The University of San Francisco

PERCEPTIONS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGES ON THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL TRAINING TO PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT DURING HIGH SCHOOL

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by
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THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Perceptions of African American College Students in
San Francisco Bay Area Community Colleges on
Their Developmental Training to Participate in
Civic Engagement During High School

The democratic practice of representative government in the United States is supposed to represent and protect its citizens. Since the United States abolished legalized slavery with the 13th Amendment in 1865, individual states have made many attempts to impede the civil rights and voting rights of African American citizens. Several pieces of legislation were designed to protect citizens, such as the Civil Rights act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In addition to overt legislated actions to thwart voting rights, the 26th Amendment of 1971 afforded citizens at least 18-years old the right to vote. Studies, however, have shown that the 18- to 24-year-old voting block consistently lags other cohorts in exercising the right to vote. Those studies presumed a flaw in the youths and rarely fully imagine systemic issues.

The purpose of this study was to view youth voting through the lenses of critical race theory and neoliberalism to gain insights into how students from San Francisco (SF) Bay Area community colleges perceived their development during high school influenced their engagement in civic activity. The researcher evaluated answers from the position that suppressed youth voting and moreover, suppressed African American voting, is systemic in nature.

This quantitative study was conducted with 84 anonymous SF Bay Area students who participated in an online survey that asked for their perceptions of which social structures—schools, families, community organizations, or religious organizations—most

and least prepared them for civic duty such as voting. The study explored trust in social structures and asked specifically how well high school prepared them for voting in the 2016 presidential election.

Thematically, the study uncovered that the most effective source of voting training was from family members, followed by peers. High schools, the primary source of all other education, rated well below families in preparation for voting and in influence on how to evaluate candidates. Other social structures—religious organizations and community organizations—essentially did not serve as factors in the development of surveyed youths. Those two groups represented an opportunity to connect with younger voters if they are employed as a resource.

This study was not designed to uncover how specific high schools conducted civic education; that is a potential topic for future research. What was clear is that the State of California, the largest, most diverse state in the United States, places little emphasis on schools teaching civics, given that it is a 1-semester requirement for graduation in comparison to mathematics, which has a minimum of 3 years or English, which has a minimum of 4 years required for graduation.

The study results showed that due to the influences of critical race theory and neoliberalism, the actual incentive to improve knowledge and participation from young African American voters is limited, and potentially counter to the goals of those holding political power.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The contents and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Melvin Davis, Jr. Candidate	April 23, 2018

Dissertation Committee:

Patricia A. Mitchell, Ph.D., Chairperson	April 23, 2018
Walter Gmelch, Ph.D., Committee Member	April 23, 2018
Richard Greggory Johnson, Ph.D., Committee Member	April 23, 2018

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Beverly H. Davis. We do so much together that it was fitting that we do this academic journey together. There is no way this would have happened without her by my side. Also, to my children, Dr. India Stewart, who blazed the academic trail, Cira C. Davis, Esq. who has a ton of degrees that she reminds us of, and Melvin Davis, III, who is a HBCU graduate that shows nothing but support for our endeavors. Finally, to my dad, Melvin Davis, Sr., who reads all my stuff and shares it as lessons for his community men's group.

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The doctoral dissertation journey is a privilege to begin and rewarding to go on. It is a privilege because many factors outside of my control helped me even begin the journey. From special people who encouraged me in certain directions early and throughout my academic career, to the jarring misdirections that pop up in life, I am fortunate to be able to be in the position to contemplate, let alone execute, the journey. Not everyone who embarks on the journey finishes and I recognize that getting this far is a privilege.

Moving through the experience, several people exerted tremendous influence over how the process unfolded. The very first person to acknowledge is my wife, Beverly H. Davis, who allowed me to tag along on her experience. Without her, I might never have considered pursuing this degree. It was rewarding to get to do it together.

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Two other key individuals are on my dissertation committee: Dr. Walter H. Gmelch and Dr. Richard G. Johnson III. Dr. Gmelch's class was the very first one I took and he set the tone for how the doctoral journey should unfold. Dr. Gmelch also literally changed my world view as he invited me to attend the Global Citizenship Seminar in Salzburg, Austria, that he has managed for the University. Dr. Johnson's influence as a

social scholar has been enlightening and more personal, as he and I served on committees outside the university.

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Last, I would like to point out that some very strong African American women were essential to me getting here. I mentioned my wife, but it was two of her former students, USAF Colonel Lasheeco B. Graham and USAF Lt. Colonel (Ret) Vanessa Matthews, who guided me to a program many years ago that allowed me to think of higher education. My mother, Valerie Davis, always believed in me, no matter what. My aunt, Marie Brown, who worked in a kitchen, and my grandmother, Willie Mae Davis, who was a domestic worker, never let me settle. They were all inspirational and foundations for this achievement.

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THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

If, according to the 14th Amendment, U.S. government, whether city, state, or federal, is designed to be representative, should young people between 18 and 24 years old be ensured they have representation? Should a young man be concerned that agents of the government would see him as a source of revenue or worse, a threat to be exterminated? If young voters should have representative government, how should they be prepared for participation prior to reaching the voting age of 18? Additionally, is there a difference in preparation for voting among students from different races and economic backgrounds?

In 1971, the U.S. Congress passed, the states ratified, and President Nixon signed the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, changing voting eligibility for citizens from 21 to 18 years of age (U.S. Const. amend. XXVI). On August 9, 2014, 18-year-old, Michael Brown was shot and killed by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri (Smith, 2014). In what should have been his first year of eligibility to vote, Michael Brown was killed by an officer working for the government ostensibly designed to protect him through the 14th Amendment to the Constitution; Section 1 states "nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of the law" (Legal Information Institute, n.d.). Following that incident, Ferguson made national headlines after several nights of protests (Sanchez & Lawler, 2015) and those protests helped spark an investigation by the Department of Justice (DOJ) into the legality of the shooting.

On March 3, 2015, Attorney General Eric Holder released a statement that carried two messages: insufficient evidence existed to charge officer Wilson with any wrong-doing in the death of Michael Brown, and widespread evidence existed of racially motivated bias in the Ferguson police department that led to the erosion of trust between citizens and the police force (DOJ, 2015). One prime findings was that the Ferguson police were leveraging their city-sanctioned power to increase city revenues by targeting their constituents fines. One instance showed an officer ticketing a citizen for 14 violations/fines in one traffic stop (DOJ, 2015). These practices were supported by a city council "voted" into office by Ferguson residents.

The Ferguson city government and the city constituents were virtually configured racially opposite. For example, based on the 2010 census, Ferguson's African American population was 14,297, or 67.4% of the 21,203 residents. In Smith (2014), elected officials comprised a White mayor, one Black member of the 6-person city council (16.7%) and one Latino member of the 7-person school board (14.3%). The Ferguson city council's racial mix, the sanctioning of the police's fine-collection focus, and ultimately the death of Michael Brown, are all a function of the local government, and presumably, should have aligned with the citizen's well-being rather than their exploitation.

As a government that should be representative of its constituents by "acting in a way which in the interest of the represented and be responsive to them" (Pitkin, 1967; Saward, 2008), Ferguson is an example of what can happen when a city does not meet representational goals. Representation by race is one demographic measure to consider and Ferguson's racial mix of representatives to constituents was out of alignment. In addition to being African American and having the impact of the race, as the U.S.

Attorney outlined, Michael Brown was also 18 years old. The intersection of race and youth in civic engagement has limited research.

Only 12% of a sample of students from Michael Brown's age cohort displayed knowledge, when tested on all three branches of the U.S. government (Ahranjani, Medearis, & Shook, 2013). Additionally, 18 to 24-year-old people voted 11.5 percentage points below the next cohort (25–44) and 21.7 points below the highest cohort (65 years or older) in the 2012 presidential election (File, 2014). The gap is consistently larger in nonpresidential elections (File, 2014). Knowledge, and the lack of political-engagement research on the effects from reduced voter turnout among 18- to 24-year-old adults, is limited.

Background and Need for the Study

Since implementation of the 26th Amendment, multiple studies have been conducted to determine the rationale for low voter turnout; Cancela and Geys (2016) reviewed more 200 studies in a meta-analysis of voter turnout and noted 197 studies in 2014 alone. Smets and van Ham's (2013) meta-analysis showed that 65 of 90 studies they evaluated focused on ages of voting cohorts. Often, those studies focused on presidential elections or, in some instances midterm elections. The impact of presidential elections on local representation is minimal. Studies generally do not partition the level of election and treat voting as a territorial event (Cancela & Geys, 2016).

Despite other forms of civic engagement, such as volunteering, community service, political involvement, or organizing for social change (Adler & Goggin, 2005), voting is considered the most essential form. As a democratic society, voting is

considered the strongest level of impact the average citizen can have on governmental outcomes, as noted by Chief Justice Earl Warren:

> No right is more precious in a free country than that of having a voice in the election of those who make the laws under which, as good citizen, we must live. Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined. Our Constitution leaves no room for classification of people in a way that unnecessarily abridged this right. (*Reynolds v. Sims*, 1964)

This statement implies that voting is an essential part of a representative democracy and, if that is the case, preparation to vote effectively is also essential.

To prepare students for their ability to vote, researchers considered four social structures as the basis for teaching. Schools are tasked with providing civics education and do so quite unevenly throughout the country (Ben-Porath, 2013). Civic education is affected by schools' economic status in that high-income schools provide more civic opportunity (Ben-Porath, 2013). In addition to schools, young citizens are taught about civic engagement from their family and friends (McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, 2007). Students who discuss politics and current events at home score higher on tests of political knowledge than their peers who do not (McIntosh et al., 2007). Social organizations are another source of learning about civic engagement (Li & Zhang], 2017). Li and Zhang (2017) indicated that political participation is dependent upon someone's socioeconomic status, their ability to move with a network, and their participation with organizations. Finally, churches/houses of worship provide the most common form of civic engagement for young voters to learn about politics (Hill & Matsubayashi, 2008). Although religious organizations have the potential to drive political engagement, a religious organization

does not lead its membership to increased political engagement (Hill & Matsubayashi, 2008).

Missouri's Michael Brown shooting and the behaviors of Ferguson's elected officials were cited by the DOJ (2015) as symptomatic of an abusive system, disconnected from and with little accountability to the public they serve. As Chief Justice Warren indicates, other rights are an illusion if the *voice* of the constituency is not heard effectively. To mitigate the downside of unrepresentative elections and officials, other states, like California, have given constituents greater involvement in public policy. California has rigorous use of ballot initiatives to determine public policy at the state and local levels (Ramakrishnan & Baldassare, 2004).

In addition to the concept of voting to ensure candidates represent the interests of community members is the role of setting the ballot agenda. When public policy is part of the ballot, voting is even more important to allow state and local governments to understand the needs and concerns of their citizens (Ramakrishnan & Baldassare, 2004). Despite the importance of voting, participation in voting, especially among young people 18- to 24 years old, remains below average (File, 2014). That voting among young people is below average and important has generated responses such that some states seek to engage voters even younger than 18 by noting that voting interest among younger voters declines every month between turning 18 and 19 (Aragon, 2015; D. Hart & Atkins, 2011). Regardless of the age of younger voters, the most effective way to prepare them to vote is still being researched.

Ben-Porath (2013) suggested that schools are the right choice to teach adolescents about civics and the political world. Different schools teach different civics lessons to

students, depending on their demographic status, that is, poor or a student of color. Schools should be an excellent place for students to learn civics and by doing so, have much more engaged students; however, schools are negligent in their role (Ahranjani et al., 2013). Researchers implied something is wrong with the current process for teaching such as demographic determinants or cutbacks in civic education.

Solt (2008) discussed relative-power theory, which implies that wealthier individuals have more power and are in position to control what measures are on the ballot. The American Political Science Association (2004) noted that

> The privileged participate more than others and are increasingly well organized to press their demands on government. Public officials, in turn, are much more responsive to the privileged than to average citizens and the least affluent. Citizens with low or moderate incomes speak with a whisper that is lost on the ears of inattentive government, while the advantaged roar with the clarity and consistency that policy makers readily heed. (p.1)

This 2004 quotation, written 6 years before *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) in which the Supreme Court ruled that corporations—significantly better resourced and privileged than many individuals—can spend money on political campaigns like any citizen. Current research on youth voting accounts for wealth inequality as if it were a demographic property rather than a driver of behavior.

An implicit assumption in current research on why young people do not vote more or how to improve youth voter participation is an unmet desire to improve participation; blocked by some mechanism that, if identified, could mitigate the problem. Resource theory indicates that those with higher resources—money—can control the

electoral process (Solt, 2008). Income inequality dampens the political participation of lower income voters, performing as a form of suppression (Solt, 2008).

A student's race and track record, along with the socioeconomic status (SES) of a school's student body, are determinants of the availability of school-based civics-learning programs (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). All 17- and 18-year-olds who are preparing to vote have the ability to learn about the voting process, dependent on the demographic make-up of the school rather than other factors. White students who plan to attend college and attend higher SES schools have more opportunities to develop their civic-engagement skills than students with lower SES (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Changing demographics will impact representation and California is a proxy for the future United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the United States will increase from about 319 million to 400 million people by 2050. Also, two major demographic changes may occur that can have a meaningful impact on voter behavior and outcomes. In 2050, U.S. citizens 65 and older will increase from 15 to 24% of the population whereas those classified as non-Hispanic White people's percentages will decrease from 62% in 2014 to 44% by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015). This decline in the non-Hispanic White persons' percentages will reflect the majority–minority demographic makeup that California began in the 2000 Census (Gay, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of college students on their political development as high school students. The research produced a quantitative measurement of student perceptions/satisfaction with social structures, such as high school, parents, social organizations, or houses of worship to prepare young adults to

participate in the democratic process. The research examined the impact of those structures in influencing attitudes of consumers of information: 18- to 24-year-old prospective voters.

This study used survey data to evaluate the attitudes of students as a complement to other studies that focus on behavior only. The results of this study will aid policymakers in school systems and leaders of community-based enterprises to understand the perceptions of their effectiveness in developing more robust strategies focused on influencing the perceptions of their clients. For example, study participants rated social organizations as the least effective tool for developing future voters. Leaders of those organizations can now evaluate their programs and look for solutions to their perceived shortcomings.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions to determine students' perceptions of select social structures on their attitude and self-reported behaviors in participating in political action through voting.

- Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of African American college students on social structures being most/least effective in providing a foundation for civic engagement?
- Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of African American college students on their high school experiences with respect to voter development?
- Research Question 3: What role did precollege training have on African American college students' current behavior regarding civic engagement?

- Research Question 4: What are the perceptions of African American students who represent differing SES strata?

Theoretical Framework

To analyze which institutions are perceived to be best poised to drive political actions by youth, particularly the act of voting, this study used two lenses: critical race theory (CRT) and neoliberalism. These two constructs are sparsely discussed in literature defining influences on youth voter behavior. CRT has value in explaining the political situation of young African American voters' history of being suppressed and subsequently disengaging from the voting process. Neoliberalism, in addition to forces that seek to restrict Black voters, opposes mass voting. Using both lenses helped fully encompass class and race while evaluating exogenous forces on voting preparation.

Articles that used these lenses to analyze a specific social institution were written by McGregor (2009), Olssen and Peters (2005), and Davies and Bansel (2007) on neoliberalism and education or Lynn and Dixson (2013), Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), and Bell (1995, 2004) conceptualizing writings on CRT and education. The neoliberalist literature focused on how money and free-market thinking treats curriculum, such as focusing on science and mathematics rather than civics. The CRT literature touches on curriculum but primarily focused on educational outcomes of students of color relative to White students. Neither paid much attention to how students transition into citizens.

CRT (Lynn & Dixson, 2013) has five tenets that can provide perspective on how young Black potential voters socialized into voting or not voting (Gentry, 2010). These five tenets were instrumental in providing a perspective to evaluate study responses.

- The first tenet is that *racism is normal* in the United States (Lynn & Dixson, 2013, p. 37): "racism is not some random, isolated act of individuals behaving badly. Rather, to a CRT scholar, racism is the normal order of things in the United States."
- The second tenet is *interest convergence* (Lynn & Dixson, 2013), which implies that altruism is not the driver of racial change but that having interest that aligns with those in power is how change occurs.
- The third is *race as a social construction* (Lynn & Dixson, 2013 p. 38), characterized as

humans have constructed social categories and organization that rely heavily on arbitrary genetic differences like skin color, hair texture, eye shape and lip size. They have used these differences as a mechanism for creating hierarchy and an ideology of White supremacy.

- The fourth is *intersectionality and anti-essentialism* (Lynn & Dixson, 2013), which describes two modes of thought. Intersectionality implies a person has more than a racial makeup but also has an economic status, age, and gender, among other descriptors. In describing treatment of an individual or group, the multiple points of intersection must also be considered. The second addresses groups in that essentialism is "a belief that all people perceived to be in a single group think, act, and believe the same things in the same ways" (Lynn & Dixson, 2013, p. 39. It is important to remove the idea of a universal Black or White position on ideas or situations.

