Purpose Development in College Students: Understanding the Role of Critical Consciousness

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PURPOSE DEVELOPMENT IN COLLEGE STUDENTS: UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

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Research has documented the benefits of youth purpose (i.e., a sustained intention that facilitates engagement in activities and contributes to the world beyond oneself) (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). Youth purpose has been considered a developmental asset (Benson, 2006) and predictive of flourishing (e.g., Seligman, 2002). A sense of purpose can also serve as an important psychological resource for people experiencing adversity (e.g., Frankl, 2006). Similarly, critical consciousness (CC) has been associated with positive outcomes among youth, including improved mental health and vocational commitments (Diemer, 2009; Diemer & Li, 2011), and can help youth cope with oppression and marginalization (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006).

Given the benefits of youth purpose, additional research on how purpose develops is warranted (Liang et al., 2017a). Theoretical models of character development (e.g., Lerner & Callina, 2014) have suggested that purpose and CC develop in similar, parallel ways, though research often has not connected these two constructs explicitly. The youth purpose and CC literatures suggest that a study of the possible link between CC and purpose, whereby CC helps facilitate the development of purpose, is warranted. Therefore, this dissertation sought to expand the literature on purpose development in college students, as well as better understand if and how CC facilitates purpose development in this population.

This study included 17 interviews with purposeful college students who had either relatively higher or lower levels of CC, as measured by the Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS) (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). A modified Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) method was used to analyze the data and yielded 60 categories to describe the factors that contributed to the students' purpose development (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Additional analyses suggested that CC facilitated purpose development via a healing and/or directing pathway. Students were able to heal from marginalization and trauma, which was important for helping them pursue their goals; and/or they were better able to direct their prosocial motivations toward specific beneficiaries. Implications for practice are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

"Ever more people today have the means to live,

but no meaning to live for." - Victor Frankl

Purpose and Critical Consciousness

Sense of Purpose

Youth purpose, used synonymously with adolescent purpose in this dissertation, is defined as a personally meaningful, long-term aspiration that directs behavior and is characterized by a sustained engagement in the pursuit of that goal, as well as the desire to contribute to the world beyond oneself (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003). Although Viktor Frankl first introduced the importance of having a sense of purpose in the 1940s – in the context of harrowing systemic injustice and oppression – the study of youth purpose development is still in its infancy (Frankl, 2006). Despite the prosocial motivation described in the definition of purpose, purposes in life can vary on a continuum of noble to ignoble endeavors across studies (Damon & Bronk, 2007).

For the purposes of this dissertation, adolescence is worth defining. Many scholars now consider adolescence to represent the ages of 10 through 24 (Arnett, 2000; Steinberg, 2017). The theory of emerging adulthood reflects the widespread social changes that have resulted in new experiences for youth between the ages of 18 and 25 that are characterized by a focus on the self, an exploration of personally meaningful activities, and a delayed transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Consistent with the literature, adolescents and youth are used synonymously throughout the dissertation.

Developing a sense of purpose is an adaptive task for adolescents, as it can help them resolve the "identity crisis" that is often associated with this developmental stage (Erikson, 1968). In addition to achievement outcomes (Pizzolato, Brown, & Kanny, 2011), sense of purpose is associated with a multitude of positive outcomes, including, though not limited to, academic engagement (Nurmi, 1991), well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001), hope (Bronk et al., 2009), and improved health outcomes (e.g., reduced likelihood of dying from illness) (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). Having a sense of purpose can be particularly beneficial for youth who have been disadvantaged. For example, having a sense of purpose has been shown to buffer some of the deleterious effects of poverty on adolescent outcomes (e.g., antisocial behavior) (Machell, Disabato, & Kashdan, 2016). Indeed, purpose is an important internal psychological resource to draw upon during times of both minor and significant stress.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness (CC) represents one's ability to reflect and act on one's sociopolitical environment and has been deemed the "antidote for oppression" (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan, & Hsieh, 2006; Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999). Historically, educator and philosopher Paulo Freire first used CC as a tool for liberation and as a term to describe the importance of increasing literacy among Brazilian peasants (Diemer, Rapa, Voight, & McWhirter, 2016). For adolescents, specifically, CC includes three components: critical reflection, critical motivation or self-efficacy, and critical action (Diemer et al., 2016). These components represent a process by which youth reflect on injustices and sources of oppression in their worlds, develop the motivation to

and belief that they can address these injustices, and engage in concrete ways to change those injustices. For example, youth of color who understand the social and historical contexts of racial disparities in school discipline practices may feel more empowered to engage in action directed at raising awareness about or changing such practices. Indeed, CC can be viewed as an internal psychological resource that can be used to cope with oppression and various forms of systemic injustice (Watts et al., 1999).

In a sample of urban adolescents, CC was associated with higher levels of career development progress (i.e., greater clarity regarding vocational identities and higher levels of commitment to future careers) (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). CC has also been correlated with various types of social and political action (Diemer & Rapa, 2016) and improved mental health outcomes among youth of color (Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, & Maton, 1999). Although CC was first used to empower marginalized people, research suggests people across the continuum of privilege may benefit from increasing their CC, particularly in light of the contributions they may have for society. For example, among a sample of wealthy young adults, CC was associated with increased gift giving to social justice movements (Wernick, 2016).

The Problem

Despite the benefits of youth purpose, only 20 percent of adolescents are purposeful (Damon, 2009). Given the multiple positive correlates of youth purpose, more research on what contributes to the development of purpose, as well as how to cultivate youth purpose, is needed (Liang et al., 2017a). Indeed, there has been a practical interest in the cultivation of purpose, as evidenced by the recent increase in the development of

youth purpose curricula (e.g., the MPOWER curriculum) and interventions (Klein, Liang, Sepulveda, & White, 2019; Malin, 2019). Moreover, Moran (2001) urged practitioners and scholars at universities to devote attention to cultivating purpose in their students.

Aside from the possible challenges associated with not having a sense of purpose, young people today are experiencing a significant number of psychosocial and environmental stressors (Gutowski, White, Liang, Diamonti, & Berado, 2017). Adolescence is a vulnerable developmental time period for several reasons, namely the widespread biological, physical, social, and psychological changes occuring for this age group (Steinberg, 2017). Among college students, stressors can include complex academic, social, and financial transitions (Darling, McWey, Howard, & Olmstead, 2007). In light of these vulnerabilities, systemic barriers and various forms of marginalization may leave youth particularly at risk; the aforementioned challenges are negatively associated with psychological well-being, academic achievement, and vocational aspirations (Fine, Burns, Payne, & Torre, 2004; Ryff, Keyes, & Hughes, 2003). CC may be an important way for young people to understand themselves and others in the context of experiences of marginalization and serve as an important internal resource to promote resilience in the face of challenges (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Exploring the intersection of purpose and CC, specifically the ways in which CC may influence the development of purpose, may then be helpful for ultimately cultivating the presence of these constructs in young people.

Conceptual Framework

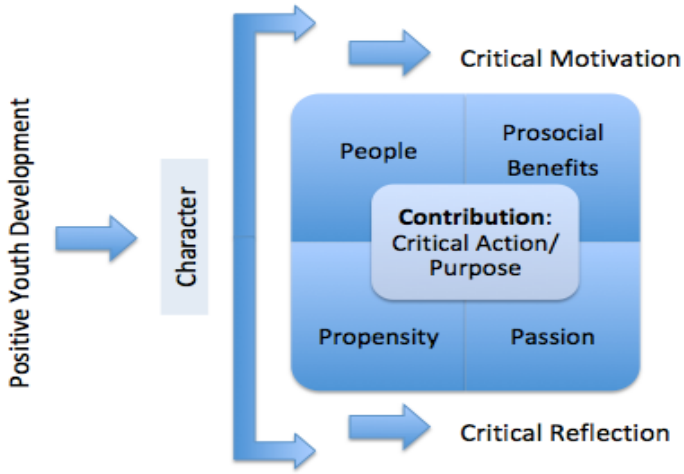
Given the importance of purpose for adolescents, research has emerged in the last 15 years that has sought to identify the factors contributing to adolescent purpose development. Liang and colleagues (2017a) identified four factors – deemed the "4 P's" – that contributed to purpose development in a diverse sample of adolescents: People (significant adults who provided cultivation, affirmation, and guidance for youth); Passion (an abiding interest or enjoyment of one's purpose); Propensity (the possession of unique personal attributes or skills relevant to one's purpose); and Prosocial Benefits (a desire to contribute to the world beyond oneself) (Liang et al., 2017a). These 4 P's were further categorized along continua of sources of support (extrinsic and intrinsic), as well as sources of influence via the provision of feelings of capability and motivation.

Although several theories have offered frameworks for understanding how CC develops in young people (e.g., Godfrey & Grayman, 2014), to my knowledge, no conceptual framework exists that delineates how CC specifically may contribute to purpose development. Seider and colleagues (2017), however, framed the cultivation of CC through a character development framework, one that has also been utilized as a theoretical foundation for purpose development (Seider, Tamerat, Clark, & Soutter, 2017). Character development will be explained in greater detail in the second chapter, but it is important to note the similar ways in which the development of purpose and CC have been conceptualized in previous literature.

Figure 1, shown below, builds on the previous work of Liang et al. (2017a) and illustrates how critical reflection and critical motivation may ultimately lead people to engage in purposeful critical action. Specifically, positive youth development (PYD),

which will be discussed in greater detail in the second chapter, promotes the development of character, which includes a sense of purpose (Damon et al., 2003; Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005a; Lerner & Callina, 2014). Through this iterative, relational, and developmental process, which includes exposure to informative people and contexts that promote an awareness of injustice, adolescents may reflect on issues of social injustice (critical reflection). Critically aware people may then develop the perceived capability and motivation to act on their sociopolitical environment to promote justice. Having a sense of purpose informed by an awareness of injustices in the world may ostensibly lead to critical action and, ultimately, contribution, the preferred final outcome of PYD programs (Fraser-Thomas, Coté, & Deakin, 2005).

Figure 1: Model of Purpose Development Informed by Critical Consciousness. Informed by the work of Lerner et al., 2005a; Liang et al., 2017a; and Diemer et al., 2016



Although purpose and CC have not been explicitly linked theoretically in the literature before, specifically as a mechanism by which CC may contribute to purpose development, a significant related body of literature has suggested that an exploration of how CC may inform purpose development is warranted. The current study conceptually

frames CC as a backdrop of the 4 P's of Purpose framework (Liang et al., 2017a), such that CC may help students reflect on issues about which they are passionate, the skills and strengths they have to apply to a particular purpose, people who could support them on their journeys, and who will benefit from their purpose.

Significance of the Study

Although there is a growing body of research on the benefits of purpose and CC in adolescents' lives, research on how to cultivate purpose and CC is in its infancy. Moreover, the two constructs have primarily been studied as separate, parallel concepts. Given that both purpose and CC can serve as salient psychological resources to cope with and fight oppression, and that individuals with purpose and CC may be more likely to concern themselves with contributing to the world beyond themselves, it stands to reason that CC may contribute to purpose development in a way that has not yet been articulated. As youth develop cognitive capacities for abstract thought and the consideration of complex, societal issues during adolescence, they become more capable of developing purpose and CC (Bronk, 2012; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014). Moreover, promoting the development of purpose and the development of CC in youth are by definition similarly associated with benefits to others beyond the youth themselves. Neglecting to study the intersection of these two constructs may be a missed opportunity to understand the ways in which CC may be associated with and serve as a salient part of the development of purpose. This qualitative study is the first of its kind to explicitly examine the intersection between these two constructs by exploring how youth describe

their experiences and specifically considering how CC may inform the development of purpose.

Study Design

Scholars have posited the importance of using qualitative methods for studying the development and cultivation of purpose because such methods allow for exploration of a wide variety of theoretically abstract topics and perspectives (Bronk, 2008; Liang et al., 2017a). This dissertation builds on previous literature on youth purpose by illuminating whether and how CC is related to the development of purpose.

Research Questions

An interview data collection approach was used to address the following research questions: (1) What factors do college students identify as being important to their development of purpose? and (2) What role, if any, does CC play in college students' development of purpose? The research questions are embedded within the PYD theoretical orientation, which assumes that youth outcomes (e.g., character and purpose) are the result of a developmental, relational process by which adolescents engage with other people and contexts in productive ways (Lerner et al., 2005a).

Participants

The dissertation included 17 interviews with college students from one mid-sized, liberal arts university in the northeastern region of the United States. The study was supported in part by funding from Boston College and the Melkus Foundation. The sample was diverse with respect to multiple demographic variables (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), and year in college).

Procedure

The longitudinal study of which this dissertation is a part was approved by the Boston College Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participants provided consent for their participation, and they were given a small incentive – a $10 gift card – for their participation in the study.

Measures. Through an online research participant recruitment system at the university, participants first completed two quantitative scales to measure purpose and CC, in addition to a few other measures and questions of interest (e.g., college grade point average). Participants completed the Claremont Purpose Scale (CPS), which was designed for adolescents and measures three major components of purpose: goal directedness, beyond-the-self orientation, and personal meaning (Bronk, Riches, & Mangan, 2018). The CPS demonstrated excellent internal consistency and convergent validity in a sample of late adolescents and emerging adults. Participants were also asked to complete the Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS), a 22-item measure that assesses levels of two types of critical reflection, as well as critical action (Diemer, Rapa, Park, & Perry, 2017). The scale has been validated on a diverse sample of youth and yielded high internal consistency. For this study, both the CPS and CCS had good internal consistency (□=.89 and □=.88, respectively). The subscales within the CPS and CCS also had good internal consistency for this sample.

For this investigation, a cross-sectional, extreme groups design, which has been used in other qualitative studies of purpose, was employed (e.g., Bronk, 2012, 2013; Malin, Reilly, Quinn, & Moran, 2014; Preacher 2015). Once participants completed the

two quantitative scales, participants who fell in both the top 25 percent of purpose and CC scores, as well as the top 25 percent of purpose and bottom 25 percent of CC scores, were recruited to participate in the interview portion of the study. Interviews were in-depth (Johnson, 2002), semi-structured (Seidman, 1991), and between 45 and 90 minutes in length. The interview protocol was informed by youth purpose (Bronk, Menon, & Damon, 2004) and CC research (Diemer et al., 2017). Relying on previous literature to guide the development of interview protocols is consistent with the Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) method, which guided data collection and analysis (Hill et al., 2005).

Analysis

The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed by a professional transcription service. They were analyzed using a modified CQR approach (Hill et al., 2005). The CQR approach involves identifying domains, core ideas, and ultimately categories, while engaging in a process of cross-analysis of interviews. Two auditors reviewed the domains, core ideas, and categories at each step of the process. The number and presence of categories represent the major themes present in the interviews. CQR was an appropriate analytic choice for ensuring the rigor of this study, given its reliance on a required consensus among research team members and its detailed, process-oriented approach to coding (Hill et al., 2005).

Purpose of the Study

Although research within the last 15 years has highlighted how purpose and CC develop in adolescents, additional research is warranted among diverse samples,

particularly to inform the development of empirically supported programs for youth (Liang et al., 2017a). What is missing from the theoretical and applied research bodies is a more comprehensive understanding of how CC may inform the development of purpose. With regard to practice, an increased understanding of the possible relationship between these two constructs may ultimately provide scholars and practitioners with insight about how to integrate CC and purpose teachings into existing curricula/programming and increase levels of each construct in college students.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The following literature review first provides a description of PYD, the theoretical orientation of the study and one of the foundational informants of how purpose and CC develop (Lerner et al., 2005a; Nucci, 2017). This chapter includes an overview of the research on youth purpose and CC and what is currently known about the development of these constructs in adolescents. Moreover, given its close conceptual ties to purpose, relevant career development literature, as well as the developmental significance of the college years, are discussed with regard to the growth of purpose and CC. Taken together, the literature review provides a rationale for the research questions and goals of the dissertation, specifically highlighting the gap in the literature regarding how CC may inform a sense of purpose.

