own biases, values, and personal background (e.g., socio-background), all of which could influence my interpretation of this urban–rural IGD study's results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Frantell et al., 2019). More importantly, reflexivity is integral to professional socialization (Austin & McDaniels, 2006). I must be reflective while practicing reflexivity to continue enhancing my competence in research and practice. This urban–rural IGD study will be undertaken after my 10th year of professional work (i.e., advising) in U.S. higher education. Early in my advising career, I noticed that college students responded differently to advisors on campus (Zhu et al., 2016). My professional observations showed me that many students reacted positively to advisors whose experiences were similar to their own (Liu & Ammigan, 2021; Liu & Cermak, 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023a; Liu et al., 2023b; Liu & Renn, 2024). I have also become more identity-aware of how college students' and university leaders' lived experiences affect their decisions to engage with institutional resources (e.g., Liu, 2022; Liu & Ammigan, 2024).

I identify as a cisgender male. I was raised on a rural rice farm and later moved to an urban city, and then back to the rice farm, before emigrating to the United States. Therefore, I lived in both urban and rural spaces during my childhood in Taiwan and the United States. I now work as an associate director in advising and as a doctoral researcher at a predominantly White institution in the Midwest (i.e., in Michigan) within in a suburban area. I reflected deeply throughout this urban–rural IGD study by journaling about my experiences interacting with college students as a researcher. After each urban–rural IGD session, I critically engaged with my own identity and conversations with participants. I asked myself reflective questions, such as "Would my physical appearance or a solid command of the Mandarin language (a common Chinese dialect) be judged favorably (insider) or unfavorably (outsider) by the participants?" On the surface, my physical 'Chineseness' may have granted me outsider status in the university's urban–rural student Michigander community. For instance, some students might have assumed I could not relate to their Michigan urban or rural identities. Yet by sharing my life stories with them, they may have seen me as a semi-insider because I, too, lived in both urban and rural spaces as a child and served in the USMC for over 8 years. Although I may or may not have shared students' exact U.S. urban or rural experiences, I strove to develop a trusting rapport with students by authentically discussing with them my urban/rural and urban–rural identities, struggles, and experiences in the United States. Zinn (1979) described this transparency as a strength for scholars performing research that involves participants with shared social identities. My shared identities were expected to engender mutual trust between myself as a researcher and my participants.

I also co-facilitated IGD for students, staff, and faculty at MSU. Based on my professional experience in this regard and my close familiarity with the IGD framework's

underpinnings, I began to understand—in my facilitator–researcher role—how urban and rural contexts are essential to students' success. However, these settings have been largely absent from institutional resources. The literature indicates that college students' multilayered identities (e.g., among race, gender, social class, intersecting languages, culture, and history) naturally inform personal choices (Solórzano et al., 2000). I believe urban and rural identities are also important to explore in terms of college students' success. Overall, people with urban and/or rural identities should be given the chance to share their stories and have their voices heard (e.g., Keehn, 2015).

My positionality and identities helped to ensure a fair, authentic exploration of the research objectives. I practiced reflexivity by sharing my background to humanize the interview experience. Furthermore, as a full-time professional, I was socially separated from study participants, given the inherent power dynamics between university personnel and students. To address the power dynamics between myself as a researcher and my participants during the urban–rural IGD study, I continued sharing my story and passion for the chosen topic throughout the 6-week dialogue program. I periodically checked in with students as I documented the research process and my corresponding feelings through observer comments in my research log. At the same time, I set a clear boundary with participants to acknowledge that this urban–rural IGD study was about them, not about me—my story was merely one part of building trust and humanizing their experiences.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I illustrated the quantitative methodology and techniques for measuring whether urban–rural IGD could improve participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice in bridging the urban–rural divide. I

took a quantitative approach to hypothesis testing and regression analysis while examining change scores and the survey's internal consistency reliability within the sampled population. I carefully examined, bound, and discussed the results' internal and external validity and determined the effect size for this study. To quantitatively gauge the breadth and depth of students' urban–rural IGD learning experiences, the participants were asked to provide survey responses using quantitative methods based on their participation in urban–rural IGD curricula designed for urban–rural content. I measured participants' self-reported changes using pre-tests and post-surveys. I also employed GLM to measure whether the independent variables (e.g., urban, rural, and suburban social identities) could affect participants' awareness of social identities, intergroup relationships and understanding, strategies to engage and intervene, and capacity to advance equity and justice. The survey instrument reflected shifts in participants' intergroup understanding, relations, and actions. An interpretivist pragmatic approach contextualized this study. The research process included data collection, data analysis, and acknowledgment of my positionality.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter, I provide findings from the data collection stage during the spring 2024 and summer 2024 semesters. Overall, results related to this dissertation's research questions were statistically significant: the three cohorts' pre- and post-surveys (N = 27) demonstrated that the six virtual sessions of the urban–rural IGD curriculum significantly improved participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide. In other words, IGD narrowed the divide between urban, rural, and suburban college students through six virtual sustained dialogue sessions on the following topics: dialogue foundation and forming relationships; understanding social identity; historical read-around, perspective taking, and early social learning; individual oppression (i.e., stereotypes, microaggressions, bias, and interrupting); addressing group privilege and creating inclusive spaces; and hot topics and actions around allyhood.

As part of the objective to understand the breadth and depth of college students' urban–rural IGD learning experiences, I asked participants to provide survey responses before and after taking part in an IGD curriculum centered on urban–rural identities. I adopted and expanded a previous IGD evaluation survey (Kaplowitz et al., 2023) to measure changes in students' awareness of social identities, intergroup understanding, relations, and actions after participation. I used IBM® SPSS for statistical analysis and generated demonstrative tables to examine participants' differential learning growth at two time points (i.e., before and after engaging in an urban–rural IGD) based on open-ended questions concerning each of the four factors. Table 2.1 outlines participants' demographics. Tables 2.2–2.6 summarize outcome measures on participants' urban–rural IGD learning growth using paired sample t tests. Tables 2.7–2.10

display the outcomes of GLM analysis to examine participants' learning growth for the four subscales. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's strengths and limitations in light of its findings.

Demographic Information of Participants in Urban–Rural IGD

Participants reported their demographic information via the urban–rural IGD sign-up and consent forms (Table 2.1). Twenty-seven students participated in the spring and summer 2024 semesters' urban–rural IGD (Cohort 1, $n = 11$; Cohort 2, $n = 10$; Cohort 3, $n = 6$). Students' mean age was 19.95 years (±1.07 *SD*). Participants' self-identified gender identities were as follows: 20 women (74%), five men (19%), and two non-binary (7%). Regarding racial/ethnic identities, 16 participants identified as White (59%), four as African American/Black (15%), two as Hispanic/Latinx (7%), two as Middle Eastern American (7%), two as multiracial (7%), and one as Asian (4%). All 27 participants self-identified as U.S. citizens, and none were international students, per the participant selection criteria.

Along the urban–rural identity continuum for these 27 participants, eight identified as urban (30%), nine identified as rural (33%), and 10 (37%) identified as suburban. The research site (MSU) is in a suburban geographic area. Thirteen of the participants (48.1%) were in their first year of college at MSU, whereas 10 (37%) were in their second year and four (15%) were in their third year. No participants were in their fourth year or beyond (see Table 2.1 for details).

Table 2.1: Demographic information

Demographic	Cohort 1 (n = 11)		Cohort 2 (n = 10)		Cohort 3 (n = 6)		Total Students (N = 27)	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
Sex								
Male	2	18.2	2	20	1	17	5	19
Female	7	63.6	8	80	5	83	20	74
Non-Binary	2	18.2	0	0	0	0	2	7
Race/Ethnicity								
White	8	72.7	4	40	4	67	16	59
Black	1	9.1	2	20	1	17	4	15
Hispanic	1	9.1	1	10	0	0	2	7
Middle Eastern	0	0	2	20	0	0	2	7
Multiracial	1	9.1	1	10	0	0	2	7
Asian	0	0	0	0	1	17	1	4
Urban–Rural Identity								
Urban	3	27.3	3	30	2	33	8	30
Suburban	3	27.3	6	60	1	17	10	37
Rural	5	45.5	1	10	3	50	9	33
Year Enrolled at University								
First	7	63.6	6	60	0	0	13	48.1
Second	0	0	4	40	6	100	10	37
Third	4	36.4	0	0	0	0	4	15
Political Beliefs								
Democratic	9	81.8	9	90	1	17	19	70
Republican	0	0	0	0	1	17	1	4
Green Party	1	9.1	0	0	1	17	2	7
Socialist	1	9.1	0	0	0	0	1	4
Other	0	0	1	10	3	50	4	14.8
Religious Beliefs								
Agnosticism	7	63.6	2	20	1	17	10	37
Atheism	2	18.2	1	10	1	17	4	14.8
Buddhism	0	0	0	0	1	17	1	3.7
Christian	0	0	3	30	3	50	6	22.2
Judaism	1	9.1	0	0	0	0	1	3.7
Muslim	0	0	2	20	0	0	2	7.4
Other	1	9.1	2	20	0	0	3	11.1

Note. Participants in Cohorts 1, 2, and 3 self-reported their demographic information. The students' overall average age was 20.04 ± 1.02 ($N = 27$). Cohort 1's average age was 20.18 ± 1.17 ($n = 11$). Cohort 2's average age was 19.90 ± .99 ($n = 10$). Cohort 3's average age was 20.00 ± .89 ($n = 6$).

Paired Sample *t*-test Results on Participants' Growth in IGD Outcome Measures

The IGD outcome measures in Table 2.2 illustrate participants' learning growth on each subscale (i.e., Subscale 1–Subscale 4) and are statistically significant based on the collated data. I used Cohen's *d* metric (i.e., the standardized mean difference) to compare areas of learning growth; the raw mean difference was expressed in the unit of standard deviation (Cohen, 1988). Item measures ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree* or *never*) to 5 (*strongly agree* or *almost always*; $+p < .10.$,$*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$). Cohen (1988) classified effect sizes as small ($d = 0.2$), medium ($d = 0.5$), and large ($d \geq 0.8$).

Participants displayed improvement on all 27 individual outcome measures and four subsequent subscales after participating in IGD (Tables 2.2–2.5). To identify differences, I have provided the four subscales and the five items constituting each (20 items in total) for the individual and combined cohorts. In addition to the scaled survey items, I invited participants to answer open-ended questions during the pre- and post-surveys. This chapter includes open-ended responses to substantiate the statistical findings.

Table 2.2 shows that participants' learning growth improved for all four factors during the urban–rural IGD to a statistically significant extent. All IGD outcome measures' post-survey standard deviations were smaller than the pre-survey scores; that is, participants' degrees of understanding and skills related to social justice topics were more similar after IGD than before. I observed a large effect size for participants' overall IGD learning growth, Cohen's $d = 1.66$, $\delta =$

0.38, $t(27) = 8.70$, $p < .001$. In fact, the Cohen's d values for all four subscales ranged between 1.01 and 1.46, indicating large IGD intervention effects.

Furthermore, three out of the four IGD outcomes had a smaller post-survey standard deviation than the pre-survey scores; the remaining outcome exhibited a larger post-survey standard deviation than its pre-survey scores (i.e., following IGD). I rank ordered participants' learning growth for each subscale in descending order: "Capacity to Advance Equity and Justice," Cohen's $d = 1.46$, $\delta = 0.43$, $t(27) = 7.57$, $p < .001$; "Strategies to Engage and Intervene," Cohen's $d = 1.19$, $\delta = 0.53$, $t(27) = 6.19$, $p < .001$; "Awareness of Social Identities," Cohen's $d = 1.11$, $\delta = 0.74$, $t(27) = 5.78$, $p < .001$; "Intergroup Understanding and Relationships," Cohen's $d = 1.01$, $\delta = 0.43$, $t(27) = 5.24$, $p < .001$.

Table 2.2: Pre-post urban–rural IGD paired sample t-test for combined cohorts

Subscale		Pre-survey		Post-survey		Diff (*SD*)	Cohen's *d*	*t* value
	n	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
1. Awareness of Social Identities, Privilege, and Oppression	27	3.66	0.75	4.48	0.36	0.83 (0.74)	1.11	5.78***
2. Intergroup Relationship and Understanding	27	4.03	0.47	4.47	0.46	0.44 (0.43)	1.01	5.24***
3. Strategies to Engage and Intervene	27	3.40	0.43	4.03	0.66	0.63 (0.53)	1.19	6.19***
4. Capacity to Advance Equity and Justice	27	3.47	0.58	4.10	0.54	0.63 (0.43)	1.46	7.57***
Overall	27	3.64	0.43	4.27	0.45	0.63 (0.38)	1.66	8.70***

Note. $+p < .10$. $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

As indicated in Table 2.3, Subscale 1 showed significant improvement on "Awareness of Social Identities, Privilege, and Oppression" for all three cohorts. Cohen's *d* was large, ranging from 1.10 to 1.50. Scores on two out of the five items (items #2 and #5) did not significantly improve after IGD. When compared with the other items in Subscale 1, Cohen's *d* for these two items was between small and medium/moderate.

In brief, sharing stories about their urban–rural social identities provided participants with a broader perspective on the urban–rural spectrum and afforded them a co-learning community space (as small and large groups) to better understand whether their social identities imparted them with privilege. All participants' open-ended responses revealed learning growth in terms of social identity awareness.

Table 2.3: Paired sample t-tests of pre-survey and post-survey of outcome measures subscale one

Subscale/ Item No.	Sub-population	*n*	Pre-survey		Post-survey		Diff (*SD*)	Cohen's *d*	*t* value
			M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Subscale 1: Awareness of Social Identities, Privilege, and Oppression	Cohort 1	11	3.89	0.39	4.48	0.32	0.59 (0.48)	1.30	4.10**
	Cohort 2	10	3.72	0.62	4.50	0.39	0.78 (0.54)	1.50	4.59**
	Cohort 3	6	3.13	1.22	4.47	0.43	1.33 (1.20)	1.10	2.71*
1. I recognize and challenge my own thinking around urban/rural identities.	Cohort 1	11	3.36	0.67	4.40	0.49	1.04 (0.73)	1.42	4.70***
	Cohort 2	10	2.90	0.88	4.40	0.52	1.50 (0.85)	1.76	5.58***
	Cohort 3	6	3.00	1.27	4.33	0.52	1.33 (1.37)	0.97	2.39+
2. I am aware of my own social identities.	Cohort 1	11	4.27	0.65	4.70	0.46	0.43 (0.71)	0.61	1.99+
	Cohort 2	10	4.20	0.92	4.80	0.42	0.60 (1.07)	0.56	1.77
	Cohort 3	6	3.67	1.37	4.33	0.52	0.67 (1.37)	0.49	1.20
3. I understand which of my identities give me privilege or not.	Cohort 1	11	4.27	0.47	5.00	0.00	0.73 (0.47)	1.55	5.16***
	Cohort 2	10	4.20	0.63	4.70	0.48	0.50 (0.53)	0.94	3.00*
	Cohort 3	6	3.17	1.47	4.83	0.41	1.67 (1.37)	1.22	3.00*
4. I try to educate myself about people of different urban/rural identities, watching films, talking to others, etc.	Cohort 1	11	3.36	0.92	4.00	0.77	0.64 (0.92)	0.70	2.28*
	Cohort 2	10	3.30	1.25	4.20	0.63	0.90 (1.20)	0.75	2.38*
	Cohort 3	6	2.50	1.38	4.33	0.82	1.83 (0.98)	1.87	4.57**
5. I notice biased comments, jokes or microaggressions.	Cohort 1	11	4.18	0.60	4.30	0.46	0.12 (0.70)	0.17	0.56
	Cohort 2	10	4.00	0.67	4.40	0.70	0.40 (0.70)	0.57	1.81
	Cohort 3	6	3.33	1.21	4.50	0.55	1.17 (1.47)	0.80	1.94

Note. $+p < .10$. $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

To support the findings in Table 2.3, the following open-ended responses exemplify participants' growth for "Awareness of Social Identities" in Subscale 1:

- Quote from an urban Black female first-year participant: *"The urban-rural dialogue has increased my awareness of social identities, privileges, and oppression in urban and rural areas. It helped me understand the unique characteristics and challenges of each setting. The dialogue also highlights the privileges and inequalities present in both urban and rural contexts. By sharing stories and experiences, it promoted empathy and collective action to address oppression and work towards a more equitable society."*
- Quote from a rural biracial female first-year participant: *"I never thought there was such a thing as an Urban-Rural divide, so this dialogue helped give me the knowledge and tools to further my understanding of this concept. The dialogue has shown me a new identity of myself that I never really thought of. It has also shown me a new identity that others possess and how it can affect them!"*

Table 2.4 shows significant improvement on Subscale 2 regarding "Intergroup Understanding and Relationships" for Cohorts 1 and 3. Although Cohort 2 did not display significant improvement in this regard, participants' scores on "Intergroup Understanding and Relationships" increased and had a medium effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.60$). Cohen's d spanned between 0 and 2.85, ranging from a small to large effect size. Two out of the five items (i.e., items #7 and #8) did not display significant post-IGD improvements. Compared with Cohorts 2 and 3, Cohort 1 had larger learning growth in intergroup understanding and relationships. Participants' open-ended responses indicated that these individuals greatly valued active listening from their group IGD experiences and sought to learn from each other's urban/rural identities as well as their own lived experiences.

Table 2.4: Paired sample t-tests of pre-survey and post-survey of outcome measures subscale two

Subscale/ Item No.	Sub-population		Pre-survey		Post-survey		Diff (*SD*)	Cohen's *d*	*t* value
		n	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Subscale 2: Intergroup Understanding and Relationships	Cohort 1	11	4.15	0.45	4.60	0.40	0.45 (0.44)	1.10	3.43**
	Cohort 2	10	4.04	0.56	4.28	0.50	0.24 (0.40)	0.60	1.91
	Cohort 3	6	3.80	0.31	4.53	0.45	0.73 (0.35)	2.09	5.13**
6. I actively listen to people of different points of view.	Cohort 1	11	4.36	0.50	4.82	0.40	0.45 (0.52)	0.87	2.89*
	Cohort 2	10	4.10	0.88	4.50	0.53	0.40 (0.84)	0.48	1.50
	Cohort 3	6	4.17	0.41	4.83	0.41	0.67 (0.82)	0.82	2.00
7. I apologize when my comments appear to have offended someone.	Cohort 1	11	4.55	0.52	4.64	0.50	0.09 (0.70)	0.13	1.43
	Cohort 2	10	4.40	0.52	4.70	0.48	0.30 (0.48)	0.63	1.96+
	Cohort 3	6	4.00	0.63	4.50	0.55	0.50 (0.55)	0.91	2.24+
8. I pay attention to the impact of my comments and behaviors on others.	Cohort 1	11	4.36	0.67	4.64	0.50	0.27 (0.65)	0.42	1.40
	Cohort 2	10	4.30	0.67	4.70	0.67	0.40 (0.70)	0.57	1.81
	Cohort 3	6	4.17	0.41	4.50	0.55	0.33 (0.52)	0.63	1.58
9. I seek opportunities to be around people who are different from me.	Cohort 1	11	4.00	1.00	4.55	0.52	0.55 (0.82)	0.67	2.21+
	Cohort 2	10	3.90	0.99	3.90	0.88	0 (0.47)	0	0
	Cohort 3	6	3.50	0.55	4.67	0.52	1.17 (0.41)	2.85	7.00***
10. I make an effort to learn about people of different urban/rural identities.	Cohort 1	11	3.45	0.82	4.36	0.67	0.91 (0.94)	0.97	3.19*
	Cohort 2	10	3.50	1.08	3.60	0.97	0.10 (0.99)	0.10	0.32
	Cohort 3	6	3.17	1.33	4.17	1.17	1.00 (1.10)	0.91	2.24+

Note. +$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Participants' open-ended responses elucidated their learning growth in intergroup understanding and relationships across differences. The following remarks, related to "Intergroup Understanding and Relationships" in Subscale 2, lend support to the results reported in Table 2.4:

- Quote from a rural White female third-year participant: *"I think in the past I would interact with people from diverse urban/rural backgrounds by chance, but now I see the importance of urban/rural identities and I will continue trying to make an effort to engage with people from urban/suburban backgrounds."*
- Quote from an urban White male first-year participant: *"I discussed [IGD] in my International Relations and Urban & Regional Planning major classes. I have also asked all of my friends more about urban-rural identities and how they think [these identities] have affected them."*

For Subscale 3 (Table 2.5), all three cohorts demonstrated significant improvement on "Strategies to Engage and Intervene" after participating in IGD. The effect sizes were large: Cohen's *d* was between 1.10 and 1.84. Only item #15, "I try to help people understand the impact of their words/actions on others," did not yield a significant improvement for the three cohorts; however, participants' scores increased after the IGD intervention. Open-ended responses revealed that participants most appreciated being able to interrupt bias by using the Pause, Acknowledge/Ask, Listen, and Share (PALS) technique while sharing stories. All 27 participants viewed PALS as a key skill for engaging and intervening in bias, microaggressions, and discrimination.

Table 2.5: Paired sample t-tests of pre-survey and post-survey of outcome measures subscale three

Subscale/ Item No.	Sub-population		Pre-survey		Post-survey		Diff (*SD*)	Cohen's *d*	*t* value
		n	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Subscale 3: Strategies to Engage and Intervene	Cohort 1	11	3.45	0.48	4.04	0.77	0.58 (0.55)	1.10	3.48**
	Cohort 2	10	3.40	0.39	3.84	0.52	0.44 (0.37)	1.20	3.71**
	Cohort 3	6	3.30	0.43	4.33	0.65	1.03 (0.56)	1.84	4.54**
11. I interrupt biased comments, jokes, and/or microaggressions.	Cohort 1	11	3.27	0.90	3.64	0.92	0.36 (0.92)	0.39	1.31
	Cohort 2	10	2.90	0.74	4.00	0.82	1.10 (1.10)	1	3.16*
	Cohort 3	6	2.33	1.03	4.17	0.75	1.83 (1.47)	1.24	3.05*
12. I use PALS (Pause, Acknowledge/Ask, Listen, & Share Stories) as a way to intervene.	Cohort 1	11	2.55	0.69	3.82	0.87	1.27 (0.79)	1.61	5.37***
	Cohort 2	10	2.90	0.74	3.00	0.67	0.10 (0.88)	0.11	0.36
	Cohort 3	6	3.33	1.51	3.83	1.17	0.50 (1.22)	0.41	1.00
13. I reframe debates as dialogues.	Cohort 1	11	3.27	1.01	4.64	0.50	1.36 (1.21)	1.12	3.75**
	Cohort 2	10	3.30	0.67	3.90	0.88	0.60 (0.84)	0.71	2.25*
	Cohort 3	6	3.33	0.52	4.50	0.55	1.17 (0.41)	2.85	7.00***
14. I try to listen generously and acknowledge others' perspectives before intervening.	Cohort 1	11	4.36	0.67	4.55	0.69	0.18 (1.08)	0.17	0.56
	Cohort 2	10	4.10	0.74	4.30	0.48	0.20 (0.63)	0.32	1.00
	Cohort 3	6	4.00	0.63	4.67	0.52	0.67 (0.52)	1.29	3.16*
15. I try to help people understand the impact of their words/actions on others.	Cohort 1	11	3.82	1.08	4.27	1.01	0.45 (0.93)	0.48	1.61
	Cohort 2	10	3.80	0.92	4.00	0.67	0.20 (0.79)	0.25	0.80
	Cohort 3	6	3.50	0.84	4.50	0.84	1.00 (1.10)	0.91	2.24+

Note. $+p < .10$. $*p < .05$. $**p < .01$. $***p < .001$.