- The fifth is *voice or counter-narrative* (Lynn & Dixson, 2013, p.41), which can be described as the rest of the history, indicating how "one group describes its world view or story as 'real history', 'truth' or 'objective science' and others' worldview as myth or lore."

With respect to neoliberalism and voting, Harvey (2007) stated

> Neoliberal theorist, however, are profoundly suspicious of democracy. Governance by majority rule is seen as a potential threat to individual rights and constitutional liberties. … A strong preference exists for government by executive order and by judicial decision rather than democratic or parliamentary decision-making. (p. 66)

This view implies that proponents of neoliberalism will not support and will potentially seek to thwart voter participation. Purdy (2014) referenced the "Citizens United" case, where corporations were granted citizenship and money was dubbed a form of free speech to highlight how neoliberals can drown out smaller, less-affluent voices, due to their size and influence. This lens also aided in evaluating research responses.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Due to the point-in-time nature of the study, the attitudes and perceptions noted in the study cannot show the rate of change; that is, this study does not show whether a structure is declining or increasing in influence. The perceptions of young voters are self-reported and do not reflect behavior. The location of the study limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader U.S. population, given that the study was centered in the San Francisco Bay area and influences on those districts may not apply to other school

districts. Finally, because the survey was voluntary, respondents may not represent the views of students who did not participate, which can skew the results.

Delimitations of the study are the population source of students: one school district. Social networks, such as National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) activities, are specific to the location and reflect the needs of that community. Another factor to consider is the socioeconomic makeup of the student body, the servicing institution and, the parental groups that may impact this population and may result in different responses with any alteration to either influence.

Significance of the Study

The goal of this study was to determine African American college students' perceptions of their developmental training for engaging in civic activities during their high school careers. Studies to date focused on the roles of influential institutions, such as schools, on developing participation. Research into civic engagement is often race-neutral; students are primarily grouped as an age cohort. Some researchers considered SES as a factor in reducing learning opportunities and included a snapshot of differences between races. Little research has been conducted that is race-specific.

Many studies begin with an implicit assumption that the audience for the research is interested in improving outcomes. This study will not dispel those assumptions but considers that the desire to improve outcomes is not a universally accepted goal. The current research landscape covers civic engagement with little consideration for the historical context in the United States of limited suffrage. Despite specific studies on voter suppression, research on youth engagement does not begin with the premise that improvement in participation rates might not be a universal goal.

The significance of this research will be to introduce another research perspective. This study ascertained the perceptions of African American college students on how the structures designed to teach them to engage civically have performed in that role. Historically, African Americans have been the subject of overt political discrimination from poll taxes to criminalization that were ostensibly removed with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This study provides insight into how African American college students in the San Francisco Bay Area perceive their treatment today.

This study can provide a basis for strategy formulation for those who seek to influence youth civic participation and can also inform additional study. Finally, this study connects theories that researchers used separately to evaluate youth participation in civic engagement and provides a framework for future researchers to expand the field.

Definition of Terms

Researchers use many definitions to describe civic engagement (Adler & Goggin, 2005) and use the terminology interchangeably throughout the study. The following list of key definitions are terms used.

Civic engagement: The ways citizens participate in the life of a community to improve conditions for others or help shape a community's future (Adler & Goggin, 2005): voting, protesting, and volunteering are considered forms of civic engagement.

Civic organizations: Organizations that have a history of influencing voter participation such as the National Rifle Association or the NAACP.

Neoliberalism: Human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills in an institutional framework characterized by strong private-property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2007).

Social structures: Four entities are under review: schools, places of worship, families/friends, and civic organizations.

Voter-participation rates: The number of potential voters who voted, divided by the total number of eligible voters (File, 2014).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 of this study outlined the research problem and provided an overview of the four social structures evaluated during this study: schools, families, religious organizations, and social organizations. The chapter indicated specifically how U.S. schools have managed their role in developing students to participate in the political process. The chapter also provided some political context as to how a state and its citizens who are limited in voter participation can maintain a disconnection from potentially life-threatening consequences.

Chapter 1 also outlined the significance of the study and how it will fit into the current literature on civic engagement of African American students. The four social structures have all been the focus of past studies, yet little work has combined the relative impact of the four on preparing young African Americans to engage in civic activity: specifically, voting.

The chapter described the theoretical frameworks of CRT and neoliberalism that informed the study. Studies have used each of the frameworks independently but have not used them in conjunction to evaluate the impact of training on the affected population. Chapter 1 shows why both theories are needed to consider the impact of training and training policies on the outcomes of the African American experience in the San Francisco Bay Area. Additionally, the chapter covered important elements of the study

including the sample population and the definition of terms. Finally, Chapter 1 introduced the four research questions that guided the study.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature that begins with a historical overview of African American voting suppression, setting the context for the balance of the literature. Chapter 2 examines the current literature to explore how researchers have looked at civic engagement of 18- to 24 year olds through lenses that do not consider the potential for additional suppression. Each structure examined in the study has its own section that places the current literature in context. In Chapter 2, the historical process of overt voter suppression of African Americans is outlined. The chapter contains a review of the literature on the role of religious organizations in preparing young adults for civic engagement.

Additional elements of Chapter 2 are the roles of the remaining social structures. A section specifically focuses on schools' impact on training young adults. The other two areas—social structures and parents—are also reviewed for how the current literature frames their roles. Finally, Chapter 2 gives context to how researchers have used both theoretical frameworks independently to look at voter engagement and voter suppression.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study. The research was quantitative using a researcher-developed survey to answer the research questions. Chapter 3 presents a discussion of the specific target population and sample-selection process. It provides more background into how the research questions were translated into survey questions to gain insight from the population. The chapter covers the entire research design, data-collection process, and limitations of the data.

Chapter 4 presents a review the results of the study. In the chapter, the four research questions are answered based on how the data emerged from respondents. The partition will look at the general population and the specific African American populations' perceptions on the topics. For example, the discussion of how well students felt high school prepared them will consider responses for both groups. The socioeconomic question, however, will focus on intragroup responses. Each of the four research questions has a section that covers the responses and meaning to the questions.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, includes a discussion of the research findings with an interpretation based on the theoretical lenses of CRT and neoliberalism, viewing each research question separately through these constructs. After the discussion on the individual questions, the discussion moves to a synthesis of the findings. The chapter concludes with the researcher's thoughts on the total data, the research process, and findings, as well as implications for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To provide some background and context to this study, the literature review covers four distinct but related topics on socialization of young voters: Younger Voters and Civic Engagement, Civics and High School, Civics and Social Structures, and Neoliberalism and Civics Education. First is a brief discussion of impact of the United States on African American voting rights throughout history.

Brief Overview of Voting for African Americans in the United States

> I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races, that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office.
>
> Abraham Lincoln, 1858, 4th Debate with Steven Douglas. (Joshi, 1999 p. 286)

As late as 1858, Abraham Lincoln publicly stated his opposition to Black suffrage. By December of 1865, the 13th Amendment was ratified and the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified in 1870. The 13th Amendment was the constitutional process of ending slavery in the United States and states. "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime wherefore the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction" (U.S. Const. amend. XIII). The 15th Amendment guarantees "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" (U.S. Const. amend. XV). Both amendments have been used to circumvent rights by determined forces in the

United States. One way select states found to evade servitude and voting restrictions was through criminal disenfranchisement (Christopher, 1965).

Criminal disenfranchisement is a subtle way to exclude Black people from the franchise of voting by simply denying citizens convicted of crimes the vote (Shapiro, 1993). What makes this process particularly effective is that it targets only select crimes. In criminal disenfranchisement's early days, during the late 1800s, southern states, such as Mississippi, provided constitutions that limited "Black" crimes to burglary, theft, and arson, disqualifying those convicted of voting rights; in contrast, "White" crimes like robbery and murder were exempt (*Ratliff v. Beale*, 1896; Shapiro, 1993). This idea resurfaced in 1986 with the Federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act, when crack cocaine, a "Black" drug and powder cocaine, a "White" drug received extraordinarily different sentencing guidelines, where 1 gram of crack was deemed equivalent to 100 grams of powder (Blumstein, 2003). For more than 150 years, Black Americans have been the object of legally sanctioned obstacles placed in the way of free voting.

Another familiar way of restricting voting had been the adoption of poll taxes. In *Harper v. Virginia Bd. of Elections* (1966), the Supreme Court concluded that a

> State violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment whenever it makes affluence of the voter or payment of any fee an electoral standard. Voter qualifications have no relation to wealth nor to paying or not paying this or any other tax.

The 24th Amendment, enacted in 1964, confers,

> The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for

> Senator or Representative in Congress shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax. (U.S. Const. amend. XXVI)

With some nuance, this is very like the 15th Amendment. The Supreme Court and the U.S. Constitution reacted to legislation that sought to restrict voting rights for those who are primarily Black and, now, the poor. The enactment of the 24th Amendment came into being 1 year before the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In one of the most enduring acts of the Civil Rights Era, President L. B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into existence. The 1965 Voting Rights Act followed the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964 (Christopher, 1965). The 1957 version was limited because, according to the Civil Rights Commission, the prejudices of both jurors and registrars limited the ability of the U.S. Government to uphold the guarantees of the Constitution (Christopher, 1965). The 1960 version gave the Attorney General greater power to pursue discriminatory cases; however, the Attorney General found, "After five years of Federal litigation, it is fair to conclude that case-by-case proceedings, helpful as they may have been in isolated localities, have not provided prompt or adequate remedy for widespread discriminatory denials of the right to vote" (Christopher, 1965, p.6). Regardless of legislation, the United States has historically denied and upheld the rights of select citizens to vote. The balance of this literature review will look at more current views on the subject.

Younger Voters and Civic Engagement

Young voters, those between the ages of 18 and 24, and in some cases, up to 29, have been the focus of many studies over the past 45 years (Cancela & Geys, 2016).

Flanagan (2003) considered what happens in both childhood and adolescence that helps to develop civic participation. And what are the practices of those institutions that help develop democratic positions such as tolerance or trust? Flanagan analyzed community-based organizations. Implicitly, the assumption was that exogenous influence can lead to better voting or civic participation.

Less than half of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 24/29 participate in elections (Adler & Goggin, 2005; Lin, Lawrence, & Snow, 2015), perhaps due to lack of education or awareness as the driver(s) of low participation. The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE; Gibson & Levine, 2003) emphasized that exposure to controversial issues helps support student learning of issues and hence improves their civic engagement. These issues that create high levels of disagreement and are socially relevant drive higher civic engagement (Lin et al., 2015). Again, education as an exogenous factor can be influenced to drive behavior.

In determining what is civic education, Levinson extracted the following from the 2007 CIRCLE report:

> Civic education should help young people acquire and learn to use skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives. Competent and responsible citizens:
>
> 1. Are informed and thoughtful; have a grasp and an appreciation of history and the fundamental process of American democracy; have an understanding and awareness of public and community issues; and have the ability to obtain information, think critically, and enter into dialogue among others with different perspectives.

2. Participate in their communities through membership in or contributions to organizations working to address an array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs.

3. Act politically by having the skills, knowledge, and commitment needed to accomplish public purposes, such as group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning, and protesting, and voting.

4. Have moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference. (pp.4-5).

Levinson (2007) then divided those four components of citizenship to having knowledge of politics, the skill to discern and communicate positions, concern for the plight of others, and the belief they can make a difference. Thematically, most research on voting, citizenship, and youth behaviors concentrate on one or two of these four components. The Levinson and other research started with a similar premise that society has an underlying desire to improve young voter participation and researchers need to unlock the key to what is dampening participation.

Civics and High Schools

As part of the development of research on youthful and eligible voters, researcher Torney-Purta (2002) outlined several developmental frameworks from which to engage in the study of young people's civic engagement. Torney-Purta listed theories such as the ecological model, delineating a microsystem of family, schools, and peer groups that influence young citizens, and exosystems like school boards and, finally, macrosystems like societal values that influence young voters. Other theories such as the cognitive

developmental model and the theory of political identity do not focus on education. The microsystem view is prevalent throughout the literature.

As part of the microsystem of schools, one critique is that civic education in high schools is on the decline; especially in urban schools (Ahranjani et al., 2013). The authors connected the aforementioned low voter turnout to poor civics education in high school and noted that it is even more pronounced for African American and Latino students (Ahranjani et al., 2013). The authors conduct a pre- and posttest analysis of select high school students who have been exposed to studies on the U.S. Constitution through the Marshall-Brennan project, in which law students teach high school classes on the U.S. Constitution in Washington, DC. Findings indicated that special emphasis in teaching the U.S. Constitution drove improvement (12 to 26% on naming the branches of the federal government), but almost 75% of students did not improve (Ahranjani et al., 2013).

Aragon (2015) reviewed programs that address student participation by considering states' attempts to lower the ages of youthful voters to 16 or 17. Proponents of reducing the voting age in state elections believed 16- and-17 year old adolescents have similar cognitive functions to older voters and are capable of voting intelligently. Proponents leveraged axioms such as early engagement will "create engaged citizens and lifelong voters" and "draw young people into the process while they are highly motivated"; also, younger voting will incite discussions at home which will, in turn, involve students and parents (Aragon, 2015).

Bhatti and Hansen (2012) analyzed data from democracies around the world and found that 18- and19-year-old adolescents vote at higher rates than those between the ages of 20 and 34 years. In their work, school is not the driver, but parental influence.

Aragon (2015) noted that states such as New Mexico, Colorado, Illinois, and Hawaii, that recognize the younger-than-18-voter opportunity have revamped school curricula to incite higher civic engagement with younger students. San Francisco also has student-led initiatives to lower the voting age in municipal elections (Aragon, 2015).

Despite research reviewing how to engage younger voters and rationales for revised curricula exists, researchers must consider some barriers to universal improvement in civic education. Kahne and Middaugh (2008) studied high school civic opportunities to determine how those opportunities varied based on race or SES. Studying a national sample of more than 2,800 students across 124 schools and a localized sample of over 2,500 California students, they found students with higher SES parents and schools received much greater classroom civics-learning opportunities. They quoted an American Political Science Association (2004) report that

> The privileged participate more than others and are increasingly well organized to press their demands on government. … Citizens with low or moderate incomes speak with a whisper that is lost on the ears of inattentive government, while the advantaged roar with the clarity and consistency that policymakers readily head (p.1).

Additionally, Ramakrishnan and Baldassare (2004) noted that "Those who are white, older, affluent, homeowners, and highly educated have a disproportionate say in California politics and representation in the civic life of the state" (p. 81). The ability of those with a higher SES is not limited to influence on politics and political outcomes but also extends to high school civic education. Students from higher SES families were 2.03 times more likely to report studying how laws are made than their lower SES

counterparts (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). Higher SES students were more likely to report participating in service activities and to experience debates in their social studies classes. Race plays a role also in that African American students reported having fewer experiences in all phases of civic education than their counterparts (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008).

Summary of Civics and High School

Youth voting rates are below those of other cohorts and researchers see civics education as essential for developing life-long participants in civic engagement. Researchers focused on the age of voters and some states are seeking to extend voting in select state/municipal elections to students who are 16 or 17, based on research. Other researchers considered the demographic composition of students including their race and SES to determine the quality of their education. Beyond the quality of education, economic or racial factors are used to suppress access to high-quality education (Kahne & Middaugh, 2008). All researchers worked under the implicit assumption that the world wants more participation from youth voters and that age, SES, or race are the key drivers to education, which is the key to participation. No studies identified addressed the basic premise of who wants higher participation or who might not want higher participation. Participation is a "universal good" with no driving force.

Civics and Social Structures

In the book, *Demographic Gaps in American Political Behavior*, Fisher (2014) outlined the importance of socialization on developing political views. The most important driver of political behavior is partisanship and having high partisanship will produce more voter involvement than any other indicator. Economic factors such as

income drive part of partisanship; the income gap drives the delineation between parties. The larger the gap, the greater the likelihood of wealthier people voting and voting Republican than poorer people, who would vote Democratic, if they voted. To illustrate this point, if only poor people's votes counted in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, Barack Obama would have won in an electoral landslide and the opposite is true if only rich people voted (Fisher, 2014, p. 29).

As policymakers and citizens consider strategies for voter participation and turnout, demographics of the electorate should play a role in strategy development. Two theoretical constructs may grant insight into societal factors that improve voter participation: educational impact and high education and "left-wing mobilization" (Gallego, 2010). Education drives participation across several industrialized countries, including the United States. "Left-wing mobilization" means social structures designed to increase voter turnout have the potential to improve voter turnout through group-based organizations actively working to bring disadvantaged people to the polls (Gallego, 2010). Bringing poor or disadvantaged people to the polls would have had a disproportionate impact on a Barack Obama's electoral margin (Fisher, 2014).

An alternative to education and the "left-wing" approaches is compulsory voting, with participation rates approaching 100% (Gallego, 2010). However, Carreras (2016) determined that compulsory voting had a negligible effect on political engagement. As noted in an earlier section, the United States has implemented several laws to ensure voter access to disenfranchised voters, such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the 24th Amendment. Each measure was enacted due to local municipalities finding

inventive ways to suppress voting, suggesting that implementing compulsory voting would be difficult in the United States.