Theoretical Orientation

Although purpose was first conceptualized as an internal psychological resource that could help people exhibit resilience in the face of significant stressors, PYD, as well as the field of positive psychology, has changed the way psychologists view purpose in life (Damon et al., 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Although PYD and positive psychology are two distinct theoretical ways of conceptualizing human functioning and development, it is worth noting that positive psychology, which grew in popularity and recognition at roughly the same time as PYD, suggested that people can be motivated by both proactive and reactive influences (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Indeed, people can develop a sense of purpose (and CC) as a reaction to harrowing injustice, in the case of Victor Frankl, and as a result of a proactive desire to contribute to

the world in a meaningful way (Damon et al., 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Relational Developmental Systems Metatheory

PYD, the theoretical orientation that helps focus this study, grew out of the relational developmental systems (RDS) metatheory (Lerner & Callina, 2014). For centuries, prevailing theories of human development, including the development of aspects of individual functioning (e.g., character and personality traits), posited that development could be conceptualized from a reductionistic/Cartesian dualism framework. For example, human development could be viewed in terms of the nature vs. nurture debate, as a process characterized by continuity vs. discontinuity or stability vs instability, etc. Scholars over the last four decades have rejected a dual split view of human development, leading to the growth of the postpositivist RDS metatheory (Lerner & Overton, 2008). The RDS metatheory proposes that human development should be studied according to varying levels of biological organization and contextual influence (e.g., culture, history, etc.) (Lerner & Callina, 2014). Both people and the developmental processes that affect them across the lifespan are seen as always changing, nonlinear, complex, adaptive, and self-regulating. The RDS theory is highly process-oriented and places great emphasis on "mutually influential relationships between individuals and contexts, represented as individual ← → context relations" (Lerner & Callina, 2014, p. 325). Temporality is also a key component of the RDS metatheory, such that developing systems have a past, present, and a future; as such, the nature of human plasticity (i.e., the potential for a developing system to change) is inherent. Based on this proposition, researchers of character, purpose, and CC development - whose work is rooted in the

RDS metatheory - would posit that these constructs are not fixed across the lifespan. There is plasticity in the presence and cultivation of these constructs, and they can be fostered through mutually influential individual ← → context relations.

Developmental theorists often include purpose as an aspect of character (Damon et al., 2003; Damon, 2009). With regard to character development (e.g., purpose development) specifically, as understood through an RDS model, individual agency, identity, and context are highly important elements that contribute to the growth of aspects of character (Lerner & Callina, 2014; Nucci, 2017). Indeed, people's character and the contexts in which they interact mutually and continuously affect each other. In Nucci's (2017) developmental system's view of character development, character is viewed as comprising four major components: basic moral cognition, other-regarding socioemotional capacities, self-regulating capacities, and moral critical social engagement. The aforementioned self-regulating capacities include the development of agency, which is a defining feature of dynamic, active, and changing living systems (Lerner & Callina, 2014). Although even infants experience some form of agency, adolescence is a critical time of developing self-regulation capacities and developing one's identity as an agentic individual who can make decisions about one's purpose.

Nucci's (2017) view of character development was a result of dissatisfaction with the ways character had historically been viewed, i.e., primarily as a collection of virtues or personality traits. Instead, character development is best represented as a complex system of processes that are highly context-dependent, which ultimately prompt agentic, moral agents to act coherently, though not necessarily consistently, in moral ways, depending on their contexts. In this framework, the final result of the character

development process is a willingness to use one's moral reasoning to critically reflect on injustices in society and engage responsively to those injustices. A model of character development informed by the RDS metatheory is helpful for framing how CC may contribute to the development of purpose, such that CC may be considered as a form of moral wellness that ultimately prompts purposeful moral action (Damon, 2009; Nucci, 2017).

CC and character. The development of CC has also been understood through a character development framework. Other ways in which the development of CC has been conceptualized will be discussed in later paragraphs. As stated previously, CC includes the ability to analyze, navigate, challenge, and act on oppressive social forces (Seider et al., 2017). Seider and colleagues (2017) mapped the components of CC on to three dimensions of character, as conceptualized by Shields (2011): intellectual, performance, and civic (Seider et al., 2017). Possessing capacities that represent the intellectual dimension of character (e.g., critical thinking skills) would increase the likelihood that adolescents would be able to analyze oppressive social forces, while performance character traits (e.g., social intelligence and perseverance) would improve one's ability to navigate oppression. Finally, civic character, as represented by a commitment to activism and/or social responsibility, is aligned with the challenging/action components of CC. Importantly, Seider and colleagues (2017) argued that possessing character strengths that are aligned with the components of CC are necessary, though not sufficient, for developing CC (Seider et al., 2017). Possessing or developing the aforementioned types of character strengths may not automatically prompt adolescents to engage in social change efforts. Adolescents need "opportunity structures" (i.e., meaningful opportunities)

to help translate their critical awareness into action (Watts & Flanagan, 2007, p. 784). Indeed, character development frameworks, as informed by the RDS metatheory, offer useful conceptual models for understanding how constructs like purpose and CC develop.

Positive Youth Development

PYD was derived from the RDS metatheory and posits that PYD outcomes are the result of a developmental recursive process, specifically one in which the plasticity of human development is met with opportunities and positive relationships in adolescents' contexts (Lerner et al., 2005a). PYD, just like its predecessor (RDS metatheory), is a relational theory that rejects notions of splitting between different aspects of human development (e.g., between nature and nurture) (Lerner & Callina, 2014). As a result of iterative, bidirectional interactions with various people and contexts, youth experience myriad positive outcomes and grow as contributors to society (Damon, 2004). PYD suggests that all young people have unique talents and strengths that can be cultivated through connections to appropriate assets and resources in their contexts and communities (Damon, 2004; Lerner et al., 2005a).

PYD as a field of study grew out of dissatisfaction with the historical conception of young people as riddled with deficits (Damon, 2004). Indeed, in his monumental work on adolescence, G. Stanley Hall (1904) perpetuated the idea that adolescence was inherently a time of "storm and stress," a problem-focused view that remained dominant in the literature for the next century. Moreover, Hall (1904) suggested that engagement in risky, destructive behaviors could be expected among adolescents during this developmental period, in contrast to contemporary strengths-based views that highlight

the potential for adolescents to contribute prosocially to their communities and function as important resources that can be supported and developed (Lerner et al., 2005a).

Today, PYD theorists suggest there are five main desired outcomes of programs and contexts that support PYD: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner et al., 2005a, 2005b). Important components of programs and contexts that promote the aforementioned outcomes are sustained adult-youth relationships, opportunities for youth participation and leadership, and activities that build youths' skills (Blum, 2003). As stated previously, positive psychologists and developmental theorists often include purpose as an aspect of character, one of the five key outcomes of PYD (Damon et al., 2003; Lerner & Callina, 2014).

Critique of PYD. Some researchers have critiqued PYD for its focus on the experiences of White, middle-class adolescents and the model's limited appreciation for the powerful social forces that affect the development of adolescents (e.g., racism, sexism, etc.) (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Because of the theoretical neglect of social, economic, and political realities that shape youth development, PYD may inadvertently paint a misrepresenting problem-free life of some youth, particularly those who have been disenfranchised. Moreover, Watts and Flanagan (2007) argued that PYD may be better poised to conceptualize youth contribution by adding a liberation psychology perspective to its theoretical foundation and attending to the structural barriers that inhibit PYD. These critiques of PYD are well-taken, and the results of this dissertation may yield important insights about how structural barriers (and how adolescents perceive and interact with these structural barriers) may impact their development of a purpose that reflects critical action aimed at tackling systemic

challenges they have experienced. Nonetheless, PYD provides a helpful theoretical understanding of how the development of purpose may occur for youth across the spectrum of privilege (Lerner et al., 2005a). The results of this dissertation, however, should be viewed in light of the contextual opportunities (or lack thereof) to engage in purposeful exploration afforded to both privileged and marginalized adolescents.

Sense of Purpose

As stated previously, purpose is a "stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self" (Damon et al., 2003, p. 121). In the 1950s, Victor Frankl (2006), in *Man's Search for Meaning*, first introduced to the psychological world the potential of purpose in life to serve as an internal means of supporting human resilience. He described how meaning and purpose can help people sustain their lives even in the face of tremendous hardship and suffering. Even prior to Frankl, Aristotle's reflections on the good life posited that one's purpose in life was indeed to live a good life, characterized by living virtuously (Kenny, 1992). Other philosophers (e.g., Plato), scientific paradigms, and religious leaders throughout history have also surmised what it means to have a purpose in life. Even today, at Boston College, the revered Fr. Himes encourages students to ask themselves three purpose-related questions when considering vocation: What are you good at? What brings you joy? What does the world need you to do? (Rossmann, 2015). When Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, was asked for his thoughts on the purpose of life in *The Book of Joy*, he remarked that joy and happiness stem from having a purpose that benefits others (Bstan-'dzin-rgya-mtsho, Tutu, &

Abrams, 2016). Although Frankl paved the way for purpose to become a scientific field of study in the mid-20th century, prompting the eventual interest in youth purpose by Damon et al. (2003) and their contemporary colleagues, it is worth noting that purpose in life has had personal and existential significance for people across millenia. This investigation of youth purpose and CC bolsters the empirical study of these constructs and how they may be cultivated in youth.

Notably, the constructs of *meaning* and sense of *purpose* have often been used interchangeably. Although definitions of meaning in life vary across studies, Steger, Oishi, and Kashdan (2009) suggested that *meaning* refers to "the extent to which people comprehend, make sense of, or see significance in their lives, accompanied by the degree to which they perceive themselves to have a purpose, mission, or overarching aim in life" (p. 43). Other researchers (e.g., Martela & Steger, 2016) have highlighted multiple components of meaning, including coherence, purpose, and significance. In the context of youth *purpose*, Damon et al. (2003) made an important distinction between the two constructs, noting that although identifying a sense of purpose may be part of the process of meaning making, a purpose is uniquely prosocial and contributory, and it guides people's progress toward goal achievement. Meaning in life may not necessarily have a prosocial orientation. The current investigation includes the prosocial component in the definition of purpose, recognizing the personal and societal benefits of having a desire to contribute meaningfully to others (Bronk et al., 2009). Indeed, including this other-oriented (OO) focus is consistent with many contemporary definitions of youth purpose (Damon et al., 2003).

Types of Purpose

Based on the definition provided by Damon and colleagues (2003), purpose is often measured according to intention toward a particular goal, engagement in purposeful activities, and a beyond-the-self or OO motivation (Damon et al., 2003; Moran, 2009). As only 20 percent of adolescents are purposeful (Damon, 2009), forms and levels of purpose vary across adolescents. Based on the aforementioned three dimensions, youth can be characterized as purposeful, dreamers, dabblers, drifters, or in the pursuit of self-oriented (SO) life goals (Moran, 2009; Quinn, 2012). Informed by theoretical work on identity development, Burrow, O'Dell, and Hill (2010) identified four youth purpose profiles: Achieved, Foreclosed, Uncommitted, and Diffused. Purposeful/Achieved youth are the only group who meet all criteria for the definition of purpose (Burrow et al., 2009; Quinn, 2012). According to Moran (2009), Dreamers have prosocial intentions but may not be actively engaged in the pursuit of their purpose; instead, their purpose is more likely a lofty goal. Dabblers may be actively engaged in the pursuit of multiple activities but have not made a commitment to a particular purpose, and drifters are considered to be the least purposeful group of youth. Drifters likely have no intention toward meaningful life goals and are not actively engaged in purposeful activities.

Interestingly, although the definition of purpose typically includes a prosocial intention, some researchers have distinguished between purpose that is characterized by SO and OO life aims. Adolescents with SO purposes are purposeful with respect to intention and engagement in purposeful activities, though they lack the critical component of a desired prosocial contribution (Quinn, 2012). Notably, OO purpose in

youth has been associated with psychological health, greater contentment, and openness (Bronk & Finch, 2010; Mariano & Vaillant, 2012). For this dissertation, given the benefits associated with OO purpose, selection criteria for participation in the study included an intended OO contribution, as reflected in the CPS (Bronk et al., 2018).

The Face of Purpose

Much of the literature on youth purpose has focused on the presence and benefits of the construct among White, middle-class adolescents, given the relative ease with which this group can be identified for research studies (Liang et al., 2017a). Therefore, several scholars have called for additional studies that consider the experiences of diverse youth, particularly those who have been marginalized or underrepresented in the literature (Liang et al., 2017a; Sumner, Burrow, & Hill, 2018). It is also important to note that despite the paucity of research on the experiences of certain groups of youth, some research has shown that virtually all adolescents can develop and benefit from a sense of purpose. Purpose is not solely a privilege of White, affluent youth (Liang et al., 2017a). Several qualitative studies have revealed strong levels of purpose among impoverished or otherwise disenfranchised youth (e.g., Liang et al., 2017b). Indeed, Sayles (1995) found that in a sample of diverse adolescents, African American adolescents had higher levels of purpose than White, Anglo-American and Hispanic-American youth. Although marginalized and disenfranchised adolescents may face barriers as they attempt to develop a purpose (Liang et al., 2017b; Sumner et al., 2018), purpose may be particularly important to cultivate in youth who face a significant number of contextual stressors (Machell et al., 2016).

The Benefits of Purpose

Having a sense of purpose in life offers significant psychological, physical, and social benefits for people across the lifespan (e.g., Irving, Davis, & Collier, 2017; Damon et al., 2003). A review of studies from the 1980s and 1990s suggested that purpose in life was largely discussed in the literature as an internal psychological resource for adults (e.g., Ryff, 1989a; Ryff, 1989b; Ulmer, Range, & Smith, 1991). For example, in a sample of bereaved adults, purpose in life was associated with social support, reduced emotional impact of grief, life satisfaction, and stronger reasons for living (Ulmer et al., 1991). Purpose has been associated with improved health and well-being outcomes, including a lower risk of dying from stroke and cardiovascular disease (Irving et al., 2017; Koizumi, Ito, Kaneko, & Motohashi, 2008). Among adults, purpose has been associated with flourishing and psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989a, 1989b). Research on the association between alcoholism and purpose in life has revealed that lower scores on purpose measures correlated with alcoholism and drug use among adults (Schlesinger, Susman, & Koenigsberg, 1990; Waisberg & Porter, 1994).

Among adolescents, purpose has been associated with myriad benefits and positive outcomes. Purpose is considered a developmental asset (Benson, 2006), and it has been associated with self-esteem and academic achievement, including higher grade point averages and improved academic self-concepts (Damon et al., 2003; Dukes & Lorch, 1989; Nurmi, 1991; Pizzolato et al., 2011). It has also been correlated with hope (Burrow et al., 2010); life satisfaction (Bronk et al., 2009); happiness (French & Joseph, 1999); goal directedness (Bronk, Finch, & Talib, 2010); altruism (Noblejas de la Flor,

1997; Shek, Ma, & Cheung,1994); resilience (Benard, 1991); and youth flourishing (Han, 2015; Seligman, 2002). A lack of purpose has been associated with negative mental health outcomes among adolescents (e.g., depression and anxiety) (Damon, 2008; Keyes, 2011). Moreover, low levels of purpose in life have been shown to be predictors of participation in risky behaviors, including underage drinking, drinking and driving, tobacco and marijuana use, and illicit substance use (Sayles, 1995).

The Developmental Significance of Purpose

Adolescence, including emerging adulthood, is a significant time period of identity development and exploration (Erikson, 1968, 1980; Steinberg, 2017). During adolescence, youth become capable of thinking abstractly and considering new possibilities for their futures (Steinberg, 2017). In addition to considering their futures and purposes, adolescents tend to think more deeply about their religious and political beliefs, as well as their anticipated familial and social roles as they transition to adulthood (Erikson, 1968; Steinberg, 2017).

Despite the opportunities for internal reflection and exploration afforded by the development of cognitive capacities, identity development, particularly as it relates to the growth of purpose, can be a "crisis" and quite stressful for youth (Blattner, Liang, Lund, & Spencer, 2013; Erikson, 1968). In particular, the *search* for purpose may be stressful for youth as they simultaneously engage in the exploration of multiple life pathways, prior to committing to a cohesive identity or particular life aim (Blattner et al., 2013; Marcia, 1966). Commitment to a purpose (i.e., identity achievement), on the other hand, can help adolescents resolve their identity crisis (Erikson, 1968). Therefore, adolescents

should be scaffolded during the stressful process of searching for their purposes (Blattner et al., 2013).

Developing a sense of purpose in college students, in particular, is of great importance and can be understood as a key developmental task associated with the college years, given its relevance for career planning, extracurricular involvement, and identity development (Harren, 1979). Among college students, having a sense of purpose is associated with self-efficacy and improved student retention (DeWitz, Woolsey, & Walsh, 2009; Hill, Burrow, Brandenberger, Lapsley, & Quaranto, 2009). Moreover, both having and searching for a sense of purpose have been associated with life satisfaction among college students (Bronk et al., 2009). Identifying a purpose that has prosocial intentions, as opposed to predominantly creative or financial motivations, was also associated with the highest levels of generativity, integrity, and personal growth later in middle adulthood among a sample of college students (Hill et al., 2009). In addition, a purpose motivated by prosocial intentions was associated with greater service learning involvement and satisfaction with the college experience.

Many college students engage in activities (e.g., clubs and internships) that are associated with their purpose, but developing a concrete plan for framing activities as being in line with one's purpose and planning for life after college are more challenging tasks (Molasso, 2006). Some literature has offered suggestions for how to cultivate purpose in college students (e.g., Nash & Murray, 2009), though additional research is needed on how purposeful students develop their future-oriented, long-term aspirations to support students who are lacking in purpose (Liang et al., 2017a).