The following open-ended responses serve as exemplars of participants' views on PALS and on reframing debates as dialogues under "Strategies to Engage and Intervene" (Table 2.5):

- Quote from a suburban Middle Eastern-American female second-year participant: *"I think Urban-Rural Dialogue impacted my ability to interrupt bias or derogatory comments against a person with a different urban-rural background from me through the different strategies that were discussed. I feel like the one strategy that was emphasized is PALS and I think it'd be a great one to use."*
- Quote from a rural White female third-year participant: *"I recently used PALS when hearing a microaggression that was not related to urban/rural identity, but it gives me the confidence to use PALS in the future if I need to interrupt bias regarding urban/rural identity."*
- Quote from an urban Black female second-year participant: *"[B]eing able to not only recognize inappropriate behavior and or comments but also having [the] tools to do it safely and productively!!"*

Subscale 4 (Table 2.6) led to significant improvements on "Capacity to Advance Equity and Justice" for all three cohorts after IGD. The effect sizes were large, with Cohen's *d* being between 1.30 and 2.43. Participants' scores on item #17 ("I work with my communities/ organizations to include people of different urban/rural identities") and item #19 ("I use my leadership skills to encourage people of different urban/rural identities to work together") increased but did not reach statistical significance. Compared with Cohort 3, Cohorts 1 and 2 displayed greater learning growth on Subscale 4.

Table 2.6: Paired sample t-tests of pre-survey and post-survey of outcome measures subscale four

Subscale/ Item No.	Sub-population		Pre-survey		Post-survey		Diff (*SD*)	Cohen's *d*	*t* value
		n	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Subscale 4: Capacity to Advance Equity and Justice	Cohort 1	11	3.49	0.67	4.04	0.52	0.55 (0.44)	1.30	4.12**
	Cohort 2	10	3.32	0.58	3.98	0.52	0.66 (0.51)	1.30	4.11**
	Cohort 3	6	3.70	0.37	4.43	0.54	0.73 (0.30)	2.43	5.97**
16. I spend my time doing activities that further social justice.	Cohort 1	11	3.45	0.69	3.82	0.87	0.36 (1.12)	0.32	1.08
	Cohort 2	10	3.20	0.79	4.00	0.67	0.80 (0.79)	1.01	3.21*
	Cohort 3	6	3.17	0.75	4.00	0.89	0.83 (0.98)	0.85	2.08+
17. I work with my communities/organizations to include people of different urban/rural identities.	Cohort 1	11	3.73	1.01	4.00	0.89	0.27 (0.65)	0.42	1.40
	Cohort 2	10	3.20	0.92	3.50	0.85	0.30 (1.25)	0.24	0.76
	Cohort 3	6	3.67	0.82	4.67	0.52	1.00 (1.10)	0.91	2.24+
18. I have tools to help me interrupt bias, correct stereotyping, and create more inclusive spaces.	Cohort 1	11	3.73	0.90	4.36	0.50	0.64 (0.92)	0.70	2.28*
	Cohort 2	10	3.40	1.07	4.30	0.48	0.90 (0.74)	1.22	3.86**
	Cohort 3	6	3.67	0.52	4.67	0.82	1.00 (0.63)	1.59	3.87*
19. I use my leadership skills to encourage people of different urban/rural identities to work together.	Cohort 1	11	3.27	0.79	3.82	0.60	0.55 (0.82)	0.67	2.21+
	Cohort 2	10	3.40	0.52	3.80	0.63	0.40 (0.70)	0.57	1.81
	Cohort 3	6	4.00	0.00	4.17	0.75	0.17 (0.75)	0.23	0.54

Table 2.6 (cont'd)

Subscale/ Item No.	Sub-population		Pre-survey		Post-survey		Diff (*SD*)	Cohen's *d*	*t* value
		n	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
20. I have concrete skills that enable me to work with others towards greater social justice.	Cohort 1	11	3.27	1.01	4.18	0.60	0.91 (0.83)	1.10	3.63**
	Cohort 2	10	3.40	0.70	4.30	0.67	0.90 (0.74)	1.22	3.86**
	Cohort 3	6	4.00	0.63	4.67	0.52	0.67 (0.82)	0.82	2.00

Note. +$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Open-ended responses suggested that the IGD experience enabled participants to develop concrete skills for working towards social justice. All participants shared that they had honed their abilities in this area and had gained tools to interrupt bias, correct stereotypes, and create more inclusive spaces to bridge the gap between urban and rural communities. The following five comments contextualize participants' learning growth in their "Capacity to Advance Equity and Justice" in Subscale 4:

- Quote from a rural White female second-year participant: *"I now know more about the urban rural divide and this allows me to better know how to bridge it. By learning about other people's situations, I can help create a more inclusive world for all."*
- Quote from an urban Black female second-year participant: *"[B]eing more understanding of the other side and having the knowledge to do it!"*
- Quote from a suburban White female first-year participant: *"I absolutely see value in this. This entire dialogue session has offered such great perspective and depth into the urban-rural divide and I have learned such crucial information regarding this topic that I was not previously aware of. The first step toward bridging this divide is all about communication and education. The more people who are aware of and dedicated to bridging this divide the greater impacts bridging efforts will have. Furthermore, I was previously unaware of this divide prior to these dialogue sessions. I also believe that many other students here at MSU are also unaware of this divide, which is why more dialogues and education regarding this divide are so important."*
- Quote from a suburban Black female first-year participant: *"The urban-rural dialogue has helped bridge the divide between urban and rural areas. Through conversations, interactions, and the exchange of perspectives, this dialogue promotes understanding,*

empathy, and mutual respect between individuals from these different contexts. It breaks down barriers and misconceptions, fostering a sense of unity and shared experiences. By promoting communication and collaboration, the urban-rural dialogue plays a crucial role in bridging the urban-rural divide."

- Quote from a suburban White female second-year participant: *I understand more of the urban rural divide which will help me stop stereotypes like politics divide these areas and rural people are uneducated. It can help me promote the inequitable resources that each area has as well with a better understanding of the struggles.*

Generalized Linear Model Analysis

To examine within-group differences, I conducted GLM analyses on key demographic variables across Tables 2.7–2.10. I referred to GLM's maximum likelihood estimation to determine model parameters for the exponential family distributions given this study's small sample size (N = 27). In Tables 2.7–2.10, only students who identified as urban showed a significant association with the third factor: "Strategies to Engage and Intervene." Therefore, if higher education institutions want to enhance such strategies among college students, then the IGD intervention should focus on participants from urban backgrounds. Most independent variables (e.g., urban, suburban, and rural identities) were not significantly related to any of the four dependent variables (i.e., four factors). This pattern reinforces IGD's effectiveness in improving all college students' learning about (a) awareness of social identities, (b) intergroup relationships and understanding, (c) strategies to engage and intervene, and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice. Table 2.7 presents the GLM analysis results, treating the first factor (i.e., "Awareness of Social Identities") as a continuous variable. None of the independent variables (gender, race, year in school, and urban/rural/suburban social identity) were

significantly associated with this factor among the 27 participants. In other words, gender, race, year in school, and urban/rural/suburban identities were not associated with different outcomes from the intervention.

Table 2.7: Relationships between demographic independent variables and the "awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression" factor

Independent variable	β*	95% CI*	Std. Error	*p* value
Gender (ref: Female)	1.12	-.89, .65	.39	.758
Race (ref: non-White)	.04	-.56, .64	.31	.887
School year (ref: Non-first-year)	.50	.30, .86	.14	.392
Identity: Rural (ref: Suburban)	-.26	-.93, .40	.34	.435
Identity: Urban (ref: Suburban)	-.18	-.83, .48	.33	.595

Note. β = unstandardized coefficient; CI: confidence interval.

Table 2.8 lists findings for the second factor, "Intergroup Understanding and Relationships." Again, none of the independent variables were significantly associated with this factor for the 27 participants.

Table 2.8: Relationships between demographic independent variables and the "intergroup understanding and relationship" factor

Independent variable	β*	95% CI*	Std. Error	*p* value
Gender (ref: Female)	-.07	-.48, .34	.21	.734
Race (ref: non-White)	.11	-.21, .42	.16	.518
School year (ref: Non-first-year)	.04	-.26, .34	.15	.805
Identity: Rural (ref: Suburban)	-.21	-.56, .14	.18	.238
Identity: Urban (ref: Suburban)	.29	-.05, .64	.18	.097

Note. β = unstandardized coefficient; CI: confidence interval.

Table 2.9 concerns the third factor, "Strategies to Engage and Intervene." Participants who identified as urban (β = 0.47, p = 0.028) exhibited significant associations with this aspect. Put another way, the IGD intervention should focus more on college students from an urban background if the aim is to cultivate participants' strategies to engage and intervene in biased comments, jokes, and microaggressions and to reframe debate as dialogues as a tool for engaging with others.

Table 2.9: Relationships between demographic independent variables and the "strategies to engage and intervene" factor

Independent variable	β*	95% CI*	Std. Error	p value
Gender (ref: Female)	.08	-.40, .57	.25	.737
Race (ref: non-White)	-.11	-.49, .27	.19	.571
School year (ref: Non-first-year)	-.13	-.49, .24	.19	.490
Identity: Rural (ref: Suburban)	-.11	-.54, .31	.21	.595
Identity: Urban (ref: Suburban)	.47	.05, .88	.21	.028**

Note. β = unstandardized coefficient; CI: confidence interval. **p < .05.

Table 2.10 presents findings from the GLM analysis of the fourth factor, "Capacity to Advance Equity and Social Justice." Among the 27 students, none of the independent variables were significantly associated with this factor; it includes engaging in activities that promote social justice, working with communities/organizations of different urban/rural identities, having concrete skills to work towards greater social justice, and so on.

Table 2.10: Relationships between demographic independent variables and the "capacity to advance equity and justice" factor

Independent variable	β*	95% CI*	Std. Error	p value
Gender (ref: Female)	.004	-.41, .42	.21	.983
Race (ref: non-White)	-.04	-.36, .28	.16	.810
School year (ref: Non-first-year)	.27	-.04, .58	.16	.084
Identity: Rural (ref: Suburban)	-.14	-.49, .22	.18	.454
Identity: Urban (ref: Suburban)	-.27	-.62, .08	.18	.132

Note. β = unstandardized coefficient; CI: confidence interval.

Tables 2.7–2.10 demonstrate that students who identified as urban only displayed significant associations with "Strategies to Engage and Intervene." No statistical associations coincided with "Awareness of Social Identities," "Intergroup Understanding and Relationships," or "Capacity to Advance Equity and Social Justice" for this group.

Strengths and Limitations

This exploratory empirical study on bridging the urban–rural divide possesses several strengths. First, I collected open-ended qualitative data to further contextualize my quantitative analysis. The qualitative phase solicited more nuanced responses to supplement the quantitative information, which did not necessarily depict participants' full experiences as reported on pre-/post-surveys. Second, this study has enriched the literature on bridging the urban–rural divide through an IGD curriculum co-facilitated by professionals with advanced training—and more than 20 years' combined experience—at a large public university in the United States. Third, the findings reflect learning growth and align with the University of Michigan's original IGD four stage-model in terms of working across differences (Zúñiga et al., 2007).

Despite this study's insights, it has limitations. For example, recruitment did not occur in a natural setting because the participants (i.e., college students) could self-select to engage with topics related to urban and rural issues in Michigan. Furthermore, this study's (de)limitation criteria did not include asking international, graduate, or K–12 students about their views on the intricacies of urban–rural identities and differences across communities. The study was moderate and balanced for data analysis, having at least seven participants with which to detect a significant finding from the focal IGD curriculum (at a statistical power of 0.80 and an alpha level of 0.05; see Kaplowitz et al., 2023). However, this sample was limited to a single research site. The results therefore are not generalizable to population outside this research site. Furthermore, the online component of urban–rural dialogues did not fully capture nonverbal cues (e.g., facial expressions) while participants shared impactful stories in the pre/post survey.

Moreover, a one-semester intervention may not suggest that a curriculum is warranted to bridge the urban–rural divide over time. This study also delineated the fluidity of urban–rural challenges and students' ongoing experiences (e.g., in a given semester) while not necessarily describing the complexities of the urban–rural social identity continuum; some participants might have been shifting (i.e., transitioning) from self-ascribed urban/rural identities. Finally, with a primary focus on quantitative methods and aspects of college students' social identities (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural), multiple intersecting identities were not explored here. Subsequent work using qualitative or mixed methods is merited to empirically test the identified limitations.

Nevertheless, this study has expanded the IGD literature, particularly on bridging the urban–rural divide among college students via a 6-session urban–rural IGD experience. The statistical results were supplemented with qualitative, open-ended questions to contextualize the

"how" of introducing the curriculum (e.g., weekly circles). Circle time is especially important for co-facilitators to better comprehend and reflect on listening to what participants need in order to enhance the curriculum and participants' urban–rural IGD experiences.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described data obtained from three cohorts during the spring 2024 and summer 2024 semesters. I gathered participants' feedback via pre- and post-surveys at two time points (i.e., before and after completing a 6-week IGD curriculum over Zoom© centered on urban–rural identities) to explore their urban–rural IGD learning experiences in depth. Twenty-seven students participated in this experience during the spring 2024 and summer 2024 semesters (Cohort 1, $n = 11$; Cohort 2, $n = 10$; Cohort 3, $n = 6$). The six IGD sessions improved participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide. A GLM unveiled that participants who had urban identities displayed borderline significant difference (i.e., more growth) compared to suburban students on one of the four factors, namely "Strategies to Engage and Intervene." The IGD curriculum thus represented an effective intervention across gender, race, academic class levels, and urban–rural identities. The next and final chapter presents a discussion on bridging the urban–rural divide.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I describe the findings, conclusions, and recommendations emerging from this research with multiple stakeholder groups in mind: students, student affairs professionals, faculty members, and organizational leaders. I begin by connecting this study's results to my research questions, specifically whether IGD can enhance participants' learning growth in relation to several factors: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) the capacity to advance equity and justice in bridging the urban–rural divide. Each factor is addressed sequentially below.

To fulfill the above aims, I measured students' changes using pre- and post-surveys that included open-ended questions. Participants' urban, rural, and suburban social identities showed statistically significant ($p < .05$) associations with all four factors throughout a 6-session urban–rural IGD curriculum. This intervention afforded college students a clearer sense of how to work across differences and enhanced their learning growth from diverse urban–rural social identities. The participants explored ways to actively listen, intentionally connect, and purposefully take steps to bridge differences. I posit that what bridges the divide is allowing people to talk about their lived experiences and perspectives; this way, IGD can engender empathy, and individuals can build trust (e.g., Kelly et al., 2024). Participants shared their stories, which helped forge human connections and relationships across differences in urban–rural identities.

I conclude this chapter by (re)amplifying the purpose of this study: to prepare students to bridge urban–rural differences through IGD, especially as the world becomes more interconnected and interdependent. Rather than feeling resentment or anger within silos, what bridges the divide is allowing people—from urban, suburban, or rural identities—to pause,

reflect, and voice their shared experiences so they can move forward together. This dissertation may inspire outcomes such as a spectrum of urban–rural IGD curricula. Implementing these types of interventions would enable U.S. higher education institutions to help narrow the divide among urban, rural, and suburban college students via meaningful interactions across social identities.

Discussion

The results in Chapter 4 confirmed that all 27 participants in this urban–rural IGD study grew in their learning ($p < .001$ for the four factors) with large effect sizes (Cohen's d between 1.01 and 1.66). As I examined participants' demographic data in greater depth, I found that most participants self-identified as female (74%), White (59%), and politically Democratic (70%). Other data were more balanced: urban–rural identity (30% urban, 37% suburban, 33% rural); year enrolled at the university (48.1% first-year, 37% second-year, 15% third-year). I also observed a variety of religious beliefs (seven categories of religious, spiritual, or secular beliefs with no single group/category representing more than 37% of the sample). These details are essential for better understanding the participant pool (i.e., politically liberal White women) and for identifying sets of participants who were missing and could intentionally be invited to participate in IGD. Notably, this information is crucial for meeting the goals of IGD; that is, for students to establish stronger critical consciousness, skill development, and action preparedness (e.g., using PALS) to engage and intervene against bias and to advance equity and justice (Kaplowitz et al., 2019) across the urban–rural social identity continuum. Below, I describe how IGD enhanced participants' learning growth on each of these four factors: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies

to engage and intervene; and (d) the capacity to advance equity and justice in bridging the urban–rural divide.

Factor (a): Awareness of Social Identities through the Power of Listening to Bridge Differences

Participants' mean score increased by 0.83 on this factor, denoting a statistically significant pre–post difference, Cohen's $d = 1.11$, $\delta = 0.74$, $t(27) = 5.78$, $p < .001$. Significant improvements accompanied urban–rural participants' responses to three out of the five subscale items after IGD. More specifically, the students appeared better able to recognize and challenge their thinking about their urban/rural identities (item #1), to understand which of their identities did or did not afford them privilege (item #3), and to educate themselves about people of different urban/rural identities (item #4). These developments corroborate the literature indicating that dialogues begin by raising awareness of one's social identity through listening to others (Bohm, 1996). The quantitative data and open-ended responses related to this factor both highlighted dialogue as an opportunity to connect with others by listening, asking questions, and reflecting on others' identities in the dialogic process (Gurin et al., 2013).

A rural biracial female first-year participant stated that the IGD experience increased her social identity awareness that build off of the urban–rural social identity continuum, including its intersectionality to her sexual orientation. In other words, IGD revealed to her a new (rural) identity and how that could influence the people around her. This kind of discovery was prevalent in participants' awareness of privilege and identity: several students said that the IGD process had opened a window to self-awareness across the urban–rural social identity continuum. They also noticed how their own privilege shaped their lived experiences as well as opportunities

in urban–rural settings. In essence, participants recognized how the complexity of their newfound identities could inform their experiences and worldviews.

Despite improvements in participants' own social identity awareness (item #2) and ability to notice biased comments, jokes, or microaggressions (item #5), neither change was statistically significant after IGD. Cultivating a sustained IGD takes time; a 6-session intervention during one academic semester (i.e., over three months) may not necessarily bear fruit for individuals who wish to immediately deepen their awareness of self and bias against others. As when planting seeds, IGD requires patience—to listen, to sit with oneself to process who one is, and to deliberately build a space to listen to others (Grant, 2021). I concur with Grant's (2021) recommendation that giving one's full attention to another person (e.g., to listen to them), and being truly willing to listen, displays a sense of care and dignity for that individual. It also creates an openness to self-learning/self-awareness.

Factor (b): Bridging Rural–Urban College Students' Intergroup Understanding and Relationship

Participants' mean score rose by 0.44 on the second factor and again represented a statistically significant pre–post difference, Cohen's $d = 1.01$, $\delta = 0.43$, $t(27) = 5.24$, $p < .001$. Urban–rural participants significantly improved on three of the five subscale items after IGD: actively listening to others holding different points of view (item #6); seeking opportunities to be around people who are different from oneself (item #9); and making an effort to learn about people of various urban/rural identities (item #10). Generally, the objectives of nurturing intergroup understanding and relationships are twofold: 1) to demystify the notion of binary bias (Grant, 2021) and 2) to be open to dialogues with people who have differing or complex perspectives.

Echoing other IGD scholars, I argue that bridging intergroup understanding and relationships across urban–rural social identities calls for listening to diverse perspectives. In turn, active listening can foster finding a common ground. Finding common ground among peers can foster active learning, self-discovery, and wonder (Frantell et al., 2019; Fregoso, 2020; Gurin et al., 2013; E. Hicks et al., 2023; Jackson, 2022; James-Gallaway et al., 2023; Kaplowitz et al., 2019; Lopez & Nastasi, 2012; Maxwell et al., 2011). For instance, in this study, a rural White female third-year participant found her IGD experience important for constructing a space of mutual understanding and inclusivity. She particularly saw the value of surrounding herself with people from different urban/rural/suburban backgrounds because they can augment one another's comprehension of urban–rural issues. Participants in this urban–rural IGD experience largely believed that sharing their lived experiences deepened their relationship building across differences. They thus appreciated intergroup relationships as a fundamental element of IGD for bridging the urban–rural divide.

While participants improved on learning to apologize when their comments seemed to have offended someone (item #7) and paying attention to how their comments and behavior affect others (item #8), neither of these items exhibited statistically significant increases after IGD. However, when the students were introduced to the concept of learning edges, they became open to embracing new learning by taking risks, being uncomfortable, engaging in conflict, and making/learning from mistakes. IGD seeks to achieve social and structural equity (Banks & Banks, 2019; Nagda & Gurin, 2007; Rodríguez et al., 2018) by maintaining a dialogic moment—towards mutual understanding—where everyone has blind spots in a co-learning space. IGD helped participants engage in a novel way of learning that may have held personal meaning in this respect.

Factor (c): Strategies to Engage and Intervene Against Urban–Rural Biases

Participants' mean score rose by 0.63 on the third factor—a statistically significant pre–post difference, Cohen's $d = 1.19$, $\delta = 0.53$, $t(27) = 6.19$, $p < .001$. Urban–rural participants' scores on four of the five items significantly improved after IGD: interrupting against biased comments, jokes, and/or microaggressions (item #11); using PALS (**p**ause, **a**sk questions, **l**isten, and **s**hare stories) as a way to intervene (item #12); reframing debates to dialogues (item #13); and trying to listen generously and acknowledge others' perspectives before intervening (item #14). Students explained that applying the PALS strategy helped them intervene in biased or derogatory comments against people from different urban, suburban, or rural backgrounds by slowing the dialogue among parties. One rural White female third-year participant remarked that PALS provided her a tool with which to interrupt bias. A suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant said that practicing PALS in a safe and semi-structured environment, as in IGD, was critical for making mistakes, debriefing, and learning from others before using this approach more spontaneously.

Not all participants were immediately amenable to PALS; some needed time to process it. One urban White female first-year participant affirmed that, through IGD, she had gained strategies such as PALS to speak up in spaces where she may not have been as comfortable before. A rural multiracial female first-year participant relatedly said that IGD gave her concrete examples of when (not) to use PALS to interrupt/intervene bias in the future. Basically, the "Strategies to Engage and Intervene" factor helped participants develop spaces to practice a curriculum including semi-structured and real-life scenarios. Participants could therefore proactively deploy strategies now to intervene against bias (e.g., PALS) or genuinely apologize for mistakes (e.g., Dunn, 2024).

Participants also improved on learning to help people understand how their words/actions affect others (item #15), albeit not to a statistically significant degree. Participants might continue to make sense of their in-the-moment (and at times emotional) dialogic interactions with other participants (e.g., Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Zúñiga et al., 2007) from different urban–rural backgrounds. Strategies to engage and intervene bias are intended to break down division between urban and rural communities, allowing each other to embrace diverse communities and work across differences. The students' IGD experiences in this study centered on contentious U.S. societal issues within a safe environment and promoted a community of affective learning (Dessel & Rogge, 2008; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Said plainly, affective learning is being empathic and being able to feel other's pain and suffering could make people want to advocate, engage, and intervene for/with others. Thus, strategies to engage and intervene (e.g., using PALS), is both embrace diverse communities and work across differences; and also, to stand with for those who are not treated right to reinforce a respectful and inclusive environment.