Neoliberalism and Civics Education

Compulsory voting would drive nearly 100% voting participation (Gallego, 2010). Ease of voting also supports high voter participation. Ease of voting can be engaged with easy-to-use ballots, few party choices (e.g., Republican, Democrat, and Independent), and where registration is state initiated. In 2014, Louisiana initiated automatic preregistration for young voters to boost participation; results are not in (Aragon, 2015). If ease of voting or compulsory voting would make it easier to vote, are there barriers to implementation?

Much of the literature on voter participation explores mechanisms to improve participation rates. Van Heertum (2009) introduced cynicism as the prevailing instrument dampening civic engagement throughout the United States. Van Heertum quoted Caldwell (2006) with the following:

> Cynicism is especially disabling in a democracy where coalition, community, consensus, and good faith are critical to the operation of its political, social, and economic institutions. The cynic scoffs as such concepts and mocks their idealistic underpinning as well as any efforts to move forward, or for that matter, backward. (p. 137).

Van Heertum asserted that cynicism is an outcome of neoliberalism.

Giroux (2013) stated

> Indeed, many institutions that provide formal education in the United States have become co-conspirators in a savage casino capitalism that promotes the narrow world view of commodity worship, celebrity culture, bare-knuckle competition,

> and a 'war against all' mentality that destroys any viable notion of the common good and political, social, and economic rights. (p. 46)

Essentially, education has a new role: to promote the values of neoliberalism. Baltodano (2012) described how neoliberalism transforms the political sphere to support the needs of the market. This transformation changes social goods into private, individual entities that compete in the "market." The role of government is to promote that culture. Personal and individual freedom is paramount as is personal responsibility and accountability; therefore the government should be removed from healthcare, welfare, and education (Harvey, 2007).

With personal freedom and accountability as a backdrop, neoliberal ideology can reinvent the education process. During the Reagan presidency, the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* was published. This report highlighted the need for a fundamental shift in U.S. education because, although

> the average citizen today is better educated and more knowledgeable than the average citizen of a generation ago—more literate, and exposed to more mathematics, literature and science. … Nevertheless, the average graduate of our schools and colleges today is note as well-educated as the average graduate of 25 or 35 years ago. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p.19)

This was the opening needed to begin a series of reforms that today are the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS, developed to combat U.S. decline and to create comparisons across countries ignores the real issue in academic achievement: poverty (Krashen, 2014).

Although failing to address poverty and its concomitant issues like food insecurity and lack of healthcare, CCSS does transfer state funds from education to education testing (Krashen, 2014). The focus of CCSS is on mathematics and English-language arts, diminishing the role of social studies (Kenna & Russell, 2015). Social studies teachers believed they were providing instruction consistent with the needs of CCSS but were unfamiliar with the actual requirements. They were working toward testing and not toward understanding the material (Kenna & Russell, 2015). When civics is taught by teachers who do not understand the material and by a state apparatus that is not driving that understanding, young potential voters, regardless of SES, will struggle to seek civic engagement.

The example of CCSS as a consequence of neoliberal ideology fits into what Davies and Bansel (2007) noted that neoliberal technologies have been instituted in an almost invisible fashion and that makes analysis difficult. Schools and universities are perfect structures to turn individuals into "economic entrepreneurs" and coursework was reconfigured for that purpose (Davies & Bansel, 2007). The role of government, then, is to promote economic freedoms, so governments had to "de-socialize" to maximize the entrepreneurial conduct of individuals (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Schools are then a commodity to focus on market-driven classes such as mathematics and science. Politics and civics are not part of the equation.

Chapter Summary

The literature on civic education for high school students often begin with an assumption that a universal desire exists to "fix" the civics-education process to drive participation. No research begins with the premise that voting participation is not desired.

Kahne and Middaugh (2008) pointed to inequity in civics education based on demographic factors such as race or income levels. They assumed that mitigating those factors would drive participation.

Some remedies to improve participation of younger voters are to lower voting ages for municipal elections, or move toward compulsory voting (Gallego, 2010). Although compulsory voting does not drive political engagement (Carreras, 2016), it does drive participation. These "fixes" to voter participation also assume no forces are interested in lower voting turnout.

Neoliberalism, as an underlying guiding force for government and schools, is antithetical to developing political engagement. Neoliberals do not trust democracy because governance by majority rule threatens individual rights and constitutional liberties (Harvey, 2007). Additionally, neoliberals prefer governance by executive order and judicial decisions rather than democratic or parliamentary decision-making (Harvey, 2007). These preferences imply an adversarial approach to voting and political participation. With neoliberals managing schools and government, the assumption in current research that a "universal desire" exists to improve political participation might be an illusion.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the best or least influential social structures for young adults (18–24 years old) in motivating their civic engagement, most notably through voting. From the inception of the 26th Amendment, granting the right to vote to citizens at least 18 years of age, researchers worked to discern how younger voter-eligible Americans exercised their rights. Much of that research focuses on a specific influencer, such as church participation on civic engagement.

Research Design

This quantitative study used a specifically designed survey instrument called Perceptions of Political Development in High School to provide a quantitative measurement of the perceptions and satisfaction of students regarding those social structures most/least influential in providing political education, and to provide a contrasting scale of those social structures. In choosing a research method, Krathwohl (2009) indicated that how mature the knowledge of a topic is an important factor. Krathwohl (2009) averred researchers should ask the question, "Where does the knowledge sought stand on the continuum from *discovery* to *accepted as generally applicable knowledge*?" The continuum breaks down the decision factors in developing a qualitative design or quantitative design using survey sampling.

Studies that seek to explain, corroborate, predict, and determine generality are appropriate for quantitative work. One key element influencing the use of quantitative methods is the goal of analyzing data through dissecting it into its' constituent parts

(Krathwohl, 2009). This study sought to understand the influence of constituent parts rather than a holistic phenomenon leading to a quantitative approach.

According to Creswell (2013), survey designs provide quantitative descriptions of attitudes and opinions of a population by drawing from a sample population; the data can then be generalized to the broader population. The survey instrument was administered online through Qualtrics to five San Francisco Bay Area colleges, one 4-year university in northern California and one high school to students who are 18 and eligible to vote. In this case, sampling college students with recent high school experience provided a way to uncover the impact of attitudes and behaviors on precollege political training that can be implied to represent that training against the population of California students.

Research Setting

The research setting was five colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area with only those students over 18 and eligible to vote. The California community college system is the largest in the nation and serves over 2 million students across 114 colleges (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2018). The survey was open to students at the schools with emphasis on reaching daytime students when most of the target age group (72.21% of the community college population; California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2018) is available. Of the group of daytime students, 65.4% are 24 years old and under, as shown in Table 1. Qualtrics reports that the majority of survey participants took the survey between 9:00am and 12:00pm.

Table 1

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Student Enrollment Status Summary Report

	Spring 2017	
	Student count *N*	%
State of California Total	1,549,488	100.00
Day Total	1,134,422	73.21
19 or Less	325,191	28.67
20 to 24	416,617	36.73
25 to 29	134,910	11.89
30 to 34	65,971	5.82
35 to 39	43,572	3.84
40 to 49	56,279	4.96
50 +	91,708	8.08
Unknown	174	0.02
Evening Total	267,469	17.26
19 or Less	26,495	9.91
20 to 24	68,576	25.64
25 to 29	54,898	20.52
30 to 34	33,550	12.54
35 to 39	22,715	8.49
40 to 49	31,014	11.60
50 +	30,164	11.28
Unknown	57	0.02
Unknown Total	147,597	9.53
19 or Less	17,835	12.08
20 to 24	41,077	27.83
25 to 29	28,177	19.09
30 to 34	18,526	12.55
35 to 39	13,197	8.94
40 to 49	16,809	11.39
50 +	11,966	8.11
Unknown	10	0.01

Note. Report run date as of October 12, 2017, 3:11:50 PM.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of current students (N = 84) who were 18 to 24 years old, drawn from accessible schools in the Bay Area. The sample included all races with analysis centered on African American students at those same schools. The selected colleges represent approximately 5% of the available community colleges in all of California. The scope of the study was limited to a specific community college student population target of 14,053 who fit the age criteria. Given the size of the projected student population at the surveyed schools who fit the age criteria, the Qualtrics estimation tool determined the population size with 10% margin of error and 90% confidence level required 68 completed surveys. (Qualtrics, 2018).

Data Collection

To reach the sample number, the researcher worked with school officials—a member of the board of trustees, a director of student services, and three instructors—to secure the required number of participants. The researcher sent formal requests (see Appendix A) to the administrators of participating schools and personally met with those officials to ensure distribution of the survey. The administrators knew who they sent the survey instrument to but did not disclose any of that information to the researcher. Due to the nature of the information the researcher gained, which administrators or instructors were most effective in securing students could not be ascertained.

Students who participated in the survey received a link to the survey and could complete the survey by phone with Internet access or computer. The Qualtrics survey software was configured to provide a similar survey experience in either format. The survey was active from February 14, 2018 through March 23, 2018. The researcher

received an update each morning upon logging into the survey site to see how many surveys were executed. Throughout the balance of February and first 2 weeks of March survey-taker numbers were too small to reach the required minimums. The researcher provided the selected administrators with the rolling tally and asked them to reengage their students to reach the goal.

The most effective sources of reaching students were school instructors and one student who secured respondents as a personal endeavor. In that case, those dedicated to achieving the minimum number would provide updates on the number of students contacted and how many would execute the survey. This would not have worked without the personal commitment of the instructors and a student.

One key element that affected survey respondents was that participants needed access to a computer or phone and the Internet for the survey. The need for a computer was important and limited participation because, while an approximate number could not be obtained, school officials did warn that many students did not have access to computers and that instructors were not likely to schedule computer laboratory time for students to participate. All potential schools were from the San Francisco Bay Area due to the limitations of the researcher's project scope.

Instrumentation

This study used a researcher-designed online survey called Perceptions of Political Development in High School Survey using the Qualtrics software (see Appendix A). The survey had 25 to 37 questions, depending on follow-up questions to selected answers and was segmented into four sections to answer the research questions: Demographics; Civic Knowledge; Civic Participation; and ratings of Sources of

Knowledge. Demographic questions had discrete answers like gender; Civic Knowledge used a combination of fill-in and Likert-type scale questions. Participation and Sources of Knowledge questions had Likert-type scale responses or forced-choice questions. Participants had the ability to provide additional comments to offer information the researcher did not anticipate in the questions.

Data Analysis

The data for the study came from responses generated by the survey instrument. Qualtrics provides descriptive statistics such as number of responses (*n*) and lists of demographic information based on the asked questions. Qualtrics is limited in developing inferential statistics; however, it does allow for evaluation of the data based on the researcher's ability to sort data by select properties, such as gender or SES.

Each question set was grouped to develop answers to the proposed research questions. The groupings allowed for comparative analysis of key elements such as Sources of Knowledge against any of the four social structures (families/friends, places of worship, social organizations, or schools). For example, a question from the instrument, reflects participant behavior, such as, "I voted and felt prepared for the ballot" and their perceived knowledge and preparation for voting. Qualtrics allowed the ability for this question to be compared to answers on other questions regarding "which institutions do I trust to provide accurate information I need to vote?" All questions were analyzed to help answer the research questions along demographic and social-structure lines.

Table 2

Research Questions and Survey Questions

Research questions	Survey question
What are the perceptions of African American college students on social structures being most/least effective in providing a foundation for civic engagement?	1. When reflecting on whether you voted or not, who had the most influence on your decision? 2. Same but with Least influence 3. Rate your trust of the social structures to give useful political advice 4. If a politician wanted your vote, what issues would they have to convince you they support?
What are the perceptions of African American college students on their high school experiences with respect to voter development?	1. In discussing politics, with whom would you most likely have the discussion? 2. As you reflect upon your political awareness, how would you rate the following sources of information? 3. Rate how your high school classes prepared you for political action?
What role did pre-college training have on African American college students' current behavior regarding civic engagement?	1. Are you part of student government? 2. Voting Participation question 3. How prepared were you to vote? 4. Campaigning for a candidate question 5. What political office, if any, would you run for? 6. Which political official has personally shown you the most support?
The role of SES on voting Participation	1. School lunch eligibility during High School

Validity and Reliability

Creswell (2013) indicated that, in survey research, construct validity has become the overriding objective in determining validity, discerning if the scores have served a useful purpose or offered useful outcomes in leveraging the results for real-world implications. In the case of a previously nonexistent survey, reliability and validity must be established. A three-person panel reviewed the instrument that included one instructor of survey research, one author with experience in validation panels, and one researcher of young adult experiences. The panel assisted with what Fink (2017) referenced as content

validity, discerning if experts agree that the questions answer the research questions. See Appendix C for panel requests.

Additionally, the researcher conducted a pilot test of the instrument with a group of 11 individuals to determine question clarity, uncover any indeterminate questions, and receive feedback on the usefulness/appropriateness of the questions to answer the overarching research questions.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained approval from the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects to conduct this study (see Appendix C). The researcher gained approval from administrators at four community colleges to conduct the survey. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that their confidentiality would be maintained and was guaranteed. A statement of informed consent appeared at the beginning of the survey. Students who agreed to participate were administered the survey to complete. Surveys were completed online through Qualtrics. Responses were held on the database and participants' names were withheld from the researcher. The researcher did not seek any identification of participants and cannot determine who they were (Fink, 2017; Krathwohl, 2009).

Researcher's Background

The researcher earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology from Southern Illinois University's College of Engineering, Carbondale IL, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. The researcher has more than 20 years of experience in the field of Brand Management that

includes new product development; a survey-research reliant task. In addition to professional experience, the researcher serves as a board member for a nonprofit afterschool service provider in Contra Costa County, CA, and as an organizing volunteer for the voting-orientated Organizing for Action social-network group. The results of this study will aid the researcher in working with community elected officials—the school board and mayor's office—in assessing future curriculum changes and in developing voter-awareness strategies for public consumption.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of African American students on the impact that different social structures (family, schools, religious organizations, or community organizations) had on their development in civic engagement; most notably voting. This study also uncovered an opportunity for future research into the political development of young adults and their access to information. The study's theoretical lenses—CRT and neoliberalism—were used to inform the development of the research and the interpretation of the data. CRT informs that racism is permanent (Bell, 1995) and that the actions of legislators since the passage of the 13th Amendment have sought to disenfranchise African Americans from exercising their right to vote. Neoliberalism informs that, in capitalist structures, the elite will denounce community involvement and do not support or trust democracy (Harvey, 2007). A way to achieve both objectives is to ensure the electorate is disengaged from voting and that African Americans are even less prepared to participate in electoral politics. This study sought to explore the perceptions of the 18- to 24-year-old age group in parts of northern California and to understand how they believe they have been taught.

This dissertation explored four research questions.

1. What are the perceptions of African American college students on social structures being most/least effective in providing a foundation for civic engagement?

2. What are the perceptions of African American college students on their high school experiences with respect to voter development?
3. What role did precollege training have on African American college students' current behavior regarding civic engagement?
4. What are the perceptions of African American students who represent differing SES strata?

This study also identified those same characteristics for people other than African Americans and provided some insight into the impact of those same social structures outside of northern California.

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study and the answers sought for the research questions. The chapter begins with descriptive statistics about the population including the number of respondents, their gender, race, SES, and graduation dates. The chapter then reports the data obtained from respondents (N = 84) relative to the four research questions. Last the chapter provides a summary of the findings.

Demographics

Participants in the study drew from the population of students who are between 18- and 24 years old and attend or plan to attend community colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area. Based on students enrolled in the Spring 2017 term, the estimate for the total population of community college students in California in the age group who fit the profile is 836,897. This study focused on a smaller area where the total student population is estimated at 37,778 for the 2016–2017 school year and 37.2% of the students, or 14,053 are between 19- and 24 years old. (18 year olds are in the 16–18 age group). This study required participation by 68 respondents to meet the criteria for 90%

confidence level. The 84 respondents were of sufficient number to evaluate the responses. (Note: 86 people started the survey with six people declining consent. Of those six, all completed the ethnic question and four continued with the survey.)

Black/African American formed the highest percentage of participants at 40.70% (35), with White and Hispanic/Latinx both at 16.28% (14 each). The College district reports 20.8% African American, 18.4% White, 18.2% Hispanic/Latinx, and 21.4% Asian American (see Table 3).

Table 3

Racial Identity of Survey Respondents

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Hispanic/Latinx	16.28	14
2	Asian American	15.12	13
3	Black/African American	40.70	35
4	White	16.28	14
5	Bi-racial	9.30	8
6	Other	2.33	2
	Total	100.00	86

For gender (N = 82), more than half were women at 59.76% (49). African American students (n = 35) were 51.43% (18) male (see Table 4).

Table 4

Gender of Survey Respondents

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Male	37.80	31
2	Female	59.76	49
3	Other. Please specify	2.44	2
	Total	100.00	82

Over half of respondents, 41 (51%) obtained their high school diploma/GED in 2013 or later. The majority (87%) of the respondents attended high school in California and 80% of respondents attended high school in the San Francisco Bay Area. Three respondents attended high school in Alabama/Louisiana and one attended high school in Africa.