The Development of Purpose

Given the breadth of positive impacts that a sense of purpose has on people, particularly adolescents, research has emerged over the last decade about how to foster youth purpose (Liang et al., 2017a). Kashdan and McKnight (2009) identified three major pathways to purpose: proactive, reactive, and social learning. A proactive pathway to purpose is characterized by a conscious exploration of one's environment through opportunities (e.g., internships and volunteer work) and experiences, while a reactive pathway involves a transformative life event (e.g., near death or otherwise traumatic experience) that propels the individual into developing a purpose. Social learning pathways are those that are characterized by observing others and associating positive outcomes with those observations.

The 4 P's framework, which informs the current work, was formulated by Liang and colleagues (2017a) to elucidate primary factors that shape the development of youth purpose in diverse contexts (Liang et al., 2017a). The authors interviewed purposeful students from a College Bound after-school program, which serves diverse, low-income high school students by increasing their connections to and knowledge of college and career options. The four factors that contributed to the development of purpose were: People (i.e., significant adults who offered affirmation, cultivation, and guidance); Passion (i.e., an abiding interest in or enthusiasm for one's purposeful activities); Propensity (i.e., possessing unique character strengths and skills relevant for one's purpose); and Prosocial Benefits (i.e., the desire to contribute prosocially to one's family, community, or society at large) (Liang et al., 2017a). The 4 P's were further classified

across two continua of sources (intrinsic and extrinsic) and influences (capability and motivation). For example, Propensity reflected an intrinsic source of capability, while People provided an extrinsic source of capability (e.g., important People provided adolescents helpful feedback about strengths and skills they believed the youth possessed that were relevant to their purposes). Notably, youth in this sample often named their families as the beneficiaries of their purposes, whereas affluent youth in a separate study often named other macro-level causes as the beneficiaries of their purposes (Spencer, Walsh, Liang, Mousseau, & Lund, 2018). Taken together, it is important to recognize that prosocial benefits can take various forms (Sumner et al., 2018).

In a similar study of purposeful Guatemalan youth, Liang and colleagues (2017b) expanded their 4 P's framework to include discussions of barriers to purpose development (e.g., discrimination, poverty, etc.), as well as two other factors that were particularly salient for Guatemalan youths' sense of purpose: faith/spirituality and family (Liang et al., 2017b). Specifically, Guatemalan youth in this study were often motivated, in the context of their religious faith convictions, to pursue their purposes in order to fulfill their sense of responsibility to help their family (e.g., by improving their family's socioeconomic standing and supporting their family to escape poverty). The study of Guatemalan adolescents highlighted the important role that context and cultural factors have in shaping the development of youth purpose.

Other scholars have identified the role that stressful, adverse experiences play in the development of purpose. Gutowski and colleagues (2017) argued that stressful experiences in diverse youth served both as a motivator and detractor of purpose

development (Gutowski et al., 2017). Primarily in the context of an absence of social support, stressful experiences acted as a barrier to purpose development for adolescents when they were too overwhelmed by environmental factors to pursue their purposes or they believed their aspirations to be impossible to achieve.

Relatedly, forms of marginalization can deter students from developing a sense of purpose (Sumner et al., 2018). Marginalized youth may face multiple potential obstacles as they aim to develop a purpose, some of which include difficulty developing a future orientation, social isolation and a lack of connection within their marginalized group(s), and reluctance to participate in political activism, all of which may ultimately impact the scope, strength, and awareness of their purpose (Sumner et al., 2018). However, potential opportunities for marginalized adolescents as they develop a purpose include feeling the motivation to pursue a civically oriented purpose, perhaps through a reactive pathway to purpose, developing a shared voice or language within their marginalized group(s), and participating in activism or organizing efforts. Because of the challenges and opportunities that may exist for marginalized youth as they seek to develop purpose, and the underrepresentation of their experiences in the literature, Sumner and colleagues (2018) heeded the call for additional research on the processes of purpose development for these youth (Sumner et al., 2018).

Youth have a wide variety of purposes, and research suggests that identity variables, beyond marginalized identities, may also be implicated in the development of purpose (Sumner et al., 2018). For example, gender appears to have an impact on purpose: female youth, as compared to males, tended to report purposes related to

community service, as well as OO purposes generally (Bronk & Finch, 2010), and male youth tended to focus on occupational and financial aspects of their purposes (Hill, Burrow, O'Dell, & Thornton, 2010). It stands to reason that other identity variables may be implicated in the development of purpose, given the bidirectional relationship of influence between people and their contexts as they develop purpose (Lerner et al., 2005a). Thus, this dissertation aims to explore identity variables that may affect purpose and, in particular, how college students' understanding of their own and others' oppressed identities (through CC) impacts their purpose.

Critical Consciousness

As stated previously, educator and philosopher Paulo Freire coined the term CC in a context of structural injustice, as he sought to increase literacy rates among Brazilian peasants (Watts et al., 2011). According to Freire, becoming critically conscious included a process of engaging in a critical analysis of the peasants' societies and noting social injustices, ultimately sparking knowledge about social issues and transformative social change. Indeed, Freire intended for CC to serve as a tool for liberation. Freire (1973) left a profound legacy with his education on fostering CC (e.g., in his book *Education for Critical Consciousness*). To describe the process of CC, Freire (1973) wrote, "Once man perceives a challenge, understands it, and recognizes the possibility of response he acts. The nature of that action corresponds to the nature of his understanding" (p. 44).

Similarly to the youth purpose field, the interest in the cultivation of CC has expanded to include youth, in addition to adults, over the last few decades (Diemer et al., 2016; Watts et al., 2011). Today, among adolescents, CC has most often been considered

within the realms of youth political and civic development/engagement (Watts et al., 2011). The growth of CC is often seen as a key component of civic development (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014). Scholars have suggested that youth across all dimensions of oppression and privilege may benefit from becoming critically conscious and attuned to the social injustices in their society. CC in adolescents has been characterized as embodying critical reflection, critical motivation or self-efficacy, and critical action (Diemer et al., 2016). Critical reflection includes the process of learning about social injustices and considering how the identity group(s) to which one belongs (and others belong) have been oppressed. Thereafter, adolescents develop the critical motivation or political self-efficacy to affect change in society by addressing the identified injustices.

The process of becoming critically conscious ideally concludes with a decision to engage in critical (i.e., social or political) action. Scholars have raised questions about how to most effectively encourage adolescents to move from "armchair activism" to political action, as it is unclear how much critical reflection is necessary for prompting the desire to affect change. Despite this ongoing ambiguity, Watts and colleagues (2011) posit that at least some critical social awareness is necessary, given that people generally feel most compelled to engage in social change when they have personal or political reasons to do so (Watts et al., 2011). Moreover, internal psychological factors (i.e., critical motivation) are implicated as a key link between reflection and action. However, there remains a paucity of literature on how exactly youth move through the process of first becoming critically aware of social injustice to choosing action as a contribution to society.

The Benefits of CC

The presence of CC has been linked with several positive outcomes, particularly among youth of color. Higher levels of CC have been associated with improved mental health and occupational outcomes (Diemer, 2009; Diemer & Li, 2011). Other studies have shown that the development of CC can facilitate career development for disenfranchised youth (e.g., Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Olle & Fouad, 2015). Unsurprisingly, CC has been linked to participation in voting and other traditional forms of political engagement (Diemer & Blustein, 2006). Consistent with Freire's teachings, CC is associated with increased levels of empowerment among youth (Wong, Zimmerman, & Parker, 2010). Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), who discussed a Social Justice Model of Youth Development, argued that developing CC could promote healing (i.e., emotional, spiritual, and psychological wellness) from the challenges associated with racial, economic, community, or personal suffering. In this model, the process of healing ultimately can result in the development of a sense of purpose, which, as has been said, is associated with a substantial number of benefits. As noted previously, CC can be viewed within a larger framework of civic development (i.e., "the process of developing skills, knowledge, attitudes, and inclination for full participation in political and community life;" Malin, Ballard, & Damon, 2015, p. 103). Several components of civic development offer a wide range of benefits (e.g., a sense of agency and responsibility) for adolescents and are an indicator of thriving in this age group (Lerner, 2004; Malin et al., 2015).

The Development of CC

The specific role of CC in the development of purpose has not yet been studied, though the development of CC has been considered as its own process with multiple related theories (e.g., sociopolitical development; Watts et al., 1999) (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Sociopolitical development theorists, who share similar, though broader, ideas to those who discuss CC, posit that youth become more conscious of their sociopolitical identities and then become motivated to make social change. In this way, the development of CC is one part of sociopolitical development. In one model of sociopolitical development, youth of color move through five stages, beginning with people as objects of sociopolitical oppression and ending with youth as subjects who can critically analyze and feel motivated to change injustices in their environments (Watts et al., 1999). In sum, sociopolitical development theorists believe that youth engage in a process of understanding how systemic forces shape society and one's positionality in society and developing the relevant skills, knowledge, and emotional capacities to address these social forces (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003).

Among the earlier versions of youth CC development frameworks, Watts and Flanagan (2007) posited that there was a bi-directional relationship between adolescents' ability to analyze and act on social injustices. Opportunities for youth to engage in critical analysis and action, known as opportunity structures, moderated the relationship between critical analysis and action. Watts and colleagues (2011) later nuanced the understanding of the association between critical analysis and action and re-conceptualized the development of youth CC as the relationship among critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action (Watts et al., 2011).

Though the relationship between the aforementioned components of youth CC are still understudied, CC development is thought to be highly process-oriented and iterative (Watts et al., 2011). Critical reflection involves a process of a critical social analysis that emphasizes the root causes of structural injustices. Carlson, Engbretson, and Chamberlain (2006) explained that critical reflection includes passive adaptation, emotional engagement, cognitive awakening, and an intention to act. Both the emotional piece of increased empathy for others' suffering and the cognitive piece of knowledge acquisition are critical for moving from passivity to action. Also involved in critical reflection is the consideration of one's social identities and internalized forms of oppression and privilege (Guessous, 2004). Indeed, the development of youth CC is an iterative process. As people eventually engage in critical action, they gain a more nuanced understanding of how structural injustice impacts their lives, leading to increasing levels of reflection and motivation.

Just as influential, significant *people* have been identified as salient in supporting the development of youth purpose (Liang et al., 2017a), CC literature has posited that open dialogue among important people (e.g., peers, family, and community members), as well as classroom environments that support the open discussion of controversial issues, are integral in supporting the development of CC (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014). Schools can serve as important "opportunity structures" where adolescents can experience meaningful opportunities to develop CC vis-a-vis critical pedagogy and community-based work (Seider et al., 2017, p. 1164). Relatedly, opportunities for adolescents to collaborate with supportive adults in a democratically oriented environment can facilitate

critical dialogue, CC, and relevant skill-building (Zimmerman, 2000). More broadly, youth learn the principles of democracy and the nature of a variety of injustices in the world through the multiple settings in which they are embedded. Families who model civic engagement may be a helpful context for adolescents to learn how to participate as active, civically engaged citizens (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003). Several types of youth experiences (e.g., participation in community service and involvement in advocacy organizations) predict adulthood civic engagement (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007). Although civic engagement does not require the presence of CC, such that civically engaged adolescents and adults may not be critically conscious, it stands to reason that people are often motivated to participate in activities that are either personally or politically salient to their own identities or experiences (Watts et al., 2011).

The Social Justice Model of Youth Development positions CC and social action as deeply intertwined, as it considers the importance of praxis: "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1993, p. 33; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). In this model, youth move through three awareness levels: self, social, and global. At the self-awareness level, adolescents engage in activities such as the critique of stereotypes, an exploration of their identities, a development of positive self-regards, and the growth of a positive orientation toward their challenging life circumstances. In the social awareness level, adolescents begin community organizing, learn about equitable institutional practices, and increase self-efficacy regarding the ability to produce personal and community change. At the global level of awareness, adolescents experience a connection to others' struggles, learn about social well-being, gain optimism about social

change, and ultimately develop a sense of purpose. Taken together, the aforementioned literature on CC suggests that the development of CC is the result of the interplay between personal and contextual forces that inspires a process of critical awareness that ultimately results in critical action.

Career Development

Although purpose and career development are not identical fields of study, it stands to reason that the development of purpose and career aspirations share conceptual overlap. The relationship between these two processes has particular relevance for college students, given that they increasingly consider vocational purposes throughout college (Flowers, 2002). Moreover, because CC and career development have been previously linked in the literature, an overview of this literature would be helpful for understanding why it is reasonable to investigate how CC might inform the development of purpose.

Purpose and work have been clearly linked in the popular press. In *Make Your Job a Calling: How the Psychology of Vocation Can Change Your Life at Work*, Dik and Duffy (2013) argue that everyone can find joy and meaning in their work and subsequently cultivate their work into representing a higher purpose that benefits others. In this book, the authors suggest that an awareness of one's interests, personality, abilities, and values, as well as how they are connected to the required tasks of one's job, are all relevant to success at work. Moreover, perceiving one's job as a calling can help people manage daily frustrations in the pursuit of meaningful work. Purpose and CC researchers share many of these ideas, particularly the view that these constructs can be a

powerful internal resource to draw upon in the face of challenges (e.g., Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Liang et al., 2017b).

With respect to the experience of marginalized workers, the Psychology of Working Theory (PWT) (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016) is a more comprehensive iteration of Blustein's (2006) Psychology of Working Framework (PWF). The PWF argues that work fulfills survival, power, social connection, and self-determination needs (Blustein, 2006). Unlike many career development models, this framework, as well as the PWT, also emphasizes the salience of sociocultural and economic factors in career decision making, particularly for marginalized populations. The PWT is primarily concerned with the concept of decent work, an ideal that has received global interest in the context of changing economic conditions and the rise of precarious work (Blustein, Olle, Connors-Kellgren, & Diamonti, 2016). The theoretical model outlines both the predictors (e.g., marginalization and economic constraints) and outcomes (e.g., survival, social connection, and self-determination) of securing decent work. Within PWT, decent work provides safe conditions, reasonable hours, organizational values that complement family and societal values, adequate compensation, and healthcare benefits.

Although there are bleak predictors that make obtaining decent work difficult, there are two mediators proposed in the model that may explain how people who experience such challenges are able to obtain decent work: having career adaptability and work volition (Duffy et al., 2016). Career adaptability refers to one's flexibility and willingness to respond to changes in the work environment and update skills, and work

volition is the belief that one has choice in terms of work, despite economic constraints. There are also several moderator variables listed in the PWT, which include a proactive personality, economic conditions, CC, and social support. When people have a proactive personality, are not limited by certain economic conditions (e.g., high unemployment rates), develop CC, and have adequate social support, PWT posits that they are more likely to obtain decent work, despite marginalization and economic constraints. Once people have their needs met vis-a-vis securing decent work, they are able to experience work fulfillment and positive well-being. Just like purpose, which is activated by a sense of personal agency and meaning making, the ability to make meaningful career decisions depends upon some important internal psychological variables and the interactions people have with their contexts (Damon et al., 2003; Duffy et al., 2016). Of course, because of economic conditions, marginalization, and other forms of oppression, making career choices that lead to decent work - and developing a sense of purpose - are highly context dependent. Particularly relevant to this dissertation is the proposition that CC can moderate the relationship between experiencing various forms of marginalization and economic constraints (e.g., social class or limited economic resources) and securing decent work.

The Connection Between Purpose and CC

Although, to my knowledge, there are no studies to date that explicitly link purpose and CC in a comprehensive purpose development framework, some studies - beyond what has previously been discussed - have implicated how the two constructs may be conceptually linked. Kenny and colleagues (2019) argued that the parallel

inclusion of CC and purpose curricula in career development education (CDE) is important for all youth as they navigate career decision making (Kenny, Blustein, Liang, Klein, & Etchie, 2019). The increasing diversity of the workplace, the global changes in the world of work, and the increasingly precarious nature of work lead scholars to believe that adolescents would benefit from an understanding of their positionality, the root causes of work-related social injustices, and ways to engage in critical action, resulting in an increased likelihood that they will overcome barriers to securing decent work and take responsibility for addressing injustices in their work. The assumption is that purpose and CC serve as complementary internal resources to draw upon as adolescents tackle systemic barriers on their way to securing decent work (Kenny, 2017).

The conceptualization of CDE by Kenny and colleagues (2019) was influenced by the PWF/PWT (Duffy et al., 2016), though it adds the component of youth purpose as a salient part of the youth career development process (Kenny et al., 2019). In their research-practice partnership, Kenny and colleagues (2019) offered high school students an internship program that afforded students opportunities to refine their skills, expand their CC by increasing their awareness of how social and systemic barriers limit access to resources, and increase their sense of purpose (Kenny et al., 2019). Qualitative results from this study suggested that CDE that is informed by purpose and CC research can help students explore their interests in meaningful ways, reflect on the social support needed to help overcome systemic barriers, and receive important scaffolding for setting goals necessary for pursuing purposeful work. Indeed, this work is a key example of how purpose and CC have begun to be conceptualized in the literature as closely tied and

related, though parallel, concepts (Kenny et al., 2019). This dissertation, however, aims to investigate whether purpose and CC not only co-exist, but rather, the possibility that CC actually informs sense of purpose.