Factor (d): Capacity to Advance Equity and Justice through Urban–Rural IGD

Participants' mean score on this factor increased by 0.63, a statistically significant pre–post difference, Cohen's $d = 1.46$, $\delta = 0.43$, $t(27) = 7.57$, $p < .001$. Urban–rural participants significantly improved on three of the five items after IGD: spending time doing activities that further social justice (item #16); having tools to help them interrupt bias, correct stereotyping, and create more inclusive spaces (item #18); and having concrete skills that enable them to work with others towards greater social justice (item #20). Students described the dialogic interactions they had had with others from different urban–rural backgrounds. These conversations helped the participants understand discrepancies and commonalities while assembling a hybrid in-group to pursue solidarity, harmony, and equal relationships (Allport, 1954). Further illustrating

Allport's (1954) point about creating a hybrid in-group identity (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1), participants' qualitative feedback uncovered a theme of promoting inclusivity and equity. They saw IGD's value in bridging the urban–rural divide by allowing for a more inclusive, just, and equitable society. More importantly, participants expressed a collective commitment to educating themselves and others through IGD and advocating for social change. Especially in addressing the context for bridging the urban–rural divide, participants noted that their personal safety and acknowledgment of breaking away from (or unlearning) social pressure in close-knit communities should not affect their post-IGD appreciation for differing perspectives.

Participants also improved on learning to work with their communities/organizations to include people of different urban/rural identities (item #17) and on using their leadership skills to encourage people of different urban/rural identities to work together (item #19). However, neither item improved to a statistically significant extent after IGD. Participants might have yearned for more opportunities (e.g., an educational intervention like an urban–rural IGD), which higher education institutions could facilitate, to hear varied perspectives. Programming on leadership development or community engagement could have potentially fulfilled this demand. I posit that higher education institutions have a civic responsibility to provide education on social equity (e.g., James-Gallaway & James-Gallaway, 2023) and to concurrently build environments where a wide range of college students can engage across differences.

Development of Intergroup Dialogue Curriculum Bridging the Urban–Rural Divide

As I expected, the findings from this urban–rural IGD study depict how IGD can ignite social change (e.g., Frantell et al., 2019). The urban–rural IGD in this research took place over six virtual sessions and adhered to a 4-stage curriculum development process: 1) group formation, 2) exploration of individual differences and commonalities, 3) discussion of

controversial issues/hot topics, and 4) action planning for coalition building to work across differences (Gurin et al., 2013). Data showed that this urban–rural curriculum generated space for small-group interactions and experience through which students developed a sense of community (e.g., by sharing stories and perspectives that might otherwise be difficult to share with a larger group). Thematic open-ended data uncovered bonding between participants via the power of storytelling, specifically in sharing personal stories during dialogue sessions. This dialogic experience effectively helped participants validate their worldviews, and each other, to build a more just and welcoming community. For example, in accordance with the "Capacity to Advance Equity and Justice" factor, participants learned to differentiate between 'equity' and 'equality' and these concepts' distinct roles in fostering a more inclusive environment (e.g., McMahon, 2024). Participants also completed a 'cycle of socialization'; through it, they became more aware of their taught beliefs/behavior and learned to take action to break through biases as part of their liberatory transformation (Harro, 2018). This IGD curriculum started to open participants' eyes to "aha" moments in endeavoring to bridge the urban–rural divide.

This study's urban–rural IGD curriculum involved 12 contact hours. As summarized elsewhere, the content addressed participants' (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression; (b) intergroup understanding and relationships; (c) strategies to engage and intervene; and (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide. The curriculum presented participants with a call to action. For instance, one student became interested in creating a designated space (a farmers' market) for dialogue. Others indicated greater commitment to caring for their community—especially people with whom they might not normally interact in depth. Participants also hoped to continue learning about the urban–rural

continuum and associated differences. An urban White male first-year participant described having brought his IGD experience into the classroom:

> *"I discussed [IGD] in my International Relations and Urban & Regional Planning major classes. I have also asked all of my friends more about urban-rural identities and how they think [those identities] have affected them."*

In addition, socioeconomic status and race inequities intersect in complicated ways across the urban–rural continuum. Data from this dissertation's research site (MSU, a predominantly White institution) indicated that participants were amenable to new modes of thinking. The students were also open to communicating across their social-identity differences and to building friendships via dialogic experiences.

Updated Beliefs

The notion of belief updating (Kube & Rozenkrantz, 2021) helps to further elucidate participants' pre–post open-ended responses. Kube and Rozenkrantz (2021) defined belief updating as continuous examination and adjustment of one's beliefs "in light of new evidence" (p. 247). Even though empirical studies on this concept are currently scarce, participants in the urban–rural IGD generally disclosed that new information obtained through this experience challenged their initial beliefs/worldviews. That is, hearing other participants' lived experiences broadened participants' thinking across differences throughout their college journey (Shea, 2024). Students' feedback also mirrored that from Shea's (2024) facilitated conversation among IGD experts: Shea (2024) determined that sustained IGD across differences takes time as people continuously update/widen their beliefs, thinking, and values. More concretely, beliefs are not updated instantly: IGD-based learning is dynamic and evolves from pre-dialogue to post-dialogue participation. As Chapter 4 described, participants' subjective beliefs about their own

urban–rural social identities were reflected in their awareness and perspectives on bridging this divide.

Updating beliefs also acknowledges a larger societal context that affects participants' urban–rural dialogue experiences. To put into perspective, Cohort 1 occurred during the continuation of the Russo-Ukraine War and Israel-Hamas War. Cohort 2 occurred in the height of college students' activism (e.g., encampment) across U.S. higher education spaces with the ongoing Isarel-Hamas War. Cohort 3 took place in the summer of 2024, when participants likely had more time to reflect on their IGD experiences away from the college campus. Given that the larger societal context may affect participants' IGD experiences, I took into consideration how to tailor the urban–rural IGD curriculum (as well as facilitation approach) in each cohort iteration. For example, included checking in with students about their feelings entering to dialogues and leading centering/grounding breathing exercises while maintain the key core curriculum concepts and activities across three cohorts (see Appendix G for urban–rural IGD curriculum).

Recommendations

Based on this study's findings, I present recommendations for (a) students, (b) student affairs professionals, (c) faculty members and organizational leaders to reflect on how to facilitate spaces for bridging the divide along students' urban–rural social identity continuum. This continuum includes suburban students who sometimes flow along or outside of the urban–rural spectrum. As mentioned, MSU is in a suburban area. My recommendations are intended to clarify how college students can think, feel, adjust, and connect across differences (e.g., Fregoso, 2020; Tran et al., 2022; Yaj & Tran, 2022) through IGD, not to change who they are. I find IGD to be a fruitful intervention for connecting urban, rural, and suburban college students (and people in general) precisely because the goal is not to change participants; rather, IGD is meant

to broaden their perspectives on how individuals think across differences. As data shows for this study, IGD is hence of paramount importance for higher education institutions—in helping prepare students to engage in today's diverse economic workforce, possess socio-political civic responsibility, and contribute positively to humanity yearning to bridge differences/divides (e.g., see Chapter 4 for statistical analysis and Appendix H for participants' open-ended responses).

Recommendations for Students

Given participants' commentary on how they perceived bridging the urban–rural divide after IGD, I would suggest that students first acknowledge the various contexts that separate urban, rural, as well as suburban communities. During IGD sessions, Participants insinuated that rural, urban, and suburban residents both face consequences from unemployment rates, child poverty, a lack of racial diversity, limited economic resources, deficient healthcare access, food insecurity, pollution crises, and a lag in college degree completion. These lines of thinking coincide with the literature detailing such issues in rural, urban, and even suburban communities (Bauer, 2024; Broadway, 2023; Detroit PBS, 2018; Mack, 2018; Manuel et al., 2024; Pipa, 2024). Participants in this study pointed out that the problems for urban and rural communities which remain divided, in Michigan and elsewhere in the United States, are due to siloing and not understanding the cultures between urban and rural communities.

I would also advise students taking part in IGD to view urban, rural, and suburban identity as part of the larger social identity context, such that people can make broader meaning across communities. This study's participants took time to pause and reflect on their own social identities and the settings in which these identities operate. Urban–rural dialogue elicited "aha" moments for participants to become more aware of who they were and how they were similar to/different from the people around them. I witnessed students embracing multiple truths—

within each individual's lived experiences—and maintaining one another's dignity through perspective sharing. One theme in participants' post-IGD open-ended responses was that the students were more open to expanding their worldview and intentionally searching for varying perspectives to make connections across urban–rural communities. These propensities are important: participants came to see that the urban–rural divide is intensifying (e.g., during a political election year) and wanted to do their part by socializing across communities to narrow urban–rural division (e.g., Tieken & Auldridge-Reveles, 2019).

Caution is also warranted: if urban, rural, and suburban student-communities do not come into contact with one another, they will only become more divided (Allport, 1954; PBS NewsHour, 2018; Tieken & Auldridge-Reveles, 2019). Participants have demonstrated in this study that they are becoming more aware of the emergence of urban–rural divide (e.g., Appendix H). Also, I recommend students to be more aware of the geographic context affecting social context globally and locally. For example, that United Nations–sponsored organizations suggested that the world is becoming more geographically distinct; urban areas are projected to be more heavily populated than rural ones by 2050 (Our World in Data, 2018). Locally, Michigan census data reported that out of 83 counties in the state, there are more rural counties than urban and suburban counties (Mack, 2018). However, more residents live in urban and suburban areas, and fewer reside in rural Michigan (Mack & Levin, 2024). In turn, I recommend students to take action countering/bridging this division: urban, rural, suburban student population can build tangible, unifying coalitions across socio-geographic lines to advocate for each other and to spotlight critical needs that can benefit all of them. I would also like to reiterate for students to better understand urban, rural, suburban communities can be participating local initiatives/events/programs to demystify/broaden/deepen their (lack of) understanding of urban,

rural, suburban ways of life (e.g., rural farming festivals and urban art shows, such as the Fermentation Fest in Wisconsin reported by PBS NewsHour, 2018). Students participating in these initiatives can link their experiences and better understand their unique environments with one another. However, I echo Weisman's (2024) reminder bears repeating, too—bridging the gap between urban–rural communities hinges not on changing the students of who they are as urban, rural, or suburban person but on fostering dialogue in order to find common ground and respect divergent viewpoints.

Hence, I believe seeking various perspectives can broaden students' learning (and their sense of feeling heard) about how the social environment molds their values (Borer, 2006; Bruneau & Saxe, 2012; Kelly & Lobao, 2019). The more that students deliberately seek diverse points of view, the more they might want to connect with people who are different from them and cultivate a larger group identity (Allport, 1954; Bruneau & Saxe, 2012). Students can feel motivated, whether intrinsically for transformative learning or extrinsically for adding values, if institutions of higher education invest and reward their participation as part of their collegiate experience (e.g., university civic engagement) toward their academic and professional career advancement. In the process for students receiving a world-class education, IGD can act as a tool/skill for them to become a better leader and communicator to breakdown the socially constructed dichotomies of better/worse, worthy/unworthy, or good/evil (e.g., Tajfel, 1974); rather, IGD would be a key skill for students to create social spaces for inclusive perspectives within a larger (in-)group identities (Allport, 1954). I further reaffirm Allport's (1954) recommendation for students to acknowledge their differing/unique backgrounds to intentionally come together in pursuit of a common purpose for good. Doing so students can make space for inclusive identities for blended hybrid groups. The present study demonstrated that urban, rural,

and suburban students can find ways/spaces/opportunities on college campus to engage in IGD for a mutual purpose: to bridge the urban–rural divide. Those taking part in this research indeed established a students' larger group identity over the six sessions (see Chapter 4 for detailed results) that deepened their intergroup relationship and understandings for each other (see Appendix H for participants' detailed open-ended responses on their IGD experiences).

Finally, I advise students to take Brown et al.'s (2011) and Zosel's (2018) positions that moving into the workforce by earning a degree in higher education is not enough; one must couple this preparation with tangible soft skills (e.g., the ability to communicate well) because innovations and work performance often improve when people work across difficult and restorative conversations. Students can benefit from learning IGD as a soft skill. For instance, the first-session activity during the urban–rural IGD described in this dissertation produced a space for students with rural/urban/suburban identities to reflect on their hopes and fears when working across differences. Students could anonymously share their fears (e.g., offending someone, giving a wrong impression, being judged, or judging another person harshly) while encouraging one another by processing hopes as a dialogic community. Validating one another through hopes (i.e., understanding oneself and others, connecting with more people, and forging connections to foster social change) can help bridge the urban–rural divide (McFarland, 2018). Later, in the last session of the urban–rural IGD, participants continued to plan for allyhood actions to work across differences with appropriate skills and mindsets.

Recommendation for Student Affairs Professionals

Data in the IGD curriculum intervention from the current study showed that participants, especially in intimate small-group spaces, shared stories and listened to others' stories of how they see themselves in the world, as documented in the literature on bridging differences (e.g.,

Keehn, 2015; Mintz, 2024; The Atlantic, 2019) that student affairs professionals can adopt and learn from. I also found in this study's post-survey open-ended responses contextualized participants' openness to sharing their stories and their awareness of who they are (individual and collective social identities) in their dialogue groups. The students felt heard, seen, and cared for when being their authentic selves within the IGD space (see Appendix H for detailed open-ended responses). I would suggest that student affairs professionals to (continue to) recognize that students' urban, rural, and suburban identities may be on par with students' other socially held identities, while these identities may require some surfacing in discussions or story-sharing of identity, diversity, and belonging.

Furthermore, student affairs professionals can seek ways to integrate IGD principles into their work with students to make positive contribute to bridging urban/rural/suburban identity differences. To do so, I would recommend student affairs professional to infuse IGD's principle, in which, the findings in this study shows that using PALS is one way to interrupt bias in order to maintain individual dignity. PALS slows down the dialogue tempo while creates inclusive spaces to allow people to feel valued and heard. Donna Hicks, an expert in conflict resolution and organizational leadership, has specifically suggested that people lead with dignity for others; individuals feel appreciated and seen across differences when dignity is maintained. This is especially important and ripe for student affairs professionals because they are often on the front lines to interact day to day with students and the broader campus community (e.g., Liu & Renn, 2024). Hicks (2011) proposed adhering to the following principles as adopted in this IGD's session 2 curriculum to work across difference:

> …approach people as being neither inferior nor superior to you. Give others the freedom to express their authentic selves without fear of being negatively judged. Interact without

> prejudice or bias, accepting the ways in which race, religion, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability may be at the core of other people's identities. Assume that others have integrity. (p. 33)

In contrast, when dignity is violated, negative emotions compromise one's self-love and sense of worth (Hicks, 2011). Violating one's dignity feels like a transgression (or a pernicious effect) that deepens one's social identity (e.g., arguing during a heated debate rather than staying curious during a dialogue). In sum, I suggest student affairs professionals to integrate (and practice) IGD principle of the students their serve.

Recommendation for Faculty Members and Organizational Leaders

I recommend that faculty and instructional staff become core partners in delivering IGD programs. Structurally, faculty should be supported in this work not as a volunteer or add-on responsibility, but released from courses or other responsibilities to get trained in facilitation and offer IGD sessions. In turn, involve with IGD work can widen faculty members' interdisciplinary collaboration, teaching and learning competencies, service, and support institutional's mission on student success (Fuhrmans & Ellis, 2024; Liu et al., 2023a; Liu et al., 2023b; Weissman, 2024). For instance, students need to hone social skills for the workplace, especially in terms of respecting and working across diverse populations in the United States. Faculty members can view their participating in delivering IGD program can also infused into their curriculum design (e.g., IGD in bioethics or IGD in higher education student success) that may benefit their scholarly work in the field.

Organizational leaders in higher education have a special obligation to educate students for the public good. Bennett (2023) reminded readers that institutions of higher learning have a "[social] responsibility to educate their students, employees, and the broader populace…that

impact our lives and well-being" (p. xii). In other words, these institutions prepare learners to work among peers as individuals within a collegiate environment. Felten and Lambert (2020) identified peer-to-peer relationships, among other intersecting relationships, as key for higher education institutions to support students' learning, belonging, and thriving during college. Institutional support for building these relationships can positively influence how students learn and persist while also sparking "critical thinking, identity development, communication skills, and leadership abilities" (Felten & Lambert, 2020, p. 5).

One peer-to-peer institutional support is cultivating a sustained (intergroup) dialogue that can help build these relationships; active listening and thoughtful engagement are part and parcel of bringing people from different walks of life together with an open mind (e.g., Poliner & Benson, 1997). Felten and Lambert (2020) implored the higher education sector to "act so that all students experience welcome and care, become inspired to learn through interactions in and out of the classroom, cultivate constellations of impor-tant relationships, and use those relationships to explore the big questions of their lives" (pp. 6–7). Urban–rural IGD can help higher education institutions actuate this call, making college campuses more inclusive settings where (urban/rural) students can form lifelong relationships across differences that they will carry throughout their academic, professional, and personal lives. To do so, institutions can employ an urban–rural IGD framework (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1) with more marginalized identities (e.g., rural Black female college students) for participants to grasp the intersectional roles of geography, race, and gender in spurring social change (i.e., bridging the urban–rural divide). Urban–rural IGD also needs to integrate related frameworks (e.g., Black feminist theory) "to perceive and humanize [participants'] thoughts, actions, and words" (James-Gallaway & James-Gallaway, 2023, pp. 3–4) in order to move towards working across differences.

Provide Institutional Focus Identity-Based Curricula for Diverse Social Identities

The U.S. political landscape—particularly in 2024, a presidential election year—has negatively affected higher education institutions' identity-based programming. As reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 196 college campuses across 29 states have either eliminated or reclassified identity-based curricula or policies related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (Gretzinger et al., 2024). Dismantling identity-based programming further marginalizes students who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color. It will also continue to deepen existing community divides between varying social identities (e.g., urban vs. rural vs. suburban). However, higher education institutions can synergize their collective power to alter this narrative.

One starting point for sustaining urban–rural IGD is having an institutional mindset to ground this work within institutional values and responsibilities as part of the curriculum based on a school's academic mission. In turn, institutions can carry out their academic missions by buttressing the capacities to (a) re-strengthen institutional's commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice work; (b) provide sustainable funding on recurring IGD pedagogy across the social identity continuum; and (c) recruit faculty co-facilitators capable of broadening the collegiate learning/teaching experience (e.g., Crews et al., 2024). Since 2017, my experiences co-facilitating race-related IGD at MSU (https://inclusion.msu.edu/education/msu-dialogues.html) have taught me that faculty, staff, and executive administrators enter IGD with a growth and intellectual humility mindset. Participants typically acknowledge their own lifelong learning, share lived experiences (in confidence), and 'call each other in' to better understand one another. The reward has been establishing a community of allies to operate from a frame of collaboration instead of competition. Additionally, I have witnessed faculty, staff, and executive

administrators deepen their interpersonal connections throughout IGD sessions (i.e., eight 2-hour sessions per semester). Some even launched a book club after IGD to sustain 'walking out' their values in social justice education among communities of support.

Ultimately, dialogue across social identities grants higher education institutions an opportunity to live out their values and recognize that these principles' essence is most important—that is, "walking the talk" to mirror institutional practices (Brown, 2018). It is imperative not to jettison one's social responsibilities out of convenience (Mangan, 2024). Put another way, the overarching aim of IGD at higher education institutions is to address social (in)equities (e.g., Rodríguez et al., 2018)—especially when seeking to create a collaborative working environment that sees pertinent issues (e.g., healthcare, education, high-speed internet, employment, and social justice) as common concerns among urban/rural/suburban communities (Bauer, 2024; Broadway & Broadway, 2023; Cherry, 2024; Goldberg, 2024; Network of the National Library of Medicine, 2022; Weissman, 2024). I would like to highlight Goldberg's (2024) caveat that without collaboration between urban–rural communities, bitterness may seep in based on (mis)perceptions of what urban/rural/suburban life is truly like. Urban–rural communities thus need to understand more about life on the other side. IGD provides a starting point to dissolve resentment by stoking empathy, namely by effecting positive change in educational and professional workspaces.

Looking into bringing people together across different urban–rural communities, Nadworny and Marcus (2023) discovered that universities from urban areas (e.g., Ivy Leagues in urban cities) could make a difference by devoting more attention to identity-based recruitment. For example, these institutions could recruit (rather than neglect) students from rural America. Welcoming these student demographics could help rural and urban learners alike understand one

another, especially if given sustainable institutional support to facilitate space to work across differences. When students from urban/rural/suburban backgrounds come to college, higher education institutions can better design sequential curricula and co-curricular programs to practice how to connect with others who have different identities (e.g., TEDx Talks by Buchanan, 2014; Murthy, 2023). Efforts could include experiential learning (e.g., via technology) to inform rural students about urban culture and urban students about rural culture. For instance, institutions could devise a set urban–rural IGD curriculum and co-curricular in-person and/or virtual experience to expose participants to agrarian communities' and urbanite ways of life. More specifically, the urban–rural dialogic experience could clarify shared basic needs (e.g., food security) across urban–rural identities/communities: the rural component would inform students from urban contexts, and the urban experience across the urban–rural continuum would inform students from rural contexts. In the case of this dissertation, the urban–rural IGD curriculum's Four Corners activity in Session 5 asked students to recall dark memories of being targeted or shoring up the courage to intervene. They listened to each other and felt common pain in coming to understand one another. This activity was hence less about self-reflection and more about dialogue and knowing that participants were not alone.

Data from this study further revealed that participants in urban–rural IGD cultivated skills to actively listen to others. They also recognized that the goal was not to argue to change someone's worldview but to ask better questions, broaden their awareness of how differing backgrounds/opinions can influence perspectives, and work across intersecting social identities. To collectively bridge divides, Kelly et al. (2024) asserted that the power of IGD weaves together a sense of shared understanding by

> listening to understand, speaking one's own voice, holding judgments softly, releasing emotions, reflecting on insights gained from individual stories situated within sociopolitical contexts, building community, and creating justice together for the moment and for the future. (p. 3)

The above capacities exemplify advantages of connecting diverse social identities through identity-based curricula. Students' learning may prompt efforts to better understand (a) common identities, characteristics, challenges, and strengths from rural and urban communities; (b) rurality/urbanity in relation to place, education, community, and one's individual self; (c) needs for communities of support across spaces while studying at colleges or universities; and (d) advocacy for additional resources that promote successful educational experiences, such as by engaging with academic curricula, people, and places. All in all, the urban–rural IGD curriculum is designed to invite people across differences (e.g., urban, rural, suburban) to come together and talk through challenging issues while acknowledging personal differences and similarities. The following seven key considerations, which align with this dissertation's four guiding factors/outcomes, are meant to aid the leaders of higher education institutions in implementing an urban–rural IGD curriculum. This initiative intends to construct a community of support and deeper empathy for the campus community at large.