To determine SES, the question focused on school lunch eligibility. The criteria for free or reduced-price lunch are outlined in Appendix E. The 2017 federal guidelines state that students qualify for free lunch if their household income is 130% or less relative to federal poverty guidelines (e.g., $24,600 per year for a family of 4 multiplied by 1.3 is $31,980). Students eligible for reduced-price lunch cannot exceed 185% of that $24,600, which is $45,510 for a family of 4.

Table 5

Survey Respondents' Lunch Status for Socioeconomic Status

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Qualified for reduced-price lunch	13.58	11
2	Qualified for free lunch	37.04	30
3	Did not qualify for lunch program	37.04	30
4	Prefer not to answer	12.35	10
	Total	100.00	81

A third of respondents (N = 81) reported 37% (30) qualified for free lunch and 13.6% (11) qualified for reduced-price lunch. For African American students (n = 35), 40% (14) qualified for free school lunch and 17.14% (6) qualified for reduced-price lunch. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012) data from 2010–2011, 54.1% of California students receive free or reduced-price lunch (see Appendix F). Overall, 50.6% of survey respondents who receive free or reduced-price lunch was

consistent with the state figures. African American students reported a rate of 57.14%, which is directionally higher.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of African American students on which social structures are the most/least effective in providing a foundation for civic engagement?

The survey asked four questions to discover the answer to this first research question. The social structures under consideration were family, schools, community organizations, and religious organizations such as churches or mosques. Two questions specifically asked about the most and least effective of the structures. The first question, "When reflecting on whether to vote or not, which source had the most influence on your decision?" provided the following results. The responses for the entire sample group (N = 77) were with My Family at 45.45% (35) as the largest influence on voting (see Table 6).

Table 6

Survey Responses to Most Influential Source—Total Sample

#	Answer	%	Count
1	My high school government class(es)	22.08	17
2	My family	45.45	35
3	My friends	19.48	15
4	My religious organization (church, synagogue/mosque/other)	5.19	4
5	Other organizations like the NAACP, NRA, YMCA, etc.	7.79	6
	Total	100.00	77

Note. NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NRA = National Rifle Association, YMCA = Young Men's Christian Association.

For African American students (n = 35), My Family was at 55.88% (19). The next highest overall responses were My High School Government Classes with 20.59% (7) and My Friends at 14.71% (5; see Table 7).

Table 7

Survey Responses to Most Influential Source—African Americans

#	Answer	%	Count
1	My high school government class(es)	20.59	7
2	My family	55.88	19
3	My friends	14.71	5
4	My religious organization (church, synagogue/mosque/other)	2.94	1
5	Other organizations like the NAACP, NRA, YMCA, etc.	5.88	2
	Total	100.00	34

Note. NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NRA = National Rifle Association, YMCA = Young Men's Christian Association.

For the total sample (N = 77), the lowest scoring groups were Other Organizations with 7.79% (6) and My Religious Organization at 5.19% (4). For African Americans (n = 35), Other Organizations were 5.88% (2) and Religious Organizations were 2.94% (1). The low impact of churches on these African American students runs counter to Harris' (1994) findings that church activism highly correlates with voting participation.

The question was then inverted to ask about the least effective sources of influence. Respondents' (N = 74) answers showed that Family influence was still effective, as it had the lowest score of 5.41% as being the *least* effective (4; see Table 8). The next least effective structure was My High School Government Classes at 27.03% (20). Regardless of how the question was posed, high school rates as an inferior source of influence.

Table 8

Survey Respondent's Least Influential Source—Total Sample

#	Answer	%	Count
1	My high school government class(es)	27.03	20
2	My family	5.41	4
3	My friends	20.27	15
4	My religious organization (church, synagogue/mosque/other)	24.32	18
5	Other organizations like the NAACP, NRA, YMCA, etc.	22.97	17
	Total	100.00	74

Note. NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NRA = National Rifle Association, YMCA = Young Men's Christian Association.

African American students (n = 33) also reported My Family 6.08% (2) very low on the least effective scale (see Table 9). African Americans reported slightly differently for Other Organizations at 36.36% (12), My High School Government Classes at 24.24% (8), and My Friends at 21.21% (7) as the least influential sources of information. Churches, with 12.12% (4), did not score as poorly as the positive version of the question implied.

Table 9

Survey Respondent's Least Influential Source—African Americans

#	Answer	%	Count
1	My high school government class(es)	24.24	8
2	My family	6.06	2
3	My friends	21.21	7
4	My religious organization (church, synagogue/mosque/other)	12.12	4
5	Other organizations like the NAACP, NRA, YMCA, etc.	36.36	12
	Total	100.00	33

Note. NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NRA = National Rifle Association, YMCA = Young Men's Christian Association.

To continue to understand the influences of the social structures, respondents (N = 70) were asked to rate their level of trust in the various structures to provide political

advice. Parents were deemed the most trustworthy with 70 responses and 58.6% (41) rating them on the top two boxes of Mostly Trustworthy (25.71%) and Very Trustworthy (32.86%; see Table 10—bolding shows the top two). Respondents (N = 68) rated elected officials as very low on Mostly or Very Trustworthy with 4.4% (3) rating Mostly and 0% (0) rating Very Trustworthy.

Table 10

Survey Respondent's Level of Trust—Total Sample

		Not trustworthy		Somewhat trustworthy		Not Applicable		**Mostly trustworthy**		**Very trustworthy**		
#	Question	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	Total
1	Your parents	15.71	11	21.43	15	4.29	3	**25.71**	18	**32.86**	23	70
2	Other close relatives	19.12	13	32.35	22	11.76	8	26.47	18	10.29	7	68
3	Your religious leader	34.33	23	16.42	11	28.36	19	13.43	9	7.46	5	67
4	Your high school government teacher	13.04	9	36.23	25	20.29	14	21.74	15	8.70	6	69
5	A college professor in civics/government	10.29	7	30.88	21	20.59	14	22.06	15	16.18	11	68
6	Your local community leaders	17.91	12	35.82	24	25.37	17	14.93	10	5.97	4	67
7	Your elected officials	36.76	25	36.76	25	22.06	15	**4.41**	3	**0.00**	0	68
8	The news	36.76	25	48.53	33	8.82	6	5.88	4	0.00	0	68
9	Social media, e.g., Facebook	43.28	29	41.79	28	7.46	5	5.97	4	1.49	1	67
10	Close friends	11.94	8	35.82	24	7.46	5	41.79	28	2.99	2	67
11	People you met at a rally	32.31	21	29.23	19	26.15	17	10.77	7	1.54	1	65

African Americans (n = 32) reported parents at 71.88% (23) Mostly or Very Trustworthy (see Table 11). African Americans (n = 31) were similar with 67.7% (21) reporting elected officials as Not to Somewhat Trustworthy and 9.68% (3) rating elected officials as Mostly Trustworthy.

Table 11

African American Respondent's Level of Trust—Total Sample

#	Question	Not trustworthy		Somewhat trustworthy		Not Applicable		**Mostly trustworthy**		**Very trustworthy**		Total
		%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	
1	Your parents	6.25	2	18.75	6	3.13	1	**21.88**	7	**50.00**	16	32
2	Other close relatives	13.33	4	36.67	11	6.67	2	20.00	6	23.33	7	30
3	Your religious leader	30.00	9	26.67	8	20.00	6	13.33	4	10.00	3	30
4	Your high school government teacher	12.90	4	35.48	11	19.35	6	19.35	6	12.90	4	31
5	A college professor in civics/government	12.90	4	29.03	9	22.58	7	9.68	3	25.81	8	31
6	Your local community leaders	20.00	6	36.67	11	30.00	9	10.00	3	3.33	1	30
7	Your elected officials	32.26	10	35.48	11	22.58	7	9.68	3	0.00	0	31
8	The news	32.26	10	45.16	14	12.90	4	9.68	3	0.00	0	31
9	Social media, e.g., Facebook	36.67	11	40.00	12	10.00	3	10.00	3	3.33	1	30
10	Close friends	16.13	5	29.03	9	6.45	2	45.16	14	3.23	1	31
11	People you met at a rally	31.03	9	20.69	6	31.03	9	13.79	4	3.45	1	29

General Respondents (N = 68) were more likely to rate close relatives as trustworthy with 36.8% (25) as Mostly to Very Trustworthy. African Americans (n = 30) rated family members as 43.3% (13) Mostly to Very Trustworthy. In the total sample, Community leaders (N = 67) and religious leaders were viewed with similar trust levels of 20.9% Mostly to Very Trustworthy. African Americans (n = 30) indicated clergy as polarizing with 56.7% (17) rated as Not to Somewhat Trustworthy and 23.3% (7) as Mostly to Very Trustworthy.

The question of trust was asked on a 5-point Likert-type scale and respondents could provide Not Trustworthy to Very Trustworthy as the range. Parents (N = 70), the

most trustworthy source, rated 37.1% (26) on Not Trustworthy to Somewhat Trustworthy. African Americans (*n* = 32) reported very high trust in their parents with 71.88 (23) Mostly to Very Trustworthy and 25% (8) as Not to Somewhat Trustworthy; only 6.25% (2) rated as Not Trustworthy. Community leaders (*N* = 67) and religious leaders were rated as 53.7% (36) and 50.7% (34), respectively, on Not to Somewhat Trustworthy. For African American students, community leaders (*n* = 30) and religious leaders (*n* = 30) each scored 56.7% (17) Not to Somewhat Trustworthy. Three sources of information, elected officials (*N* = 68), social media such as Facebook, and the news were reported as having very low trust with 73.5% (50), 85.1% (57), and 86.6% (58), respectively. For African Americans, elected officials, the news, and social-media sites received scores of 9.88%, 9.88%, and 13.3% for Mostly to Very Trustworthy.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of African American students on their high school experiences with respect to voter development?

To answer this question, the survey asked three specific items: In discussing politics, with whom would you most likely have this discussion?; as you reflect upon your political awareness, how would you rate various sources of information?; and rate how well your high school classes prepared you for political action.

With respect to the first subquestion, with whom would you discuss politics, the total sample (*N* = 77) reported Family Members as highest with 32.47% (see Table 12). For the larger group (*N* = 77), Friends from College was second with 31.17 (24). Friends from High School achieved 11.69 (9) with the total sample and 2.94 (1) with the African American sample. The implication is that a transformation takes place in college that is

not realized in high school. Although friends from college were a good source, college professors rated as a low source with only one person, an African American, reporting them as a primary source. Religious leaders were also rated as a poor source for information with the overall sample (N = 77) reporting 3.9% (3), whereas the African American sample (n = 34) reported 0%.

Table 12

With Whom Are Respondent's Most Likely to Discuss Politics—Total

#	Answer	%	Count
1	My religious leader and/or elders	3.90	3
2	My family members	**32.47**	**25**
3	Former high school teachers	9.09	7
4	Current/Former college instructors	1.30	1
5	Friends I met in political forums	2.60	2
6	Friends from high school	11.69	9
7	Friends from college	31.17	24
8	Friends from my community social organizations such as the NAACP or NRA	2.60	2
9	Other	5.19	4
	Total	100.00	77

Note. NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NRA = National Rifle Association.

For African Americans (n = 34), Family Members and Friends from College ranked equally with 32.35% (11) respectively. As in the larger group, a change appears to have happened in college with respect to discussing politics. Only one person (2.94%) most likely discussed politics with a high school friend.

Table 13

With Whom Are Respondent's Most Likely to Discuss Politics—AA

#	Answer	%	Count
1	My religious leader and/or elders	0.00	0
2	My family members	**32.35**	**11**
3	Former high school teachers	11.76	4
4	Current/Former college instructors	2.94	1
5	Friends I met in political forums	5.88	2
6	Friends from high school	2.94	1
7	Friends from college	**32.35**	**11**
8	Friends from my community social organizations such as the NAACP or NRA	2.94	1
9	Other	8.82	3
	Total	100.00	34

Note. NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NRA = National Rifle Association.

For the second subquestion, "how would you rate various sources of information?" the question was presented with a 5-point Likert-type scale response ranging from "none-at-all" to "a great deal." For the overall sample population, high school instruction's bottom two-box score was 72% (see Table 14). Community organizations performed similarly with a 73.61% bottom two-box score whereas religious leaders scored the lowest with 79.17% bottom two box. These scores are point-in-time but do indicate that the key entities in the ecosystem are providing little influence on young prospective voters.

Table 14

Rating Level of Influence of Information Sources—Total Sample

		None at all		A little		A moderate amount		A lot		A great deal		
#	Question	**%**	*n*	**%**	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	Total
1	High school instruction	**50.67**	38	**21.33**	16	21.33	16	4.00	3	2.67	2	75
2	TV news	16.44	12	32.88	24	31.51	23	12.33	9	6.85	5	73
3	Radio news	45.95	34	29.73	22	10.81	8	9.46	7	4.05	3	74
4	Community organizations like fraternities/sororities, YMCA, NRA, NAACP	**50.00**	36	**23.61**	17	22.22	16	1.39	1	2.78	2	72
5	Family members: father/mother, sister/brother, uncles/aunts	23.29	17	24.66	18	30.14	22	13.70	10	8.22	6	73
6	Close friends	12.86	9	25.71	18	40.00	28	18.57	13	2.86	2	70
7	Social media	20.55	15	30.14	22	24.66	18	21.92	16	2.74	2	73
8	Your religious leader/elders/congregants	**62.50**	45	**16.67**	12	13.89	10	5.56	4	1.39	1	72

Note. YMCA = Young Men's Christian Association, NRA = National Rifle Association, NAACP = National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

African Americans (*n* = 33) were more likely to rate high school instruction as little to none-at-all for providing instructions to develop political awareness with 78.8% of the total sample's 72% bottom-two box scores. Community organizations with 64.51% and religious leaders with 64.52% bottom-two box scores each exhibited low-levels of influence (see Table 15).

Table 15

Rating Level of Influence of Information Sources—African Americans

		None at all		A little		A moderate amount		A lot		A great deal		
#	Question	**%**	*n*	**%**	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	Total
1	High school instruction	**54.55**	18	**24.24**	8	6.06	2	9.09	3	6.06	2	33
2	TV news	6.25	2	31.25	10	37.50	12	9.38	3	15.63	5	32
3	Radio news	34.38	11	28.13	9	9.38	3	18.75	6	9.38	3	32
4	Community organizations like fraternities/sororities, YMCA, NRA, NAACP	**45.16**	14	**19.35**	6	32.26	10	3.23	1	0.00	0	31
5	Family members: father/mother, sister/brother, uncles/aunts	21.88	7	15.63	5	28.13	9	18.75	6	15.63	5	32
6	Close friends	10.00	3	36.67	11	40.00	12	13.33	4	0.00	0	30
7	Social media	18.75	6	21.88	7	34.38	11	18.75	6	6.25	2	32
8	Your religious leader/elders/congregants	41.94	13	22.58	7	25.81	8	9.68	3	0.00	0	31

Consistent with previous questions, African American students gained some but not a great deal from community organizations that included fraternities, sororities, or the NAACP. Their reporting was consistent with the total sample in that respect. One unexpected finding was that African American students reported 25% receiving a lot to a great deal of information from TV news. The total sample, with African Americans removed, reported just 14.6% receiving a lot from TV news. Again, in the total and African American populations, religious leaders are not connecting with students with respect to politics. Table 16 provides a snapshot of the total population to the African American population.

Table 16

Comparison of Sources of Information (Total to African Americans)

	None at all		A little		A moderate amount		A lot		A great deal		
Source	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	Total
High school instruction	50.67	38	21.33	16	21.33	16	4.00	3	2.67	2	75
HS African American	54.56	18	24.24	8	6.06	2	9.38	3	6.08	2	33
TV news	16.44	12	32.88	24	31.51	23	12.3	9	6.85	5	73
TV AA	6.25	2	31.25	10	37.50	12	9.38	3	15.63	5	32
Radio news	45.95	34	29.73	22	10.81	8	9.46	7	4.05	3	74
Radio AA	34.38	11	28.13	9	9.38	3	18.75	6	9.38	3	32
Community organizations	50.00	36	23.61	17	22.22	16	1.39	1	2.78	2	72
Community AA	45.16	14	19.35	6	32.26	10	3.23	1	0.0	0	31
Family members	23.29	17	24.66	18	30.14	22	13.70	10	8.22	6	73
Family AA	21.88	7	15.63	5	28.13	9	18.75	6	15.63	5	32
Close friends	12.86	9	25.71	18	40.00	28	18.57	13	2.86	2	70
Friends AA	10.00	3	36.67	11	40.00	12	13.33	4	0.00	0	30
Social Media	20.55	15	30.14	22	24.66	18	21.92	16	2.74	2	73
Social media AA	18.75	6	21.88	7	34.38	11	18.75	6	6.25	2	32
Religious leaders	62.50	45	16.67	12	13.89	10	5.56	4	1.39	1	72
Religious leaders AA	41.94	13	22.58	7	25.81	8	39.68	3	0.00	0	31

Note. AA = African American

The last subitem asked respondents to specifically "Rate how well high school prepared you for exercising your right to vote." Responses to this item were also on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Not well at all" to Extremely well." Whether the total population or the subset of African Americans, over 41% of each group reported that high school did not prepare them well to exercise their right to vote. Although each

group indicated that high school was deficient in training, African Americans were more likely to rate high school as preparing them Very Well to Extremely Well with 23.53% whereas non-African Americans reported 16.28%. The crux of the reporting by students is that social structures, outside of parents, that have historically shown an interest in developing teens are not viewed by their clients as successful (see Table 17).