Civic purpose, a "sustained intention to contribute to the world beyond the self through civic or political action," represents another way that the two literatures have been indirectly conceptually linked (Malin et al., 2015, p. 103). In their study, Malin and colleagues (2015) surveyed and interviewed a large, diverse sample of high school students about the development of their civic purpose (Malin et al., 2015). Part of the study included an exemplar form of data collection, such that youth who demonstrated high levels of civic purpose were asked to reflect on how they developed this purpose. Civic purpose embodies an integration of the motivation to engage with civic activities and a future-oriented commitment to an ongoing participation in these activities. Malin and colleagues (2015) argued that the articulation of civic purpose represented an important advancement from the discussion of civic engagement, which they believe is a weak, often poorly measured construct that fails to predict future, sustained levels of social and political involvement and the motivation for this engagement (Malin et al., 2015). Understanding civic engagement through the lens of purpose, therefore, may be a helpful way of conceptualizing why people are motivated to engage in this type of work for the long-haul.

Results suggested that civic purpose can develop as a result of the interplay between personal and contextual factors (Malin et al., 2015). It can develop as moral development occurs throughout adolescence, vis-a-vis a process of increased empathy for

people's suffering and perspective taking that typically occurs during this time period as a result of improved cognitive capacities and social cognition (Hoffman, 2000; Steinberg, 2017). Civic purpose may also develop as a result of an increased level of personal and social responsibility, and in tandem with the formation of a civic identity. Identity salience and personal beliefs and values were other individual factors associated with the development of civic purpose (Malin et al., 2015). Contextual factors, including opportunities for civic participation during adolescence and connections to politically active adults, may also promote the development of civic purpose. However, the relationship between contextual factors and civic purpose is complicated for adolescents from marginalized groups, as their oppressed identities and possible lack of opportunities may leave them disempowered and disconnected from social and political engagement experiences. The literature on civic purpose is an important advancement of the literature on how adolescents develop a sense of purpose that is motivated by a commitment to social and political action.

Connecting Purpose and CC in the College Years

The college years represent an important developmental period for students to develop a sense of purpose and CC. Emerging adulthood represents a key period of instability, identity exploration, self-focus, feeling "in between," and possibilities (Arnett, 1998). Particularly relevant to this dissertation is the area of identity development. Adolescents typically engage in identity exploration related to their careers, relationships, religious affiliations, political beliefs, and personal values (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Luyckx, Meca, & Ritchie, 2013). For adolescents who have marginalized identities,

identity-related challenges and opportunities may be even more salient as they engage in the identity development process. Myriad challenges and opportunities occur because of the relatively unstructured identity development process and the available options to explore one's identity, particularly in college through involvement in different majors, clubs, etc. (Cote & Bynner, 2008). Developing CC and purpose may help college students resolve some of their identity-related challenges.

Developing a sense of purpose is also consistent with one of the major tasks of a university experience. Chickering's (1969) seminal theory on college development posited that students should seek to complete seven tasks during the college years: the development of competence, the effective management of emotions, greater autonomy toward independence, the development of mature interpersonal relationships, an establishment of a coherent identity, the development of a sense of purpose, and the development of integrity. Engaging with a variety of on-campus, social activities has been associated with improving levels of purpose among college students (Molasso, 2006). Flowers (2002) found that college students tended to increase their vocational purposes from their freshmen to senior year. Student affairs offices at universities would do well to encourage students with low levels of purpose to engage in a variety of extracurricular and other social activities to increase their levels of purpose, especially given that purpose is associated with student retention (DeWitz et al., 2009). Moreover, student affairs and other university practitioners may benefit from an increased understanding of how promoting the development of CC may also help students develop

a sense of purpose. A framework for understanding the relationship between these two constructs may ultimately have significant practical implications at the college level.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review provided in this chapter has offered a summary of the relevant research and theory in the fields of youth purpose and CC, noting the historical context of the development of each of these constructs as scholarly fields. However, it was first important to situate purpose and CC within the theoretical orientation of PYD, which grew out of the RDS metatheory. The development of purpose and CC can be understood both through the development of character and through the lens of of PYD, a developmental recursive process that includes the mutual, bidirectional influence of people and their contexts (Lerner et al., 2005a). Moreover, the literature review highlighted the benefits associated with having each construct as an internal psychological resource, particularly as a means of coping with structural injustice and oppression, as well as the recent conceptual frameworks outlining the development of each construct in adolescents. The literature review concluded with a discussion of why fostering purpose and CC is a worthwhile goal of university practitioners, as well as a reiteration that the college experience is an opportune time for developing these constructs.

The literature review has offered several important frameworks for understanding the development of purpose and CC, respectively. Recent work on the impact of marginalization on purpose development (Sumner et al., 2018), as well as the work on civic purpose (Malin et al., 2015) and CDE (Kenny et al., 2019), exemplify the ways in which researchers have begun to take an indirect or direct interest in the relationship

between purpose and CC. Notably, the work on civic purpose has been conducted with high school students, resulting in the need for similar explorations with college students, given the significant developmental changes that occur as adolescents move from high school through college and beyond (Steinberg, 2017). What remains clear is that a more comprehensive understanding of how college students, in particular, develop a sense of purpose, as well as how CC may explicitly shape that development, is warranted. Indeed, the aforementioned literature provides strong evidence that CC could very well be implicated in the development of purpose, given that purpose and CC have been raised as parallel strands, they are both related to identity development, and they develop in similar ways (Kenny et al., 2019). All of the literature, taken together, suggests the two constructs likely directly influence one another, not just that they co-exist, in meaningful ways. Ideally, the results of this study will help university officials support students in the development of personally meaningful purposes that benefit society, possibly as a result of students' CC.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design

As previously stated, the goal of the dissertation is to better understand what factors contribute to the development of purpose in college students, as well as to identify how CC may be related to the development of a sense of purpose in this sample. Specifically, the research questions are as follows: (1) What factors do college students identify as being important to their development of purpose? and (2) What role, if any, does CC play in college students' development of purpose?

A qualitative methodology was chosen for this study because of its utility for providing rich, interpretive descriptions of how people make meaning of phenomena in the world (Creswell, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argued: "Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world" (p. 3). To accomplish the goals of qualitative research, researchers share several assumptions about the nature of their work: the researcher is a key instrument in the process, and multiple methods are often, though not always, used in data collection (Creswell, 2013). Moreover, researchers aim to provide holistic accounts of the participants' experiences; researchers position themselves in the study through a process of "reflexivity;" and researchers focus thoughtfully on participants' meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2013, p. 44). Qualitative studies on the development of purpose are limited, and researchers in the fields of positive psychology and PYD have recommended qualitative methods, particularly ones that involve open-ended interviews,

to allow participants to speak freely about a range of perspectives (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005; Liang et al., 2017a).

Consensual Qualitative Research

Before considering what type of methodology to use for a qualitative study, it is important to consider the philosophical assumptions behind how researchers understand reality and acquire knowledge. For example, Ponterotto (2005) enumerated various constructs relevant to decisions regarding methodological approach, including research paradigms, ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetoric, and methodology. CQR has roots in both the postpositivist and constructivist research paradigms and is a method that aligns with the idea that there is one probabilistic reality that can be understood by engaging with participants in a naturalistic setting. Regarding axiology, the role of researchers' values, CQR leans more toward the constructivist framework. Researchers' biases, values, and assumptions should be reflected upon throughout the research process and acknowledged prior to sharing the results, as will be discussed collectively in later paragraphs, such that readers understand how researchers' views may shape the findings.

CQR was first developed largely out of frustration with quantitative and qualitative methods available at the time of creation (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). The creators appreciated the nature of qualitative research, such that it provides rich, full descriptions of the phenomena under study, but they perceived many of the qualitative methods to include vague methodological descriptions. In developing CQR, the creators hoped to offer a method that would incorporate the best features of existing methods, be easy to learn by novice and expert researchers, and employ a rigorous, well-defined process to data collection and analysis (Hill et al., 1997). Notably, data analysis occurs

collectively. CQR is characterized by the use of multiple researchers, an aim toward general consensus among researchers, and a systematic way of documenting the results. Although the method is somewhat distinctive in these ways, it shares many common features of other methods (e.g., understanding experiences from participants' perspectives and using inductive analytic methods to draw conclusions about the nature of these experiences).

CQR was informed by comprehensive process analysis (CPA) (Elliott, 1989), phenomenology (Giorgi, 1970), and feminist theories (e.g., Fine, 1992). CPA offered the idea of general consensus among researchers and a systematic analytic method characterized by comparison across cases (Elliott, 1989). Giorgi's (1970) approach to phenomenology was influential because of its emphasis on understanding data in the context in which it emerges. Feminist theories (e.g., Fine, 1992), with their emphasis on shared power and collaboration, helped the developers of CQR decide on a consensus approach to data analysis. Although consensus is encouraged in CQR, collaboration and open discussion are emphasized, and divergent opinions are permitted. The development of CQR was also heavily informed by grounded theory, although there are some key differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). CQR and Grounded Theory both employ an iterative data coding approach, termed the constant comparative method by grounded theorists (Hill et al., 1997; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). However, with regard to data collection, users of CQR carefully determine the sample and collect all data using an identical protocol before moving on to data analysis. In contrast, Grounded Theory espouses an alternating data gathering and data analysis approach, possibly changing the

interview protocol as they conduct interviews. Other major features of CQR will be highlighted in the subsequent sections.

Procedures

This dissertation is part of a larger, longitudinal, mixed-methods study developed for three universities (called "The Three Universities Study"), the goals of which pertain more broadly to how college students develop a sense of purpose. The Boston College IRB approved both the larger study, as well as the dissertation. Data collection for The Three Universities Study began in the fall of 2017, and data collection for this dissertation occurred at the beginning of the second wave of data collection in the fall of 2018. This dissertation considers more intentionally the possible role of CC in the development of purpose and, specifically, the experiences of students at only one of the universities involved in the study (Boston College). Using a more homogenous sample from one university reduces the likelihood of a possible confounding variable: having differing college experiences across universities (Hill et al., 1997). Focusing on one university also afforded greater oversight of data collection to ensure the trustworthiness of the process (Hill et al., 2005).

Sample. The sample for this dissertation was a diverse group of college students at a private, religiously affiliated mid-sized liberal arts university in the northeast. The CQR developers recommended that participants be relatively homogenous, as well as very knowledgeable of the phenomena under investigation (Hill et al., 1997). Therefore, the sample included students who exhibited high levels of purpose and CC; studying people who have high levels of constructs also affords good opportunities to understand how these constructs developed (Bronk, 2012). However, the sample also included

students who reported high levels of purpose and low levels of CC. Given that research has not yet clearly delineated a role of CC in the development of purpose, it was important to interview students who lacked CC to see if any differences in their purpose development trajectories were qualitatively observable. This choice afforded the possibility that CC may not be relevant for the purpose development of all students. Comparing two groups of participants is consistent with CQR guidelines and previous studies (Hill et al., 2005).

Although CC research has primarily focused on recruiting participants who have been marginalized (e.g., youth of color), this study did not limit participation according to various types of marginalization, as purpose and CC benefit youth across the continuum of privilege and society at large. Indeed, it is important to thoughtfully consider the historical roots of CC and remain mindful of the ways that CC benefits people from marginalized groups, in particular (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014). Many scholars still suggest that CC is a construct most relevant, if not entirely relevant, for marginalized groups of people (e.g., see Baker & Brookins, 2014; Watts et al., 2011). However, other scholars argue that the exclusion of people from oppressive or privileged groups from having CC may inadvertently imply that they are less responsible for becoming aware of systems of oppression and acting to reduce injustice than their oppressed counterparts (Jemal, 2017). Thus, it has been increasingly accepted that CC is an important component of civic development among all youth (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014).

There has also been a recent interest in trying to spread multicultural and social justice curricula to people from dominant social groups, given the risks to society when

people from dominant groups resist making changes to the status quo and remain apathetic, at worst, to issues of social injustice (Goodman, 2001). Goodman (2000) noted, "We know from history and our current experiences that people from privileged groups also support, and often lead, struggles for social justice" (p. 1062). Privileged college students have been shown to be motivated to engage in social justice efforts when they understand themselves as resources, a trend that many would argue is worth supporting (Howard, 2011). Finally, given new understandings of intersectionality and the ways that people can have multiple privileged and oppressed identities, it becomes difficult to neatly separate people into two categories: the privileged and the oppressed (Jemal, 2017). This false dichotomy poses some challenges to choosing two groups for the dissertation based on relative levels of marginalization and privilege. Taken together, exploring the question of how CC may inform the development of purpose among students from a diverse range of privileged and marginalized backgrounds appropriately reflects a modern understanding of oppression and privilege, as well as the function of CC in society today (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014). Therefore, participants were chosen based on their level of CC, rather than by a level of marginalization.

Recruitment. Participants were recruited by accessing a research participant recruitment system at Boston College called SONA. Students most often access the recruitment portal because of requirements to participate in research in their undergraduate classes. One research credit hour was offered as an incentive to participate in the survey portion of the study. The consent form on the survey included a location for

students to submit their contact information if they were willing to be contacted to participate in the interview portion of the study.

Once data collection had ended in the fall of 2018 (214 students completed the survey at Boston College), one of the principal investigators of The Three Universities Study identified participants who fell within the top 25 percent of purpose scores and the top and bottom 25 percent of CC scores, according to these measures (described below). The upper and bottom quartiles of scores were chosen for this study because these likely represented the "information rich" cases, and the participants could likely provide the greatest insight relevant to the research questions (Devers & Frankel, 2000). In the winter of 2019, at the beginning of the spring semester, students were contacted via email and asked if they would like to participate in an interview. If the students did not respond to the initial email request, they were contacted approximately one week later to ask about participating in the study. At most, students received three emails requesting their participation in the study. Once participants completed the interview portion of the study, they received a $10 gift card as compensation for their involvement. All interviews were conducted in February or March of 2019. In the initial discussion of CQR, sample sizes of between eight and 15 participants were recommended (Hill et al., 1997). Consistent with these recommendations, the intended sample size for the dissertation was 15 participants; 17 students ultimately consented to participate in the study. Out of 18 high CC students in the larger sample, 13 agreed to participate in the study. Ten students were in the bottom quartertile of CC scores, and four of them consented to participate in an interview. Students were not eligible for participation in this study if they had participated in the previous wave of data collection for the larger study.

Instrumentation. As previously noted, participants first completed two quantitative scales to measure purpose and CC. The survey portion of data collection also asked participants to complete a few other measures and self-report on other variables of interest (e.g., college grade point average and number of mentors), based on the research questions of the larger study. Participants completed the CPS, which was normed on adolescents and measures three major components of purpose: goal directedness, beyond-the-self orientation, and personal meaning (Bronk et al., 2018). Although the CPS was recently developed, the authors noted that repeated administration of the scale has yielded promising psychometric properties. Participants also completed the CCS, a 22-item measure that assesses levels of two types of critical reflection, as well as critical action (Diemer et al., 2017). Both scales demonstrated excellent psychometric properties among the samples on which they were normed.

Interviews were chosen as the data collection method for this study, given the opportunity to engage with participants about their diverse, idiosyncratic perspectives (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005). Interviews are a typical form of data collection among CQR researchers, and Hill and colleagues (1997) recommended that researchers develop detailed, semi-structured interview protocols that are informed by previous theory. The interview protocol designed for this investigation was informed by youth purpose research (e.g., Bronk et al., 2004) and youth CC research (Diemer et al., 2017) (see Appendix A). Specific interview questions included: What is your purpose? What people have contributed to your development of purpose? What experiences have contributed to your development of purpose? Do you ever think about how your future goals will impact underprivileged or underserved people? If so, please explain how.

As is recommended by the CQR method, one pilot interview was conducted as part of an advanced qualitative research methods class with an undergraduate student whom the professor believed met criteria for the study, which helped refine the final version of the interview protocol (Hill et al., 2005). The pilot interview revealed that the interview protocol may have been more detailed than was necessary for some participants, given that the student was willing to talk about her experiences with minimal prompting. However, the interview protocol remained largely unchanged, given the recommendation by the CQR developers to create detailed protocols (Hill et al., 1997). One exception was that the questions about CC were moved closer to the beginning of the interview in an attempt to minimize priming participants to inauthentically link purpose and CC.

Data collection. Hill and colleagues (2005) cautioned that, unless they are clinically skilled, undergraduate and graduate students who are new to interviewing and qualitative research may struggle with conducting interviews consistently and competently, posing a risk to the trustworthiness of the study (Hill et al., 2005). Therefore, given my extensive experience conducting qualitative research and two graduate-level qualitative research methods courses, I conducted all 17 interviews.