1. [*Awareness of social identities*] Actively promote inclusive IGD practices that value awareness of urban–rural social identities/positionalities
2. [*Awareness of social identities*] Enhance the dialogic curriculum accessibility, inclusivity, and availability of (in-person and online) spaces, technologies, and resources; provide evidence-based practices on how participants connect their self/reflective-learning to urban–rural communities

3. [*Intergroup understanding and relationships*] Establish similar IGDs for the entire institution (staff, faculty, and students) to ensure there is action to build on institutional values, plans, and goals around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging
4. [*Intergroup understanding and relationships*] Foster university-wide programming that generates relational dialogues among students by welcoming diverse geographic backgrounds, perspectives, and ideologies to help college students expand their thinking and to feel at home, in solidarity with, and connected to one another
5. [*Strategies to engage and intervene*] Provide institutional support to advance IGD efforts, such as to develop skills to interrupt bias, microaggressions, and discrimination
6. [*Capacity to advance equity and justice*] Include dialogues as part of a university-wide (co-)curriculum to cultivate diverse community experiences among students, faculty, and staff inside and outside the classroom.
7. [*Capacity to advance equity and justice*] Allocate additional post-dialogic opportunities and resources to continuously foster coalition building and *esprit de corps* (i.e., to focus on bridging the urban–rural divide across communities).

Future Research on Urban–Rural Intergroup Dialogues

Moving forward, the current quantitative pre- and post-surveys can be refined to calibrate questions to clarify for participants what is being asked of them. Future surveys will briefly define key terms and empirically test them by comparing participants' experiences (i.e., before and after IGD). Subsequent survey designs could also address scaling, such as by providing a text box where participants can define words' meanings and their personal understanding in their own words. These open-ended responses would complement scored items.

Follow-up research could be enhanced by an urban–rural IGD curriculum that features a longitudinal quasi-experimental design with more follow-up data collection points and concrete questions (e.g., 2 years from completing the 6-week urban–rural IGD), which would also track participants' learning growth, areas of residence, and worldviews after their dialogic experiences across the urban–rural continuum. Of equal importance, a future quasi-experimental design that includes a broader population of participants with different intention and action levels could examine whether IGD is similarly beneficial (e.g., in terms of learning growth) in engaging college students across the urban–rural continuum for individuals who are more – or less – intentional about more firmly grasping 'how to' work across [geo-/socio-political] differences (e.g., Fregoso, 2020; Tran et al., 2022; Yaj & Tran, 2022). Future studies can possibly recruit various categories of participants in random sampling—for example, to conduct a comparison between a control group that receives non-specific training about interpersonal communication and a treatment group that focuses on urban–rural dialogues.

Along this line of research, qualitative methods could illuminate particular college student groups/demographics to unearth emergent/thematic patterns across the urban–rural spectrum. Future studies could also (re)examine how participants' intersecting identities (e.g., veteran status, LGBTQIA2S+, disabilities, creed) affect their urban–rural identity (e.g., TEDx Talks by Patel, 2021; Radford et al., 2024). The preliminary open-ended data from this dissertation showed that participants' responses provided more context around their learning growth via the urban–rural IGD curriculum. Future longitudinal research may include qualitative or mixed methods to enrich the urban–rural IGD experience among participants across higher education institutions. While outside the scope of this dissertation, longitudinal studies could also focus on different iterations of dialogue curricula and its impact on college students and compare

the development of curricula over the years with the IGD curricula for teachers in the K–12 setting (e.g., Littleton & Howe, 2010; Poliner & Benson, 1997).

Finally, qualitative data (e.g., individual interviews) can richly supplement quantitative data. Future qualitative studies could, for example, diarize information to help both supplement and deepen findings to the target population Qualitative approaches humanize quantitative information; they can hence shed light on how the urban–rural divide emerges and how to bridge this ever-widening gap (e.g., Goldberg, 2024). Individual interviews and focus group discussions between urban, rural, and suburban participants may provide new and robust insights into how these individuals interact across identity/affinity groups. Observations of their conversations may additionally produce perspectives that help address how participants can bridge the urban–rural divide based on their positionality/worldview.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented a discussion, recommendations, and future avenues to advance IGD research, particularly with regard to college students' urban–rural identities. The overall study, although incomplete and time-bound, generated statistically significant results based on IGD participants' self-reported outcomes (i.e., on bridging the urban–rural divide) at a large, research-intensive state university in the midwestern United States. I tested and validated the four urban–rural IGD outcome measures and measured participants' reported growth in accordance with the research questions. Participants shared their stories throughout the six sessions and answered open-ended survey questions. Findings provided a window into their lived experiences. In brief, students with urban/rural identities can learn more about how others' socialization affects their disparate perspectives via IGD (e.g., Jack, 2019). I hope this

dissertation work[6] has illuminated a pathway/tool for higher education institutions to consider urban–rural IGD options that are timely, accessible, empathetic, and socially connecting. Ideally, the results will continue to activate IGD among urban–rural educational scholars, practitioners, advocates, community members, and others who care about the interconnections of humanity. Urban–rural IGD holds promise for cultivating a world where all can seek to live peacefully during the sliver of time they have.

[6] I use the word "work" to refer to a labor of sustained love and hopefulness for humanity to engage meaningfully across differences.

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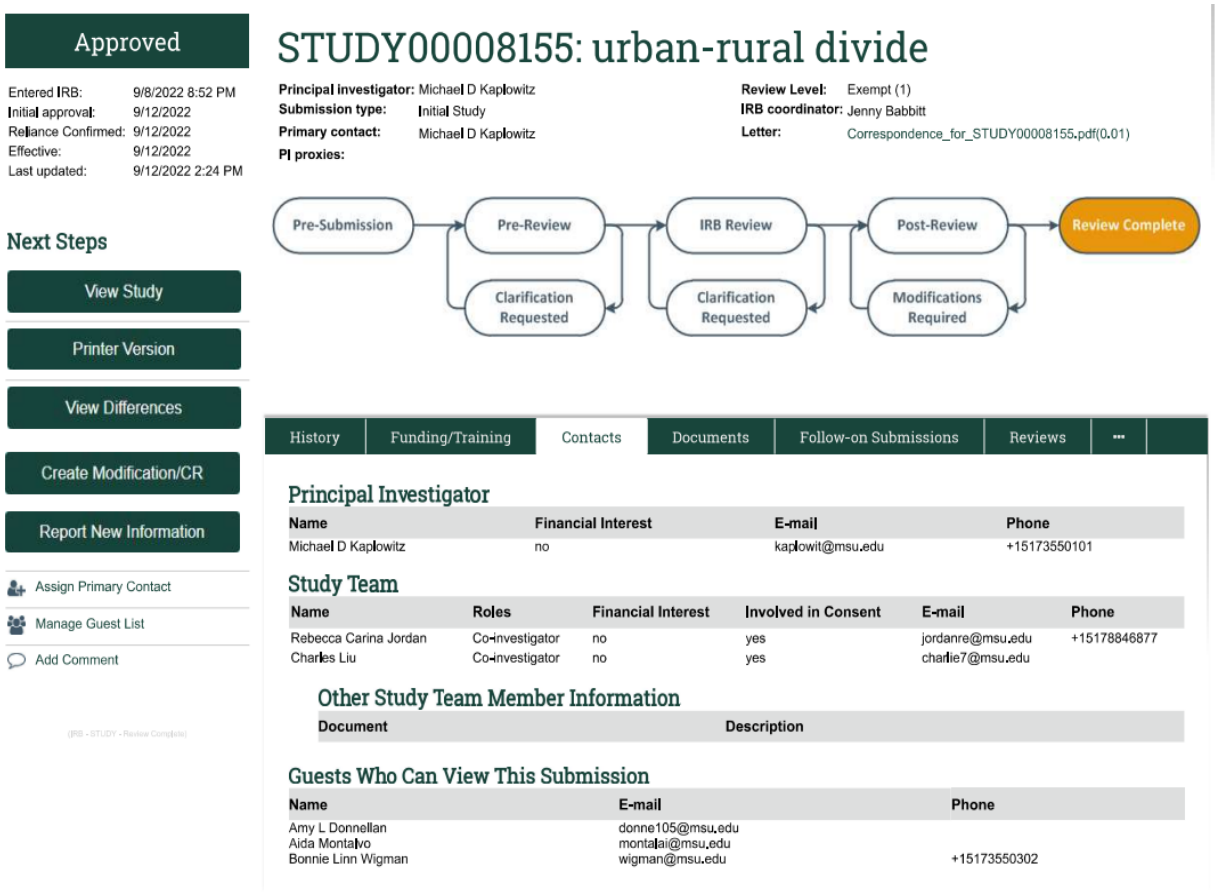
APPENDIX A - IRB APPROVED STUDY



Approved

Entered IRB: 9/8/2022 8:52 PM
Initial approval: 9/12/2022
Reliance Confirmed: 9/12/2022
Effective: 9/12/2022
Last updated: 9/12/2022 2:24 PM

Next Steps

View Study
Printer Version
View Differences
Create Modification/CR
Report New Information

Assign Primary Contact
Manage Guest List
Add Comment

(IRB - STUDY - Review Complete)

STUDY00008155: urban-rural divide

Principal investigator: Michael D Kaplowitz
Submission type: Initial Study
Primary contact: Michael D Kaplowitz
PI proxies:

Review Level: Exempt (1)
IRB coordinator: Jenny Babbitt
Letter: Correspondence_for_STUDY00008155.pdf(0.01)

Pre-Submission → Pre-Review → IRB Review → Post-Review → Review Complete
Pre-Review ⇄ Clarification Requested
IRB Review ⇄ Clarification Requested
Post-Review ⇄ Modifications Required

History | Funding/Training | Contacts | Documents | Follow-on Submissions | Reviews | ...

Principal Investigator

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Document	Description

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APPENDIX B - SCREENING/SIGN-UP FORM FOR URBAN-RURAL DIALOGUES

Sign Up Form: Urban-Rural Dialogue - Fall 2023 https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eLNlCFWFV1UTl6m

Start of Block: Screening data

Q41 **Urban-Rural Dialogue Participant Information Survey Fall 2023**

Thank you for participating in the urban-rural dialogue project at Michigan State University (MSU). Completing this survey will help us better understand some things about you so we can create balanced urban-rural dialogue groups for the next part of the project. Answer the survey questions honestly and to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers. Your participation will help us advance our work focused on improving dialogue across the so-called urban-rural divide. If you have questions or comments about the project or your participation in it, please contact Dr. Michael D. Kaplowitz at kaplowit@msu.edu or Charles Liu at charlie7@msu.edu. Please click the 'button/bar' below to proceed. Thank you. Urban-Rural Dialogue Team

Q77 Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at MSU?

O Yes (1)

O No (2)

Skip To: Q73 If Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at MSU? = No
Q124 Are you an international student at MSU?

O Yes (1)

O No (2)

Skip To: Q73 If Are you an international student at MSU? = Yes

Display This Question: If Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at MSU? = Yes

Q81 In order to help us make sure you get paid for this part of the project as promised and to help us keep track of your participation, please provide 1) your first and last name and 2) your MSU Email address.

Your individual identity will NOT be attributed to your responses. Your confidentiality will be maintained by the researchers and the project.

O Name (7) _____

O MSU Email Address (8) _____

Q73 Currently, I think of myself as a...

O Urban person (1)

O Rural person (2)

O Suburban person (7)

O Those labels do not apply to me because: (11)

_____

Display This Question: If Currently, I think of myself as a... = Urban person

Q86 Thank you. Now we would like to understand why you describe yourself as an urban person.

In your own words, what are some of the reasons you think of yourself as an urban person?

_____

Display This Question: If Currently, I think of myself as a... = Rural person

Q87 Thank you. Now we would like to understand why you describe yourself as an rural person.

In your own words, what are some of the reasons you think of yourself as an rural person?

_____

Display This Question: If Currently, I think of myself as a... = Suburban person

Q88 Thank you. Now we would like to understand why you describe yourself as an suburban person.

In your own words, what are some of the reasons you think of yourself as an suburban person?

_____

Q130 How would you characterize the community where you spent the most of your time when you attended K-12 education?

O Remote (15)

O Rural (16)

O Small town/village/city (6)

O Mid-sized town/city (4)

O Large city (5)

Q126 What would you say the size of the town/city that you are from?

O Very Low population size: Less than 2,500 (6)

O Low population size: 2,501 to 4,999 (2)

O Middle population size: 5,000 to 25,000 (4)

O Upper population size: More than 25,001 (5)

Q102 What is the ZIP code of your home town? Enter a 5-digit ZIP Code.

_____

Q131 Does your family's livelihood depend directly on the land, natural resource, and/or the environment?

O No (2)

O Yes. If so, please describe: (1) _____

Q103 During your last year of high school, how did you usually get to and from school?

O Bicycle (2)

O Bus (4)

O Car-driver (10)

O Car-passenger (15)

O Train (5)

O Walking or use of an assistive mobility device (i.e., wheelchair) (6)

O Prefer to describe OTHER type (17) _____

Q104 During your last year in high school, where did you typically eat your evening meals?

O Home (6)

O Relative's house (15)

O Fast-food restaurant (e.g., McDonalds) (2)

O Sit-down restaurant (e.g., Applebee's) (4)

O Prefer to describe OTHER type (17) _____

Q128 Have you traveled abroad?

O Yes (6)

O No (15)

Q129 Do you speak a language fluently other than English?

O Yes. If so, please identify what language(s) do you speak (6)

_____

O No (15)

Q100 We understand that people across rural and urban contexts engage in a range of recreational, social, and other meaningful activities. We would like your help better understanding some of the things that you do.

Q9 If you listen to music (e.g., radio, streaming service, live performance), what are the top two types of music you listen to?

- ☐ Classical (26)
- ☐ Country (2)
- ☐ Hip-hop (11)
- ☐ Jazz (13)
- ☐ Latin (10)
- ☐ Meditation/relaxing music (25)
- ☐ Pop (22)
- ☐ Rap (6)
- ☐ Religious/Spiritual (21)
- ☐ Rock/Rock&Roll (19)
- ☐ World music (24)
- ☐ Prefer to describe OTHER type (3) _____
- ☐ I do not listen to music (1)

Q89 People in rural and urban settings may engage in sports as a participant and as a fan. What are your two favorite sports to watch and/or play?

- ☐ Baseball/Softball (1)
- ☐ Basketball (5)

- [ ] Car racing (13)
- [ ] Field Hocky/Lacrosse (16)
- [ ] Football (6)
- [ ] Frisbee/Frisbee Golf/Frisbee Ultimate (17)
- [ ] Golf (15)
- [ ] Ice skating/Hockey (9)
- [ ] Running/Track & Field/Cross country (23)
- [ ] Ski/Snowboard/Sled (24)
- [ ] Soccer (7)
- [ ] Swimming (10)
- [ ] Tennis (14)
- [ ] Prefer to describe OTHER type (3) _____
- [ ] I do not have a favorite sport (12)

Q101 People in urban and rural settings may engage in a range of recreational, social, and other social meaningful activities. Apart from sports mentioned above, which of the following are your top-two favorite activities?

- [ ] Bible study (17)
- [ ] Fishing (1)
- [ ] Gardening (5)

- [ ] Going to live music performances (13)
- [ ] Hiking/Walking (23)
- [ ] Hunting (6)
- [ ] Journaling (18)
- [ ] Listening to music (20)
- [ ] Playing cards/Board games (16)
- [ ] Playing a musical instrument (15)
- [ ] Playing video games (21)
- [ ] Reading (9)
- [ ] Singing (10)
- [ ] Watching TV/Streaming (14)
- [ ] Yoga/Meditation (19)
- [ ] Prefer to describe OTHER type (3) _____
- [ ] I do not have favorite activities besides sports (12)

Q92 We understand that people may get their news and information from a variety of sources. Which two sources of news/information do you most frequently follow/use?

- [ ] BBC (58)
- [ ] BuzzFeed (52)

- [ ] CNN (19)
- [ ] Fox News (15)
- [ ] Google News (50)
- [ ] Government News (55)
- [ ] NPR (29)
- [ ] MSNBC (22)
- [ ] My local newspaper (33)
- [ ] Newsmax (34)
- [ ] PBC (60)
- [ ] Reuters (56)
- [ ] The Hill (61)
- [ ] The New York Times (62)
- [ ] The Wall Street Journal (57)
- [ ] The Washington Post (59)
- [ ] USA Today (53)
- [ ] Influencer/Youtuber/Blogger (Please provide name below) (54)

_____

☐ Prefer to describe OTHER source of news (3)

_____

☐ I do not follow any news (24)

Q12 People have different racial and ethnic identities. What would you say is your racial/ethnic identity? (select one)

O American Indian or Alaska Native (1)

O Asian (2)

O Black or African American (3)

O Middle Eastern and North African (11)

O Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (4)

O Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (5)

O White (6)

O Biracial or Multiracial (you have more than one racial/ethnic identity) (7)

O Other/Prefer to self-describe (9) _____

Q125 How would you describe your gender identity?

O Male (6)

O Female (1)

O Non-Binary (2)

O Prefer not to answer (11)

Q85 What year were you born?
▼ 2006 (1) ... 1981 (25)

Q82 We understand that you are a college student. Your current financial situation may be different from that of your family and household before coming to school. For this question, please answer from the perspective of your family/household, at the time just before you started college. My primary family/household income is:

O Very Low Income: Less than $25,000 (6)

O Low Income: $25,001 to $49,999 (2)

O Middle Income: $50,000 to $150,000 (4)

O Upper Income: More than $150,001 (5)

Q127 What is the highest educational level of either of your parents/guardians?

O High School degree (6)

O College degree (2)

O Graduate degree (4)

O Other educational opportunity (15) _____

Q98 We understand that people may have religious identities or no religious identity. Which religious belief system, if any, do you most closely identify with?

O Agnostic (11)

O Atheist (12)

O Buddhism (6)

O Christianity (2)

O Hinduism (4)

O Jainism (5)

O Judaism (1)

O Islam (3)

O Sikhism (7)

O Other/Prefer to self-describe (9) _____

Q97 Are you affiliated with the U.S. military?

O Yes, I am currently a U.S. military servicemember. (1)

O Yes, I served in the U.S. military and now I am a veteran. (11)

O Yes, one of my immediate family members (parent/siblings) has served in the U.S. military (12)

O No (3)

Q96 We understand that people have a wide range of political beliefs. We also understand that people do not always agree with everything associated with a particular political party. Which political party would you say is most in line with your points of view?

☐ Democratic Party (6)

☐ Green Party (16)

☐ Libertarian Party (12)

☐ Republican Party (11)

☐ Socialist Party (13)

☐ Other/Prefer to self-describe (9) _____

Q133 Next, we would like to ask you a series of questions about your points of view so we better understand you and what is important to you.

Q107 If you had to choose, would you rather have...

O A smaller government providing fewer services (1)

O A bigger government providing more services (2)

Q108 Which of the following statements come closest to your view?

O America's openness to people from all over the world is essential to who we are as a nation (1)

O If America is too open to people from all over the world, we risk losing our identity as a nation (2)

Q109 In general, would you say experts who study a subject for many years are...

O Usually BETTER at making good policy decisions about that subject than other people (1)

O Usually WORSE at making good policy decisions about that subject than other people (2)

O NEITHER BETTER NOR WORSE at making good policy decisions about that subject than other people (3)

Q110 Thinking about increased trade of goods and services between the U.S. and other nations in recent decades, would you say that the U.S. has...

O Gained more than it has lost because increased trade has helped lower prices and increased the competitiveness of some U.S. businesses (1)

O Lost more than it has gained because increased trade has cost jobs in manufacturing and other industries and lowered wages from some U.S. workers (2)

Q111 How much more, if anything, needs to be done to ensure equal rights for all Americans regardless of their racial or ethnic backgrounds?

O A lot (1)

O A little (2)

O Nothing at all (3)

Q112 Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

O Business corporations make too much profit (1)

O Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit (2)

Q113 How much, if at all, would it bother you to regularly hear people speak a language other than English in public places in your community?

O A lot (1)

O Some (2)

O Not much (3)

O Not at all (4)

Q114 On a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 means you feel as cold and negative as possible and 100 means you feel as warm and positive as possible, how do you feel toward...

	0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
How do you feel toward Democrats? ()	
How do you feel toward Republicans? ()	

Q115 Which of these statements best describes your opinion about the United States?

O The U.S. stands above all other countries in the world (1)

O The U.S. is one of the greatest countries in the world, along with some others (2)

O There are other countries that are better than the U.S. (3)

Q116 How much of a problem, if any, would you say each of the following are in the country today?

People being too easily offended by things others say

O Major problem (1)

O Minor problem (2)

O Not a problem (3)

Q117 People saying things that are very offensive to others

O Major problem (1)

O Minor problem (2)

O Not a problem (3)

Q118 Which comes closer to your view of candidates for political office, even if neither is exactly right? I usually feel like...

O There is at least one candidate who shares most of my views (1)

O None of the candidates represent my views well (2)

Q119 In general, how much do White people benefit from advantages in society that Black people do not have?

O A great deal (1)

O A fair amount (2)

O Not too much (3)

O Not at all (4)

Q120 Do you think greater social acceptance of people who are transgender (people who identify as a gender that is different from the sex they were assigned at birth) is...

O Very good for society (1)

O Somewhat good for society (2)

O Neither good nor bad for society (3)

O Somewhat bad for society (4)

O Very bad for society (5)

Q121 Overall, would you say people who are convicted of crimes in this country serve...

O Too much time in prison (1)

O Too little time in prison (2)

O About the right amount of time in prison (3)

Q122 Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?

O Religion should be kept separate from government policies (1)

O Government policies should support religious values and beliefs (2)

Q123 In the future, do you think...

O U.S. policies should try to keep it so America is the only military superpower (1)

O It would be acceptable if another country became as militarily powerful as the U.S. (2)

Q80 Thank you. You are almost done. The project will be working on placing participants into dialogue groups that will meet six (6) times. Space is limited and 100% attendance is required. Individuals placed in a dialogue group will receive a $100 participation fee at the conclusion of their final session.

To be clear, the urban-rural dialogue groups will meet via Zoom six (6) times with each session lasting 2 – 2¼ hours. Participating in the project is voluntary, but we are asking for participants commitment to 100% attendance for all six (6) sessions.

We understand that everybody is busy. If you are too busy to commit to 12-15 hours to the project, we understand. However, if you can commit the time, and we have a spot for you, we can promise you that you will learn something about yourself and get paid a $100 participant fee.

To help with our scheduling process, please share with us your preferred day & time of day for your group to meet six (6) times during the fall 2023 semester—between October 16th to November 20th, 2023 [Six weeks].

Which two (2) of the following time slots would you most prefer to be assigned to:

1st Time Slot:	2nd Time Slot:
_____ Tuesdays – 12pm to 2pm (11)	_____ Tuesdays – 12pm to 2pm (11)
_____ Tuesdays – 3pm to 5pm (12)	_____ Tuesdays – 3pm to 5pm (12)
_____ Tuesdays – 6pm to 8pm (13)	_____ Tuesdays – 6pm to 8pm (13)
_____ Thursdays – 12pm to 2pm (14)	_____ Thursdays – 12pm to 2pm (14)
_____ Thursdays – 3pm to 5pm (15)	_____ Thursdays – 3pm to 5pm (15)
_____ Thursdays – 6pm to 8pm (16)	_____ Thursdays – 6pm to 8pm (16)

Q134 Thank you. You made it to the end of this form. We appreciate your input and sharing some information about you and your points of view. We have one last question for you. An opportunity for you to share with us something you'd like to get from participating in this urban-rural dialogue.