Table 17

Comparison of Ratings of How Well High School Prepared Students

	Not well at all		Slightly well		Moderately well		Very well		Extremely well	
Total	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*
Total sample (77)	42.86	33	14.29	11	23.38	18	9.09	7	10.39	8
AA Sample (34)	41.18	14	17.65	6	17.65	6	8.82	3	14.71	5

Research Question 3

What role did precollege training have on African American students' current behavior regarding civic engagement?

To uncover answers to this research question, the survey asked for perceptions on preparation and how students saw their political action today and in the future. The first question reviewed if students engaged in political activity while in high school or college by holding an office. Holding an office implied campaigning, connecting with colleagues, and persuading them to vote for the student. For the total sample population (N = 79), 25.32% (20) students held and office. Of those 20 students who held office, three were class presidents. All three were African American students. The African American students (n = 34) had 41.18% (14) of the population engaged in student government. The non-African American population only had 10.2% engaged in student government.

The next question focused on preparation during high school and asked how many civics classes students took in high school. To obtain a high school diploma, California requires one semester of civics and American government and one semester of economics (California Department of Education, n.d.). The more advanced curricula that prepare students for the University of California system still allows for a half-year of civics or American government. The California Department of Education recommends 4 years of mathematics for students seeking entrance to the University of California system.

Respondents (N = 79) to the question of how many government classes they took in high school, reported that 56.23% (46) took one class. The next level was two classes with 24.09% (19) reporting. Several students, 6.33% (5) reported taking three or more classes. Interestingly, relative to base requirements, 11.39% (9) students said they had not taken a single class. The African American sample (n = 35) reported 62.86% (22) took one class. Like the larger sample, 20% (7) took two classes and 8.57% (3) took three or more classes. They too reported 8.57% (3) students did not take any government classes.

The next question was to determine how prepared students who were eligible to vote felt when they voted. The survey asked about participation in the 2016 presidential election querying conditions surrounding voting or not. African American students appeared to participate similarly to the total population with most of those who were eligible to vote voting. Each group had about 20% of the respective populations declining to vote. No one opted for the "did not vote as a form of protest" selection (see Table 18). The next question was designed to tease out more information.

Table 18

Comparison Table of Voting and Conditions for Voting

Question	Total population *N* = 79		African American population *N* = 35	
	%	*n*	%	*n*
I voted for all offices and measures	38.71	29	31.43	11
I voted for local measures but not for President	2.53	2	2.86	1
I voted for President but not the rest of the ballot	7.59	6	11.43	4
I chose not to vote	21.52	17	20.00	7
I chose not to vote as a form of protest	0.00	0	0.00	0
I wanted to vote but was not registered	3.80	3	2.88	1
I was not eligible to vote	18.99	15	20.00	7
I voted for most (but not all) measures	8.86	7	11.43	4

For the next set of questions, the survey provided a series of voting/not voting scenarios and asked respondents' views on a 7-point Likert-type scale from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree." Table 19 reflects the top three-box answers (Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree). In both instances, for the total population and African American population, 50% or more voted but did not know all the measures. Also, each group was similar with respect to feeling prepared, with 40.8% of the total population feeling prepared and 38.24% of African Americans also feeling prepared. In the previous question, no one indicated they chose not to vote as a form of protest; however in this question, 23.94% of the total population and 31.25% of the African American population indicated they felt their vote was meaningless. The survey also noted that people voted even though they did not have exact alignment with the candidates; the survey was not intended to uncover party alliance, but future research can uncover how much alignment is necessary for candidates to attract voters.

Table 19

Comparison Table of Voting Preparation

Question	Total population		African American population	
	%	*n*	%	*n*
I voted and felt prepared for the ballot	40.80	31	38.24	13
I voted but did not know all the measures	50.00	37	51.52	17
I did not vote because the candidates did not reflect my values	18.92	14	29.41	10
I voted even though the candidates did not fully reflect my values	44.60	33	42.42	14
I voted because candidate choices reflected my values	22.20	16	24.24	8
I did not vote because it did not matter; my vote wouldn't change anything	23.94	17	31.25	10
I did not vote because I was not prepared to vote on the issues	16.67	12	23.53	8
I was not eligible to vote	26.40	19	28.13	9

Next were a series of questions to gauge interest and action on voter engagement. In the case of the total population and the African American population, each delivered approximately 11% of active campaigning. African Americans indicated they were very aware of candidate issues and could speak on them (67.65%), yet slightly more, 42.86%, than the 32.35% said they did not actively share their views with others. Cynicism does not appear to be a driving factor in that 80.77% of the total and 74.29% of African Americans indicated that not doing anything did not apply to them. For those who said they did not follow election coverage, they wrote their rationale. Two respondents cited being underage as a reason and another stated they were uninformed at the time with little understanding of how the world operated.

The next question was a projection question and asked how the students saw their political futures unfolding. Respondents could check all the boxes that applied to them. Questions asked if they could see themselves as government officials from mayor to

senator up to president or if they do not see themselves in office. In the total population of *N* = 84, 12 people said they could be mayor, 10 said city-council member, six as congressperson or senator, and three said they could see themselves as President. Most respondents did not see themselves holding office, with 26 indicating they would not run for office. Several, 18, indicated they would not run for office but would be involved politically. Finally, 25 people indicated they had no plans right now but may increase involvement later. African American respondents noted seven people could be mayor, seven as city-council members, four to Congress or the Senate, and one as President. People opting out of running were seven, with another eight rejecting office but being active and 11 who may engage in political activities in the future, but had no plans now.

The last questions in this section asked about students' relationships with politicians. A specific question was "Do you personally know any of your local politicians?" In the total population (*N* = 77), 17 people indicated they knew at least one politician. The follow-up question was "how did you meet them?" Several write-in responses indicated they met through community service. A couple of respondents said they met at high school and two people had family friends who were in politics. The African American students (*n* = 35) had five people report that they knew politicians (see Table 20). Only three people wrote how they met and two were from school and one from a meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus. Overall, African Americans had very light engagement with politicians. A survey question was, "Has any politician ever asked your opinion on a topic?" In the total population (*N* = 75), 69 people (92%) said "no." For African Americans (*n* = 34), 30 people (88.24%) said "no."

Table 20

Comparison Table of Political Engagement Activity

	Total population				African American population			
	Applied to me		Did not apply		Applied to me		Did not apply	
Question	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
I was an active campaigner for my candidate and/or causes	11.39	9	88.61	70	11.43	4	88.57	31
I was aware of the new around my candidate can could talk on it	53.25	41	46.75	36	67.65	23	32.35	11
I was aware of the issues but did not actively share my views with others	43.04	34	56.96	45	42.86	15	57.14	20
I was aware of the issues but didn't do anything because it didn't matter	19.23	15	80.77	63	25.71	9	74.29	26
I did not pay attention to election coverage	18.99	15	81.01	64	22.86	8	77.14	27

Research Question 4

What was the role of SES on voting participation?

For this research question, school-lunch status was the surrogate for SES. Specifically, qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch was the criteria for selection in this section. When filtering the data for African Americans who selected free or reduced-price lunch, 20 respondents are included. The respondents divided as 65% (13) men and 35% (7) women. In this group, 70% (14) received free lunch. To receive free lunch, a student's family income cannot exceed 135 indexed to federal-poverty levels for the number of people in the household.

The characteristics for this group follow. Half of respondents (10) were part of student government. This group's civics class in high school was 65% (13) with one class, 15% (3) with two classes, and 10% (2) with three or more. No substantial changes emerged from the subset of African Americans (n = 35). Table 21 shows the largest

change, given SES status, was on preparation for the ballot. Confidence in preparation dropped by 45% with the reflection of lower income.

Table 21

Comparison of African Americans' Socioeconomic Status and Preparation

	African American population		African American free and reduced-price lunch population	
Question	%	*n*	%	*n*
I voted and felt prepared for the ballot	38.24	13	21.00	4
I voted but did not know all the measures	51.52	17	42.11	8
I did not vote because the candidates did not reflect my values	29.41	10	20.00	4
I voted even though the candidates did not fully reflect my values	42.42	14	30.00	6
I voted because candidate choices reflected my values	24.24	8	21.05	4
I did not vote because it did not matter; my vote wouldn't change anything	31.25	10	36.84	7
I did not vote because I was not prepared to vote on the issues	23.53	8	25.00	5
I was not eligible to vote	26.40	19	28.13	9

Table 22 shows the impact SES has on the African American group. With a side-by-side comparison, it appears that SES was not driving voting behavior as no noticeable changes emerged in answers.

Table 22

Comparison of African Americans' Socioeconomic Status and Voting Activity

Question	African American population $N = 35$		African American population $N = 20$	
	%	*n*	%	*n*
I voted for all offices and measures	31.43	11	30.00	6
I voted for local measures but not for President	2.86	1	0.00	0
I voted for President but not the rest of the ballot	11.43	4	10.00	2
I chose not to vote	20.00	7	25.00	5
I chose not to vote as a form of protest	0.00	0	0.00	0
I wanted to vote but was not registered	2.88	1	5.00	1
I was not eligible to vote	20.00	7	20.00	4
I voted for most (but not all) measures	11.43	4	10.00	2

Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to present and review the data from the survey Perceptions of Political Development in High School. Each of the four research questions were addressed and reviewed as a total population and the specific African American component. Few attitudes or behaviors differed between the total group and African American students.

Key conclusions from the study were that the four social structures in question—schools, families, religious organizations, and social organizations—were unequal with respect to influence and effectiveness. Young adults rated family as the primary source of political information and as influencing their civic activity. Students viewed religious organizations and social organizations as the least effective and influential sources of political information and trust.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of African American college students in the San Francisco Bay Area about how well they received training or were developed in civic engagement during high school. The study looked at four social structures as potential support for their learning. According to the literature, those structures—family, religious institutions, community organizations, and schools—represent the best vehicles for students to learn. The study entailed receiving feedback from a survey from 84 students who answered up to 37 questions pertaining to their experiences and actions during their high school years. Chapter 4 reported the findings from their answers. This chapter will present a discussion of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study. Based on the themes that emerged from this study, recommendations for action and future study will be made.

The two theoretical frameworks used for this study were CRT and neoliberalism. Those two frameworks had limited use in previous studies to analyze the influences on young African American voters. CRT suggests that, as history bears out, overt and covert ways will always exist that African American voters will find their ability to vote hampered. The "permanency of racism" outlined by Bell (1995), coupled with the recent *NC State Conference of NAACP v. McCrory* (2013), case supports the idea of continued barriers due to race. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, is less overt and relies on a more overarching approach than CRT. Its market-driven focus on individualism and denouncing of the value of collective electoral politics, has, for more than 30 years,

reduced the appeal of politics to young voters (J. Hart & Henn, 2017). These two influences have the potential to create disengagement in politics and voting for young people, and especially African Americans. The sense of purposeful disengagement is counter to the tone of existing studies and the key evaluative lens for this study.

Discussion of Findings

What follows is a discussion of study findings and the conclusions drawn from the research, viewed through the critical lenses.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of African American students on which social structures are the most/least effective in providing a foundation for civic engagement?

The aim of this question was to discover how students learn about the act of voting and from whom. The ecosystem approach discussed by Torney-Purta (2002), wherein the microsystem of family, schools, and peer groups, and macrosystems of societal values were the basis for considering the structures. The structures—family, schools, religious institutions, and community organizations—are considered highly likely to influence voting knowledge and behavior. From the research, families emerged as the most influential structure for teaching adolescent African Americans about politics. The specific question, "When reflecting on whether to vote or not, which source had the most influence on your decision?" showed that for the overall sample (N = 77) and African Americans (n = 35), My Family was highest rated at 45.45% and 55.88%, respectively.

This finding is consistent with the work of Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, and Keeter, (2003) who found that families, particularly those that discuss politics at home, are more

likely to vote. They found that 38% of students in those homes always vote compared to 20% of those in homes without political dialogue. McIntosh et al. (2007) also indicated that parental discussion drives youth voter participation. What is new from these data is that the African American students in this study reported parental influence 10 points higher than did the overall sample.

African American students rated schools above the other two social structures with 20.59%, but still almost half as highly as family. One of the issues with schools driving stronger results is that they are controlled by individual school districts and, without national oversight, local control leads to difficulty in evaluating programs consistently (Andolina et al., 2003). Locally, the California state budget's largest single expense is K–12 education, representing 41.9% of the budget (see Figure 1).

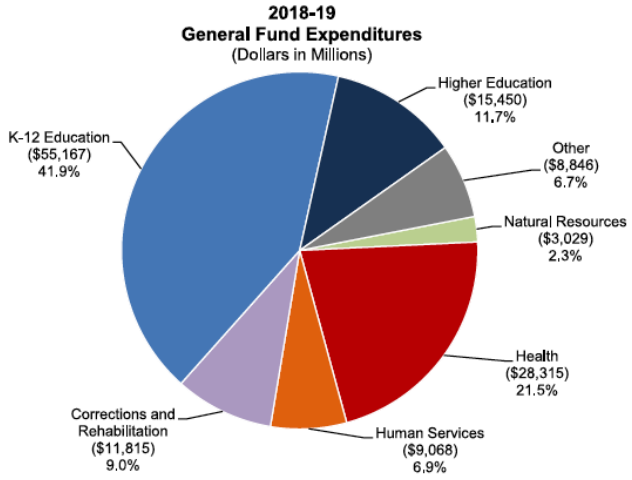

Figure 1. K–12 education in California.
Source: Summary Charts, by California Governor's Budget Summary, 2018–19, retrieved from http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/2018-19/pdf/BudgetSummary/SummaryCharts.pdf

Despite the resources devoted to K–12, Levinson (2013) noted that business leaders, parents, youths, and other citizens have been concerned about the limited effectiveness of student's opportunities to learn civics. The scores in this study reflect

students' perspectives, which support the stated concerns. Overall, students, who are consumers of the educational system that receives the lion's share of the California budget, indicated that the schools are a poorly performing entity.

Given that school attendance is compulsory, schools would appear to be in a stronger position to influence voting behavior. Apple (2006) described the impact of neoliberalism on education as deemphasizing community-oriented citizenship and promoting styles of individualism where citizenship is reduced to how people consume goods and services. If that is true, schools, by design, would not be the place for young citizens to learn about civic engagement. The emphasis would be on skill development other than participatory government. Saltman (2009) implied a sort of war is waging between two forces: traditional teachers and corporate-based reformers. Corporate-based reformers are focused on achievement that can be quantified, measured, and improved. Leaders in this situation are like mini-CEOs who can impact performance similarly to increasing corporate profits. Civic education does not lend itself to evaluation like mathematics does so is not an emphasis item for this type of leader.

In 1998, California State Board of Education published the *History–Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve.* The guidelines outline the year-by-year requirements for each grade level. The standards document was updated in 2016, which would not have been applicable to several survey respondents. Of those who took the survey, 65 of the total (N = 84) or 77%, graduated before 2016.

The high school modules are as follows:

1. Ninth Grade: has no specific requirement

2. 10th Grade: World History, Culture, and Geography: The Modern World
3. 11th Grade: U.S. History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the 20th Century
4. 12th Grade: Principles of American Democracy and Economics

By the headings of the yearly requirements, civic engagement seems to be wrapped into the 12th-grade module. Each year has a summary of what is expected in that year, and, as the title of the module explains, students will cover principles of American democracy and economics. The paragraph outlining the principles states "Students in grade twelve pursue a deeper understanding of the institutions of American government" (California State Board of Education, 1998, p. 54). Students will compare various systems of government while also reviewing and analyzing the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, and *The Federalist Papers*. These documents, which form the foundation of U.S. government, along with the branches of the government, comprise the basis for student learning about democracy. In the pages that discuss the 10 key points for students to learn, despite no pragmatic module on the development of a school board or the role of an Alderman, Section 12.3 covers how a civil society can have social structures outside of government influence on the role of government.

Beyond schools and families, other social structures, religious institutions, and social organizations were reported as having very little relative influence on youths' political perceptions. Only 5% of African American students (n = 35) rated social organizations as having high influence and religious organizations rated less than 3%. This implies that if, for any reason, parents or family members do not discuss politics, other organizations are not there to mitigate the lack. The study does not describe if there

is a message coming from social organizations or religious institutions but does indicate that those two structures are ineffective in influence.

Findings for religious institutions' impact on African American political influence seems at odds with some earlier literature. Pattillo-McCoy (1998) stated,

> The church acts simultaneously as a school, a bank, a benevolent society, a political organization, a party hall, and a spiritual base. As one of the few institutions owned and operated by African Americans, the church is often the center of activity in black communities. (p. 769)

This idea of the church as a focal point of African American political life has been a consistent theme from Du Bois and Eaton (1899) to 100 years later with Lincoln and Mamiya (1990).