When participants agreed to participate in an interview, they were contacted to schedule a time for the interview. Interviews were conducted in-person in a private office at Boston College, with the exception of one interview, which was conducted by Skype because the participant was studying abroad. Although participants answered some questions about their SES in the survey, students were asked to complete a MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status ladder, which measures one's subjective social class, at

the beginning of the interview (Ladder rung *1* = Lowest SES, Ladder rung *10* = Highest SES) (Adler et al., 1994). Although there are a variety of social class measures used in research, the MacArthur ladder is appropriate for inquiries about how one's social class may impact a variety of internal experiences, and it provided a helpful, comparative measure of one type of marginalization among students in the sample (Duffy et al., 2016). Interviews were usually between 45 and 90 minutes in length. Interviews were in-depth (Johnson, 2002) and semi-structured (Seidman, 1991), such that participants were encouraged to elaborate on responses, although efforts were made to be relatively consistent with the administration of the interview protocol (Hill et al., 2005). Participants were given a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity. With support from a grant from the Boston College Lynch School of Education and Human Development, interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service, and audio files have been stored on the secure Boston College server. All consent forms and other confidential materials relevant to the study have been stored in a locked cabinet in a faculty member's office.

Participants. Of the 17 purposeful participants, 13 students fell within the top 25 percent of CC scores, and four students fell within the bottom quartile of CC scores. Table 1 provides demographic information of the participants. Most major undergraduate schools at Boston College were represented (i.e., the Lynch School of Education and Human Development, the Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences, the Carroll School of Management, and the Connell School of Nursing). Although there was a range of ages represented in the sample, over half of the students were freshmen ($N = 9$). Four students

were sophomores, three students were juniors, and one student was a senior at the time of data collection. Given that research study participation requirements are typically more common in lower division classes, the spread across years in college is unsurprising. Over 41 percent of the sample were students of color ($N = 7$), and approximately 76 percent of the sample was female ($N = 13$).

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Pseudonym	Level of CC	Year in College	SES Ladder	Race/ Ethnicity	Gender Identity
1	Risa	High	Freshmen	5	Asian	F
2	Chris	High	Sophomore	7	White	M
3	Tom	High	Sophomore	7	White	M
4	Sarah	Low	Freshmen	8	White	F
5	Kim	High	Freshmen	6	Asian	F
6	Peter	High	Sophomore	5	White	M
7	Maria	High	Freshmen	8	Latinx	F
8	Carol	High	Freshmen	8	White	F
9	Dara	High	Junior	4	Asian	F
10	Iris	High	Sophomore	6	Asian	F
11	Rachel	High	Senior	8	White	F
12	Emily	Low	Junior	8	White	F

13	Tina	Low	Freshmen	7	White	F
14	Ana	High	Junior	2	Latinx	F
15	Steve	Low	Freshmen	9	White	M
16	Molly	High	Freshmen	7	White	F
17	Jackie	High	Freshmen	7	Multiracial	F

Although it is difficult to compare the two groups of students based on higher and lower levels of CC, given the difference in group sizes, there were some notable differences. None of the students in the low CC group were students of color, and all but one was a freshmen. Three out of the four students in the low CC group were female. For the low CC group of students, the average SES, according to the MacArthur ladder rankings, was 8. For the higher CC group, the SES average was lower at approximately 6.

Data Analysis

In CQR, data analysis includes three primary steps: the identification of domains, the creation of core ideas, and a cross-analysis across interviews, resulting in a delineation of categories (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). Domains are topics used to cluster chunks of the data into different ideas, while core ideas are summaries of the chunked data. Core ideas more clearly capture the main ideas of the data in fewer words than in the original data. A cross-analysis process is used to identify themes (i.e., categories) across interviews. Results are then reported both verbally and numerically, such that readers learn about the content of the interviews vis-a-vis categories, as well as the frequency with which the categories appeared across cases.

Analysis Team

As is consistent with CQR, the data analysis process included a collaborative approach by a consensus team (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). The consensus team included one White woman and one biracial woman in their second year of the Mental Health Counseling Master's program at Boston College, one undergraduate White student in her senior year in the Lynch School of Education and Human Development, and myself. The three students had between a few months and approximately one year of experience on the youth mentoring and purpose-focused research team of which I am a member. Prior to data analysis, I assigned readings to all three students and provided training in CQR (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). When not working as a team, the group worked in pairs, such that I worked with the undergraduate student, and the other graduate students worked together. As is recommended by the CQR developers (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005), the analysis team also included two external auditors: one woman in her third year of the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology and one man in his fourth year of the doctoral program in Counseling Psychology. Both auditors had extensive experience studying the development of purpose and using CQR as a qualitative research method. Given their demanding schedules, one doctoral student audited the domain list, the other doctoral student audited the core ideas, and both doctoral students shared the responsibility of auditing the categories and final coding document.

Imbalanced power dynamics can emerge during consensus team discussions (Hill et al., 2005). In an attempt to prevent power imbalances from skewing results, the team had an explicit discussion about this phenomenon prior to beginning data analysis. Although the likelihood that power would likely never be perfectly equal among team

members was acknowledged, given my role as a senior doctoral student and ownership of the project, team members were repeatedly encouraged to share their honest opinions and impressions of the data. The team appeared to work together effectively.

Reflexivity. Reflexivity is a process by which researchers reflect on their biases, assumptions, values, actions, and expectations, all of which may inform the research questions asked, interview questions posed, and the ways in which the data are analyzed (Darawsheh, 2014). The process of reflexivity allows researchers to offer a rationale for the various decisions they made throughout the research process, as well as enhance the study's rigor. As is consistent with CQR approaches, prior to data analysis, research assistants and I wrote statements about our expectations about results and potential biases that may have impacted how we evaluated and interpreted the findings (Hill et al., 1997). Specifically, I have considered my positionality as an educated, upper middle class, White woman and how it informs my understanding of CC and purpose development in college students. I am also mindful of how the theoretical orientation (i.e., PYD) and conceptual framework of this dissertation, although helpful for grounding the study in previous research, may limit or otherwise influence the scope with which I view the findings. The research team, including the consensus and auditing groups, was diverse with respect to gender, race, sexual orientation, educational attainment, and social class. All research team members have expressed interest in youth mentoring and purpose and espoused social justice values. With these positions in mind, every effort was made in the dissertation to authentically represent participants' experiences.

Domains, Core Ideas, and Categories

Domains. The developers of CQR typically recommend either beginning the analysis process by creating a "start list" of domains - based on previous literature or the interview protocol - and then changing the list to reflect new data that emerges, or reviewing transcripts without a domain list, thus potentially grounding the domains more deeply in the data (Hill et al., 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Given the conceptual framework of this study, the coding process began with a very preliminary domain list, largely informed by the 4 P's framework of purpose development (Liang et al., 2017a). Preliminary domains included Purpose, People, Passion, Propensity, Prosocial Benefits, and Critical Consciousness. Thereafter, the coding team reviewed a few transcripts, and the team met to develop an initial domain list that reflected the other constructs that emerged. The team reached consensus on the following initial domain list: Purpose, Purpose Planning, Supportive People, Passion, Propensity, Prosocial Benefits, Barriers/Adversity, Critical Consciousness, Experiences, Identity, Uncertainty and Doubt, and Other. Once consensus had been reached on the domain list and the team had coded three interviews together, the research team then worked in pairs to group chunks of data into their appropriate domains for the remainder of the interviews. All coding was completed on a secure Google Sheets form. Each partner reviewed their partner's coding before the domain list was sent to one of the external auditors. Any discrepancies or questions about coding between the partners were resolved through discussion. The external auditor reviewed the domain list and provided feedback; an important question in the feedback was about how Critical Consciousness was coded. This feedback was revisited multiple times throughout the analysis process.

Core ideas. After the auditor's feedback about the domain list was incorporated into the coding document, pairs of research assistants began to develop core ideas (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005). The consensus team reviewed the definition and key components of core ideas, and each consensus team member created core ideas for approximately one fourth of the interviews. In pairs, team members reviewed each other's work and resolved any discrepancies and concerns through discussion. After consensus was reached on all core ideas between the pairs, the core ideas were sent to the other external auditor, who had minor feedback.

Categories. In the final phase of coding, cross-analysis, all consensus team members first individually developed a preliminary list of categories (Hill et al., 2005). The consensus team then met twice before reaching consensus on a list of categories that fell within each domain. Thereafter, each consensus team member assigned core ideas to the appropriate categories for approximately one fourth of the interviews. In pairs, team members reviewed each other's work and resolved any discrepancies and concerns through discussion. As one of the final quality checks, and to ensure consistency across coding, I reviewed all coding of the domains, core ideas, and category assignments and provided minor edits before sending the coding document to the auditors for review. As an additional effort to ensure the quality of the team's coding, I also requested that a faculty colleague - an expert in qualitative research methods - review the categories (Hill et al., 2005). A subsequent conversation with this colleague resulted in my decision to change a few of the domains (e.g., Experiences was renamed as Activities, and the Other domain was deleted). I also reorganized some of the categories, though I sought consultation and approval from the other consensus team members prior to finalizing the

changes. Valuable feedback from the auditors also resulted in minor changes to the Category list, primarily to clarify the definitions of the categories in the Critical Consciousness domain. According to the CQR developers, the cross-analysis process is often iterative, and frequent revisiting of the category list and raw data is often warranted (Hill et al., 2005). All team members reached consensus on the final list of domains and categories, and the auditors' feedback was responded to and/or incorporated. For the definitions of the final list of domains and categories, see Appendix B.

Standards of Quality

Qualitative researchers have been concerned about issues of standards of quality for decades (Maxwell, 1992; Morrow, 2005). Across qualitative studies, prolonged engagement with participants, a process of researcher reflexivity, the use of peer debriefers, the inclusion of "thick descriptions," and a thorough description of the research design are just some of the methods qualitative researchers employ to ensure the rigor of their studies (Morrow, 2005). For this dissertation, although I did not employ all aforementioned methods (e.g., prolonged engagement) due to the nature of the study, I aimed to provide thick descriptions of participants' experiences by authentically grounding the domains and categories in the data. The research team engaged in an intentional process of reflexivity, and I sought to provide a thorough description of the research design. I also primarily relied on the consensus process among pairs and within the whole research team, as well as the help of the auditors, as a means of demonstrating a form of interrater reliability and the rigor of the study (Morse, 2015).

In their original conception of CQR, the authors recommended that one or two interviews from the dataset be withheld from the initial cross-analysis as a stability check

(Hill et al., 1997). It was then suggested that researchers check to determine if the categories later fit well with the withheld cases. However, in a later review of several CQR studies, the stability check was deemed unnecessary because often little changes were made to the cross analysis, and rarely did researchers attempt to collect additional data if the stability check raised concerns (Hill et al., 2005). Therefore, I did not withhold any interviews during the cross-analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This dissertation explored the following research questions: (1) What factors do college students identify as being relevant to their purpose development? and (2) What role, if any, does CC play in the development of purpose? The results of this dissertation are presented in several formats in an effort to capture the richness of the data. First, as is consistent with CQR recommendations (Hill et al., 1997; Hill et al., 2005), the frequencies of the categories across interviews are presented. However, given the goals of this study and the fact that the two groups of students (high and low CC) were uneven in number, a slightly modified version of CQR was adopted to illustrate the results. Instead of presenting only the frequency of categories across all 17 participants, the description of the Results includes frequency counts across all 17 participants, the high CC group (13 students), and the low CC group (4 students). The differing rules for understanding the categorical descriptions of the frequencies across groups is discussed in greater detail below. The small size of the low CC group will be discussed as a limitation of the study, and readers should take caution when attempting to compare the two groups of students. Nonetheless, it is worth noting the important contributions that the low CC students offered for our understanding of a range of factors that contribute to purpose development.

The presentation of categories addressed the first research question by illustrating the factors that a group of college students identified as facilitating their purpose development. The categories were explored in depth, with salient quotes offered as

examples of how the category was relevant to participants' purpose development journeys. To address the second research question, a visual model of the role of CC, or lack thereof, in students' purpose development is presented. Finally, five case examples are discussed to demonstrate the salience of CC and/or other factors in some of the participants' purpose development (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Three case examples from the high CC group and two cases examples from the low CC group were chosen. The uneven number in types of cases reflects the greater number of high CC students in the sample. All five case examples were carefully selected, given the ways in which they exemplified some of the key themes that emerged from the study. The use of case studies has been recommended to most effectively highlight the context of how phenomena played out in participants' lives (Hill et al., 2005).

Category Frequencies

Data analysis ultimately resulted in the creation of 12 domains and 60 corresponding categories, which provided information about the factors that contributed to students' purpose development, the nature of their purposes, and their future plans for purpose engagement and career planning. Table 2 shows all 60 categories and the frequency with which they appeared across interviews in each of the groups: all participants, the participants with higher levels of CC, and the participants with lower levels of CC. The guidelines for frequency labels set forth by Hill and colleagues (2005) recommended that General categories be present in all or all but one of the interviews, while Typical categories are those that appear in over 50 percent of interviews, though less frequently than General categories (Hill et al., 2005). Variant categories are those that appear in less than 50 percent of interviews, though the minimum is approximately

two interviews. Rare categories are similar to outliers and occur in very few cases in samples of over 15. Given the differences in group size between the low and high CC participants, the definitions of General, Typical, Variant, and Rare vary slightly across groups. Looking across all participants (17 students), General categories were present in 16 or 17 interviews; Typical categories emerged in between nine and 15 interviews; Variant categories were present in between four and eight interviews; and Rare categories emerged in two or three interviews. In the high CC group (13 students), General categories were present across 12 or 13 interviews; Typical categories were present in between seven and 11 interviews; Variant categories were present in between two and six interviews; and Rare categories were only present in one interview. In the low CC group (4 students), General referred to categories that were present in all interviews, Typical categories were present in two or three interviews, and Variant categories were present in one or zero interviews.

Table 2

Categories and Frequency Counts

Category	All Participants	High CC	Low CC
Purpose			
Self-Oriented Aim	Typical	Typical	General
Prosocial Purpose	Typical	Typical	Typical
Social Justice-Oriented Purpose	Variant	Typical	Variant
Purpose Planning			
Learning More about Purpose	Variant	Variant	Variant

Seeking out Mentors	Variant	Variant	Typical
Education	Typical	Typical	General
Extracurricular Activities	Typical	Typical	Variant
Internships and Jobs	Typical	Typical	General
Alternative Paths	Typical	Typical	Variant
Types of Support			
Affirmation	Typical	Typical	General
Role Modeling or Mentoring	Typical	Typical	Typical
Cultivation	Typical	Typical	General
Guidance	Typical	Typical	Typical
People			
Family	General	General	General
Peers	Typical	Typical	Typical
Therapist	Variant	Variant	Variant
Pre-College Educators	Typical	Typical	Typical
Staff/Faculty at Boston College	Typical	Typical	Typical
Professional(s) in the Field	Typical	Typical	Typical
Passion			
Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment	General	General	General
Education	Typical	Typical	Typical

Interest in Social Justice	Typical	Typical	Typical
Propensity			
Weaknesses/Poor Fit	Typical	Typical	General
Improving Skills	Typical	Typical	Typical
Strengths/Goodness of Fit	General	General	General
Prosocial Benefits			
General Prosocial Benefits	General	General	General
Being a Role Model or Mentor	Variant	Variant	Typical
Benefitting the Organization	Variant	Variant	Typical
Benefitting Loved Ones	Variant	Variant	Typical
Benefitting Marginalized Populations	Typical	General	Typical
Barriers/Adversity			
Lack of Barriers	Rare	Variant	Variant
Issues with Work	Typical	Typical	Typical
Self-Doubt	Variant	Variant	Variant
Academic	Typical	Typical	Variant
Lack of Social Support	Typical	Typical	Typical
Financial	Typical	Typical	Typical
Mental or Physical Health	Typical	Typical	Variant
Marginalization or Trauma	Typical	Typical	Variant

Other Barriers	Variant	Variant	Typical
Resilience	Typical	Typical	Typical
Critical Consciousness			
Lack of Critical Consciousness	Variant	Variant	Typical
Consciousness Raising Activities	Variant	General	Typical
Awareness of Systems of Oppression	General	General	General
Awareness of One's Positionality	Typical	General	Typical
Critical Consciousness: Awareness + Action	Typical	Typical	Variant
Activities			
Pre-College Education	Typical	Typical	Typical
Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement	General	General	Typical
Travel	Rare	Rare	Variant
College Education	Typical	Typical	Typical
College Extracurricular Involvement	Typical	General	Typical
Identity			
Marginalized Identity(s)	Typical	Typical	Variant
Demographic Information	General	General	Typical
Hometown	Typical	Typical	Typical
Religious Beliefs	Typical	Typical	General

Values	Typical	Typical	General
Privileged Identity(s)	Typical	Typical	Typical
Uncertainty			
Changing Purpose	Variant	Variant	Variant
Purpose Uncertainty	Typical	Typical	General
Purpose Activity Uncertainty	Typical	Variant	Typical
Post-Undergraduate Uncertainty	Variant	Variant	Variant

Although each category will be described in greater depth below, there were several noteworthy preliminary differences in category frequencies across the three groups. As shown in Table 2, the high CC group had the following General categories: Family, Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment, Strengths/Goodness of Fit, General Prosocial Benefits, Benefitting Marginalized Populations, Consciousness Raising Activities, Awareness of Systems of Oppression, Awareness of One's Positionality, Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement, College Extracurricular Involvement, and Demographic Information. Among the low CC participants, the following categories were General: Self-Oriented Aim, Education, Internships and Jobs, Affirmation, Cultivation, Family, Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment, Weaknesses/Poor Fit, Strengths/Goodness of Fit, General Prosocial Benefits, Awareness of Systems of Oppression, Religious Beliefs, Values, and Purpose Uncertainty. In comparing the high and low CC groups, the following five categories were General for both groups: Family, Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment, Strengths/Goodness of Fit, General Prosocial

Benefits, and Awareness of Systems of Oppression. The following categories were General across all participants: Family, Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment, Strengths/Goodness of Fit, General Prosocial Benefits, Awareness of Systems of Oppression, Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement, and Demographic Information.