Q84 What skills, experiences, knowledge, or other outcomes, if any, do you hope to gain as a result of participating in an urban-rural dialogue?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

End of Block: Screening data

End of Survey

Thank you. You should receive the gift card from the project's administrative assistant within the next few days if you have not already received it.

The next steps include assigning potential participants to groups and engaging in a 6-session intergroup dialogue on urban-rural social identities. We hope to place all qualifying potential participants in a dialogue group. If we do not have enough space for you this semester, we may reach out to you next semester if that's ok.

Thanks again for your help and input.

APPENDIX C - CONSENT FORM

Consent form link: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9WuxYgbdsBEOqNM

Participant Information and Consent Form for MSU Urban-Rural Dialogue Study

You are being asked to participate in a study to help us understand how urban and rural people think about resources, challenges, and ways to improve communities in Michigan. This urban-rural Dialogue study will explore how you think about and understand similarities and differences between urban and rural contexts. There are no right or wrong answers. There are 6 total sessions of urban-rural dialogues should take about 2 hours each session.

Participation in this urban-rural dialogue is completely voluntary. You may change your mind any time and withdraw from this study at any time. You may refuse to answer certain questions. Your participation will help us better serve the citizens of Michigan.

Your identity will not be associated with your responses in surveys, analyses, reports, presentations, or publications. Identifiers will be removed from information shared by subjects and, after such removal, the collected data may be used for future research studies without additional informed consent from the subjects. The project data may be kept and/or destroyed after the project closes pursuant to university protocol.

Only PI-approved researchers and MSU HRPP will have access to project data which will be kept in secure, password-protected files on MSU computer systems. Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. There are minimal risks associated with the study. If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the principal investigator, Dr. Michael D. Kaplowitz, at 308b Natural Resources Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824, kaplowit@msu.edu, 517-582-1918.

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 (HRPP) 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.

By clicking on the arrow below, you signal your consent to participate in this study. We will then ask a few demographic questions in this same form.

Enter your full name in the box and the green arrow to consent and proceed. Thank you.

Click enter your MSU NetID and the green arrow box to consent and proceed.

APPENDIX D - URBAN-RURAL DIALOGUE PRE SURVEY

Pre-survey link https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3W7kilD59Rn8vuS
Start of Block: Default Question Block
Q1 Thanks for being involved in Urban-Rural Dialogues in Fall 2023 The survey is a 10-minute web-based survey that asks about your perceptions of urban/rural identities before you participate in dialogue. We want the survey to represent all participants, including those of all ages, genders, races and sexualities. The survey is voluntary and you can choose to skip any questions or stop the survey at any time. Your responses to the survey questions will remain confidential. For questions about the survey, please email Michael Kaplowitz at kaplowit@msu.edu or Charles Liu at charlie7@msu.edu.
Q2 Which urban/rural identity would you describe about yourself?

O Urban (1)

O Rural (2)

O Self-Describe (4) _____

Display This Question: If Which urban/rural identity would you describe about yourself? = Urban
Q106 On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the weakest and 10 being the strongest), how strong do you feel about your urban identity?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Urban (1)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Display This Question: If Which urban/rural identity would you describe about yourself? = Rural
Q107 On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the weakest and 10 being the strongest), how strong do you feel about your rural identity?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Rural (1)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

End of Block: Default Question Block
Start of Block: Thoughts, Skills, and Actions
Q3 Please rate the following statements about how you feel now.

	Before Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)

I recognize and challenge my own thinking around urban-rural identities. (1)	O	O	O	O	O
I am open to new ideas and ways of understanding urban-rural identities. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
I am aware of my social identities. (3)	O	O	O	O	O
I understand which of my identities give me privilege or not. (6)	O	O	O	O	O
I try to educate myself about people of different urban/rural identities through reading, watching films, talking to others, etc. (9)	O	O	O	O	O
I notice biased comments, jokes or microaggressions. (8)	O	O	O	O	O

Q108 In what ways, if any, are you aware of your social identities, privilege, and oppression in your [urban/rural] context?

_____

End of Block: Thoughts, Skills, and Actions
Start of Block: Behavior
Q4 This question asks you to think about how frequently you do the things **now**.

	Before Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I listen actively to others. (10)	O	O	O	O	O
I am exposed to diversity on campus. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
I have gotten to know people from different urban/rural identities. (8)	O	O	O	O	O

Q109 How do you perceive your relationship, if any, with people of other groups that is different from your urban/rural identity?

_____

Q5 This question asks you to think about how frequently you do the things **now**.

	Before Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I participate in activities that further justice and equity (6)	O	O	O	O	O
I plan to join organizations or activities with people of different urban/rural identities. (5)	O	O	O	O	O

I interrupt biased comments, jokes and/or microaggressions. (11)	O	O	O	O	O
I use PALS (Pause, Acknowledge/Ask, Listen, & Share Stories) as a way to intervene. (12)	O	O	O	O	O
I reframe debates into dialogues. (13)	O	O	O	O	O

Q110 What strategies, if any, would you use to interrupt bias, derogatory comments or jokes and/or microaggressions against an urban or rural person?

_____

Q6 This question asks you to reflect on your level of agreement with the following statements **now**.

	Before Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I have developed a tool kit to interrupt bias. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
I have strong leadership skills for working with people of different urban/rural identities. (11)	O	O	O	O	O

I have developed concrete skills to work toward greater equity. (12)	O	O	O	O	O

Q99 How do you see this intergroup dialogue contribute to bridging the urban-rural divide?
_____

End of Block: Behavior
Start of Block: APOS-2
Q101 Please respond to the items in this questionnaire by clicking on one of the following five response options for each item: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree.

	Before Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Urban people receive more governmental resources than rural people. (10)	O	O	O	O	O
Rural people are more likely to suffer from mental illness than urban people. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people value less of their relationship with neighbors and others than rural people. (8)	O	O	O	O	O

Rural people don’t appreciate the importance of being educated than urban people. (12)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people care less about environmental degradation than rural people. (13)	O	O	O	O	O
Rural people have a harder time finding medical support than rural people. (14)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people often earn more money than rural people performing the same job. (15)	O	O	O	O	O
Rural people are more likely to participate in religious organizations than urban people. (16)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people are more likely to go to college than rural people. (17)	O	O	O	O	O

Rural people are more likely to be on welfare than urban people. (18)	O	O	O	O	O

End of Block: APOS-2
Start of Block: Program Knowledge and Demographics
Q90 You are almost done with the survey. Please share your demographics to help us learn more about the program.
Q91 What racial or ethnic group describes you? Select as many as apply to you.

- ☐ African (1)
- ☐ Asian American (3)
- ☐ Black/Black American (4)
- ☐ Chicano/a/x (5)
- ☐ East Asian (14)
- ☐ Hawaiian (6)
- ☐ Latino/a/x (7)
- ☐ Middle Eastern/North African (8)
- ☐ Multiracial (9)
- ☐ Indigenous/Native American (10)
- ☐ Pacific Islander (11)
- ☐ South East Asian (2)
- ☐ South Asian (16)

- [ ] White and multiracial (12)
- [ ] White (15)
- [ ] Prefer not to say (13)
- [ ] Other: (17) _____

Q92 Which gender identity describes you? Select as many as apply to you.

- [ ] Agender (1)
- [ ] Bigender (2)
- [ ] Gender Non-conforming (3)
- [ ] Genderqueer (4)
- [ ] Gender Fluid (5)
- [ ] Intersex (6)
- [ ] Man (7)
- [ ] Non-binary (8)
- [ ] Pangender (9)
- [ ] Questioning (10)
- [ ] Transgender (11)
- [ ] Two-spirit (12)
- [ ] Woman (13)

☐ Prefer not to answer (14)

☐ Additional identities and information/prefer to self-describe: (15)
_____

Q93 Any other information about racial/ethnic group that you would like to share?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q94 I am an international student.

O Yes (1)

O No (2)

Q95 Age
_____

Q96 Which of the following best characterizes your anticipated career path?

O Arts (1)

O Business (2)

O Education (3)

O Law (4)

O Medicine or Health Services (5)

O Non-profit (6)

O Private Sector (7)

O Public Service/Government (8)

O Research/Lab/Science (9)

O Engineering/Technology (10)

O Community Organizing or Social Justice Work (11)

O Student Affairs or other Higher Ed (12)

O Not Sure (13)

O Other, please specify (14) _____

Q97 What college are you in at MSU? (Check all that apply).

- ☐ Agriculture and Natural Resources (1)
- ☐ College of Arts and Letters (2)
- ☐ Communication Arts and Sciences (3)
- ☐ Education (4)
- ☐ Eli Broad College of Business (5)
- ☐ Engineering (6)
- ☐ Graduate School (7)
- ☐ Honors College (8)
- ☐ Human Medicine (9)
- ☐ International Studies and programs (10)
- ☐ James Madison (11)
- ☐ Law (12)
- ☐ Lyman Briggs (13)
- ☐ Music (14)
- ☐ Natural Science (15)

☐ Nursing (16)

☐ Osteopathic Medicine (17)

☐ Residential College in the Arts and Humanities (18)

☐ Social Science (19)

☐ Vet med (20)

Q98 How did you learn about the Urban-Rural Dialogues program?

_____

Q100 Please provide any comments that would better help us understand your responses to the above questions or anything else you want us to know.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Program Knowledge and Demographics

Thank you very much for completing the Urban-Rural Dialogues pre-survey. Your responses will help us better provide the intergroup dialogue experience in the near future. We sincerely thank you for your participation in the urban-rural dialogues. If you have questions or would like to get connected, please email me at charlie7@msu.edu.

Thank you, Charlie

APPENDIX E - URBAN-RURAL DIALOGUE POST SURVEY

Post-survey link: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0322Ijlaejk8WlE

Urban-Rural Dialogues Post-Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Q1 Thanks for being involved in Urban-Rural Dialogues in Fall 2023 The survey is a 10-minute web-based survey that asks about your perceptions of urban/rural identities after you participate in dialogue. We want the survey to represent all participants, including those of all ages, genders, races and sexualities. The survey is voluntary and you can choose to skip any questions or stop the survey at any time. Your responses to the survey questions will remain confidential. For questions about the survey, please email Michael Kaplowitz at kaplowit@msu.edu or Charles Liu at charlie7@msu.edu.

Q2 Which urban/rural identity would you describe about yourself now?

O Urban (1)

O Rural (2)

O Self-Describe (4) _____

Display This Question: If Which urban/rural identity would you describe about yourself now? = Urban

Q123 On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the weakest and 10 being the strongest), how strong do you feel about your urban identity?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Urban (1)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

Display This Question: If Which urban/rural identity would you describe about yourself now? = Rural

Q124 On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the weakest and 10 being the strongest), how strong do you feel about your rural identity?

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)
Rural (1)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Thoughts, Skills, and Actions

Q3 Please rate the following statements about how you feel now.

	After Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)

I recognize and challenge my own thinking around urban-rural identities. (1)	O	O	O	O	O
I am open to new ideas and ways of understanding urban-rural identites. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
I am aware of my social identities. (3)	O	O	O	O	O
I understand which of my identities give me privilege or not. (6)	O	O	O	O	O
I try to educate myself about people of different urban/rural identities through reading, watching films, talking to others, etc. (9)	O	O	O	O	O
I notice biased comments, jokes or microaggressions. (8)	O	O	O	O	O

Q125 In what ways, if any, are you aware of your social identities, privilege, and oppression in your [urban/rural] context?

_____

End of Block: Thoughts, Skills, and Actions
Start of Block: Behavior
Q4 This question asks you to think about how frequently you did the things **now**.

	After Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Almost Always (5)
I listen actively to others. (10)	O	O	O	O	O
I am exposed to diversity on campus. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
I have gotten to know people from different urban/rural identities. (8)	O	O	O	O	O

Q126 How do you perceive your relationship, if any, with people of other groups that is different from your urban/rural identity?

_____

Q5 This question asks you to think about how frequently you did the things **now**.

	After Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Almost Always (5)
I participate in activities that further justice and equity. (6)	O	O	O	O	O
I plan to join organizations or activities with people of different urban/rural identities. (5)	O	O	O	O	O

I interrupt biased comments, jokes and/or microaggressions. (11)	O	O	O	O	O
I use PALS (Pause, Acknowledge/Ask, Listen, & Share Stories) as a way to intervene. (12)	O	O	O	O	O
I reframe debates into dialogues. (13)	O	O	O	O	O

Q127 What strategies, if any, would you use to interrupt bias, derogatory comments or jokes and/or microaggressions against an urban or rural person?

_____

Q6 This question asks you to reflect on your level of agreement with the following statements **now**.

	After Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
I have developed a tool kit to interrupt bias. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
I have strong leadership skills for working with people of different urban/rural identities. (11)	O	O	O	O	O

I have developed concrete skills to work toward greater equity. (12)	O	O	O	O	O

Q7 How do you now see this intergroup dialogue contribute to bridging the urban-rural divide?

_____

End of Block: Behavior
Start of Block: APOS-2
Q122 Please respond to the items in this questionnaire by clicking on one of the following five response options for each item: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, or Strongly Agree.

	After Urban-Rural Dialogues				
	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Urban people receive more governmental resources than rural people. (10)	O	O	O	O	O
Rural people are more likely to suffer from mental illness than urban people. (2)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people value less of their relationship with neighbors and others than rural people. (8)	O	O	O	O	O

Rural people don’t appreciate the importance of being educated than urban people. (12)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people care less about environmental degradation than rural people. (13)	O	O	O	O	O
Rural people have a harder time finding medical support than rural people. (14)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people often earn more money than rural people performing the same job. (15)	O	O	O	O	O
Rural people are more likely to participate in religious organizations than urban people. (16)	O	O	O	O	O
Urban people are more likely to go to college than rural people. (17)	O	O	O	O	O

Rural people are more likely to be on welfare than urban people. (18)	O	O	O	O	O

End of Block: APOS-2
Start of Block: Program Assessment and Demographics
Q105 How likely is it that you will recommend participating in Dialogue to a friend?

O Not at all likely (1)

O Unlikely (2)

O Not sure (3)

O Likely (4)

O Very likely (5)

Q106 Please share your reasons:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q107 During the dialogue sessions, we covered a lot of material including, but not limited to the following list. Please check all the material that was most meaningful to you in dialogue.

☐ Dialogue v. Debate (1)

☐ Active Listening (2)

☐ Responding to triggers (3)

☐ Social identity (4)

☐ Implicit bias (5)

☐ Microaggressions (6)

☐ PALS (7)

- [ ] History read-around (8)
- [ ] Cycle of socialization (9)
- [ ] Caucus groups and fish bowls (10)
- [ ] Allyhood (12)
- [ ] Apologizing (13)
- [ ] "Hot Topics" (11)
- [ ] Other (15)

Q108 If you checked 'other' above, please explain;

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q110 From the list above, what activities do you think we could definitely keep or eliminate in future years?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q111 What activity or topic you wish us to cover more to bridge the urban-rural divide?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q113 How could we improve Urban-Rural Dialogues?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q114 Please share strengths and weaknesses of your co-facilitation team

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q109 What was most meaningful to you about your experience in dialogue this year?

_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q115 You are almost done with the survey. Please share your demographics to help us learn more about the program.

Q116 What racial or ethnic group describes you? Select as many as apply to you.

- ☐ African (1)
- ☐ Asian American (3)
- ☐ Black/Black American (4)
- ☐ Chicano/a/x (5)
- ☐ East Asian (14)
- ☐ Hawaiian (6)
- ☐ Latino/a/x (7)
- ☐ Middle Eastern/North African (8)
- ☐ Multiracial (9)
- ☐ Indigenous/Native American (10)
- ☐ Pacific Islander (11)
- ☐ South East Asian (2)
- ☐ South Asian (16)
- ☐ White and multiracial (12)
- ☐ White (15)

- [ ] Prefer not to say (13)
- [ ] Other: (17) _____

Q117 Which gender identity describes you? Select as many as apply to you.

- [ ] Agender (1)
- [ ] Bigender (2)
- [ ] Gender Non-conforming (3)
- [ ] Genderqueer (4)
- [ ] Gender Fluid (5)
- [ ] Intersex (6)
- [ ] Man (7)
- [ ] Non-binary (8)
- [ ] Pangender (9)
- [ ] Questioning (10)
- [ ] Transgender (11)
- [ ] Two-spirit (12)
- [ ] Woman (13)
- [ ] Prefer not to answer (14)

☐ Additional identities and information/prefer to self-describe: (15)
_____

Q118 Any other information about racial/ethnic group that you would like to share?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q119 I am an international student.

O Yes (1)

O No (2)

Q120 Age
_____

Q121 Please provide any comments that would better help us understand your responses to the above questions or anything else you want us to know.
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

End of Block: Program Assessment and Demographics

Thank you very much for completing the Urban-Rural Dialogues post-survey. Your responses will help us better provide the intergroup dialogue experience in the near future. We sincerely thank you for your participation in the urban-rural dialogues. If you have questions or would like to get connected, please email me at charlie7@msu.edu.
Thank you, Charlie

APPENDIX F - DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS TIMELINE

Table 3.1: Fall 2023 to summer 2024 data collection timeline plan

	Fall 2023 Semester					Spring 2024 Semester					Summer 2024 Semester	
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024
Data Collection			Prep Pretest	Prep posttest				Pretest	posttest		Pretest	posttest
Data Analysis					**Preparation of Data Clean**					**Data Clean**		
IGD Sessions			Preparation of 6 Urban-Rural Dialogue Sessions					6 Urban-Rural Dialogue Sessions			6 Urban-Rural Dialogue Sessions	

Table 3.2: Fall 2024 to summer 2025 backup plan for additional data collection and analysis

	Fall 2024 Semester					Spring 2025 Semester					Summer 2025 Semester	
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
	2024	2024	2024	2024	2024	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025	2025
Data Collection			Pretest	posttest				Pretest	posttest			
Data Analysis					**Data Clean**					**Data Clean/ Final Data Analysis**		
IGD Sessions			6 Urban-Rural Dialogue Sessions					6 Urban-Rural Dialogue Sessions				

APPENDIX G - CURRICULUM ON THE URBAN-RURAL DIALOGUE

Overview of the Urban-Rural Intergroup Dialogue (URD) Curriculum

Program Goals

1. Understanding of concepts pertaining to urban-rural identity; individual/institutional oppression and privilege; and inclusive practices.
2. Skill building to create more inclusive communities; more productive engagement across differences; and more effectively managed conflicts.
3. Learning experiences that promote and facilitate program development centered on social justice and inclusion.

Group Objectives

1. Increase urban-rural awareness of personal social identity and awareness of different identities, the concept of intersectionality, and why intersectionality is important.
2. Improve intergroup understanding, trust, and cohesion to bridge the urban-rural division.
3. Develop strategies/skills to interrupt bias, as well as practice said strategies/skills to prepare to intervene when necessary.
4. Explore ways of working together toward promoting inclusion and social justice in/through academic degree programs.

Thematic Overview

- Session 1: Dialogue Foundation and Forming Relationships
- Session 2: Understanding Our Social Identity
- Session 3: Historical Read-Around and Interrupting Bias
- Session 4: Individual Oppression: Stereotypes, Microaggressions, Bias, and Perspective-Taking
- Session 5: Group Privilege and Creating Inclusive Spaces
- Session 6: Hot Topics and Actions to Allyhood

Session Structure

- Brave space and group building warm-up
- Core concepts and topics
- Activities, dialogue, and reflection/collaboration
- Group experience reflection/survey
- Closing – group debrief and closing activity

Capacity Building (Skills)

- Self-Awareness
- Perspective Taking
- Mindfulness (Guided imagery)
- Active (Deep) Listening
- Interrupting prejudice and discrimination (PALS - Pause, Ask, Listen, Share)
- Goal setting

Tools/Practices

- Mindfulness practices to stay grounded/present and build awareness:
    - Guided Imagery

    - Breath Awareness
    - Body Scan
    - Labeling Thoughts and Emotions
- ACT for active listening
- REAACT for apologizing when made a mistake
- PALS for interrupting challenging moments
- ALLY for committing to allyship as a process

Session 1: Dialogue Foundations and Forming Relationships

Session Objectives

- Define dialogue and active listening, distinguish dialogue from debate, and understand the benefits of dialogue
- Practice dialogue and active listening skills
- Develop group rapport and connection
- Share individual and group hopes and fears related to the dialogue experience and acknowledge fear as normal/common and something we can work from

Brave Space Warm-up and Group Building Activity

Guided Imagery Activity: *Safe space, where you feel welcomed, included, and embraced*

- Share out in pairs
- Debrief as a big group – What did you share? How did it feel to share your safe space? How did it feel to listen to your partner share their safe space?
- *Facilitator Note: We will be using guided imagery as a skill and practice throughout the program. This skill can bring into focus an experience and the thoughts/feelings tied to that experience that is relevant to who we are. Imagery is also a useful tool to use to prepare for performance experiences. We can rehearse a performance to prepare for it and anticipate the thoughts/emotions that may be more/less helpful for us to be at our best.*

Introduction - Overview Weekly Structure & Program Agenda (Weeks 1-6)

What is Intergroup Dialogue (IGD), and why use this process in the Urban-Rural Divide?

- *"Intergroup Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn."*
- Studying a topic we care about—bridging the urban-rural divide—can be a unifying, empowering force that brings people with different backgrounds, experiences, identities, and beliefs together and makes us all the better as students/people and a society
- Intergroup Dialogue can help us recognize similarities and honor differences within our group and in our people/community to better ensure its unifying, empowering potential is realized.
- Diversity & inclusion can optimize our performance, growth, & social progress
    - Growth – Diversity broadens our skills and perspectives
    - Academic performance – We perform at our peak when we feel supported and worthy because we can stay fully present (flow) – show diagram
    - Social progress – We can become better leaders, teammates, and champions of change
- Just like your persistence in completing your academic degree, intergroup dialogue is a process that we commit to build our dialogic capacity and develop skills to effectively engage across differences inside and outside this academic space. The right balance of challenge (difficult conversations, differences in opinion, and even conflict) and support (treating people with dignity/respect and openness to learn) in this space, just like in your education, will help us grow.

Core Dialogue Concepts & Practices – INTERGROUP DIALOGUE

Dialogue - discovering a shared truth by combining all our stories given aspects of our identity/experiences/beliefs/background – social, personal, or another descriptor (show cartoon of scientists)

Visualization exercise (as practice)

Consider a recent experience that you've had in which you engaged in a conversation about the difference between people living in urban and rural places (visualization 1 – debate and visualization 2 - dialogue) with someone else (student, instructor, parent, etc.).

Alternatively, imagine you are having a heated conversation with another person with a different urban/rural identity than you about whether government assistance (e.g., food stamps for low-income families) is good for the general welfare.

Group Debrief Question

- Which experience or conversation type is more common (i.e., debate or dialogue)?
- What experience or conversation type is more common when talking about race, gender, or other social identity characteristics in an urban-rural divide topic?
    - What bodily reactions do you have?
    - What kinds of feelings does the experience elicit?
- What obstacles might we encounter in this space?