Despite the historical significance of the church in African American life, the data from this study show that the African American church structure has not influenced those Bay Area youths surveyed. In more recent work, Jabir (2017) indicated that young Black activists who look toward their church leaders find those leaders unwilling to support social change, leading to disillusionment. The author noted that those young activists are expecting results like the 1960s civil rights era whereas those elders are weary from the battles and lost comrades from that era. The idea that churches were a focal point of African American political involvement and is no longer that place appears consistent with the findings of this study. This study cannot corroborate the reasons, as that was outside the scope of the study, but clearly a gap exists in church influence.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of African American students on their high school experiences with respect to voter development?

African American students (n = 35) rated high school as 20.59% on the question of influence. This question differed from other in that respondents had to reflect on how well high school years prepared them to engage in civic behavior. Giroux (2014) noted that mastering test-taking and memorizing facts has supplanted critical learning leading to being taught how to accept knowledge or authority without question. This implies that schools would not actually do a good job in preparing students for civic engagement because critical thinking is at odds with what schools teach. The findings from African American students showed that 85% felt that schools, at best, did a moderate amount as a source of information that helped prepare them for voting. Of the respondents, 54.55% indicated that high school instruction did not influence their political choices at all.

The African American students (n = 34) were asked specifically how well high school prepared them for exercising their right to vote. The highest answer was "not well at all" with 41.18% providing that answer. Overall, students rated high school as a weak source for their development, with the bottom three choices on the 5-point Likert-type scale reaching 76.5%. If these students stated that their high schools have done a poor job of training, and other scholarly research such as Kahne and Middaugh (2008) indicted schools across the country, it seems reasonable to infer that the failure of schools is not accidental. Researchers J. Hart and Henn (2017) evaluated other school systems such as those in Great Britain and have also found schools doing a poor job. Their conclusions are that neoliberal philosophies in action are responsible.

Neoliberalism as a philosophy is, according to Giroux (2014), one that "abhors democracy and views public and higher education as a toxic civic sphere that poses a threat to corporate values, power, and ideology" (p. 30). Education reform is designed to promote the causes of corporate values and power. Reform is based on the obvious notions of individualism (Giroux, 2014) and enactment of reforms does not have to be as overt as impeding voting rights with new identification laws, as was the case in North Carolina (*NC State Conference of NAACP v. McCrory*, 2016). CRT would explain a situation such as North Carolina's identification laws as a racial act. Neoliberal reform in schools can suppress voting by creating a bias against it.

One unexpected outcome of the research was the response to the question, "With whom are you most likely to discuss politics?" The African American response rate of zero for the church, which was below the general population's low score of 3.9%. Given the historical context of the church in African American society, the finding of 0% further reinforces the notion that the church has lost significant relevance with younger African Americans. Again, with respect to Pattillo-McCoy (1998) these findings, 20 years after their publication, indicated that what might have been true is no longer current. If the neoliberal process is to deconstruct a community-based focus for young people, then these findings were possible to predict. This question's response is more consistent with Jabir (2017), a more recent analysis, suggesting that religious leaders have moved away from their Civil Rights Era roles and that the congregants cannot look to them for arguably secular insights.

Another finding relates to social organizations. When asked about them as a source of information, the general population gave them a modest rating or lower; 1.39%

rated them as a lot and 2.78% said a great deal. African American students indicated they received more information than their peers: 32.26% for a moderate amount versus the general population's 22.26%. However, like the general population, African American students rated social organizations as 3.23% for a lot and 0.0% for a great deal. Social organizations would seem to have a vested interest in having political influence or being a source of political information.

Boyte (2005) showed that politics was highly dependent on social organizations by illustrating the career of Hubert Humphrey. Boyte discussed how Humphrey's politics were grounded in local civic culture that connected people's everyday lives through everyday institutions. These institutions were spaces where people learned how to address varying types of people, how to negotiate, and to manage public life. They were sources of information in managing and understanding a democratic society. Boyte (2005) also linked the demise of the influence of spaces that influence civic engagement to the rise of professional education. In this scenario, professional training for teachers and the ministry have lost their connections with people and places and have placed greater emphasis on the actual discipline. Ministry training may focus on church organization or how to deliver a good sermon rather than how to engage congregants in more local matters. The implication is that social and religious organizations have moved from their civic-minded roles to more market-driven roles by becoming more discipline focused. That transformation is consistent with the neoliberal idea of individuals rather than community.

Research Questions 3 and 4

What role did precollege training have on African American students' current behavior regarding civic engagement? What was the role of SES on voting participation?

These two questions center on behavior, specifically, did respondents vote? Eight African American students (n = 35) were not eligible to vote in the 2016 election, which meant 27 people were eligible. Of the 27 who could vote, 20 indicated they did and seven did not vote. When the SES filter for low income was applied, 15 people were eligible to vote, but five did not vote. The lower-income-household students' percentage of nonparticipation increased over their higher income counterparts. Considering only those respondents who qualified for free lunch in high school created set of (n = 14), and 10 were eligible to vote. In that case, four people did not vote. Although it is difficult to project to the general population, the impact of 40% of these students who were in the poorest households not voting is consistent with literature.

This study cannot indicate exactly why students who are lower income did not vote. Literature on similarly situated adults can provide some potential insight that can be validated with future studies similar to the present study. Alex-Assensoh (1997) showed a strong link between poverty and the decline in church attendance, which in turn, dampened electoral participation. The impact of poverty or reducing voting participation was greater for poorer Caucasian respondents than for African American respondents, but African American poverty was still a factor. The foundation of the Alex-Assensoh study was the combination of poverty, race, and isolation. The scholar reviewed the literature of the time, which supported the link between African American churches and voting

participation. The data from the present study does not corroborate the claim of the church's active role in voting participation.

From the work of Alex-Assensoh (1997), social isolation of African Americans can dampen their voter participation. Those with a lower SES reported greater social isolation that limited their participation in social organizations. The present study showed that social organizations and churches had limited influence on respondents. Social isolation also leads to reduced opportunities to interact with upwardly mobile individuals, which can also lead to greater electoral participation as more upwardly mobile people can act as role models on the benefits of political participation.

The benefits of association with upwardly mobile people, although not part of the present study, is a situation that has relevance as neoliberalism has gained traction. Minnite and Piven (2016) discussed at length associations with cohorts and their amplification or dampening of political activity relative to neoliberal principles. The authors discussed how members in a certain class share similar chances in life that place them in locations of inequality or privilege. Those chances build on the resources they have available to them, such as wealth, but also skills and education. People of lower economic means tend to stay in that strata and have limited upward mobility.

This limited association, weakened church association, and lower social organization influence may be part of the dampening effect of lower SES students from voting. As with Jabir (2017), a weariness with the outcomes of working with clergy to advance community agendas through voting may have ensued. While the study is 50-years old, Keech (1968) showed that African American voting made some gains but was not truly instrumental in reducing the impact of racism. Although not causal, several

anecdotal pieces suggest youth voting is unsupported by most social structures outside of family members. Neoliberalism would predict this type of outcome.

Discussion

From a historical context, Minnite and Piven (2006) said "Segregated Black communities in both the South and the North developed complex local societies and indigenous institutions like the Black church and fraternal and civic organizations, which nurtured and protected ordinary African Americans as best they could" (p. 34). The sense of community rather than individualism is antithetical to neoliberal ideology, which

> parades as an emancipatory theory of how to achieve human well-being by unleashing entrepreneurial spirit through the marketization of everything, when in fact, it is a strategy of the capitalist classes and their allies among upper echelons of financial and corporate management and the state to curb the power of labor, deregulate the economy, undermine democratic norms and institutions and shrink the welfare state. (p. 34)

Neoliberal thinking is designed to reduce the processes of leveraging voting.

In considering the role that training played on study respondents' lives while in high school, it is now clear that civic organizations and religious organizations have lost effectiveness. Additionally, high schools, through their curriculum, deemphasize the teaching of civic engagement. Chief Justice Warren spoke about the value of voting, yet the training needed for developing young voters is lacking. Why would the United States as a nation undermine the training of the next generation?

If poorer African Americans students self-selected to opt not to vote, policymakers who might want to use overt suppression measures like North Carolina

have other tools at their disposal. Students who qualified for free lunch indicated that nine of 15 of them rarely or never spoke about politics at home. As noted earlier, talking about politics at home increased the likelihood of younger voters actually voting. School reform that follows neoliberal ideology, supplemented with more direct voter-suppression tactics can disenfranchise potential African American voters in perpetuity.

Throughout the history of the United States, the suppression of African American votes has been persistent. Roithmayr (2014) explained this persistency as a function of *cartel* behavior. In Roithmayr's view, racial cartels explain why the classic economic theory that predicts the removal or race-based limitations demise due to market conditions does not work. The development of racial cartels was to ensure that Caucasian workers or homeowners did not have to compete with African American workers or homebuyers for jobs or property. The idea was that excluding them would boost profits for the majority group at the expense of the African American minority.

A way to execute cartels was to create laws or bylaws to enforce protection of the cartel's goals. If, for example, the goal was to create and maintain a segregated neighborhood, developing city ordinances restricting where African American families could live was a method. If not an ordinance, homeowner associations could write in covenants for a particular neighborhood. Roithmayr (2014) explained that for enforcement of covenants was the threat of being sued by a neighbor if a homeowner decided to sell their house to an African American family, which would presumably lower the values of the homes of those remaining in the neighborhood. This type of cartel was designed to ensure that the economic status of the Caucasian homeowners remained intact.

The cartel is one idea of how and why a neoliberal and a CRT component exist to restrict the voting power of African American adults. CRT would suggest that racism is the primary driver of segregation covenants. Neoliberalism indicates an economic component whereby individual gain is paramount. Without CRT as a lens, no need would exist to examine how African Americans were affected by segregation rules because neoliberals would have other ways of segregating, such as country of origin.

Those in power gain benefit from creating barriers to allowing others to gain access to that power. In the case of homeowners, restricting access by African Americans accomplishes several benefits. First, keeping out African American reduced the risk of lowering property values. Second, because public schools are often funded locally from property taxes and attended based on proximity, Caucasian schools can fund better education access. Better education access presumably leads to better employment options, which lead to increased income opportunities. Bowles and Gintis (2011) describe this in a hypothesis that legitimizes the behavior. In this hypothesis, education helps legitimize preexisting economic conditions. The idea that education is based on meritocracy is an illusion and instead reproduces existing inequalities.

To illustrate this graphically, Bayesian modeling or the Polya Urn model (Thörnblad, 2016). The Polya Urn model can serve as a surrogate for economic advantage. The model shows what happens when a scenario exists whereby a group has a lead at the outset and then displays the likelihood of either maintaining that lead or losing that lead. In this model, colored balls are added to an urn based on the ball that was randomly selected immediately prior to adding new balls. Figure 2 shows a hypothetical situation where one color starts in the lead with respect to how many of that color are

already in the urn at the start. The graph from Mauboussin (n.d.) starts with five different color balls where one color, red, has 15 balls and the other four colors each have one less ball then the higher colors: black has four, yellow has three, and green has two. The starting numbers are arbitrary but are designed to show the stark contrast between relative equality and the value of a significant lead.

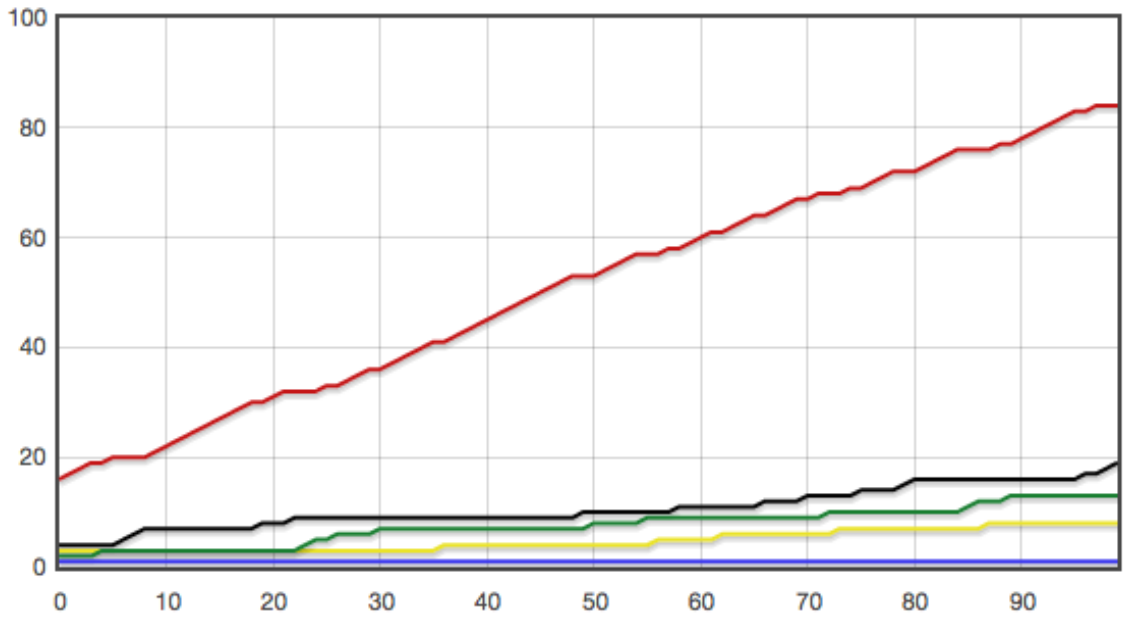

Figure 2. Graph of Polya urn simulation.
Source: *Polya Urn Model,* by A. Mauboussin, n.d., retrieved from http://success-equation.com/urn.html

What Figure 2 indicates is that beginning with a lead can create a self-perpetuating cycle. Over the course of 100 draws, the red balls increased their lead. Renaming the red balls to *political advantage* or *wealth advantage* then shows that having the lead in those areas can create bigger gains. Those in the dominant position would have no reason to cede power. The colors other than red start with relative equality. Over time, in this outcome, the colors stay relatively close. Although they stay close, red continues to accumulate more red balls. Beginning with more yields more and more over

time. The implication of this model is that without a disruptive strategy and continued reliance on past methods, those balls that are not part of the privileged red balls will never come close to equality.

Leveraging neoliberalism and race-based tactics are in the best interest of a segment of the population. Much of the existing research on youth voting is seeking how to increase participation. Little research is done on why to increase participation. CRT and neoliberalism provide a perspective that sharing political advantage through democratic learning is counter to the continued success of the dominant group. CRT supports the idea that forces are always acting against the promotion of African American people and other people of color. From the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964 to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Supreme Court's 2013 decision to weaken sections of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the forces of suppression remain constant. Harvey (2007) said that neoliberals want the judicial branch to legitimate the executive branch of government. Promoting voting of the unpowerful is a poor strategy for the powerful to adopt.

Strategy for Counteracting Inherent Power Advantages

If the status quo will yield additional gains for the powerful group and nominal gains for those out of power, maintaining the status quo should not be the long-term strategy. At the beginning of this study, I referenced the shooting of Michael Brown, the Attorney General's findings, and Chief Justice Earl Warren's point of view on voting. Laws have been adopted to counteract many of the obvious levels of discrimination in the past. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, and various Civil Rights acts have been

adopted, yet African Americans still have to worry about their safety and influence in the United States. Voting, as Chief Justice Warren indicated, should affect that.

What follows next is a rethinking of voting and voting for power for African Americans. CRT and neoliberalism suggest that overt and covert practices exist in the United States to limit participation of African Americans in the voting process. Voter-identification laws are overt whereas deemphasizing civic education in school is more covert. Without a disruptive strategy, the Bayesian model shows that the situation is unlikely to improve over time; those in power have no incentive to develop stronger African American voting awareness or participation.

One of the limitations on African American influence and voting in California is the relative smallness of the African American population. Based on the 2016 U.S. Census for Population by State and the percentage of African American population by state from 2013 (Index Mundi, 2013), California's African American population is 6.2% of the total. For perspective, that is just below Wisconsin (6.5%) and just above Minnesota (5.7%). Each of these states is well below the national average of 13.2%. The implication of such low population rates is that voting power is necessarily limited. Higher percentages of African American's in a state, however, does not always translate into greater political power. For example, Mississippi's African American population percentage is 37.4%; the highest in the nation. With that high of a percentage, the African American Mayors Association (2017) avers people have limited political power. That association reports three dues paying members in the cities of Yazoo City, Meridian, and Vicksburg.

Having an African American mayor is one form of political power, but on a larger scale are governorships, senators, and congressmen. Additional forms of political power are state courts, school boards, police chiefs, and heads of National Guards. For African Americans, these types of positions are generally out of reach, given their 13.2% overall population percentage, and no more than 37% population percentage in any one state. To reimagine how that power can be reconfigured, it is instructive to look at how population shifts could address the situation.

The data from the 2016 U.S. Census projections show 40.2 million African Americans live in the United States. The most populated states are Texas, Florida, Georgia, and New York, each with approximately 3 million people. California is the fourth most populated state for African Americans with 2.4 million people. As noted earlier, California's African American percentage of population is 6.2%. Texas' percentage of African Americans is 11%, Florida's is 15%, Georgia's is 29%, and New York's is 15%.