Domain and Category Descriptions

Purpose

The purpose domain captured the types of purposes expressed by the participants and contained three categories: Self-Oriented Aim, Prosocial Purpose, and Social Justice-Oriented Purpose. Self-Oriented Aims were those that reflected either clear SO motivations, or the participant was not explicit about having a prosocial intention. Because Damon and colleagues' (2003) definition of purpose includes a prosocial contribution, it is worth noting that all students expressed having prosocial intentions at some point in their interview (Damon et al., 2003). Therefore, all of the students in this sample were characterized as purposeful, even though they sometimes expressed SO motivations for pursuing their goals. Prosocial Purposes were those that had clear prosocial intentions, and Social Justice-Oriented Purposes went a step beyond prosocial purposes, such that participants expressed a desire to specifically benefit marginalized populations. Table 3 illustrates the purposes described by each of the participants; most purposes were related to career aspirations. Categories in this domain were not mutually exclusive, as participants could describe several motivations for pursuing their purpose and/or some level of uncertainty about their purpose. For example, when Risa talked about her desire to be a social worker or a psychologist, she said that she was "heading toward a helping profession" (Prosocial Purpose). When talking about her desire to work

in marketing for an "A-Brand sneaker company," Emily said that she definitely wants "to do something creatively based" (Self-Oriented Aim). Given her family's experiences as recent immigrants to the United States, Ana said that, regarding the population with whom she wants to work as a bilingual speech and language pathologist (SLP), "the majority that I want to work with are children of immigrants" (Social Justice-Oriented Purpose). Notably, a Self-Oriented Aim was a General category in the low CC group and a Typical category in the high CC group. None of the low CC participants expressed having a social justice-oriented purpose in which they were motivated to help marginalized populations.

Table 3

Participant Purposes

Participant	Pseudonym	Purpose
1	Risa	Social worker or psychologist
2	Chris	Navy SEAL
3	Tom	School counselor
4	Sarah	Teacher or business
5	Kim	Social worker and public speaker
6	Peter	High school math teacher and principal
7	Maria	Teacher
8	Carol	Education or psychology
9	Dara	Social services or public health

10	Iris	Business
11	Rachel	Nursing
12	Emily	Marketing for a sneaker company
13	Tina	Mental health or business
14	Ana	Bilingual speech and language pathologist
15	Steve	Police officer
16	Molly	Non-profits/Women's Health
17	Jackie	English teacher

Purpose Planning

The second domain was Purpose Planning, which included the following six categories: Learning More About Purpose, Seeking Out Mentors, Education, Extracurricular Activities, Internships and Jobs, and Alternative Paths. The first five categories were actions or steps that participants wanted to take to pursue their purpose. While most of the domains reflected past or present experiences that contributed to purpose development, the Purpose Planning domain was relatively unique in its capturing of the steps yet taken. In these instances, students often talked about what they imagined for their futures in five or 10 years. When students discussed Learning More About their Purpose, they often discussed needing more information to help them determine next steps, or their desire to take advantage of opportunities relevant to their purpose. For example, Iris, who wanted to work in finance, said that she would like to be "talking more, networking more, [and] going to all these events that companies hold." Ana, who

wanted to be an SLP, believed that she needed to learn more about communication disorders: “I’m still going to continue learning about them and like finding out.” This category was Variant across all groups.

When participants talked about Seeking Out Mentors, they mentioned important people who could help them work toward reaching their goals. For example, Sarah, who wanted to either pursue a career in teaching or business, said that she wanted to meet with academic advisors to be sure that she was not “missing anything, or missing any opportunities that are on campus that [she] doesn’t know about.” Kim, who aimed to be a social worker and a public speaker/advocate for people with mental illness, said that it would be “practical and helpful” for her to “get in touch with teaching faculty about their work experience.” Emily, who saw a future in marketing, sought to “meet as many people and make as many contacts” as she could with “people who work in the sneaker industry.” Taken together, several participants recognized the potential helpfulness of professionals in the field or staff at their university; this category was Typical for the low CC group and Variant for the high CC group.

Several participants also described wanting or needing to pursue higher education to realize their aspirations; these plans often comprised the Education category. Other times, participants described relevant classes they would take as an undergraduate to help them learn more about their fields of interest. For example, Ana, knew that she would need to earn a Master’s degree to become an SLP. Molly, who had specific interests in working with non-profit organizations in developing countries, described thinking carefully about her majors and minors for her undergraduate degree, given some concerns about the practicality of her choices. She was considering adding minors in Management

and Social Justice Leadership and majoring in Women's Studies. Iris, who was pursuing a career in business, said that within three years of graduating college, she wanted "to go back to business school, just because [she] feels like education is super important." For the high CC group, Education was a Typical category, and for the low CC group, it was a General category.

Students also described extracurricular activities with which they would like to be involved in the future as stepping stones toward reaching their goals. For example, Peter, who wanted to become a teacher and eventually a high school principal, was looking forward to his upcoming Resident Assistant (RA) position because of the practice having "a group of students see [him] as a resource" and the ways in which the position is "kind of similar in a way to being a teacher." Tom, who likely wanted to become a school counselor, said that he wanted to be a "coordinator for a club" of which he is a member and keep "pursuing leadership roles" in college to help him pursue his purpose. Extracurricular Activities was a Typical category for the high CC group and a Variant category for the low CC group.

Participants also spoke concretely about internships or employment opportunities that they wanted to obtain after college that were directly aligned with their purpose. Chris, the aspiring Navy SEAL, hoped to be "shipping out to Navy Boot Camp" as soon as he finished his undergraduate degree. Iris, given her interest in being a woman leader in finance, expressed her desire to move back to New York after college and begin working at "a bank - a large, Bulge Bracket bank." Given Rachel's prior experience working as a nurse on a transplant surgery unit in an internship, she hoped to apply to the same department after college. Steve, who had a clear vision of becoming a police

officer, said that his plan was to be "enrolled in the academy" right after college on his way to work for the New York City Police Department (NYPD). The Internship and Jobs category was Typical for the high CC group and General for the low CC group.

The last category in the Purpose domain, Alternative Paths, was used most often to describe back-up plans if aspirations could not be realized, as well as future career aspirations/changes that the participants were considering after years in their chosen profession. For example, Steve talked about his consideration of running for Congress in 30 or 40 years after a career as a police officer. Chris said, even though he wanted to become a Navy SEAL, that he has always been interested in history; majoring in Secondary Education was a way for him to make his passion for history "applicable if [he] ever wanted to teach afterwards." The Alternative Paths category was Typical for the high CC group and Variant for the low CC group.

Types of Support

The Types of Support domain included four categories: Affirmation, Role Modeling and Mentoring, Cultivation, and Guidance. The Affirmation, Cultivation, and Guidance categories were adapted from previous research on the development of youth purpose (Liang et al., 2017a). Affirmation characterized emotionally supportive or close relationships, Cultivation included actions that nurtured the young person's purpose development (e.g., identifying their strengths and skills), and Guidance typically included the provision of concrete advice and related support. The Role Modeling and Mentoring category emerged as several students described people they wanted to emulate or who inspired them, as well as people whom they clearly labeled as mentors. Affirmation was common; it was a Typical category in the high CC group and General in the low CC

group. Participants often described people as being "supportive." For example, when talking about her mother, Jackie, an aspiring English teacher, said that "she's always been really supportive of whatever [she] wanted to do." Risa, who faced challenges during her undergraduate years, felt that her therapist "validated [her] feelings" and helped her view some of her childhood traumatic experiences "as a gift."

Many students discussed having role models and mentors. This category was Typical for both the high and low CC groups. For example, Risa described her therapist as a "role model." Chris, the aspiring Navy SEAL, was inspired by his grandfather's service in World War II. Sarah, who had dreams of working as a teacher or in business, viewed her mother and former teachers as role models. When she had good teachers throughout her educational history, she often thought "'Oh, I want to be like that person.'" She also developed the idea of combining her interests in teaching math skills and business from her friend's cousin. Peter, the aspiring high school principal, said that his "AP Calculus teacher" was "always a great mentor to [him]."

Cultivation and Guidance were often closely related. For example, Ana's high school guidance counselor knew that Ana was one of the top students in her graduating class. Her guidance counselor "had really high expectations of [her]," "[despite her status as a] first generation, low income student." The guidance counselor told Ana about various opportunities and said "they would be something [she] could do." As a result of the guidance counselor's identification of Ana's academic strengths (Cultivation) and her information about internship opportunities at a local hospital (Guidance), Ana developed her strong interest in speech and language pathology after observing people in this role at an internship. Peter, who made several positive connections during high school that

facilitated his interest in becoming a principal, was told by one of his teachers: "Just keep in contact if you ever come back and want to do substitute teaching while you're still in college. Let me know, and I'll hook you up to the right resources." This teacher began her career in teaching and worked her way up to administration, served as a "role model" for Peter, and offered helpful Cultivation and Guidance.

People

Participants described several important People who had helped facilitate their purpose development. The categories in the People domain were Family, Peers, Therapist, Pre-College Educators, Staff/Faculty at Boston College, and Professional(s) in the Field. The Family category included immediate and extended family members, and the Peers category included friends, college-age peers and fellow students, and romantic partners. All but one of the students in the high CC group said that family members were supportive, and all students in the low CC group said that their family was supportive of their goals. As such, Family was a General category for both the low and high CC groups. Peer support was a Typical category for both the high and low CC groups. Emily's boyfriend sparked her interest in the sneaker industry, given that his strong interest in sneakers "rubbed off on [her]." Ana discussed the importance of having like-minded peers at her university, particularly because of her identity as a first generation, low income, woman of color, as well as her belief that she is "expected to fail" by the administration at her university. When describing the importance of having conversations about social justice issues with her peers, she said that they had a shared mentality: "Okay, we feel so out of place here at [our university], but we have a community within ourselves." Notably, several stories about mental health concerns were present in this

sample, though the Therapist category was Variant for both the high and low CC groups. Four out of the 13 students in the High CC group mentioned a therapist as being helpful for them in reaching their goals, while none of the students in the low CC group mentioned seeing a therapist. Jackie, who had severe Obsessive and Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in high school, stated that "intensive care and treatment" helped her mental illness be less debilitating.

Pre-College Educators (e.g., high school teachers and coaches), Staff and Faculty at Boston College, and Professionals in the Field were also commonly supportive people for students as they developed a sense of purpose. These three categories were Typical across the high and low CC groups. Ana's high school guidance counselor was helpful when she connected her to career exploration activities. Molly's high school advanced religion teacher, who was also the head of the campus ministry department and coordinator of "social justice groups," was "very influential" and like a "second mother." This religion teacher's oversight of Molly's involvement in service projects was instrumental in facilitating Molly's interest in working for non-profit organizations later in life. Staff and faculty at Boston College were also helpful to students. A couple of students mentioned the professors of their PULSE classes, a unique class that combines foundational theology and philosophy learning with a yearlong service placement. Dara, who wanted to pursue a career in social services or public health, said that her PULSE professor viewed his students as "agents" of change. He made her feel that she "could go out and carry what [she] learned through the philosophy and theology core and enact change." Academic advisors who could help with undergraduate course planning were also often viewed as valuable. Finally, Professionals in the Field helped students in a

variety of ways on their purpose journeys. Risa, a future psychologist or social worker, met a famous therapist in Taiwan, Risa's country of origin. Risa said that this therapist "saw [her] potential" and said that she would take her as a student if she ever wanted the opportunity. Chris, as he considered the best path toward becoming a Navy SEAL, spoke with several members of the Navy during high school, all of who recommended that he obtain an undergraduate degree. Emily, in her efforts to one day obtain a job at a sneaker company, made it a point to "get lunch" with "executives from different departments" during all of her internships to "ask people questions" and "ask for help."

Passion

The Passion domain included three categories: Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment of one's purpose, Education, and Interest in Social Justice. All participants stated that they had a strong or sustained interest and enjoyment of their purpose and related endeavors; as such, this category was General for both the high and low CC groups. Many students talked about having a longstanding (Sustained) interest in their purpose and were often able to identify moments during childhood when they first developed a spark of interest in their purpose. For example, Steve's purpose evolved from the military to police work, but his interest in the military emerged when he was six years old. He said his family "went up to West Point to watch a football game, and it clicked. [He] fell in love." Chris saw the movie *Saving Private Ryan* and frequently watched the History Channel on television as a child, resulting in his longstanding interest in the military and subsequent desire to become a Navy SEAL. Tom said that he "grew up in a house full of books" and was "always obsessed with reading," which he believed was relevant to his interest in school counseling. Tom said that he was able to

"[see] [himself] in those books" and practice understanding "where people are coming from." Maria, an aspiring Kindergarten teacher, said she "always wanted to be a teacher" and that she has "always loved younger kids."

Participants also enhanced their Passion for their purpose by taking relevant classes in college. The Education category was Typical for both high and low CC students. Tina, who was considering a career in mental health or business, had limited exposure to social justice issues before coming to college, but was greatly enjoying her classes that focused on "super controversial topics of society." She felt so enlivened about what she was learning that she called her "mom after every class" to tell her about it. Jackie, the aspiring English teacher, said that her "applied psychology classes here are so interesting" and felt that classes that focused on "social issues" were "really interesting." Being able to understand social issues and psychology was relevant for Jackie's desire to provide holistic support to students, in light of her challenges and lack of support during her educational career.

The last category in the Passion domain, Interest in Social Justice, was also Typical for the high and low CC groups. When participants talked about having an Interest in Social Justice, they described a deep, caring concern for marginalized populations. For example, Iris, who attended protests on immigration in high school, said that she believes "it's really important just to have an opinion about these controversial topics." After growing up in New York City, witnessing homelessnesss, and experiencing financial difficulties as a child, Dara said the following about her interest in social justice:

> Previously I worked with the homeless population, and currently I work with people who have struggled with suicidality, so I think those two issues are most pressing for me and the ones I feel like I am competent enough to address and

> passionate about. And, helping people find access to affordable housing or getting people the resources they need… are the two most issues important to me.

Moreover, Rachel said that social justice as a value was "ingrained" in her as a nurse; she said this value is "why [she is] proud to be a nurse."

Propensity

The Propensity domain captured the ways in which students' purposes were a good fit for them, based on their character strengths, skills, and personality traits, as well as their weaknesses. Three categories emerged in the Propensity domain: Weaknesses/Poor Fit, Improving Skills, and Strengths/Goodness of Fit. A discussion of Weaknesses/Poor fit was Typical among the high CC participants and General among the low CC participants, while the Improving Skills category was Typical for both groups. The Strengths/Goodness of Fit category, however, was General for both groups. All participants in the study discussed why and how their purpose was a good fit for them based on their strengths and skills. Carol, who had an interest in working with adolescents in either the mental health or education sectors, noted that she had questioned whether the mental health route was best for her, even though she described herself as a "people person." She said that she was "known for being one of those people that takes on other people's problems like a sponge" but then "never gets rung out." Because of this tendency, she acknowledged that becoming a therapist might not be a good fit for her. With regard to the skills that she would like to improve, Carol said that she wanted to focus on "learning resiliency and learning how to be flexible with things." Steve believed that he had several qualities that would make him a good police officer, including that he was "dedicated," good at carrying out tasks, "attentive, focused, [and] aware." However,

he also acknowledged that he wanted to learn how to be more "collaborative" because he was a very "headstrong person" who liked to do "projects on [his] own."