Dialogue v. Debate Components (Chart)

Active Listening

Ask: Who is someone in your life who is a great listener? Why are they a good listener? What makes them a good listener? How do they actively listen? How does it make you feel when someone actively listens to you?

3 Levels of Listening: Internal, Active (Ask – Clarify – Tell me more), and Global

Active Listening Practice

- *What is your favorite place on campus?* Provide them with 30 seconds to think. Share in pairs for 1 minute each.

Group Debrief: How did this make you feel? What did you notice about your experience debating compared to dialoguing? How is active listening different from normal listening?

Brave Space

Building skills requires taking risks, being uncomfortable, and making/learning from mistakes. We are on our growth/learning edge.

Balance Support & Challenge - Threshold of Discomfort

- Buttons Pushed: When an individual says or does something that makes us feel hurt, offended, threatened, stereotyped, discounted, or attacked. Does not necessarily threaten our physical safety, but we may be threatened, and our sense of justice violated.
- Think of a time when your buttons were pushed (show a LIST of various emotions). Where did you feel it in your body? What thoughts/reactions do you typically have? Look

at the list and identify how you typically respond. How do you want to respond in this space?

Depth of Sharing - Reflection of Short Survey Completion

Closing Activity - Hopes and Fears

Invite participants to write hopes on one side of a 3x5 card and fears on the other (Google Jamboard) —related specifically to this urban-rural intergroup dialogue experience. Do not have them write their names on the cards. Collect the cards, shuffle them, and pass them out again. Have the group read the fears first, one by one, out loud, and then the hopes.

Debrief: What do we notice about our hopes and fears? Similarities and differences?

Facilitator Notes: Fears in this space translate to where our family lives (urban or rural regional identity)—self-doubts about our inexperience or inability; fears of messing up/making a mistake that hurts others; or being judged. Often, people are afraid of offending someone during our dialogue process. It is useful to point this out, which helps everyone realize they are not alone in this fear.

In this space, we will learn to change our relationships to discomfort (e.g., fear of making a mistake, being seen as ignorant, being called in/out, not belonging/being worthy, exclusion). This discomfort is not something we need to avoid. We don't need to feel less because discomfort is normal and common. Our attitude and desire to make the discomfort go away often impact us more than the feeling itself. Feelings are information, perhaps that we need to step back (buttons pushed), but more often, an indication that we are about to stretch ourselves and can be an opportunity to learn through challenges. We can still act even if we are uncomfortable (like nerves/lack of confidence talking about our urban/rural family background). We are more than our feelings. We don't have to wait to feel confident or fearless. Confidence comes after—and from—our learning and actions (See Harris, 2011, The Confidence Gap).

Choice point analogy

- Pulse check–reset your focus to move through the discomfort/nerves
- Take space/share space from the conversation (white participants need to contribute & share airtime and not just have folks of the color bear burden of educating) Ex. 1. I'm nervous/scared/uncomfortable saying this and/but ...; 2. From my experience as (identity)...; 3. I'm afraid I may offend someone, and please let me know if I do, but ...; 4. It feels risky to say this/and I'm not sure if I am making sense but ...

Reflection Journal Questions

1. Now that we have finished our first session, how have your hopes and expectations for yourself and this urban-rural dialogue experience changed, if at all?
2. Reflecting on our first session, what thoughts or insights do you have about how you would set the stage for dialogue next time?
3. How would you prepare yourself to practice good active/mindful listening as a participant in the remainder 5 sessions together?
4. What do you want to listen for and pay attention to when participating in a group? For example,
    a. Voice: Who is speaking? Who isn't? What is said/not said?

b. Power: Who speaks first? Most often? Who takes space?
c. Identity: What perspectives are represented? What is silenced?
d. Emotion: How are feelings (not) showing up? How are they acknowledged/addressed?
e. Energy: What mood(s) do you perceive? Nonverbals you observe?

5. How might you personally reflect on or manage any of the above while participating?

Supplemental Materials

- Introduction to intergroup dialogue https://youtu.be/-HakVaSyzLc?si=lQskcId9fD9uNlEk
- This Kentucky singer-songwriter seeks to bridge the urban-rural divide https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kI59v5jNlic

Session 2: Identity and Responding to Bias

Session objectives

- Define concepts related to identity, diversity, and privilege
- Deepen understanding of self and others, especially those who value different identity descriptors for themselves and others
- Explore how, if at all, norms/interactions may honor or other/exclude aspects of our urban-rural identities and its (dis)empowering effects
- Recognize sensations (tension) that show up in our body during difficult conversations and interactions, and practice releasing these to stay brave in response to bias(es)

Brave Space and Group Building Warm-up

Body Scan

- We use the sensations in our body as an anchor for the present moment and try to recognize and release tension that we may feel with an attitude of curiosity and kindness. We all have different relationships with our bodies, so be sure to do what is within your 'brave zone', trying to be gentle and open to whatever arises, knowing that you can pause at any time if the experience is overwhelming.
- We will use this skill, body scan, today to check in with ourselves and prime us to do so later in the session as a way to identify how emotions and tension show up in our body during difficult conversations and interactions and how we can recognize or release that tension. *[Facilitator instruction to the participants: We generate the tension we carry as we put our palms together. If you are able, rub your hands together, and on the count of 3, we clap together to release tension outside of our body]*

Identity Box

- 1 minute, each person shares the object they brought in that represents their urban/rural identity/racial identity/gender identity/etc. One facilitator should go first and demonstrate how to do this quickly but meaningfully.

Establishing Community Aspirations Activity - Cultivating a Shared-Brave Space

- Community Aspirations: Aspirations for this community are something that we all design together; we agree to them as a community; we use them so that we can all stay in a shared-brave place as much as possible; we can modify them when we see we need to. They are not written in stone.
- Ex. Take space, give space (attention to privileged silence v. emotional labor); name difficult moments (oops, ouch); speak from personal experience; don't freeze people in time; share air time; be aware of intent versus impact; embrace mistakes and apologize when necessary; take the learning, leave the stories; treat people with dignity[7]

Reminders

[7] https://drdonnahicks.com/books/dignity/

- We want to actively listen to different opinions and manage conflict in a most productive way that can allow for growth– as long as it is respectful. We are striving to be mindful of "perspective taking".
- Our goal is to surface different opinions and really listen to one another to add to the common pool of knowledge.

Group Debrief:

- How might this work for our urban/rural dialogue context? How are these defined? How will we ensure all voices and perspectives are balanced/honored and given weight in decision-making?
- Facilitator note: Today, we will more deeply unpack inclusion and identity, and we encourage you to continue to ask these questions.

Core Dialogue Concepts & Practices – IDENTITY Common Language – definitions impact our understanding/perspective

- Diversity: The all-encompassing differences that make up a complete person. Differences can be visible or less readily seen. Diversity is about embracing differences rather than taking the melting pot view and erasing them as is framed here. We can unify or come together, such as in college, by adding our differences in perspective, creative thought, and skills to our collective assets.
- Personal identity: Characteristics or descriptors that are less socially recognized as representative of a group, such as personality, values, role/job, and/or relation.
    - Note: Identity is fluid, multi-dimensional, and some aspects are core/peripheral, deep/superficial.
- Social Identity: People who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within one of the social identity categories. Some identities are more visible than others; we are born into identities, and some may change over time/space, with some debate about whether we can be "born" only to belong to a particular group (gender).
- Social group status: Individuals have greater access to power based upon membership in their social group (groups with more power – dominant/privileged/oppressor v. groups with less power – marginalized/minoritized/facing oppression).
    - Note: racism, sexism, and other "isms" as systems of oppression
- Privilege: Advantages, favors, and benefits to members of groups with more power at the expense of groups with less power. These advantages are unearned and often invisible, and they are not available to groups with less power.
    - Having privilege does not make you a good or bad person. Rather, it considers how systems afford individuals advantages and are not something you can give up. Social systems of our culture give you privilege no matter what.
    - Privilege does not mean someone can't work hard to achieve success.
    - What you choose to do with your privilege can make a difference. You are more than your privilege (or guilt that you feel – note: can use body scan).
    - Lots of people get really defensive when talking about privilege. Try not to get defensive. Recognizing our privileges (or those we lack) is simply important to understand your identity.

- Social identities to consider regarding: access and resources in urban/rural communities
    - Race: A social construct used to categorize people based on how they appear (color of skin, eyes, hair type, etc.). No genetic basis.
    - Gender: A social construct that refers to the complex relationship between physical traits and one's internal sense of self (how we identify); one's outward presentations & behaviors related to that perception; & social norms (i.e., what is defined as "masculine"/"feminine").
    - Gender non-conforming or non-binary: Gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity; a term used by some people who experience their gender identity or gender expression as falling outside the categories of man and woman.
    - Transgender: This term describes individuals whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth. Note: Pronouns are one way to show inclusivity and validate individuals in how they choose to identify (e.g., she, her, hers; he, him, his; they, them, theirs). Modifiers matter to normalize individuals' gender identities.
    - Ability (or alternatively, disability)[8]: A social construction to influence people to believe an able-body person is someone who can conduct their day-to-day activities without assistance to their physical/bodily/mental function. Disability, in contrast, is perceived as needing assistance in their day-to-day activities—visibly or invisibly. Being able-bodied is critical to their ability to work on a farm – what happens if they are hurt? Are other occupational opportunities afforded to them? In the alternative, what occupational opportunities for persons with physical or mental disabilities in an urban or rural setting?
- Intersectionality: Various marginalized identities may result in an interlocking, compounding experience of oppression (e.g., rural Hispanic/Latinx gay man working at a farm)

Depth of Sharing - Reflection of Short Survey Completion

Facilitator note:

- People may differently, or similarly, prioritize aspects of their identity
- We may have a limited perception of what others value and why it is important to them
- There are social norms/interactions within institutions and structures that reinforce ideas of certain identities as being more important than others; they also afford certain identities social privilege (white, male, able, cisgender)
- We might be interacting with people in power who take our identities away. We may
- be people in power, so make sure to honor other people's identities.

Closing Activity

- What's one specific action you can take to better understand your own privilege and the ways they influence how you show up in your urban/rural community?

[8] https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ888645.pdf

Reflection Journal Questions

- What were your personal insights from Session 2 about what comes up for *you* when sharing about your own social identity(ies) in a dialogue context? When listening to others about social identity(ies) in a dialogue context?
- What were your insights from Session 2 about what can come up for *others* or for groups as a whole (e.g., feelings, questions, resistance, etc.), when sharing and listening about social identity(ies) in a dialogue context?

Supplemental Materials

- Intersectionality https://youtu.be/uPtz8TiATJY
- Why Our Conversation About Rural America is Incomplete https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uT1rj08kGM

Session 3: Historical Read-Around, Perspective Taking, Early Social Learning

Session Objectives

- Illustrate historical events in the United States relating to power, privilege, and oppression
- Define and explore the concept and skill of perspective taking through reflection and dialogue with others (using "ACT" to practice deep listening)
- Understand what factors influence perspective taking, including our identities and social learning
- Explore our social learning process (socialization) about social identity characteristics (race/gender) using guided imagery and cycles of socialization
- Brave Space and Group Building Warmup

Core Dialogue Concepts & Practices – HISTORICAL READ-AROUND and PERSPECTIVE TAKING

Historical Read-Around

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CBqVQPnRoBvihZI73yRV57bLSLa0PtRC/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106511683103840845955&rtpof=true&sd=true

Use a set of slide decks of U.S. historical events from 1880 to present surrounding power, privilege, oppression, and marginalization of social identities—such as, race, gender, urban/rural, socioeconomic status, etc.

Group Debrief Questions

- What were you feeling during this activity?
- What surprised you?
- What were some moments of hope?
- What does this activity make you think about?

Perspective taking through deep listening

Divide the group in half as storytellers and listeners. Then ask participants to pair up a storyteller with a listener. Ask the storytellers to think about a (recent) moment or challenging situation when they recognized the different point-of-view of a person and were able to work productively through that difference such as preferred style of communication/acting, motive, and value. Storytellers have 2 minutes. Use **ACT** to engage in deep listening. Next, ask participants to rotate roles. Storytellers should become listeners and move to a different partner.

Use **ACT** as an active communication technique to practice with active listening

- **Ask** an open-ended question (i.e., what was that experience like for you?)

- **Clarify** – Paraphrase sparingly to acknowledge and check for understanding
- **Tell** me more – to keep conversation about the speaker, invite them to keep explore the topic/issue with "tell me more" instead of "me too"

Group Debrief Questions

- What was your storytelling and/or deep listening experience like? How did these feel?
- Was it easy/difficult to think of a time when you worked through an issue/point of difference using perspective taking?
- How did you broaden your perspective to consider someone's else's point of view?
- What insights did you glean from the experience that have been helpful to you in the future, either in interactions with others in life?
- What, if any, similarities or differences were there between the shared experiences as partners or as a whole group?

Takeaway

Define *perspective taking:* the ability to see a situation from the viewpoint of another. The ability to understand another person's feelings, intentions, thoughts, or view of a situation. Perspective taking is a good approach *to attempt* to understand the experiences of each other. We may only have one view of the world: our own. We can't trek a mile in someone else's place and fully understand their experience but we can trek alongside them and try. Our lenses are deep-rooted to who we are. Working across differences requires perspective-taking as we adopt others' perspectives in order to effectively communicate and use all of our strengths and accomplish a common goal.

What shapes our perspective?

Our experiences, identities/roles, personality traits, information available, values, biases, and social learning… Perspective taking is our effort to reposition ourselves physically and/or mentally to consider the experiences or perspectives of others. By doing so we improve our ability to understand, communicate and empathize.

Early Learning Guided Imagery Activity (Optional)

What is an early childhood memory that you have about our urban/rural identity group, perhaps a time when the fact of urban/rural difference became apparent to you somehow? Or maybe the moment/event when you realized your urban/rural identity.

Facilitator Note: Imagery can sometimes bring up powerful thoughts/emotions. These are valid and if at any point you feel overwhelmed, honor yourself and step out.

Reflect

- What early experience did you recreate and what sensations, thoughts, and emotions most readily emerged?

- What sensations, thoughts, and emotions came up as you *stepped back* from your early experience to observe your now?

Group Debrief

- Share your early memory: What sensations, thoughts, and feelings did you recall?
- Share your experience with the guided imagery: What thoughts/emotions came up when you stepped back from the memory and into the now?
- How, if at all, has this early experience (learning) impacted you through your life and work? In your personal thoughts and experiences?
- Why do you think this is the case? If you don't think this is the case, why is that?
- How is it showing up now in your life today? Why is this the case?

Core Concepts

Socialization: A process that individuals acquire beliefs and behaviors about what is appropriate or possible specific to society or culture.

- Since we are born into this world we learn formal and informal rules about what we can/can't do and how to function in society. Through our social learning, we receive messages—*beliefs, stereotypes, values, and norms*.

Bias: An inclination that is usually unreasonable or inaccurate. Biases can be ***in favor*** of something or against something; they can be problematic since they don't allow the person with bias to consider all the facts when making a decision.

Prejudice: A (pre)judgment/opinion that is formed on insufficient grounds before facts are known or in disregard to facts (based on stereotypes)

Stereotypes: An *exaggerated or distorted belief* about a group of people. This can look like lumping people together and overlooking differences among group members.

- People are often biased against others outside of their own social group, showing prejudice (emotional bias), stereotypes (cognitive bias), and discrimination (behavioral bias).

Microaggressions: Everyday encounters of abuse that people of various marginalized identities experience throughout their lives. These may be intentional or unconscious and communicate hostile (insult), derogatory, or negative ideas about someone.

- Humor/jokes can be a microaggression, or blatantly discriminatory. Offensive jokes make people uncomfortable and reinforce exclusion/discrimination.

Cycle of Socialization Activity (Reference Diagram)

Stage 1: Early Learning — *From our earliest experiences, we learn lessons about our **own identities** through listening to our families and peers.*

- What were you taught about race/gender/social identities growing up? What are your early learnings?
- Do you remember your parents discussing these? If so, how? What were conversations like within your home? What messages, stereotypes, or prejudices did they communicate? What values and/or norms were communicated to you?

Examples: Girls are more emotional and less aggressive/competitive than boys; Boys don't cry; White people are smart; Muslims are terrorists; Fat people are lazy; Black people in urban areas live in the "ghetto" and White people in rural areas live in "trailer parks".

Stage 2: Outside the Home — *The messages received at home are reinforced when we go to school, watch media, play sports, and more. We learn from authority figures and we internalize these messages. Growing up, think about your urban/rural community's demographic make-up.*

- Did you have teachers/coaches/role models who looked like you—what messages, stereotypes, or values did they communicate?
- What were your conversations about race/gender/social identities with your friends and community like? What unspoken (implicit) messages did you receive about race/gender/social identities with your friends and community? What about in school? What about sport or recreation in your urban/rural community?
- How were these messages repeated/reinforced over time by parents, peers, friends, and other significant figures?

Examples: Everyone living out in the rural countryside who plays football is white; Urban Black kids are good at basketball and football; Being thin means you are beautiful; We don't see/talk about race and treat everyone equal; Black women are angry and sassy.

Stage 3: Institutional socialization — *These messages are reinforced all the time.*

- How have all these messages been reinforced or repeated *over time* in **urban/rural communities?**
- How are these messages *currently reinforced in your urban/rural space* in your interactions with others? As a result, what messages are reinforced?
- How, if at all, have all these messages been reinforced *over time* by news media and culture?

Examples: Women who are ambitious are too masculine; If you tell someone you think their joke isn't funny, you are too PC or sensitive; Rural communities are all Republicans and urban communities are Democrats that are portrayed by the news media.

Stage 4: Results

- How has your social learning impacted your life? Your own identities and relations?
- How do these socializations make you feel? (e.g., angry, guilty, embarrassed, ignorant, supported?)
- How have these messages impacted you as an urban/rural person? Your relationships and interactions with others in your rural/urban upbringing?

Stage 5: Actions

- As a result of thinking about how you have been socialized, are there certain things you might want to do about it? Specifically, in your urban/rural identity?

Examples: Prove them wrong; Defy the stereotype; Stand up when others make "jokes"; Be myself; Learn about new identities; Read more; Be aware.

Virtual Walk: Give participants 15 minutes in breakout rooms to discuss each stage.

Large Group Debrief

- How did you feel doing this exercise?
- What was difficult about this exercise?
- Did you find it surprising?
- What keeps us in this cycle?
- What did we learn about ourselves through this exercise?

Depth of Sharing — Reflection of Short Survey Completion

Closing Activity

- One word or phrase [#Label] to describe how you are feeling or thinking after our session
- One word or phrase to describe how you want to act (respond) given this thought or feeling

Journal Questions

- What sensations, thoughts, and feelings come up for you in the historical read-around?
- How do your identities (both privileged and marginalized), and your lived experience around those identities influence your thinking and your actions?

Supplemental Materials

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg
- Contextualize the urban-rural divide https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6XIsQCKcRE

Session 4: Individual Oppression -- Stereotypes, Microaggressions, Bias and Interrupting

Session Objectives

- Define individual oppression, its link to institutional oppression, and key concepts related to individual oppression
- Reflect and dialogue about how we act around issues of exclusion/othering in urban/rural communities
- Recognize our difficult thoughts/emotions tied to these challenging moments and how to make space for them to respond rather than react
- Practice PALS to interrupt prejudicial, marginalizing comments

Brave Space and Group Building Warm-up

- *Body scan – release and relax tension*
- Share with the group: What's a way that you release stress/de-stress in your life?

Core Dialogue Concepts & Practices– INDIVIDUAL OPPRESSION

Racism and sexism are defined as an overall system and pattern that benefits one group and disadvantages the other group. However, we often think of xenophobia, racism, or sexism as something one individual does. Additionally, we usually think of extreme examples of xenophobia, like calling someone an ethnic slur or not giving someone a job because of their gender. But there are many forms of sexism, racism, and other oppressions. Today, we will be talking about individual oppression.

Key Terms to Remember (Revisit)

- *Bias:* An inclination that is usually unreasonable or inaccurate. Biases can be in favor of something or against something. *Implicit bias* refers to the unconscious biases, stereotypes, and beliefs we hold that inform and shape our behavior. These beliefs can impact our decision-making and interactions in the same way as the biases of which we are aware. We all have biases!
- Prejudice v. Discrimination; Oppression; Stereotypes; Microaggressions (see Session 3)

Institutional Oppression & Individual-Institutional Connection:

- **Individual:** Attitudes and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate prejudice and discrimination, and can occur at unconscious & conscious levels
- **Institutional:** Policies, rules, laws enacted by organizations and institutions that disadvantage some social identity groups
    - For example: The digital divide between urban and rural communities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Pew Research

https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/08/19/some-digital-divides-persist-between-rural-urban-and-suburban-america/)

- Individual and institutional forms are linked. What we do reinforces systems in place but we also learn these behaviors/attitudes from social systems/norms.

Four Corners

This activity helps participants think about ways in which they act around issues of exclusion/othering or "individual racism" or "individual sexism" as an urban/rural person. Divide the group into small groups. In their small groups, ask them to move around the room and discuss the question posted in each corner with their small group. Tell them to please use personal examples, if possible in their urban/rural identity.

1. Discuss a time when you were targeted for one of your social identities. If you have not experienced it, why do you believe it hasn't happened to you?
2. Share a time when targeted another individual for their identity through direct action or inaction.
3. Share a time when you interrupted or stopped someone else who was targeting someone for their identity.
4. Discuss a time when you witnessed someone targeting someone for their social identity but did not intervene. What type of internal reaction did you have to not intervening?

Group Debrief

- What was it like talking about these four situations?
- Which corner was easiest for you to be in? Hardest?
- Did you experience anything that made you feel defensive, on edge, or get your buttons pushed? When?
- What made it easy to talk? Difficult?
- What were some barriers, filters that might have interfered with you hearing what others were saying?
- Did you feel reluctant to talk in a particular corner? Why?

Brave Space Pause: *Body Scan and Box Breathing Exercise* (3-5 minutes)

Group Debrief

- What was this experience like? What did you notice? Did you have any tension in your body? Did your mind wander?
- Were you able to focus your attention back to the scan?
- What thoughts or feelings were underneath these sensations?
- What insights might you glean from this check-in?

PALS urban-rural-specific practice

P – Pause/Stop the conversation and compose yourself

- Slow the conversation. Don't let oppressive statements go by without being checked.
- "Excuse me, I'm wondering about what you just said."

A – Acknowledge what the person is saying.

- Even if it is at odds with your own ideas, acknowledging shows respect/dignity/interest in dialogue and gives people the opportunity to think deeply about their ideas and beliefs.
- *"What I hear you saying is…". "I appreciate your thinking on this…." "That sounds important. Can you say more?"*
- Let them know what you think you heard them say. It is possible that you heard them wrong. Sometimes that is all you need to do. When you reflect back to them, they may change their position: *"I think I heard you say that…"*

L - Listen to what the person said.

- Listening shows you respect the person's dignity; be open to challenging your own thinking; and be mindful of your body language

S - Speak your truth. Share your story.