According to the African American Mayors Association (2017), Texas has four mayors on its roles, Florida has four, Georgia has 19, and New York has one. None of those four states has an African American governor or senator. In 2018, no states have African American governors and three states have African American senators: California (Kamala Harris), New Jersey (Cory Booker), and South Carolina (Tim Scott). In the history of the U.S. Senate, 10 African American senators have served since 1870 (U.S. Senate, 2018)

The lack of prominent African American politicians at the highest level may have a limiting effect on voting participation of young African American voters. Those

African American survey respondents (n = 34) indicated that five people knew a local politician. Four people indicated they could run for Congress or the Senate. Each of the four people who would consider a run for Congress were members of their school student governments. Three of those who knew local politicians were also in student government. Those respondents with no ties to student government were less likely to know politicians or see themselves as politicians.

With a limited number of prominent politicians and only 13.2% of the total U.S. population, the African American community would need disruptive change to impact the current power structure; the Bayesian model implies no change without it. A way to address this is to reconsider demographic density. Georgia, with its 29% African American percentage also had 19 mayors, almost five times the other large African American population states. Mississippi, in contrast, with 37% of the population being African American, does not have similar results with only three members of the African American Mayor's Association. Neither Georgia nor Mississippi, with their larger than average African American populations, has enough of a majority to control most major branches of state government.

Reconsidering population density, it might seem that African Americans moving from one state of a high-minority density to one that would provide majority density would increase their power. Wyoming, for example, has 585,000, 6,421 of whom are African American: 1.1% of the total population. Moving 1 million African Americans to Wyoming would increase the total population to 1.58 million but also provide for 63.5% percentage. That type of majority can increase the likelihood of two African American

senators, a governor, influence on state supreme courts, and other state and local government officials.

The type of shift of population is an approach that moves the African American population into the possibility of a more representative government. The interests of African American constituents would have a stronger voice ranging from how the population is treated to how schools are run and the types of police interactions that led to Michael Brown's death. With respect to problems that appear in the news and literature, such as overpolicing and incarceration of young African American men, holding state and local governments accountable could and should remedy those conditions. The Wyoming model could then become a model for how schooling and other public services such as police reform can occur in the rest of the country. Such a model can also be extended to other states. For example, 40 million African Americans strategically located in low-density states can significantly alter the political power of the entire population and can impact youth-voting participation and the process by which young people are taught about civic engagement.

Additional Findings

As the research unfolded, a few conditions emerged that were not part of the original goal of the study, but nonetheless bear note. The first condition is that access to information tools is problematic with some lower income students. Three administrators discussed the limits they had on having students take the survey online due to those students' lack of personal computers. To administer the survey, they would need to schedule time at computer laboratories to ensure students could access the survey. In those cases, a paper copy would serve; however, it is not the completion of the survey

that is of concern but rather that current college students have limited access to one of the key information-dissemination tools in the United States.

According to the U.S. Census (2015), 80.1% of African American households in the United States have computing devices at home and only 64.9% have broadband Internet access at home. For Caucasian Americans, those numbers are 88% and 79.9%, respectively. Any household with incomes under $25,000 have 67.1% access to home computing and 51% have broadband connections. California has 81.3% broadband connections at home, meaning that low-income and African American households underperform average households for Internet access. Potential voters who need access to the Internet may be left out of the process.

Another condition that emerged was that of participant wariness of surveys for political insight and the need for reassurance that the survey would not jeopardize their legal status. Feedback from administrators was that some potential participants would not agree to the survey because, despite its anonymity, the immigration climate in the United States concerned them. Cheng and Liu (2018) showed that political engagement relies on horizontal trust—how a person relies on co-citizens—and vertical trust: previous successful exchanges with government agencies. When citizens feel that government services are fair, they are more likely to comply with authorities. The survey was provided to participants from people in position of authority and lack of trust in one area, such as Immigration services, impedes trust with other authorities (Cheng & Liu, 2018).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

The State of California is the harbinger for demographic changes that will occur in the United States over the next 30 to 40 years. By 2050, U.S. citizens 65 and older will increase from 15% to 24% of the population whereas those classified as non-Hispanic White people's percentages will decrease from 62% in 2014 to 44% by 2060 (Colby & Ortman, 2015). This decline in non-Hispanic White persons' percentages will reflect the majority–minority demographic composition that California began in the 2000 Census (Gay, 2001). Looking at current policies in California today can lead to insights for the rest of the country in the future.

In preparing citizens for political activity in the form of voting, California does nothing special to ensure an informed citizenry. Scholastically, it requires one class for 1 semester in civics/American government. The requirements for admission to the University of California system is for at least 3 years of mathematics. Neoliberal reviewers could classify mathematics as an economic interest rather than a community or societal interest. With respect to tools for gaining political insight such as computers and Internet access, California also does little to promote those needs. People in political power in California have no incentive to share that power, as the Polya urn model shows.

The two most underperforming social structures are religious institutions and community-based organizations. Groups like the NAACP or fraternities and sororities were rarely mentioned as sources of information or key drivers of behaviors. Religious leaders do not appear to have led the political thinking of their younger congregants. Schools are run by governments and the leaders who have benefitted from the system

may not have any incentive to change. Families are the best source of information, but projecting today's undertrained young adults into future parents may not improve the knowledge of future generations.

To change the current power structure, the two underperforming groups provide the greatest upside to change. Religious organizations and community-based groups should develop their outreach programs. They should not target young adults, however. The focus should be on developing the information-sharing process for their older constituents, the ones more likely to be parents. Those parents can, in turn, promote conversations at home to help promote voting awareness and behavior. Without a concerted effort to actively ensure consistent information exchange and voting behavior, as the urn model shows, no change will occur.

Recommendations for Future Research

Current research on youth voting seeks to uncover the causes of individual behavior and then ascend to cohort behavior. CIRCLE at Tufts University is a robust source for ongoing study of youth voting. Researchers can find many ways to improve youth-voting rates. Where this study focused and where additional research can be leveraged is in studying larger groups of students using the same theoretical lenses. A study that focuses on the impact of school messaging on youth civic engagement should be attempted. This researcher has visited two distinct elementary schools in Oakland, California, where one has messages exhorting the children to avoid going to jail whereas the other focused on how high each student's potential was. Two vastly different messaging schemes might have vastly different but predictable outcomes; further study is needed.

Additionally, this study cannot tell what high schools the students attended and could not look at the quality of instruction. Future research on best-in-class programs based on percentage of students engaging in civic activities should also be initiated. Finally, much of scholarly research treats young voters as on cohort and future research should partition students by racial makeup of the schools. California is the precursor to the rest of the demographic makeup of the United States. Understanding how California practices help or hurt the democratic process is essential to its improvement or decline.

Concluding Thoughts

I began formulating the idea for this research during my first semester at the University of San Francisco. In that semester, I was exposed to new-to-me ideas about race and politics. My prior educational and career experience was in manufacturing and business management. That semester showed me the impact of being indifferent to politics and policies. I met a city-council person who lamented the lack of knowledge by constituents while benefitting from the lack of political knowledge of constituents. I also met a formerly incarcerated person who discussed the developmental shortcomings of the high school years. Formal study and anecdotal feedback produced this work.

When it comes to voting, 18- to 24-year-old voters have consistently lagged behind other cohorts in actual participation. In years of a presidential election, participation spikes, but still lags. In primaries and midterm elections, young voters are even less likely to participate. Although this study did not reveal the motivations of young voters, it did reveal that they are not engaged in meaningful ways by organizations that could play a pivotal role. I am a member of social organizations that have mission statements to support voting, yet those organizations were seen as ineffective. It is easy to

see how unfunded, volunteer organizations can have a low impact, but I am also part of another organization whose mission is strictly voting. That one appears much more effective but would need its own study to validate that contention.

One concept that became clearer in doing this research was the idea that doing more of what the United States and California have been doing will not change the status quo. It would appear that the push for increased voting awareness would have opposing camps: one that would benefit from change and one that would lose something with change. For African Americans who would like change, there needs to be more work on setting clear objectives, such as five governors or 10 senators, to form the appropriate strategies. Both scholars and political strategists should develop plans and a process for execution to create that kind of change.

The United States offers tremendous potential but has shown historically to hold out on that potential for many of its citizens. CRT implies that, for African Americans, whatever gains are achieved will be constantly attacked and reduced by opposing forces. While the potential for all citizens is available, it will not be achieved without disruptive changes in how African American leaders and constituents approach civic learning. This study provides some insight into the state of learning for students in the San Francisco Bay Area, but it is just a start for additional scholarship and for leaders to map out plans. This work and future work can and will help us unlock our potential.

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APPENDIX A

COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS PARTICIPATION REQUEST LETTER

Letter of invitation to community college administrators to allow participation at their schools.

Dear Dr. RXXX,

My name is Melvin Davis, Jr. and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of San Francisco. I am writing to solicit your approval for me to survey your students for a study on their perceptions of how they were instructed on Civic Engagement during high school. This study is a part of my doctoral dissertation and it focuses on current political engagement and the development of political awareness/participation of students between the ages of 18-years-old and 24-years-old.

With your approval, I will send a link to an online survey that I have developed and ask that you share with your entire student body via email distribution. The survey is approximately 35 questions and takes about 10 minutes including instructions. The beginning of the survey provides the details of the purpose the survey and its disposition to ensure informed consent of the participants.

Participation of the students is voluntary and all student information is anonymous and there will be no identifying characteristics of the college or the students. Your name as well as the name of your school will not be disclosed in the study. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

Within two months of the conclusion of data collection, a summary report of the study will be emailed to you. If you wish to receive the final report in the form of a dissertation, I will email it to you.

If you have questions about the research, please contact me at 412-736-9700. If you have further questions about the research, you may contact the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. IRBPHS can be reached via email at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

I hope that you and your students will be able to contribute to this research. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Melvin Davis, Jr.
Doctoral Candidate, University of San Francisco

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Perceptions of Political Development During High School

Consent to Be a Survey Research Participant

Purpose and Background
Melvin Davis, Jr. a graduate student at the University of San Francisco, California is doing a study on the perceptions of San Francisco Bay Area community college students on how and where they received training on engaging in the political process. Adults, ages 18-24 are consistently under-represented in elections and this research is to help understand how my experiences during my high school years affects my political participation. If I choose to participate, here is what I can expect:

1. I will receive a link to an online survey entitled: Perceptions of Political Development in High School that will ask me to rate my experiences with sources for learning about politics such as my high school
2. The survey will take about 8 to 10 minutes and my responses will be anonymously recorded
3. After the survey is done, there will be no further expectations on my time

Risks and/or Discomforts

1. If I do not feel comfortable answering any questions, I may decline to answer them and can stop participating at any time
2. My participation will be anonymous to the researcher; there will be no defining characteristics about me to distinguish me as a survey participant
3. There are no direct benefits to me for participating in the survey. There will be no cost to me to participate in the survey. If the time investment becomes more than I am comfortable with, I may cease participation immediately. If I have further questions, I may contact the researcher: Melvin Davis (412) 736-9700 or mdavisjr@dons.usfca.edu. If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I may contact the IRBPHS which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail and/or by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu. I may also contact them by writing to the IRBPHS, Counseling Psychology Department, Education Building, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA, 94117-107.

I have read the document of Informed Consent and CONSENT to participate (1)

I have read the document of Informed Consent and DECLINE to participate (2)

Q1 What is your ethnic identity?

Hispanic/Latinx (1)

Asian American (2)

Black/African American (3)

White (4)

Bi-racial (5)

Other (6)

Display This Question:
If What is your ethnic identity? = Bi-racial

Q26 If you are Bi-racial, please specify

_____

Display This Question:
If What is your ethnic identity? = Other

Q27 If you selected Other, please specify

_____

Q2 What is your gender identity?
Male (1)

Female (2)

Other. Please specify (3)

Display This Question:
If What is your gender identity? = Other. Please specify

Q28 Please specify your gender identity

_____

Q3 How many college classes have you completed?
0 (1)

1-3 (2)

4-6 (3)

7-10 (4)

10-15 (5)

16-20 (6)

More than 20 (7)

Q4 When did you receive your High School diploma/Equivalency degree?
2017 (1)

2016 (2)

2015 (3)

2014 (4)

2013 (5)

2012 or earlier (6)

Did Not Receive Either (7)

Q5 Did you attend High School in the SF Bay area?
Yes (1)

No (2)

If no, please specify city/state you attended HS (3)

Display This Question:
If Did you attend High School in the SF Bay area? = If no, please specify

city/state you attended HS

Q29 What city/state did you attend HS?
_____

Q33 Please describe your High School lunch program status
Qualified for Reduced Lunch (1)

Qualified for Free Lunch (2)

Did not qualify for lunch program (3)

Prefer not to answer (4)

Q7 Are you/were you part of student government in HS or College?
Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question:
If Are you/were you part of student government in HS or College? = Yes

Q30 Please write in your role in student government
_____

Q37 Thinking on High School, how many classes on government did you take?
0 (1)

1 (4)

2 (2)

3 or more (3)

Q34 In High School, did you discuss politics at home?
Never (1)

Rarely (3)

Sometimes (4)

Always (5)

Q6 The next question is about your participation in the 2016 Presidential Election. Please choose the answer that best applies.
I voted for all offices and measures on the ballot (1)

I voted for local measures but not for President (2)

I voted for President but not the rest of the ballot (3)

I chose not to vote (4)

I chose not to vote as a form or protest (5)

I wanted to vote but was not registered (6)

I was not eligible to vote (7)

I voted for most (but not all) measures on the ballot (8)

Q10 Please respond on a scale of 1-7 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) about the following questions as they relate to the 2016 Election

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
I voted and felt prepared for the ballot (1)							
I voted but did not know all the measures (2)							
I did not vote because the candidates did not reflect my values (3)							
I voted even though the candidates did not fully reflect my values (4)							
I voted because my candidate choices reflected my values (5)							
I did not vote because it didn't matter; my vote wasn't going to change anything (6)							
I did not vote because I was not prepared to vote on the issues (7)							
I was not eligible to vote (8)							

Q11 During the 2016 Election Season, which statement(s) reflects your participation in process. Check "Applied to Me" or "Did Not Apply to Me"

	Applied to Me (1)	Did Not Apply to Me (2)
I was an active campaigner for my candidate an/or causes (1)		
I was very aware of the news surrounding my candidate/causes and could talk to anyone about them (2)		
I was aware of the issues but did not actively share my views with others (3)		
I was aware of the issues but did not do anything because it didn't matter (4)		
I did not pay attention to the election coverage (5)		

Display This Question:
If During the 2016 Election Season, which statement(s) reflects your participation in process. Chec... = I did not pay attention to the election coverage [Applied to Me]

Q12 I did not pay attention because....
I don't care for politics (1)

I did not care for the candidates (2)

I happens every 4 years and nothing changes (3)

It really doesn't matter how I vote or don't vote (4)

Other Please Specify (5)

Display This Question:
If I did not pay attention because.... = Other Please Specify

Q29 I did not pay attention because of other....please specify
_____

Q13 When you were thinking about whether or not to vote, which source below had the MOST influence based on "What I learned about politics from....."
My High School Government Class(es) (1)

My family (2)

My friends (3)

My Religious organization (Church, Synagogue/Mosque/Other (4)

Other organizations like the NAACP, NRA, YMCA, etc. (5)

Q14 Which source of information was the LEAST influential in your voting participation decision?
My High School Government Class(es) (1)

My family (2)

My friends (3)

My Religious organization (Church, Synagogue/Mosque/Other (4)

Other Organizations like the NAACP, NRA, YMCA, etc. (5)

Q15 If you were to discuss politics, with whom would you MOST LIKELY have that discussion?

My religious leader and/or elders (1)

My family members (2)

Former High School teachers (3)

Current/Former college instructors (4)

Friends I met in political forums (5)

Friends from High School (6)

Friends from College (7)

Friends from my community social organizations such as the NAACP or NRA (8)

Q16 Which statement BEST describes you?

I have a lot in common with leaders of my preferred political party (1)

I don't have anything in common with leaders of my preferred political party (2)

I have some things in common with leaders in my political party, but even less with the other parties (3)

I can go any way on political parties: it's who has the best message for my concerns (4)

No political party reflects my views (5)

Display This Question:

If Which statement BEST describes you? = No political party reflects my views

Q17 No political party reflects my views.....

but, I vote anyway (1)

and, I do not vote at all (2)

Q18 If you reflect upon your political awareness, how much do the following influence your political choices?

	None at all (1)	A little (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A lot (4)	A great deal (5)
High school instruction (1)					
TV news (2)					
Radio news (3)					
Community organizations like fraternities/sororities, YMCA, NRA, NAACP (4)					
Family members: father/mother, sister/brother, uncles/aunts (5)					
Close friends (6)					
Social media (7)					
Your religious leader/elders/congregants (8)					

Q19 Rate how well High School prepared you for exercising your right to vote?

Extremely well (1)

Very well (2)

Moderately well (3)

Slightly well (4)

Not well at all (5)

Q30 Do you personally know any of your local politicians?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question:

If Do you personally know any of your local politicians? = Yes

Q31 If yes, how did you meet them? Please fill in.