Prosocial Benefits

The Prosocial Benefits domain was created to capture the intended beneficiaries of participants' purposes, as all participants described wanting someone or something to be impacted by their purpose. This domain had five categories: General Prosocial Benefits, Being a Role Model or Mentor, Benefitting the Organization, Benefitting Loved Ones, and Benefitting Marginalized Populations. These categories were not mutually exclusive, as participants often described a variety of prosocial goals. General Prosocial Benefits, the broadest category of the five, was General for both the high and low CC groups; all participants shared in some form that they wanted to be helpful. The General Prosocial Benefits category was sometimes tied to religious beliefs. For example, Steve said that his desire to "be of something greater than [himself]" was "very similar to the message in the Bible." Molly expressed her belief that "everyone should be seen as equal in God's eyes," and people "should be treated fairly." In other cases, participants made sweeping statements about who they wanted to help. Peter said, "I see my bigger purpose in life as just serving the world as a whole." Even though she had some particular interests in nursing, Rachel said that "there is a large scope of people that [one] can help in nursing." Tina had some questions about what career path to take (mental health vs. business), but she felt confident about her desire to help other people (e.g., "helping them find happiness or passion").

Some participants expressed an interest in Being a Role Model or Mentor in pursuing their purpose. Despite the uncertainty about her purpose, Tina said that she

"would love to be an inspiration… Because [her] entire life, [she has] looked up to people… Why wouldn't that be [her] goal one day to be like that for other people?" For students in the high CC group, some people wanted to serve as mentors or role models to people with whom they shared a marginalized identity. For example, Tom acknowledged the relevance of his gay identity as he pursued becoming a teacher and later a principal; he said that when he is a teacher:

> Maybe there's a kid who comes from the same kind of background as me, or he's in the LGBT community and sees me as a mentor and feels that he has someone to aspire to be. That's kind of the end goal of all of it - to feel like there's someone that students can relate to and just kind of see that there's hope for them, if they feel like any of their identities are things that can hold them back in a sense.

Iris, who acknowledged her unique positionality in business as a woman of color, said that she did "want to empower others eventually… and kind of be that person [people] can look up to and say, you know, someone who's like me is succeeding."

Benefitting the Organization was a Variant category for the high CC group and a Typical category for the low CC group. Steve had many beneficiaries of his intended job in the police force. Steve said that by the end of his career, he wanted to have "made a positive impact on people who worked for [him]," such that he carried a reputation as an "honest person" and "hardworking, dedicated, and compassionate." He also wanted to benefit the "entire department and have a real impact" by setting an example for what honest, just police work could look like. Emily expressed her high hopes for using her creativity to positively benefit a sneaker company; she would "love to put on a unique campaign that nobody thought of before that would drive sales," "make a difference in the company," and "leave a legacy."

Benefitting Loved Ones was a Variant category for the high CC group and a Typical category for the low CC group. Regarding his desire to be a police officer, Steve said, "I want to make my family proud. I want to do something that gives my family name pride, something to be proud of." Ana noted that the community in her hometown was instrumental in helping her achieve the "success" she had experienced and that the idea of giving back to her community had "helped [her] sense of purpose in life." Dara expressed the desire to both benefit loved ones, as well as marginalized populations. Given how much her mother, as a single mother, had supported Dara as a child, Dara said that she "wants to do these good things for her" with her purpose, leading her to pursue social work. She also wanted to be supportive of her friends in the queer community who shared this part of their identity with her; Dara said that her "friends are activists," and she did not "want them to stand alone in the fight against injustice." Dara asserted her desire to "amplify their voices."

The last category in the Prosocial Benefits domain, Benefitting Marginalized Populations, was General for the high CC group and Typical for the low CC group. All but one of the students in the high CC group indicated a clear desire for marginalized populations to be the beneficiaries of their purpose in a meaningful way. However, the one student in the high CC group (Iris) who did not explicitly say that she wanted to benefit marginalized populations through her work in business expressed a desire to be a role model to young people with similar marginalized identities, though she did not see a clear role of social justice in her day-to-day employment. A desire to benefit marginalized populations was often reflective of either marginalized identities that people had or service experiences in which participants had partaken, which were often

illuminating for people with a greater number of privileged identities. For example, given Risa's traumatic experiences during childhood (e.g., "suffering," "poverty," and "violence"), she felt that she had a good ability to be empathetic to children who had experienced similar hardships. Therefore, she wanted to become a psychologist or social worker and help these young people. Jackie, who had faced challenges at her public high school, talked about her desire to become a high school English teacher for "people who wouldn't ordinarily have an opportunity to receive a good education." Molly, who had several privileged identities, said that she wanted to support women and their menstrual health in developing countries after being inspired by other women on social media and Youtube. Specifically, she said she "would like to work for women's menstrual health and especially in third world countries where women don't have access or know the education about having a period." Molly had partaken in several service projects in high school that solidified her interest in service.

Barriers/Adversity

Participants described several barriers on their purpose development journeys, which sometimes motivated them to change directions, as well as challenges that ultimately facilitated their purpose development in a productive way. At best, Barriers and Adversity gave participants a more clear sense of who they wanted to help with their purpose. There were 10 categories in the Barriers/Adversity domain: Lack of Barriers, Issues with Work, Self Doubt, Academic, Lack of Social Support, Financial, Mental or Physical Health, Marginalization or Trauma, Other Barriers, and Resilience. Taken together, significant challenges were Typical, though not universal, for participants in the

sample. Only one participant in the sample - from the low CC group - did not disclose any barriers or challenges on her purpose development path.

A Lack of Barriers was a Variant category for both the high and low CC groups. This category captured the lack of past, present, and anticipated future challenges as students worked toward meeting their goals. Kim, who was interested in pursuing a career in mental health after facing significant mental illness as an adolescent (Mental or Physical Health Barrier), was quite optimistic about her future. She did not anticipate any barriers because she had "choice to do whatever job or career [she] wants to do." When asked if she anticipated any challenges, Sarah said, "Not really. Everyone is supportive. They see [her] passion for both sides, and therefore, they feel like it's a good path for [her] to be on." Even though Sarah was unsure whether she wanted to pursue teaching or business, she felt well-supported and capable of meeting her goals. Sarah was also the only participant who did not mention any past challenges.

Issues with Work was a Typical category for both the low and high CC groups. This category was created to capture problems with an ideal job or employment; often, these problems resulted in participants changing their purpose directions or contributed to their ongoing uncertainty about what path to take. For example, although Steve had originally been interested in joining the military, he switched to the idea of becoming a police officer because of his perception of several downsides of the military profession. He said that the "biggest factor was being away from [his] family and that long sense of having no contact because family is very important to [him]." He also had difficulty justifying his potential involvement in the current United States war efforts: "And if you get shot, you're out there in the middle of a desert thinking 'What am I here for?'

Especially since I felt like this war has been rather pointless." Ana was committed to the idea of becoming an SLP, but she was still wrestling with whether she would ideally work in a school or at a hospital setting. Although she thought a school setting sounded "comfortable," the primary reason for her indecision was financial. She lamented, "A clinical setting gives more money compared to a school setting." Moreover, Emily said that marketing jobs at well-known sneaker companies are "really competitive" and expressed some doubts about her ability to successfully obtain her desired job.

Self Doubt was a Variant category for both the low and high CC groups. The Self Doubt category was used for instances in which participants discussed lacking confidence in themselves or their abilities. Although Tina grew up dancing competitively and maintained her involvement in a dance organization in college, she had doubts about her abilities to dance at the professional level. She said that dance was "one of the most competitive fields ever to get into" and that she was "realistically not at the capability of going pro." Despite this doubt, she was thoughtful about finding another purpose and said that she "really wanted to find [her] purpose through helping people rather than just doing it for [herself]." Tina's realistic assessment of her abilities and weaknesses was ultimately helpful for her as she decided to consider other options: mental health or business. Kim also had some doubts about her abilities to work with people, which had prevented her from settling decisively on a mental health career path. She wondered, "How will I perform? What if I really can't handle this situation? Will they be fine? What if I do something wrong?"

Academic barriers (i.e., those that were related to education) were Typical for the high CC group and Variant for the low CC group. Academic barriers were often related

to other issues (e.g., mental illness and lack of social support). In high school, Jackie was diagnosed with OCD, Anxiety, and Depression, which eventually resulted in her inability to attend school. She had "a lot of negative teachers" at her public school, whom she ultimately felt like were "really scary" and "huge barriers." The lack of support Jackie received at her public school prompted her family to have her transferred to an alternative school that offered more individualized programming and smaller classrooms. Jackie had a significantly more positive experience at her new school, inspiring her interest to return to the classroom as a teacher to help students with similar challenges. Even though Molly was passionate about helping women in developing countries, she had questions about how her choice of undergraduate major would enable her to obtain the type of job she wanted. As an Applied Psychology and Human Development major, Molly wondered, "I really don't know how to get there. Like, will an Applied Psychology degree help me get there, and how do you start working toward that goal?" Ana experienced academic barriers as a student at an "underfunded" public high school in her hometown, as well as ongoing challenges at her university. When describing her current experience in school, she said that she was "not encouraged to be here."

Lack of Social Support was a Typical category for both the low and high CC groups. Lack of Social Support was intentionally broad and captured a variety of experiences of relational disconnection and unsupportive attitudes regarding one's purpose. Risa, who endured several traumatic experiences as a child, said that she "doesn't feel that strong positive helpful attachment is from [her] family. That doesn't mean they're bad. It's just there are issues in [her] family." Maria, who noted that she did not look Latina but identified strongly with her Puerto Rican heritage, felt a lack of

community at her university. She said that "the groups here with people of color are very tight-knit, and you have to fit a certain criteria to be in it. I don't really fit that." Dara had a similar experience in college regarding her ethnic identity and found it easier to connect with students about her queer identity, an identity that was more salient to her purpose. She said, "I feel disconnected from the Chinese American community here. I think it was so much easier for me to find and make friends in the queer community." Rachel stated that she had "never really fully" had a mentor and found it surprising when her peers were better able to access mentors than she was, in spite of the progress she had made on her way to becoming a nurse. Molly said that while her mother was supportive of her career aspirations, her father has expressed some concerns about the feasibility of her dreams (e.g., his "perspective [is] that it's not a useful career") and practicality of her undergraduate major and minors (e.g., the Women and Gender Studies minor in which Molly is interested is a "BS minor"). Despite a Lack of Social Support at times, students generally described feeling supported by a variety of people as they pursued their purpose, as was captured by the People and Types of Support domains.

Participants also discussed facing financial challenges in the past, or they anticipated financial barriers limiting their options in the future. Financial barriers was a Typical category for both the low and high CC groups. These barriers, however, were variable in terms of the extent to which they limited students from pursuing their goals. For example, Steve was highly committed to becoming a police officer, but lamented that he would "have to adjust to lower conditions on which to live" because he would not be able to "make as much as [his] father in a public service position." Steve believed that he would not be able to achieve the same SES in which he grew up. Although Ana had

settled comfortably on the idea of becoming an SLP, she had considered earning potential frequently as she explored her career options. At one point, Ana thought about becoming a teacher, but she "knows that in order to survive in America, [she] needs money." Tina did not want to "sacrifice [her] happiness or [her] passion for money," but because she wants a "big family," she "naturally has to consider" money as a factor in her career choice. Because of the reality that "women are paid less for the same roles" and "their labor is undervalued" in finance, Iris was somewhat disheartened about her future in business. Nevertheless, she was determined to do whatever she needed to do to become successful in her career.

Several students in the sample described past or present mental and physical health diagnoses that had sometimes made it difficult to pursue their purposes, but more often than not, these diagnoses inspired a greater sense of direction in participants' lives. The Mental and Physical Health category included all related barriers/diagnoses that had an effect on participants' physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being. This category was Typical in the high CC group and Variant in the low CC group. The only student in the low CC group who had this category present in her interview was Emily, who had a vision disorder called Over Convergence that was first recognized when she was in high school. Risa discussed her history of depression, which was related to her childhood trauma and later inspired her involvement in a Crisis Text Line service and other organizations to help people facing similar challenges. Chris believed that he had undiagnosed Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), but later understood his "not being able to sit still" as a "positive thing" and perhaps useful for a career as a Navy SEAL. After struggling with several mental illnesses in high school, Kim wanted to

pursue a career in mental health and work to reduce stigma about mental illness in China. After struggling with a severe depressive disorder, Kim believed that having a sense of purpose also helped her "keep going and not be distracted." She believed that having a goal would continue to help her avoid being "in that depressed cycle again." Maria, an aspiring Kindergarten teacher, owed many of her dreams to her Kindergarten teacher; she said, "I also had this really great teacher for Kindergarten. I had selective mutism when I was really young, so she was so amazing and fundamental for me to get out of my shell." With adequate support and/or treatment, these students were able to transform their challenges into purposes that reflected a thoughtfulness about their past experiences and how those difficulties could serve as a foundation for meaningful futures.

The Marginalization or Trauma barriers that students faced were similar to - and often related to - the Mental or Physical Health Barriers they endured, in that these barriers often paved a pathway for a meaningful, intentional purpose. The Marginalization or Trauma category was, again, Typical for the high CC group and Variant for the low CC group. In fact, 10 out of the 13 participants in the high CC group described having at least one marginalized identity, and none of the low CC group members mentioned a marginalized identity. Ana and Risa described perhaps the most significant amount of marginalization and trauma, and both women had developed a sense of purpose that directly reflected these experiences. For instance, Ana discussed her experiences as a first generation, low income college student and the added challenges of being a woman of color at a predominantly White institution. When she arrived at her university, she thought, "Okay, maybe I'm not worthy of this career, and maybe I'm not worthy of going to graduate school. It's not meant for me." However, Ana was involved

with a prestigious scholarship program at her university that was designed to help first generation, low income college students attend graduate school, and she had several formative internship experiences at a world renowned hospital that have prepared her to become a bilingual SLP. Risa chose not to disclose highly detailed information about her marginalization and traumatic experiences, but she said that she "got involved inside the system [herself] as a client." She mentioned her involvement with "Child Protective Services" and "the police" as a child, interventions that she did not view positively. Risa also discussed the cultural stigma present in Taiwan, her country of origin, that stifled her efforts to ask for help, as well as her family's frequent immigration patterns that made it difficult for her schools to track her and support her well-being. Despite these circumstances, Risa poignantly said, "People might say it's a traumatic experience, but I can transform that into something that's really powerful and that gives me hope to continue my life, like all the way." Indeed, transformation was a common theme among participants' discussions of their experiences of marginalization and trauma.

Other Barriers was a category created to capture all challenges and adversity not adequately captured by the other categories in the Barriers/Adversity domain. Most Barriers were captured well by the preexisting categories, but this category was Variant for the high CC group and Typical for the low CC group. For example, Emily discussed the competitive and difficult nature of trying to obtain an internship with a New England sneaker company. After reaching out to one of the sneaker companies, Emily was told that the company only "recruits through co-ops," a type of learning format present at other universities, but not at her university. Emily was concerned about the possibility that she would not be able to obtain an internship or job at her strongly desired place of

employment. Ana said that, in high school, she was not a reflective person and that she would primarily choose activities to "put on [her] resume." However, she was grateful that her university encouraged self-reflection, and she decided to become more intentional about the ways she chose to spend her time.

The final category in the Barriers/Adversity domain was Resilience; Resilience was a Typical category for both the low and high CC groups. A discussion of resilience often coincided with stories about a variety of barriers and challenges. For example, when talking about her multiple mental health diagnoses in high school (e.g., anxiety, depression, OCD), Jackie described these diagnoses as "one of the biggest parts of [her] identity," although they "honestly made getting to this point very difficult." However, Jackie noted, "Once I made it past it, it really, honestly changed who I was. I think the growth I did getting through that was for the better." Jackie was able to demonstrate resilience and healing from her mental illness with support from her individual therapist, past group therapy members, parents, and boyfriend. She also described having an extraordinarily supportive relationship with a high school English teacher, who was "one of the nicest people [she] had ever met," as well as with other "patient" and "calm" teachers at her alternative high school. Jackie's increased awareness of mental health issues, particularly among nontraditional high school students, and a solid base of social support ultimately fostered resilience for Jackie and inspired her interest in becoming an English teacher.