- Use facts, context, and, if possible, tell a story or share your learning: *"Folks who receive extra time on tests need to have the extra time. My friend uses extra time to take her tests; due to her learning disability, her brain works a little differently."*

PALS practice/role-play

Choose a situation or comment to role-play how you might handle/manage a challenging situation

- "That's so gay!"
- "You're so smart for a _____person."
- "Urban Black people are better athletes. Just look at their upbringing into the NBA."
- "Rural farm kids have no skills in basketball, all they play is American football."
- "It was just a joke. Everything has to be so PC and sensitive to feelings."
- "I'm White but I grew up poor on a farm and worked for every opportunity I got. I'm offended when people say I'm privileged. It's simple: if you work hard, you can succeed."

Group Debrief

- Interrupting racism/sexism/prejudicial remarks takes a lot of practice, courage, and hard work. Practice is the only way to get better at it.
- What do you think will be hardest for you to interrupt racism in an urban/rural community that is other than your own rural/urban identity?
- Is this something you can imagine doing?
- What if other people laugh at you, or get angry at you?
- How will it feel to notice a racist comment and *not* say something?

Depth of Sharing - Reflection of Short Survey Completion

Closing Activity

- Share 1 strategy or practical tip that you think might help you navigate challenging situations when an urban/rural identity-related conflict arises.

Journal Questions

- How will you use the PALS skills in your spheres (personal, professional, and/or community)?
- After today's session, which activities would you use in your spheres (personal, professional, and/or community)?
- How would you mediate conflicts when people are being mocked or discriminated against, such as their urban/rural identity, race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, height, weight, etc.?

Session 5: Group Privilege and Creating Inclusive Spaces

Session Objectives

- Explore how our social identities and privileges, or lack thereof, impact our life experiences.
- Debunk commonly held myths/values held in urban/rural identities
- Explore the ways we have (or don't have) social privilege and how privilege relates to institutional and individual oppression
- Consider what power we have to effect change given our social privilege
- Understand social justice and the difference between equity/equality

Brave Space and Group Building Warm Up

- Breath awareness activity
- What concept/activity/aspect of your learning experience in our urban-rural dialogue space have you become aware of or applied in your life outside our space?

Core Dialogue Concepts and Activities

- *Privilege:* A special right or advantage available only to a specific group of people and is unearned.

[Revisit from Session 2] Privilege/ Social Identity chart activity

Create your own privilege/social identity chart that reflects your awareness of the social groups you belong to. If you are more aware of a group (think of it more often), the total count is larger, while in comparison, if you are less aware the total count in the chart will be smaller.

Social Identity Chart - download if no file with your name

- What was the easiest part about filling in this chart? What was the hardest?
- What aspects of your identity do you think about most/least as an urban/rural person? In other social spaces?
- How has/does this impact(ed) your experience, performance, and development as an urban/rural person? In life?
- What privileges afforded to you given aspects of your identity—sources of support and resources—have helped you develop? Specifically, try reflecting on how your urban/rural identity have gotten you to where you are.
- What obstacles have you had to overcome involving social identity?
- If you could change one of your identities, which would it be? Why?

Take-home messages about privilege

- Everyone has privilege in some ways; recognizing and understanding our privilege is not about shame or guilt but about *challenging* the institutions that perpetuate inequality.

- Privilege does not mean that you haven't had struggles or challenges or that you haven't overcome adversity in life
- Conversations about privilege are uncomfortable, but they are necessary if we want to make things more equitable in society.

Popular Values and Myths in Urban/Rural Identities that Discount Social Privilege

- [Myth] *Meritocracy:* People can achieve anything through hard work and discipline; failure is a result of inability, lack of effort, and poor choices. Race, gender, and other social identities do not play a role.
- [Myth] Everyone who lives in rural communities in the United States vote for the Republican party because they are all white rural farmers, whereas everyone who lives in urban communities votes for the Democratic party because they are all minority non-white.
- [Myth] Rural communities do not value education (obtaining a college degree) as much as urban communities do; urban communities do not care about the environment (climate change) as much as rural communities do.
- [Myth] Rural communities face fewer poverty issues than urban communities do because they are in farming communities.
- [Myth] Rural communities have a stronger family structure than urban communities do as their values are strongly rooted in one true religion, Christianity.
- [Values] In urban/rural sports we celebrate the underdog and can be a path for social mobility to transcend hardship and social disadvantage, but not always.
- [Values]
- [Values]
- [Values]
- [Values]

Sources: *Political affiliation (Gimpel et al., 2020; Rodden, 2019), voting patterns (Gainsborough, 2005; Scala & Johnson, 2017), social beliefs (Cramer, 2016; Gimpel & Karnes, 2006), access to education and broadband internet (McFarland, 2018), economic growth (McFarland, 2018; Miller et al., 2002), and measures of health and well-being (Hanson et al., 2008; Swieki-Sikora, Henry, & Kepka, 2019; Singh & Siahpush, 2014).*

Ask the group: Which of these beliefs have you heard, believed, or experienced? How have they come up in your urban/rural community?

Transition: Effort, ability, and opportunity (including resources and social privilege) impact success in a diverse environment. The perception of urban/rural is often portrayed through a polarizing lens by news media or political affiliations. Urban/rural communities are microcosms of society and reflect/reinforce inequities that privilege certain individuals (giving them an unearned advantage).

Institutional Oppression (racism/cis-sexism): Policies, laws, rules, and customs enacted by organizations that disadvantage urban/rural minorities (cisgender women, BIPOC) and advantage white, heterosexual cisgender men. These institutions may include education, law, media, the health care system, voting, and housing.

Examples of other institutional inequities

- African American or Black males between the ages of 15 and 19 are 21 times more likely to be killed by police than their white counterparts
- Sentences imposed on Black males in the federal system are nearly 20 percent longer than those imposed on White males convicted of similar crimes
- White individuals at every level and educational attainment level earn, on average 20% more than their Black counterparts.
- Job applicants with "White sounding names" are 50% more likely to be called back for a job interview than applicants with "Black sounding names" even when their qualifications are indistinguishable
- In 2018, the median income for Black Americans is $38,555, compared with $63,155 in White families. Hispanic households have a median income of $46,882.
- Mortgages obtained by households of color tend to have higher interest rates.
- Black teens who experience racial discrimination in adolescence are more likely to have higher levels of blood pressure, body mass index, and higher levels of stress-related hormones once they turn 20.
- The infant mortality for Black babies is three times higher than White babies born to women with equal educational backgrounds.
- Black students make up 18% of preschool enrollment, but they comprise 48% of preschool students receiving more than one suspension out of school. In contrast, White students, representing 43% of preschool students, only receive 26% of out-of-school suspensions more than once.

Virtual Privilege Tally (Seeing Commonalities and Differences among Urban/Rural Participants)

Document true/false for each statement based on whether it applies to you. If true, then tally as +1. If false, then tally as -1. Note: The higher the number the greater the privilege.

- Growing up, I could easily find dolls or action figures with skin color like me.
- English is my first language.
- I do not need a ramp to access my school, home or any other building.
- My family employed people in my house to clean, garden, remove snow, or other physical labor. And these workers tended to be people of color.
- I have never been embarrassed or ashamed by my lack of material possessions.
- I have never tried to change my appearance, behavior, or speech to avoid being judged on the basis of my gender, race, or other identity.

- I have never been confused with or mislabeled as a race other than my own.
- I see members of my race depicted in healthy and positive ways frequently in mass media.
- I have never worried about going hungry or having access to a healthy meal.
- I have never been afraid of violence because of my race or ethnicity.
- I have never been afraid of violence because of my gender identity or sexual orientation.
- The history of my race was not taught as a special month or special chapter in the US History classes.
- My race is not considered exotic.
- I had more than fifty books in my house when I grew up.
- I have never had difficulty finding hair or skin products in a supermarket.
- My parents/guardian encouraged me to attend college.
- I can easily buy "flesh toned" band-aids and/or nude stockings matching my skin tone.
- I rarely think about my race.
- I rarely think about my gender identity or sexual orientation.
- I have attended a summer camp or traveled overseas.
- I have never been told I can't do something because of my gender.
- I don't know anyone who is/has been in jail or prison.
- No one has ever asked me or my family to see our legal documents.
- No one has ever asked if they could touch my hair because it was different.
- My parents completed high school.
- I have never felt watched by clerks more than others in a store because of my race.
- I have been offered a job or other opportunities because of my association or connection with a friend, family member or mentor.
- I do not worry about being stopped by security guards in public places (schools, government offices, office buildings) or police officers for no reason.
- I do/have not worried about holding hands with someone I am in a romantic relationship with
- I have never felt uncomfortable about a joke related to my racial or gender identity.
- I have never been threatened with violence because of my race or ethnicity.
- I have never been threatened with violence because of my gender or sexual identity
- I have never been threatened with violence because of my religion.
- Growing up, I have/had role models or professionals in positions of social power who look like me.
- The religious holidays I celebrate are recognized by my school, place of work or government.
- I have had access to organized sports.
- I feel safe walking alone at night.

FishBowl Group Debrief (Urban in one group, Rural in another group)

- Was this an easy exercise? How did completing this activity make you feel?
- What questions stood out to you? What surprised you?
- What troubled you? What were you proud about?

- Are there any privileges you may have overlooked?
- How, if at all, has this activity/experience shifted your definition of privilege?
- What form of privilege do you see as your power/responsibility to use to help others?

Depth of Sharing - Reflection of Short Survey Completion

To conclude - Equity versus Equality, and social justice

- *"Equality is giving everyone the same pair of shoes. Equity is giving everyone a pair of shoes that fits for them."*
- Equality means everyone is treated the same exact way, regardless of differences. Equity means everyone is provided with what they need to succeed.

- Social Justice is a verb in the act of social equity against social inequities. More information can be found at https://igr.umich.edu/about

Closing Activity

- What's one thing you learned today because of someone else's courage/vulnerability to share their perspective (offer your learning and person!).

Journal Reflections

- What "aha" moments inspired you in this session about urban-rural identities today?
- How might you bridge the urban-rural divide through intergroup dialogues?

Supplemental Materials

- Meet the Rural Americans who fear they're being forgotten https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAWwkzoOKgY
- Can the political divide be mended by bringing rural and urban students together? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQMZL5LD4_k

Session 6: Hot Topics and Actions to Allyhood

Session Objectives

- Define and productively discuss hot topics most relevant to the group practicing dialogue skills and processes
- Define allyship and explore ways to be an ally within our spheres of influence
- Understand aspects of creating inclusive spaces and create an action plan to bridge the urban-rural divide
- Celebrate the learning, growth, and bravery of the group through our process

Brave Space and Group Building Warm Up

- Thought Labeling
- What concept/activity/aspect of your learning experience in our dialogue space have you become aware of or applied to your life outside our space?

Key Concepts and Activities – Hot Topics

- Hot topics are challenging topics, rarely discussed in intergroup settings.
- Everything we have done so far is to get us to this point – to be able to talk about conflict in a dialogic setting.
- You may be confused, challenged, or triggered.
- Trust in the dialogue process. Remember our group norms, learning edges, and generous listening skills.
- Remember that the goal of dialogue is to add to the common pool of knowledge. Be open to being changed by what you hear.
- Remember that an open dialogue about hot topics helps us identify ways to build bridges across differences and explore ways to be allies.

Activity Reset: Thought/Emotion Labeling Guided Meditation
Key Concepts and Activities – Allyship to Bridge the Urban-Rural Divide

"There's multiple reasons why it would benefit me to move to a more urban area, a more progressive area. But I feel like the only way for the South and rural areas to change and to progress is for people to stay and live out those beliefs."

S.G. Goodman, 25SEP20, Season 2020 Episode 282, PBS' News Hour: Canvas Arts and Culture https://ket.org/program/pbs-newshour/this-kentucky-singer-seeks-to-bridge-the-urban-rural-divide/

ALLYSHIP for both Urban-Rural Communities

"*One in five rural residents are people of color, and they are two to three times more likely to be poor than rural whites. Diverse rural residents are also significantly more likely to live in*

impoverished areas that have been described as 'rural ghettos.' More than 98% of U.S. agricultural land is owned by white people, while over 83% of farmworkers are Hispanic…. A new federal antipoverty program – which urban communities also need – could go a long way to improving rural quality of life."

5 ways Biden can help rural America thrive and bridge the rural-urban divide
https://theconversation.com/5-ways-biden-can-help-rural-america-thrive-and-bridge-the-rural-urban-divide-150610

Ally: An ally is typically a member of advantaged social groups who uses social power to take a stand against social injustice directed at targeted groups (i.e. rural/urban whites who speak out against racism).

- Ally is a verb, not a noun.
- Allyship is an ongoing process, not a fixed identity.
- Being an ally doesn't mean you fully understand what it feels like to be oppressed but you take on the struggle.
- Anyone has the potential to be an ally. Allies recognize that, though they're not a member of the underinvested and oppressed communities they support, they make a concerted effort to better understand the struggle, every single day.
- Because an ally might have more privilege and recognizes said privilege, they are powerful voices *alongside* oppressed ones.

TO BE AN ALLY IS TO... Know your privilege and take on the struggle as your own

A – Always center the impacted - De-center yourself: Recognize that even though you feel pain, conversations are not about you.

L – Listen and learn from those who live in the oppression - Acknowledge that your words and actions are inherently shaped and influenced by systemic oppression, so check your biases; understand that your education is up to you and no one else; be willing to listen; own your mistakes and accept criticism.

L – Leverage your privilege - Stand up, even when you feel scared; transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it.

Y – Yield the floor - Amplify minoritized voices.

Common Mistakes – "Stepping On Toes" (Adapted from iKaylaReed)

Imagine your privilege is a heavy boot that keeps you from feeling when you're stepping on someone's feet or they're stepping on yours, while oppressed people have only sandals. If someone says, "ouch! You're stepping on my toes," how do you react? Because we can think more clearly about stepping on someone's literal toes than we usually do when it comes to oppression, the problems with many common responses are obvious:

- **Centering yourself:** "I can't believe you think I'm a toe-stepper! I'm a good person!"

- **Denial that others' experiences are different from your own:** "I don't mind when people step on my toes."
- **Derailing:** "Some people don't even have toes. Why aren't we talking about them instead?"
- **Refusal to center the impacted:** "All toes matter!"
- **Tone policing:** "I'd move my foot if you'd ask me more nicely."
- **Denial that the problem is fixable**: "Toes getting stepped on is a fact of life. You'll be better off when you accept that."
- **Victim blaming:** "You shouldn't have been walking around people with boots!"
- **Withdrawing:** "I thought you wanted my help, but I guess not. I'll just go home."

Actions to Allyship process:

- **A**lways center the impacted: *"Are you okay?"*
- **L**isten to their response with curiosity and empathy: *"What am I hearing, and am I processing their message internally?"*
- **L**earn and apologize for the impact, even though you didn't intend it: *"I'm sorry!"* and stop the action: adjust to avoid harm.
- **Y**ield the oppressive behavior pattern: Be careful where you step in the future. When it comes to oppression, we want to actually change the "footwear" to get rid of privilege and oppression (sneakers for all!), but metaphors can only stretch so far!

Action Continuum – *where are you?*

Spheres of Influence Activity – *what can you do to improve along the continuum?*

- **Sphere 1: Self.** Educate yourself, connect with others, have patience, reflect, and be curious.
- **Sphere 2: Close family and friends.** Conversations at the dinner table, confront jokes, PALS (Pause, Ask, Listen, Share), pick your battles, have data, and be authentic.
- **Sphere 3: Local community, neighborhood, social media, sports, school**. Plan workshops, meetings, review policies, ensure diversity in organizations, and attend protests.
- **Sphere 4: Larger community – town, state, nation.** Attend meetings, vote, run for office, work for others in office, decide where to spend your money.

Write down at least one thing you can imagine doing in each sphere of influence.

Group Debrief

- Which of these actions are the easiest to do? Which are the hardest?
- Which actions do you think are the most important to do?
- What roadblocks might you anticipate? How can you plan to overcome those?
- Who do you have as a source of support?

Depth of Sharing - Reflection of Short Survey/Video Testimonial Completion

- How will you bridge the urban-rural divide through your sphere of influence?
- What "aha" moments throughout this urban-rural dialogue experience bring you closer to people who are different from you?

Closing Activity - Goal Setting & Action Plan

Think of one achievable goal you want to improve in bridging the urban-rural divide within your sphere of influence. An achievable goal is a challenging end toward which effort is directed.

What is an **achievable** goal that you want to set for yourself to create a more inclusive culture for both urban-rural communities?
Goal: _____

Action: a thing done.
What specific actionable step can you commit to doing today/this week?
Action: _____

Roadblock: An obstacle or challenge that gets in the way of accomplishing goals.
What might get in the way of you accomplishing your goal?
Roadblock: _____

Supporter: Significant others or things you can do to help you achieve your goal and/or overcome roadblocks.
What sources of support can you leverage to help you achieve your goal?
Supporter: _____

APPENDIX H - OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES ON THE URBAN-RURAL DIALOGUE

Table 4.1: Cohort 1 open-ended responses on "awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression"

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression*	*Post-Survey on: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	Because of my location, there are naturally some resources that I am missing out on, such as the public resources that bigger cities might offer. Some of these things are: a reliable public transportation system, major museums and/ or institutes, and, given the lack of diversity, natural cultural enrichment. Since it is a rural area, though, it costs a lot less to live, so my family does way better financially than how they would in a bigger city. There are so many other things of course.	[Blank]
Suburban white female first-year participant	I recognize that I am privileged being white and that growing up in a suburban community largely of white people and of wealthier status I have had more opportunities and resources in certain aspects.	I am now aware of things like resources, transportation, how nearby a hospital is, and education, how those play into my suburban identity, and how they may differ with other identities.
Urban white male first-year participant	In urban societies you are put in a possession to succeed more in life with the resources being a white man as I am, I have better funding to my schools allowing me to get a education getting be to possessions to succeed that many other do not because of many reasons like one being how housing works.	I think that I tend to think of my urban ideology as a right or wrong where I know see it as a grey area and I believe that that has helped me move to be more open to the ideas rural people bring and the reasoning behind it.
Rural white female third-year participant	[Blank]	I recognize the privilege associated with being white and middle class and the oppressions associated with being female and atheist

Table 4.1 (cont'd)

Urban Black non-binary third-year participant	It's something that I'm sometimes aware of mostly when I'm in a situation that highlights and of those 3 things	In the urban/rural context, I've become more aware of the privileges that I have living in an urban area that someone else living in a rural area may not have. Additionally, I've been able to become more aware of my social identities and how they influence the privileges that I have in this world.
Rural white female third-year participant	I am aware that while I live in a rural area my family is very privileged compared to many other people living in our community	I am a lot more aware now because I have heard stories about people who have faced more oppression and less privilege than myself which has made me more aware of how fortunate I have been
Suburban white female first-year participant	I know my identities and privilege/oppression however I am unsure how to properly relate them to my urban/rural context. Except for my families income which gave me the privilege of growing up in a nice suburban area	I am aware that my ethnicity gives me privilege and my gender often leads to oppression
Urban white male first-year participant	I'm aware of my privilege in context to my mostly urban identity; my access to healthcare, choices for nutrient-rich sources of food, ease of transportation, and motley of career and education (in large part, also enhanced by the privilege I have been afforded by virtue of my family income) have shaped my identity outside of, but still influenced by, my largley urban upbringing.	I have become more aware of my privilege, which social identities do or do not give me some level of privilege, and the context of my urban identity.

Table 4.1 (cont'd)

Rural white non-binary first-year participant	Being a white person in a predominately white area conferred privilege. Being upper middle class with parents who had the time/resources to drive me places was definitely a privilege. Being one of very few queer students in a fairly politically divided town resulted in certain negative experiences. Having a liberal & secular mother certainly conferred privileges to me as a queer person.	I am aware of the intersection of my identities, particularly my whiteness, queerness, and socioeconomic class and how they interact with my rural identity
Suburban Hispanic female first-year participant	NA	I have notices privileges in my social identity, especially regarding rule people lacing resources.
Rural white female third-year participant	I feel that I am aware of my identity as a white woman and how that gives me privilege. I am also aware of the other privileges I possess, like growing up in a family with two parents and having access to educational opportunities. I do see the intersectionality of my identities as queer and a woman, and what all of these identities and privileges mean in rural and urban settings.	I think these sessions gave me a greater understanding of my privilege as a white woman who grew up in a rural setting. I hadn't really considered that different people in rural settings could be more oppressed than others.

Table 4.2: Cohort 1 open-ended responses on “intergroup understanding and relationships”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (b) intergroup understanding and relationships*	*Post-Survey on: (b) intergroup understanding and relationships*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	In college this happens very naturally as people come from very different backgrounds. I purposefully attend clubs and seminars that might have different perspectives than my own.	Going to school here at MSU there’s a diversity in identities
Suburban white female first-year participant	I don't usually actively find people of different backgrounds, but when I am interactign with them I usually just treat them like I would anyone. I try to be friendly and respectful.	This dialogue is a great way that I interact with others, but also within the people in my firnd group, we come from a variety of places. Swapping stories I get to learn more of their urban/rural identity.
Urban white male first-year participant	A fair amount being at a large University and growing up in a college town brings very diverse crowds to the area same way with urban and rural people.	I just talk with them the same as with anyone and try to learn about them and their story.
Rural white female third-year participant	Attending college puts me into contact with people from many walks of life.	I talk to people from a variety of backgrounds in class, in social clubs, and elsewhere on campus.
Urban Black non-binary third-year participant	I interact with them like I do everyone else and I try my best to get to know them and understand them	I try my best to expose myself to people from different backgrounds now and I like to interact with the the intent of learning from those who are different from me in order to expand my world view.
Rural white female third-year participant	I am in an Acappella group on campus that is comprised of people from all different backgrounds and some have more urban identities and some have more rural identities	I interact with people from different urban/rural identities than my own through interactions in my classrooms and with my friends outside of class.

Table 4.2 (cont'd)

Suburban white female first-year participant	While I don't have much interaction I am always open minded and interested to learn how different each identity is	I don't have much interaction centered around our differences. Often when I interact with those from a different urban/rural identity than mine the difference in identity is not what the interaction is centered upon
Urban white male first-year participant	My job working with the Department of Great Lakes, Environment, and Energy allows me to interact with people from a wide range of urban/rural identities. Previous jobs have given my this same opportunity, as well.	I actively seek opportunities to interact with those from rural and non-urban identities and see their perspectives on issues to inform myself both about my and their identity and perspectives.
Rural white non-binary first-year participant	I have friends from both urban and rural backgrounds	I have engaged more in explicit conversations with both friends with rural and urban identities about our experiences
Suburban Hispanic female first-year participant	I tend to get along with urban people more than rural people as I feel we have more in common.	I interact the same as if they were apart of the same identity.
Rural white female third-year participant	I appreciate hearing the perspectives of people with both urban/rural identities, such as perspectives from friends, classmates, professors, colleagues, and others.	I think in the past I would interact with people from diverse urban/rural backgrounds by chance, but now I see the importance of urban/rural identities and I will continue trying to make an effort to engage with people from urban/suburban backgrounds.