_____

Q20 As you think about yourself in politics, how do you see yourself? Check all that apply.

I can be Mayor (1)

I can be a City Council Member (2)

I can be elected to Congress/Senate (3)

I would eventually run for President (4)

I would not consider running for office (5)

I don't want to hold office but I do see myself as being actively involved (6)

I may or may not get involved but right now, no plans (7)

Q21 If there were an abandoned house where you live and you were concerned about it, do you know which of your local elected official to call for resolution?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question:

If there were an abandoned house where you live and you were concerned about it,

do you know whic... = Yes

Q22 How did you learn which official to call?

_____

Q23 Has any politician ever come to you and asked your opinion on any topic?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Q24 If a politician wanted your vote, who taught you to evaluate what the politician says/stands for?

_____

Q25 Please rate your level of trust with the following to provide you with political advice

	Not trustworthy (1)	Somewhat trustworthy (2)	Not Applicable (3)	Mostly trustworthy (4)	Very trustworthy (5)
Your parents (1)					
Other close relatives (2)					
Your religious leader (3)					
Your high school government teacher (4)					
A college professor in civics/government (5)					
Your local community leaders (6)					
Your elected officials (7)					
The news (8)					
Social media, e.g., Facebook (9)					
Close friends (10)					
People you met at a rally (11)					

Q32 Please write your thoughts about this survey. Likes, dislikes, clarity.....anything at all. Thanks for your help.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Start of Block: Block 1
Display This Question:
If In High School, did you discuss politics at home? = Never

Q35 If you did discuss politics at home, who were you most likely to discuss it with?

	Usually around election time (1)	From the Primaries to Election Day (3)	Throughout the year (4)
Both parents/guardians (1)			
Only one of the two parents/guardians (2)			
Older sibling or other older relative at home (not a parent) (4)			
Younger sibling or other younger relative at home (not a parent) (5)			

End of Block: Block 1

APPENDIX C

VALIDITY PANEL REQUEST LETTER

Dear Dr. XXX,

Thank you for agreeing to participate as a member of the Validation Panel for the survey questions I have created for my dissertation research.

Attached are the questions that I plan to ask the participants, community college students in the San Francisco Bay area. Additionally, attached is the Interview Validation Rubric that you can use in your evaluation of the survey questions.

Below you can find the purpose of my research study as well as the research questions I will be investigating.

If you are able, please return your comments and suggestions to me by Friday, November 17, 2017.

Thank you in advance for your help in validating the questions for my research study. I value your expertise and experience in quantitative analysis and I look forward to reading your comments and suggestions.

Thanks,

Melvin Davis, Jr.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of college students on their political development as high school students. The study will produce a quantitative measurement of student perceptions/satisfaction with the social structures, such as high school, parents, social organizations, or houses of worship to prepare young adults to

participate in the democratic process. Conducting new research will examine the impact of those structures on influencing attitudes of the "consumers" of information, 18-24-year old prospective voters. This study will focus evaluate the attitudes of students as a complement to other studies that focus on behavior only. The results of this study will aid policy makers in the school system and leaders of community-based enterprises to understand the perceptions of their effectiveness on their clients and to develop more robust strategies focused on influencing those perceptions.

Research Questions

This study will seek to answer the following questions to determine students' perceptions of select social structures on their attitude on and self-reported behaviors in participating in political action via voting.

- Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of African American college students on social structures being most/least effective in providing a foundation for civic engagement?
- Research Question 2: What are the perceptions of African American college students on their high school experiences with respect to voter development?
- Research Question 3: What role did pre-college training have on African American college students' current behavior regarding civic engagement?
- Research Question 4: What are the perceptions of African American students who represent differing SES strata?

Comments and Suggestions

APPENDIX D

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A diploma of high school graduation shall be granted to any student who:

- Completes a total of 230 credits in grades 9-12(see below for specific coursework)
- Earns a minimum Grade Point Average of 2.00 in courses that satisfy graduation requirements
- Completes a senior project/exhibition during the 12th grade year of high school

(This project shall be a serious research project or exhibition which demonstrates achievement of school-wide learning goals and designated key content standards)

Course Requirements for OUSD High School Graduation

Subject	OUSD High School Requirements for Class of 2012, 2013, and 2014	OUSD High School Requirements for Class of 2015 and beyond (including "a-g" requirements, marked with a *)
a. History/Social Science	3 years (30 credits)	3 years (1 year of World History*, 1 year of US History* , 1 year of Government*/Econ)
b. English or English Language Development (ELD)	4 years (40 credits)	4 years of College-prep English* (ELD 5 may count for 1 year).
c. Mathematics	3 years (30 credits) of college prep math (including algebra & geometry)	3 years including Algebra*, Geometry*, and Advanced Algebra* or Intermediate Algebra*
d. Laboratory Science	3 years (30 credits) (1 year biological; 1 year physical; 1 year science elective)	3 years (2 of the 3 must be Biology*, Chemistry*, and/or Physics*)
e. World Language**	1 year (10 credits) (Sign language may satisfy this requirement)	2 years of the same language*
f. Visual / Performing Arts	1 year (10 credits)	I year (10 credits)*
g. College Prep Electives	60 credits (12 semesters)	1 year college prep elective* ("a-g" certified course) + 40 additional elective credits
Physical Education	20 credits (4 semesters)	20 credits (4 semesters)

** Students may demonstrate proficiency in world language through an assessment test. Please ask your principal for additional information. https://www.ousd.org/Page/138 Retrieved March 19, 2018

APPENDIX E

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH INCOME GUIDELINES LINK

https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/04/10/2017-07043/child-nutrition-programs-income-eligibility-guidelines

INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Effective from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES ANNUAL	REDUCED PRICE MEALS - 185 % ANNUAL	MONTHLY	TWICE PER MONTH	EVERY TWO WEEKS	WEEKLY	FREE MEALS - 130 % ANNUAL	MONTHLY	TWICE PER MONTH	EVERY TWO WEEKS	WEEKLY
48 CONTIGUOUS STATES, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, GUAM, AND TERRITORIES											
1	12,060	22,311	1,860	930	859	430	15,678	1,307	654	603	302
2	16,240	30,044	2,504	1,252	1,156	578	21,112	1,760	880	812	406
3	20,420	37,777	3,149	1,575	1,453	727	26,546	2,213	1,107	1,021	511
4	24,600	45,510	3,793	1,897	1,751	876	31,980	2,665	1,333	1,230	615
5	28,780	53,243	4,437	2,219	2,048	1,024	37,414	3,118	1,559	1,439	720
6	32,960	60,976	5,082	2,541	2,346	1,173	42,848	3,571	1,786	1,648	824
7	37,140	68,709	5,726	2,863	2,643	1,322	48,282	4,024	2,012	1,857	929
8	41,320	76,442	6,371	3,186	2,941	1,471	53,716	4,477	2,239	2,066	1,033
For each add'l family member, add	4,180	7,733	645	323	298	149	5,434	453	227	209	105
ALASKA											
1	15,060	27,861	2,322	1,161	1,072	536	19,578	1,632	816	753	377
2	20,290	37,537	3,129	1,565	1,444	722	26,377	2,199	1,100	1,015	508
3	25,520	47,212	3,935	1,968	1,816	908	33,176	2,765	1,383	1,276	638
4	30,750	56,888	4,741	2,371	2,188	1,094	39,975	3,332	1,666	1,538	769
5	35,980	66,563	5,547	2,774	2,561	1,281	46,774	3,898	1,949	1,799	900
6	41,210	76,239	6,354	3,177	2,933	1,467	53,573	4,465	2,233	2,061	1,031
7	46,440	85,914	7,160	3,580	3,305	1,653	60,372	5,031	2,516	2,322	1,161
8	51,670	95,590	7,966	3,983	3,677	1,839	67,171	5,598	2,799	2,584	1,292
For each add'l family member, add	5,230	9,676	807	404	373	187	6,799	567	284	262	131
HAWAII											
1	13,880	25,681	2,140	1,070	987	494	18,044	1,504	752	693	347
2	18,670	34,540	2,879	1,440	1,329	665	24,271	2,023	1,012	934	467
3	23,460	43,398	3,620	1,810	1,671	836	30,524	2,544	1,272	1,174	587
4	28,250	52,257	4,362	2,181	2,013	1,007	36,777	3,065	1,533	1,415	708
5	33,040	61,255	5,103	2,552	2,356	1,178	43,030	3,586	1,793	1,655	828
6	37,910	70,134	5,845	2,923	2,698	1,349	49,283	4,107	2,054	1,896	948
7	42,730	79,032	6,586	3,293	3,040	1,520	55,536	4,628	2,314	2,136	1,068
8	47,930	87,951	7,328	3,664	3,382	1,691	61,789	5,150	2,575	2,377	1,189
For each add'l family member, add	4,810	8,899	742	371	343	172	5,253	522	261	241	121

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Table 204.10. Number and percentage of public school students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, by state: Selected years, 2000-01 through 2012-13

State	Number of students				Number of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch				Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch			
	2000-01	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2000-01	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2000-01	2010-	2011-12	2012-
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
United States	**46,579,068 \1**	**48,941,267**	**48,995,812 \1**	**49,084,316**	**17,839,867 \1**	**23,544,479**	**24,291,646 \1**	**25,188,294**	**38.3 \1**	**48.1**	**49.6 \1**	**51.3**
Alabama	728,351	730,427	731,556	740,475	335,143	402,386	420,447	429,604	46.0	55.1	57.5	58.0
Alaska	105,333	132,104	131,166	131,483	32,468	50,701	53,238	53,082	30.8	38.4	40.6	40.4
Arizona	877,696 \2\	1,067,210	1,024,454	990,378	274,277 \2\	482,044	511,885	514,193	31.2 \2\	45.2	50.0	51.9
Arkansas	449,959	482,114	483,114	486,157	205,058	291,608	294,324	298,573	45.6	60.5	60.9	61.4
California	6,050,753	6,169,427	6,202,862 \2\	6,178,788	2,820,611	3,335,885	3,353,964 \2\	3,478,407	46.6	54.1	54.1 \2\	56.3
Colorado	724,349	842,864	853,610	863,121	195,148	336,426	348,896	358,876	26.9	39.9	40.9	41.6
Connecticut	562,179 \2\	552,919	543,883	549,295	143,030 \2\	190,554	194,339	201,085	25.4 \2\	34.5	35.7	36.6
Delaware	114,676	128,342	128,470	127,791	37,766	61,564	62,774	66,413	32.9	48.0	48.9	52.0
District of Columbia	68,380	71,263	72,329	75,411	47,839	52,027	45,199	46,416	70.0	73.0	62.5	61.6
Florida	2,434,755	2,641,555	2,668,037	2,691,881	1,079,009	1,479,519	1,535,670	1,576,379	44.3	56.0	57.6	58.6
Georgia	1,444,937	1,676,419	1,682,447	1,702,766	624,511	961,954	986,865	1,017,193	43.2	57.4	58.7	59.7
Hawaii	184,357	179,601	182,705	184,760	80,657	84,106	90,021	93,457	43.8	46.8	49.3	50.6
Idaho	244,755	275,815	276,969	279,277	85,824	124,104	135,642	134,560	35.1	45.0	49.0	48.2
Illinois	2,048,792 \2\	1,973,401	2,068,926	2,031,835	759,973 \2\	921,471	1,014,713	1,027,336	37.1 \2\	46.7	49.0	50.6
Indiana	977,219	1,038,817	1,037,779	1,039,797	285,267	485,728	497,663	509,604	29.2	46.8	48.0	49.0
Iowa	492,021	484,856	485,358	490,630	131,553	188,486	194,146	200,417	26.7	38.9	40.0	40.8
Kansas	462,594	479,953	481,519	470,283	154,693	228,852	235,362	233,322	33.4	47.7	48.9	49.6
Kentucky	626,723	673,128	677,628	675,167	298,334	380,773	368,355	373,837	47.6	56.6	54.4	55.4
Louisiana	741,162	695,772	702,301	693,980	433,068	460,546	471,347	459,617	58.4	66.2	67.1	66.2
Maine	198,532	183,477	178,989 \2\	179,323	60,162	78,915	76,985 \2\	80,636	30.3	43.0	43.0 \2\	45.0
Maryland	852,911	852,202	854,060	856,775	255,872	341,557	356,631	366,695	30.0	40.1	41.8	42.8
Massachusetts	979,590	955,301	952,044	952,970	237,871	326,849	334,511	352,988	24.3	34.2	35.1	37.0
Michigan	1,703,260	1,551,861	1,532,809	1,511,030	504,044	719,800	735,010	724,340	29.6	46.4	48.0	47.9
Minnesota	854,154	837,930	839,645	845,291	218,867	306,136	311,645	323,459	25.6	36.5	37.1	38.3
Mississippi	497,421	489,462	487,870	491,220	319,670	345,734	348,664	352,084	64.3	70.6	71.5	71.7
Missouri	912,247	902,375	885,138	898,402	315,608	406,358	411,750	408,726	34.6	45.0	46.5	45.5
Montana	154,438	140,497	142,349	142,908	47,415	57,836	57,349	60,262	30.7	41.2	40.3	42.2
Nebraska	286,138	298,276	301,296	303,332	87,045	127,114	132,010	133,912	30.4	42.6	43.8	44.1
Nevada	282,621	436,840	438,745	443,158	92,978	219,904	237,212	228,660	32.9	50.3	54.1	51.6
New Hampshire	206,919	194,001	190,784	187,940	31,212	48,904	50,123	50,596	15.1	25.2	26.3	26.9
New Jersey	1,312,983	1,356,882	1,316,792	1,363,967	357,728	444,735	467,798	501,804	27.2	32.8	35.5	36.8
New Mexico	320,303	335,810	333,331	335,922	174,939	227,077	228,227	229,249	54.6	67.6	68.5	68.2
New York	2,859,927	2,722,761	2,685,751	2,708,341	1,236,945	1,315,564	1,334,698	1,297,148	43.3	48.3	49.7	47.9
North Carolina	1,194,371	1,487,699	1,497,711	1,506,080	470,316	747,978	784,268	809,732	39.4	50.3	52.4	53.8
North Dakota	109,201	94,273	94,018	98,993	31,840	29,929	30,870	30,330	29.2	31.7	32.8	30.6
Ohio	1,745,237	1,747,851	1,738,642	1,656,390	494,829	745,121	758,106	674,438	28.4	42.6	43.6	40.7
Oklahoma	623,110	659,376	665,243	665,404	300,179	398,917	406,908	410,378	48.2	60.5	61.2	61.7
Oregon	535,617	553,468	540,266	533,966	186,203	280,174	287,214	286,635	34.8	50.6	53.2	53.7
Pennsylvania	1,798,977	1,742,608	1,732,035	1,716,262	510,121	686,641	696,531	712,584	28.4	39.4	40.2	41.5
Rhode Island	157,347	142,575	141,456	141,124	52,209	61,127	62,082	65,184	33.2	42.9	43.9	46.2
South Carolina	677,411	722,203	726,003	735,998	320,254	395,033	412,345	427,396	47.3	54.7	56.8	58.1
South Dakota	128,598	125,883	128,016	130,294	37,857	46,718	49,469	51,678	29.4	37.1	38.6	39.7
Tennessee	909,161 \2\	987,078	964,832	982,312	436,298 \2\	542,953	554,768	575,522	48.0 \2\	55.0	57.5	58.6
Texas	4,059,353	4,916,401	5,000,193	5,077,507	1,823,029	2,471,212	2,552,819	3,059,657	44.9	50.3	51.1	60.3
Utah	470,265	585,552	598,294	600,146	135,428	223,943	284,910	362,933	28.8	38.2	47.6	60.5
Vermont	102,049	85,144	83,451	83,568	23,986	31,339	32,748	32,581	23.5	36.8	39.2	39.0
Virginia	1,067,710	1,250,206	1,227,099	1,235,561	320,233	458,879	480,821	487,463	30.0	36.7	39.2	39.5
Washington	1,004,770 \2\	1,043,466	1,041,934	1,050,904	326,295 \2\	418,065	463,246	474,940	32.5 \2\	40.1	44.5	45.2
West Virginia	286,285	282,879	282,870	283,044	143,446	145,605	149,407	148,493	50.1	51.5	52.8	52.5
Wisconsin	859,276	872,164	869,670	871,376	219,276	342,660	354,527	360,803	25.5	39.3	40.8	41.4
Wyoming	89,895	88,779	89,363	91,533	43,483	32,968	33,145	34,617	48.4	37.1	37.1	37.8

\1\U.S. total includes imputation for nonreporting states.

\2\Imputation for survey nonresponse. State-level imputations for 2000-01 were based on the reported percentages for 2001-02 applied to the 2000-01 enrollments. State-level imputations for 2011-12 were based on the reported percentages for 2010-11 applied to the 2011-12 enrollments.

NOTE: Table reflects counts of students enrolled in all schools for which both enrollment data and free/reduced-price lunch eligibility data were reported.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2000-01, 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13. (This table was prepared December 2014.)