Table 4.3: Cohort 1 open-ended responses on “strategies to engage and intervene”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (c) strategies to engage and intervene*	*Post-Survey on: (c) strategies to engage and intervene*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	In college this happens very naturally as people come from very different backgrounds. I purposefully attend clubs and seminars that might have different perspectives than my own.	I like to pause and react effectively
Suburban white female first-year participant	I don't usually actively find people of different backgrounds, but when I am interactign with them I usually just treat them like I would anyone. I try to be friendly and respectful.	PALS to some degree is used. I like to alter it to the comment and person though.
Urban white male first-year participant	A fair amount being at a large University and growing up in a college town brings very diverse crowds to the area same way with urban and rural people.	I think that sharing my story when I interact with people of a vastly different background is very effective
Rural white female third-year participant	Attending college puts me into contact with people from many walks of life.	
Urban Black non-binary third-year participant	I interact with them like I do everyone else and I try my best to get to know them and understand them	I have begun to use the PALS strategy as a way to diffuse the situation from becoming a debate.
Rural white female third-year participant	I am in an Acappella group on campus that is comprised of people from all different backgrounds and some have more urban identities and some have more rural identities	I think the PALS strategy has been helpful in calling people out when necessary

Table 4.3 (cont'd)

Suburban white female first-year participant	While I don't have much interaction I am always open minded and interested to learn how different each identity is	I often step back and take a moment to breath and relax. I want to ensure that I am level-headed when it comes to talking about derogatory comments. Then, I ask what they meant by that to ensure that we are on the same page regarding the comment. Once they are done sharing, I do my best to share how comments like those can have negative effects on people and ensure that they understand the impacts of their derogatory comments.
Urban white male first-year participant	My job working with the Department of Great Lakes, Environment, and Energy allows me to interact with people from a wide range of urban/rural identities. Previous jobs have given my this same opportunity, as well.	I tend to use the PALS method when trying to interrupt bias, as well as helping others to understand the impact of their words. I try to do this in the form of discussion rather than debate.
Rural white non-binary first-year participant	I have friends from both urban and rural backgrounds	I now use PALS
Suburban Hispanic female first-year participant	I tend to get along with urban people more than rural people as I feel we have more in common.	The PALS seems to be a safe way to vocalize your opinion.
Rural white female third-year participant	I appreciate hearing the perspectives of people with both urban/rural identities, such as perspectives from friends, classmates, professors, colleagues, and others.	I recently used PALS when hearing a microaggression that was not related to urban/rural identity, but it gives me the confidence to use PALS in the future if I need to interrupt bias regarding urban/rural identity.

Table 4.4: Cohort 1 open-ended responses on “capacity to advance equity and justice”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide*	*Post-Survey on: (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	Yes! I feel like the urban-rural divide is something that is often overlooked. I hardly considered it up until I saw this opportunity and I can’t wait to further explore it.	Yes, it was validating and informative
Suburban white female first-year participant	Yes I find it helpful. Otherwise these people may never meet and speak. Additionally, it helps to tell personal stories to further undertanding rather than just relying on stereotypes.	Yes, it's helpful to have a designated space for these conversations to gain more meaning from them.
Urban white male first-year participant	I do, I think that this is a good way to understand how the process of thought gets to others for all different opinions, and to really make change or even to forgive, you have to understand why they believe what they do. I believe this will prove to be very effective.	I do, I think that I learned that there's no correct answer and that there is no side that has it perfect. That were a long way from that and only through understanding that fully can we give each other what we do really need.
Rural white female third-year participant		yes - understanding unique and common struggles may pave the way for better intergroup empathy and cooperation
Urban Black non-binary third-year participant	Yes, I see value in anything that helps to bring 2 groups of people together with the goal of understanding	I very much see value in it since it gives people the chance to become exposed to other perspectives and learn how to examine the privileges a person may have.
Rural white female third-year participant	I do because urban/rural identities are not often discussed in a normal settings and having a space for these dialogues are important to increase understanding with people of various backgrounds	I do see value in this, surrounding myself with people from different urban/rural backgrounds has really helped me understand this divide and how it can impact people in their day to day lives. I don't always get the opportunities to discuss issues like these so this was very beneficial to my overall undertanding.

Table 4.4 (cont'd)

Suburban white female first-year participant	I see great value in this, more often than not little interactions are done between students at MSu to bridge the urban-rural divide, or at least that has been my experience during my first semester	I absolutely see value in this. This entire dialogue session has offered such great perspective and depth into the urban-rural divide and I have learned such crucial information regarding this topic that I was not previously aware of. The first step toward bridging this divide is all about communication and education. The more people who are aware of and dedicated to bridging this divide the greater impacts bridging efforts will have. Furthermore, I was previously unaware of this divide prior to these dialogue sessions. I also believe that many other students here at MSU are also unaware of this divide, which is why more dialogues and education regarding this divide are so important.
Urban white male first-year participant	I see great value in intergroup, urban-rural dialogue! Having publicly served across most of the country, I've seen firsthand the divides in values and priorities of urban/rural living, but also the great deal of similarities that often go untouched upon. Dialogues with an intentional focus in shifting this divide provide a wonderful opportunity to close this gap and connect lived experiences together that, without, may have been perceived as insurmountable.	I see great value in the intergroup dialogue of the urban-rural divide; a better understanding of the similarities and differences in perspective, as well as the unique challenges that each group faces, has helped me to better understand the importance of bridging those divides and relating over those similarities (where they do align).
Rural white non-binary first-year participant	Certainly, I think that it is an identity division I had never much considered and I think there are some very large differences that are worth discussing to further understand people with different experiences than myself	Yes for sure. It is a divide I had never given much thought to and I feel I now understand it further

Table 4.4 (cont'd)

Suburban Hispanic female first-year participant	Yes I see there's value as its important to get along with more communities and bring people together; And a great way to bring people together is through talking and gaining perspective.	Yes, I think it's important hearing other people experience to reflect on divides.
Rural white female third-year participant	Yes. I think that it's a great idea to gather the perspectives of people from urban and rural backgrounds, I'm excited to learn more from the people in this group!	Yes. Simply by educating people and exposing people to different perspectives, I believe that intergroup dialogue is incredibly valuable in bridging the urban-rural divide (or other divides as well).

Table 5.1: Cohort 2 open-ended responses on “awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression*	*Post-Survey on: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	I haven't thought much about how my social identities, privilege, and oppression in relation to my urban/rural context.	I never thought there was such a thing as an Urban-Rural divide, so this dialogue helped give me the knowledge and tools to further my understanding of this concept. The dialogue has shown me a new identity of myself that I never really thought of. It has also shown me a new identity that others possess and how it can affect them!
Suburban Black female first-year participant	I am very self-aware of my identity as an African Muslim woman in society.	The urban-rural dialogue has increased my awareness of social identities, privileges, and oppression in urban and rural areas. It helped me understand the unique characteristics and challenges of each setting. The dialogue also highlights the privileges and inequalities present in both urban and rural contexts. By sharing stories and experiences, it promoted empathy and collective action to address oppression and work towards a more equitable society.
Suburban white female first-year participant	I understand my privilege of living in a good, safe neighborhood, in a good city with a great school district. I recognize that some people aren't safe to go outside all the time at home. But in all honesty, I don't know much about all the other questions being asked. That was one reason I wanted to do this study and educate myself further.	Before the Urban-Rural Dialogues I have was not aware that the urban-rural divide was a named thing. I of course have heard the assumptions made about either side, however, I just equated those to unfair assumptions. After the Urban-Rural Dialogues... I am now able to identify numerous biases I hold, challenge my thinking, put myself out there and feel more comfortable interacting and holding conversation with people backgrounds other than myself.

Table 5.1 (cont'd)

Suburban white male second-year participant	[Blank]	URD has raised my awareness of things like environmental privilege and how that can relate to an urban or rural background.
Urban Hispanic female second-year participant	I feel like the place where I grew up in has formed me in a way on who I am today. Traditions and culture are a part of that too. I understand in what ways I can be privillaged and opression is not really clear in areas where I live at least when I was there I wouldn't notice it but started noticing it more once I got into college.	The Urban-Rural Dialogues have been so enlightening like the whole thing (all sessions) were the Aha moment. It just so mind blowing how much you can learn from other people. I can now say for sure I'm more prepared/knowledgable about the topics above.
Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I think I'm pretty much fully aware. I live in a suburban residential area where most of the community is white, so it's not super diverse. However, there are some minorities that live in my area that I feel I can somewhat relate to.	I think that the Urban-Rural Dialogues have impacted my awareness of urban-rural social identities, privilege, and oppression in the dialogues themselves. Getting to talk to different individuals with different experiences really helped open my mind and helped me become more aware. I also feel like Charlie and Michael facilitated the session in a way that informed me more about this.
Urban white female first-year participant	I am not really aware of those things in context to me being urban.	It made me aware of what social identities really are. There are a lot of aspects about myself that I don't see as social identities because I don't think about them a lot, but going through this dialogue, I have learned to be more aware of my social identities and how they contribute to my privilege.
Suburban white female first-year participant	I already know that white individuals are often more privileged than any other race	It has opened my eyes to the fact that privilege comes in many forms besides skin color. I also did not know that there was a divide between urban and rural individuals, so this was a very helpful experience to me

Table 5.1 (cont'd)

Urban white male first-year participant	I am aware of my white privelage, financial privilege, cis-gendered privilege, male privilege, and able body privilege. I am also aware of my gay identity which leads to discrimination I face. I am also aware that I am privileged in my Urban context due to how I was able to feel much more safe in my urban communities rather than suburban/rural	Before these dialogues, I was unaware of urban-rural social identities, privilege, and oppression. They have brought these to my attention and immensely educated me on the topic.
Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I am aware of my identities and of the ways that people can percieve me/treat me based on their perceptions of them.	Having a space where so many people share their lived experiences about the same topic (ex: childhood, access to healthcare, socioeconomic status and accessibility to different things) was really powerful and I found myself learning most when people talked through their stories. It really put into perspective how different our experiences are and why they are so.

Table 5.2: Cohort 2 open-ended responses on “intergroup understanding and relationships”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (b) intergroup understanding and relationships*	*Post-Survey on: (b) intergroup understanding and relationships*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	[Blank]	I don't think that I have changed my own actions and interactions with people of urban-rural identities different from my own yet. I think I am still coming to an understanding of what this looks like in day-to-day conversations and interactions.
Suburban Black female first-year participant	N/A	Yes, through dialogue.
Suburban white female first-year participant	I'm not sure I act differently. I am intrigued by others who live differently than me.	To be honest I'm not sure my actions through interacting specifically with people of urban-rural identities has changed. Prior to these dialogues, I've seldom identified people as urban or rural and the same is true now.
Suburban white male second-year participant	Classmates from large cities as well as those from rural towns.	I still interact with the same people, but now I am more conscious of their urban-rural identity and how it interfaces with my own.
Urban Hispanic female second-year participant	I love learning other peoples cultures its so interesting to know much more. Its also intriguing being able to know there so much more other than my own bubble.	I try to always think before I speak and listen attentively and thoroughly when someone is speaking and being vulnerable. I've been reading Brene Brown's book in leadership and she makes good tips on how to be an attentive listener and the powerful connection through vulnerability.

Table 5.2 (cont'd)

Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I think I see people as people before any "identity" that they may carry with them. I'd say I interact with everyone the same but I may find myself adapting.	I don't think I've had interactions with people of urban-rural identities different from my own, at least not that I know of. I feel like I can't tell if someone's urban-rural identity is different from my own and it's not a question that I often ask. However, I feel like if I was to have an interaction with someone of an urban-rural identity different from my own, my interaction would change than if I were to have an interaction before these dialogues, in terms of perspective and understanding.
Urban white female first-year participant	I have some family that identify a rural that I interact with. I just treat them like family.	I have definitely become more aware of how being urban or rural identifying impacts others and myself. It is an aspect I never really considered to impact my interactions, but now that I am more aware of it, I am able to consider it within my interactions.
Suburban white female first-year participant	I have made friends with people who live in different types of households and neighborhoods than me. It was unintentional, but it did open my eyes to our differences in how we were raised	I definitely keep more of an open mind to how different upbringings can result in our own privileges today. Not every white person is privileged, and not every person of color has misfortune. I am more aware of my feelings and identities and am interested in learning about others' identities too
Urban white male first-year participant	In general there are less urban identities around MSU, therefore I am constantly interacting with non-urban students.	I discussed it in my International Relations and Urban & Regional Planning major classes. I have also asked all of my friends more about urban-rural identities and how they think they have affected them.

Table 5.2 (cont'd)

Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I think that since I see myself as someone who was always in the middle, I don't register or think about if someone is from an urban/rural identity and if/how that should affect me and my interactions with them.	I think my thinking is now geared towards more asking and listening instead of sharing what i think i already know. there are a lot of things that are misrepresented and misportrayed about both rural and urban and suburban people and after this dialogue experience, i am more interested in hearing directly from the people.

Table 5.3: Cohort 2 open-ended responses on “strategies to engage and intervene”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (c) strategies to engage and intervene*	*Post-Survey on: (c) strategies to engage and intervene*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	I try to assist them in seeing a different point of view and how what they said can be hurtful. I don't think being rude, condescending, or defensive will assist in achieving this so I avoid that.	The dialogue gave me the example of PALS that I want to practice in the future to be able to interrupt bias.
Suburban Black female first-year participant	Speak from experience and let them know their point of view is valid.	The urban-rural dialogue reduced my bias and derogatory treatment towards individuals from different urban or rural backgrounds from prejudgment. It fosters understanding, empathy, and respect, challenging stereotypes and promoting inclusive interactions.
Suburban white female first-year participant	I normally just tell the person what specifically they said, how it offended me or offended others, and advise them not to use language like that.	Through the Urban-Rural Dialogue I have been able to increase my knowledge in identifying bias and have learned ways to address it. For example, when someone says something not quite right instead of immediately accusing them, it is helpful to ask them what they just said and why.
Suburban white male second-year participant		I had heard of the PALS strategy before, but having the opportunity to use it in practice situations has made me more confident in employing it in the real world.
Urban Hispanic female second-year participant	I would for sure it has happened in the past. The only way I wouldn't would be if I knew it was unsafe to. There's always different ways to intervene.	I feel like overall the sessions have prepared me for certain scenarios and how I can put myself in the conversation but at the same time being patient and being there (sticking up) for the person that is being wronged.

Table 5.3 (cont'd)

Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I'm not sure I have a strategy.	I think Urban-Rural Dialogue impacted my ability to interrupt bias or derogatory comments against a person with a different urban-rural background from me through the different strategies that were discussed. I feel like the one strategy that was emphasized is PALS and I think it'd be a great one to use.
Urban white female first-year participant	I typically try to get people to rephrase comments in a productive matter, if at all possible.	I now have strategies like PALS to speak up in spaces where I am perhaps not the most comfortable.
Suburban white female first-year participant	I always try to understand the other person's perspective and background before intervening	I now have better strategies of interrupting bias. I know now to first understand what someone means when they say a comment like this, and from there talk reasonably with them instead of debating.
Urban white male first-year participant	If someone makes an offensive comment on rural lifestyle I usually tell the person to check their privilege cause they sound like an elitist.	I have found myself being more vocal without coming off as accusatory, even if what was said was excruciatingly foul.
Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I first ask if they understand what they are saying and explain tot hem why that is deragatory/wrong and harmful.	PALS was very helpful and while practicing it felt very forced and somewhat uncomfortable, i think it does help!

Table 5.4: Cohort 2 open-ended responses on “capacity to advance equity and justice”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide*	*Post-Survey on: (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide*
Rural multiracial female first-year participant	I do think there could be value in dialogue for the divide, however I am ill informed on the urban-rural divide, so I can't say much more about its affects or how it would work.	The dialogue group has given me more knowledge on the topic and set me up with a goal of how to bridge the divide through communicating and finding support.
Suburban Black female first-year participant	Yes, it promotes inclusion.	The urban-rural dialogue has helped bridge the divide between urban and rural areas. Through conversations, interactions, and the exchange of perspectives, this dialogue promotes understanding, empathy, and mutual respect between individuals from these different contexts. It breaks down barriers and misconceptions, fostering a sense of unity and shared experiences. By promoting communication and collaboration, the urban-rural dialogue plays a crucial role in bridging the urban-rural divide.
Suburban white female first-year participant	Yes, I do see value. In all honesty, I need more clarification on what an urban-rural divide entails. I know I am ignorant to all the tells. However, that is why I would like to learn.	I feel like I have not yet had an opportunity to use the skills I acquired through these dialogues. However, I am now looking for other opportunities to participate in things like this.
Suburban white male second-year participant	Yes, because urban-rural is only a mask for broader socioeconomic divides.	The discussions I had during the URDs have reinforced my passion for urban living and equity, and now I want to address it even more in my career.

Table 5.4 (cont'd)

Urban Hispanic female second-year participant	Yes I definitely see value in intergroup dialogue for helping bridge the urban rural divide.	Urban-Rural Dialouges have encouraged me to stay in touch with my passions for the future. I really appreciate that I just think that I have to work a bit harder on my leadership skills hence they have gotten a bit rusty from highschool.
Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I think their may be value if everyone listens to one another and can find common ground.	I feel like the Urban-Rural Dialogues have influenced me in helping promote a more inclusive environment to all individuals through the many topics that were covered during the Dialogues. I really liked the history lesson, as emotional as it was I felt like there was a lot to it that needed to be heard.
Urban white female first-year participant	I think the dialogue does have value as it is an issue I don't typically hear about.	It has made me more aware of the divide and how important it is to bridge the gap.
Suburban white female first-year participant	Yes, I think sharing our experiences with each other will help us understand one another and realize that social justice needs to occur	Although I am still unsure of how I personally can help improve this divide, this experience has allowed me to see the divide and feel encouraged to learn more about it.
Urban white male first-year participant	Nobody really discusses urban/rural identities.	I have grown more vocal about the topic, especially considering it is a voice I had never heard before.
Suburban Middle Eastern female second-year participant	I see great value in dialogues for bridging the urban and rural divide and I believe whether this is applied nationally (between people from different places of the same country) or interntionally (between people from different countries with varying levels of urban vs rural places) can help depolarize many of the problems that are happening around the world.	by learning more about the inequalities that different people undergo, it puts it into perspective on how to better help these people.

Table 6.1: Cohort 3 open-ended responses on “awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression*	*Post-Survey on: (a) awareness of social identities, privilege, and oppression*
Urban Asian female second-year participant	Yes many.	It impacted my awareness by letting me see different points of views from everyone with their challenges, settings, and experiences. It let me get to be in someone else's shoes and let me see their vulnerability.
Urban Black female second-year participant	na	Giving me information to have a more open mind and become more educated
Rural white female second-year participant	[Blank]	They have made me aware of my own privilege and how I can use it for good. It also helped me to identify my identities and how they impact me. I also learned more about oppression, but I would still like to learn more. I would say oppression is the topic I am least comfortable with after this dialoge.
Rural white male second-year participant	[Blank]	It’s definitely opened my eyes to see how different the urban-rural education gap is as well as the difference between the benefits that urban people receive vs. rural
Suburban white female second-year participant	Socioeconomic status, majority of suburban people are white	Before, I didn't even think of my urban-rural identity as one of my social identities, or how it impacted my privilege. I see now that being a part of a suburban identity I have easier access to healthcare, education, and resources that my rural counterparts maybe couldn't.

Table 6.1 (cont'd)

Rural white female second-year participant	[Blank]	The biggest thing for me is that privilege is not just black and white, it has more to it. Like for example yes I am white but I am a female. Yes, I am cis-gendered but I am bisexual. I do not have a physical disability but I have mental disabilities. So understanding the differences is important.

Table 6.2: Cohort 3 open-ended responses on “intergroup understanding and relationships”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (b) intergroup understanding and relationships*	*Post-Survey on: (b) intergroup understanding and relationships*
Urban Asian female second-year participant	I put myself in others shoes.	I've changed by thinking before speaking and letting me to have a different perspective on everything even with how people live.
Urban Black female second-year participant	na	just talking about the rural living and how vastly different from urban and getting a better understanding
Rural white female second-year participant	very often at MSU	I am more curious about those with different identities. I also see more of the differences and similarities between people of different identities.
Rural white male second-year participant	I am a student at MSU so I have been engaged with multiple different backgrounds through clubs	I wouldn’t say my interactions have changed. I understand more of where they may be coming from but I wouldn’t say I would necessarily interact differently.
Suburban white female second-year participant	In high school, college, and I live close to a city so whenever I go there	I definitely was more close minded and unaware of the struggles of people with different urban-rural identities than myself, but now rather than a closed off understanding, I can come into those conversations with more perspective on why they believe the things they do.
Rural white female second-year participant	[Blank]	I always wanted to learn the different ways of living and I have always done that since I do not have have many rural friends.

Table 6.3: Cohort 3 open-ended responses on “strategies to engage and intervene”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (c) strategies to engage and intervene*	*Post-Survey on: (c) strategies to engage and intervene*
Urban Asian female second-year participant	To pause and think before saying	The strategies I would use is the circle thing that we used and then I would be an active listener to others while making sure that I step forward if there is miscommunication.
Urban Black female second-year participant	na	being able to not only recognize inappropriate behavior and or comments but also having to tools to do it safely and productively!!
Rural white female second-year participant	Humor	I would use PALS. This method was taught to me by URD and it was entirely new to me before that. URD gave me tools to fight bias and microaggresions.
Rural white male second-year participant	Try to redirect or talk with them about how it may be affecting them	It allows me to recognize what comments may be seen as hurtful that I wouldn’t have noticed before.
Suburban white female second-year participant	Asking them to elaborate, pretending like I didn't know that information, etc.	I can realize how walking away, reframing a conversation, simply listening, and asking for more information not only pushes the other person to reflect on what they said, but also give myself a better understanding on why they said what they said.
Rural white female second-year participant	[Blank]	Now that I know what pals are, I think I have a better idea of stopping what is happening.

Table 6.4: Cohort 3 open-ended responses on “capacity to advance equity and justice”

Demogrphic information	*Pre-Survey on: (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide*	*Post-Survey on: (d) capacity to advance equity and justice for bridging the urban–rural divide*
Urban Asian female second-year participant	Yes	It influenced my efforts by allowing me to see different challenges that people face and what people are thinking.
Urban Black female second-year participant	yes i do	being more understanding of the other side and having the knowledge to do it !
Rural white female second-year participant	Yes. Having conversations is what creates common ground	I now know more about the urban rural divide and this allows me to better know how to bridge it. By learning about other people's situations, I can help create a more inclusive world for all.
Rural white male second-year participant	Not necessarily	I feel as if there are just going to be differences in societies. There is a greater number of poor people in urban areas so government assistance and food banks will allocate resources there, and they should. It doesn’t make sense for them to allocate the same amount of resources in an urban vs. rural because the rural people have fewer numbers. Yes, rural people matter, but if you need help in certain areas, such as food banks or homeless shelters, then an urban area would be better equipped for your needs. I feel like that’s just how it is

Table 6.4 (cont'd)

Suburban white female second-year participant	Yes, understanding different identities is necessary for community building, this is just a way to do so.	I understand more of the urban rural divide which will help me stop stereotypes like politics divide these areas and rural people are uneducated. It can help me promote the inequitable resources that each area has as well with a better understanding of the struggles.
Rural white female second-year participant	[Blank]	I think we can come together and share experiences and other stand others lives