Despite having multiple marginalized identities, Ana had made an effort to have conversations with people at her university and follow progressive social media platforms featuring women of color to help her build a community in college and nourish her sense

of self. Ana stated, "I've learned a lot of vocabulary, and reading, and all these things… I think I have opened my mind to what liberation means for me and what social justice work would look like." Relatedly, Ana had increasingly thought about what it meant to "decolonize [herself]" (e.g., "stop straightening [her] hair" and "stop thinking [she] needs lighter skin") in an effort to see her value as a woman of color. Rachel's interest in nursing was actually, in part, a resilient response to an incident that happened years ago with her mother, in which her mother "woke up in the middle of the night, passed out, and hit her head on the floor." An ambulance had to be called, and the "fear of not knowing what to do" and "helplessness really bothered" Rachel. In light of her values, strengths, and skills (e.g., a proclivity for science), Rachel said that this incident "sparked" her pursuit of nursing as a career. Taken together, some of the major factors that appeared to foster resilience among students - in the face of adversity and/or trauma - included Consciousness Raising Activities (e.g., in the case of Ana); meaningful social support from diverse sources (e.g., in the case of Jackie); and religious beliefs.

Critical Consciousness

The Critical Consciousness domain was created for instances in which participants described elements of CC, including how they developed CC, signs of critical reflection, and/or indications of their participation in critical action. There were five categories within this domain: Lack of Critical Consciousness, Consciousness Raising Activities, Awareness of Systems of Oppression, Awareness of One's Positionality, and Critical Consciousness: Awareness + Action.

The first category, Lack of Critical Consciousness, was a Variant category across all 17 participants. However, the category was Typical for low CC students and Variant

for high CC students. Chunks of data could be placed in this category when students described an explicit lack of social justice values, misinformation about social justice issues, or a level of self-awareness about what they did not know. This category could also be used by participants, especially those in the high CC group, when they discussed their past selves, i.e., before they developed CC. For example, Ana attended a predominantly White, Catholic grade school, and at the time, she "thought of the world in very problematic ways." For instance, she thought, "I really want to be pale. I want to be White. I want to have straight hair." Ana later increased her CC by attending a diverse, public high school; following people of color on social media platforms; and engaging in other Consciousness Raising Activities with her peers. Tina, who was in the low CC group, was self-aware about what she did not know and said, "To be honest… I'm starting to become more knowledgeable. But I really was not exposed to even what the social justice movement was even about until I got [to her university]." She thought that the related material discussed in one of her classes was "extremely interesting," but as a freshman, she experienced it as "weird" to talk about social justice issues in the classroom. Steve, a member of the low CC group, demonstrated that he had some awareness of systems of oppression when he talked about the type of police work he would like to do. However, he expressed other opinions that suggested he did not hold the value of a more equitable, just society as highly as he held some of his other values (e.g., family and duty). For example, he said, "So I don't think we should be spending… I don't think we should be focusing on ending something that's incurable, like poverty." He focused more on changing individuals as a method of change, rather than changing systems.

The second category in this domain, Consciousness Raising Activities, was General for the high CC group and Typical for the low CC group. All but one of the participants in the high CC group mentioned Consciousness Raising Activities; half of the participants in the low CC group described having these types of experiences. As noted previously, Consciousness Raising Activities appeared to foster resilience and healing for many students, both because students gained knowledge about some of the roots causes of their challenges and because these activities sometimes afforded them meaningful opportunities to contribute to their communities. Some of these activities were intentional, while other experiences were accidental or serendipitous. Some students were also heavily influenced by their families and carried with them the values they developed as a child. For example, Carol said the following about her parents:

> My mom and my dad have worked very hard to keep me updated and in check with my privilege, because they came from families that weren't as successful as we've been lucky to be. So, they want to make sure that it's very clear that what we have is not the norm and really just want us to expand our horizons. I have an older brother too, and they really push for us to expand where we go, and travel, and see other places that are not as cushy or as nice.

Carol also said that she learned about social justice values from her mother. She said that her mother "used to do social justice law before she went corporate." Her mother would share stories about the type of cases on which she would work, "which has really influenced the ideas" of what Carol wanted to do with her interest in education or mental health care for adolescents.

Students were mixed regarding whether they had more Consciousness Raising Activities in high school and/or college. For example, Jackie learned a lot about issues concerning gender non-conforming people after she left her public high school to attend an alternative high school, which was better designed to support her mental health needs.

However, Jackie had some other experiences that were more intentional than accidental. During the interview, Jackie identified as a "feminist," but she had not always held this identity. She recalled, "I think the first time that I really kind of immersed myself in a feminist issue was when I wrote a story [for the school newspaper] about sexual harassment in my school, because it was a really huge issue." Molly, whose experiences will be more thoroughly described as a part of the case examples, had several Consciousness Raising Activities that ultimately coalesced into her purpose of helping women in developing countries. These experiences included service work in high school, watching a *TED Talk* and a Netflix documentary, and meeting influential women during a speaker series at her high school. Ana developed CC after attending an underfunded public high school whose student body was starkly different from the population at her previous Catholic school. It was during high school that Ana first realized, "Wait, the world sees me differently," prompting her to soon try to develop a healthier narrative about her identities, follow progressive social media accounts, and have conversations with her peers in college.

For some students, their college experience has been a critical time of increasing their CC. Tina, who was in the low CC group, was excited about all the new material she was learning in some of her classes (e.g., about "racism" or "immgiration"), even though the content could "overwhelm [her] a little bit." Emily, who was also in the low CC group, said that "the majority of [her] experience with social justice has been at [her university]" (e.g., in her introductory business ethics class). She had also gained some awareness about systems of oppression while studying abroad and participating in service

trips sponsored by her university. Dara credited her recent acquisition of a Twitter account to her change in CC. She said,

> I got a Twitter. So, social media easily exposes you to just so many perspectives. I started following a lot of academics who put real life experiences into theory, and that was easier for me to conceptualize things I saw every day that didn't necessarily point to patterns of oppression or violence. And I was like, 'Ah, that's it.' I was stupid when I was younger.

Although Risa had developed CC before college after experiencing marginalization and a multitude of traumas, she increased her CC through her high school and college activities (e.g., working on a mental health Crisis Text Line and at an adoption agency). She also said that she "read books," "found resources," and "learned more" so that she could increase her awareness of systems of oppression. Peter described several Consciousness Raising Activities in college, while noting that he had not learned about these issues from his parents, as he "just did not think they had the education to teach [him] about these types of issues." Instead, classes and organizations at his university helped him raise his CC and feel more comfortable about his sexual orientation. He said,

> I'd say that class definitely opened my eyes to a lot of different issues because every class you'd have a different topic, whether it's racial inequality, economic inequality, basis of gender or sexual orientation. So basically, we covered everything, even gender identity, which was really cool. I'd say that class is kind of the basis of me getting to voice my passions in the [university] community, but also, I go out of my way to do things like 4Boston, where we have our reflection group every week, and we talk about things like this too. And also other retreats like Spectrum, which I went on a few weeks ago. It's just that I find opportunities in the [university] community to talk about these things because it's where I feel the most comfortable honestly. It's nice for me to have that kind of outlet, not only in an academic setting.

When talking about a nursing service trip that she took in college, Rachel reflected, "Going on this service trip and seeing... I mean, we obviously have very poor populations in the United States… But there is so much more I can do and that needs to be done in

other parts of the world as well, and even in the United States." Rachel repeatedly said that social justice was a value ingrained into her class curricula and nursing clinical experiences, as well as the nursing profession as a whole.

The third category in the Critical Consciousness domain, Awareness of Systems of Oppression, captured the knowledge students had about systemic injustice. When they spoke about where or how they learned this information, the data was placed in the Consciousness Raising Activities category. Awareness of Systems of Oppression was a General category for both groups; all participants in the sample voiced some awareness of systemic injustice. Given her extensive Awareness of Systems of Oppression, Risa had a strong interest in trauma-informed schools, given her belief that this type of school would be "a solution to a lot of the issues." She elaborated on her ideas about trauma-informed schools and said, "A lot of times, kids get a lot of diagnoses, and then people get passed down through the system… The professional helpers don't understand that you have to go back to the root cause…trauma, and you have to care for them." Rachel had an awareness of the "social determinants of health" and noted, "how you address what's going on with your patient is much larger than their disease." She said that, given nurses' awareness of systems of oppression,

> Nursing looks at the broader picture… not just the sick patient… What's going on in their environment at home? Where do they come from? What opportunities do they have in life? Were they in a food desert that caused this diabetes?

Ana also had an understanding of systems of oppression that impacted her purpose. She recognized the underrepresentation of "poor kids" who received "specific treatment" for their speech and language disabilities.

The fourth category in the Critical Consciousness domain was Awareness of One's Positionality. In this case, positionality refers to the social and political context that shapes one's identity, as well as how one's identity influences one's social relationships and outlook on the world (Alcoff, 1988). This category was General for the high CC group and Typical for the low CC group. Although all participants in the sample had some Awareness of Systems of Oppression, they did not all relate their understanding of injustice to themselves and their identities and/or a desire to take related action to address those injustices in the future. However, for those students who did reflect on their positionality, it was often in the context of describing their Consciousness Raising Activities. For example, Jackie, said,

> I feel like the first time that I really seriously thought about and considered how important change is probably when I was exposed to the mental health care system. It's really messed up, and it's really shocking. I was really lucky because honestly the reason why I was able to receive a lot of the therapy and the treatments and all of the things that helped me improve was because I was lucky enough that my family could afford it. But that's obviously something that not everyone can do.

Given that Jackie was exposed to diverse students at public schools, as well as at her alternative high school, she felt committed to being a teacher to students who faced greater difficulties receiving a good education. She also repeatedly recognized the ways in which she had privileged identities - in terms of receiving mental health care, having access to the alternative high school, and being able to attend college - making her even more dedicated to her cause.

Other students wrestled with what their positionality meant for their ability to effectively enact change, particularly in light of their privileged identities. Molly explained,

> I think about it a lot, and especially recently because I think of making sustainable change in environments that aren't exactly... or like communities that aren't exactly my own. Like, I don't think that the menstrual health, the women's health, and the advocacy need to happen in my neighborhood in St. Paul, Minnesota. So like what gives me the right to come into your neighborhood and do that?

Despite having to manage the possible issues with entering into unfamiliar communities as an outsider, Molly felt that the shared identities of being a woman and having to manage menstrual health was a "uniting force" that helped her feel more comfortable with her wish to support and educate women in developing countries. Iris acknowledged that her well-educated parents afforded her various privileges and made her feel responsible for succeeding in the business field. She explained,

> I feel like because my parents are so educated, but their circumstances were so hard, I feel like that kind of drives my desire to succeed. And kind of fulfill having a better life than them, and doing better with the circumstances that I have.

However, she also noted that it felt somewhat daunting to enter the business world, given her identity as an Asian woman and the lack of representation of this demographic in business settings. Other students also recognized how relevant their marginalized identities were to their purpose, particularly when they had goals of being a role model or a source of support for others. For example, when Maria described why she wanted to become a Kindergarten teacher, she said,

> I know that it's not easy being a different race in a predominantly White institution. I really lost myself very young, and I just didn't want to be associated with my culture for so long… Aside from wanting to go back to a predominantly White institution and kind of change the dynamic there, I also want to go to a very underfunded school and teach there as well, because I'm getting such a great education here.

Maria further explained how important it would be for students of color to have teachers of color, regardless of the racial composition of the student population. Indeed, Maria's

awareness of her identities helped her gain greater clarity about the type of setting in which she would like to work.

The final category of the Critical Consciousness domain was Critical Consciousness: Awareness + Action, a category that was intended to be the most emblematic of the full definition of CC across the categories (Diemer et al., 2016). In order for data to be placed in this category, students had to have engaged in past or present critical action in light of their critical awareness. As such, if participants described aspirations of engaging in critical action but had not yet done so, these plans were not placed into this category. This category was Typical for the high CC group and Variant for the low CC group. Risa offered multiple examples of critical action, which primarily included volunteer experiences (e.g., at an orphanage, group home, adoption agency, and Crisis Text Line). The volunteer experiences reflected her sincere commitment to help youth who were facing similar challenges to the ones she had survived as a child. Similarly, Molly had several formative service experiences in high school, one of which was an event that she organized called "Days for Girls." Molly organized this event after discovering this organization and asking all of her family members to send the organization money for Christmas one year. The director of the organization reached out to Molly, and Molly gathered all of the students at her high school, brought in "50 sewing machines," and "made the products to be sent to India" to help girls care for their menstrual health. Rachel discussed her participation in international service trips with a nursing organization aimed at increasing access to health care for vulnerable populations. She said,

> It was amazing. We were working in the outskirts of Lima, in the slums. The message… is more so working with the community, not coming in with this

> superiority Western complex that we're here to heal you. It's rather asking the community what they feel that they need and asking if they would like us to come help. We work alongside Peruvian doctors, so they're feeling that they're working in their health care. I guess, it's trying to capitalize on their ability, versus their disability.

Other students mentioned attending protests on immigration, having conversations with their families about donating money to different social justice organizations, hosting discussion groups with their peers, handing out resources to their peers, and participating in service-oriented organizations at their university.

Activities

The Activities domain was created to characterize efforts of purposeful engagement. Activities included past and present involvement in clubs and organizations, service work, educational experiences, and other related endeavors. There were five categories within the Activities domain: Pre-College Education, Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement, Travel, College Education, and College Extracurricular Involvement. The first category, Pre-College Education, was a Typical category for both the high and low CC groups; most often, these educational experiences were related to students' high schools. For example, Jackie's attendance at an alternative high school exposed her to a diverse, often marginalized student population, helped her raise her CC, and introduced her to teachers who were models of the type of support she wanted to offer students in the future. Molly's high school, which was "Catholic," "primarily White," "super liberal," and "super feminist" had an enormous impact on the types of opportunities that were available to her. She believed that her attendance at this school facilitated her commitment to "the women piece" of her passions. Steve identified strongly with his religious beliefs and attended a traditional Catholic high school; to

describe his high school and the values the school espoused, he said, “If they could have everyone become a soldier, cop, fireman, or priest, they’d love it.” Relatedly, he explained that “Theology Class 101,” specifically “Catholic social teaching,” was instrumental in shaping his faith and commitment to his purpose. Emily credited her high school Advanced Placement (AP) Language class with first inspiring her interest in “human motivation and drive,” which then sparked her interest in marketing. In sum, many of the participants in the sample could speak to specific educational experiences prior to college - in particular, the values of their school - that influenced their purpose.

The second category in the Activities domain, Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement, was a General category for the high CC group and a Typical category for the low CC group. All but one of the participants in the sample described extracurricular activities with which they had been involved, most often during high school. Chris was involved with “ocean lifeguarding because [he] was hoping that it could help [him] a little… [he has] kind of always kept the big picture in mind;” ocean lifeguarding was a reasonable choice given his Navy SEAL aspirations. On her way to becoming a teacher, Sarah started “tutoring a lot starting in sophomore [or] junior year for elementary aged kids but also middle school and high school aged kids.” She also “volunteered with people with disabilities” and “worked in a daycare.” Peter also had several very relevant experiences during high school, given his interest in becoming a teacher and then going into administration. As the student government president, he was responsible for planning events and creating the school calendar, and activities needed to be “approved by the principal.” Therefore, Peter explained that he had,

> Weekly meetings with him, and then monthly, there would be the parents, students, faculty association meetings where all the parents would come in, and

> the principal would be sitting at the front, and I would sit right next to him to give a little student spiel about what was going on in that month.

These meetings ostensibly provided Peter with a good sense of aspects of the principal role, and Peter was able to develop a supportive relationship with this administrator.

Travel, the third category in this domain, was a Rare category for the high CC group and a Variant category for the low CC group. This category was created because a few students described salient and formative travel experiences - either during high school or college - that influenced their purpose development. As noted previously, Rachel went to Lima, Peru, to work alongside doctors as a nurse in training with the group MEDLIFE. This international travel experience gave Rachel perspective about the meaning of vulnerable populations, encouraged her to think about her values as a nurse, and inspired a possible interest in joining Nurses Without Borders after college. Emily was studying abroad in Europe at the time of the interview, and she said that some of the cities and experiences gave her "flashbacks of Appa [a university service trip], because you kind of have this realization that, wow, this is literally so different than anything [she'd] ever experienced." Emily was enjoying her time abroad to such an extent that she had considered moving back to Europe after college for a few years.

College Education, the fourth category in this domain, included data that mentioned educational experiences at participants' current university, or previous university if the participant was a transfer student. This category was Typical for both the high and low CC groups. Steve thought that taking the course "Child Growth and Development," as well as other psychology courses, would be helpful for understanding people and, ultimately, his future role as a police officer. He found these classes "enlightening." Jackie viewed one of her Applied Psychology and Human Development

major classes very positively, especially given the way social justice issues were incorporated into the class. She said,

> I think it's really awesome that they're really talking about these ideas and really, because that's the only class where I'm in an environment where we're really talking about these issues. Also, not just talking about them, but really discussing them in a powerful and meaningful way. I feel like it's very transformative for me and for a lot of the other students in there. We listen to a lot of stories, and I feel like it really makes people want to change, which is definitely something that I'd like to work towards.

Risa valued the "whole person environment" and the value of "service" at her university. She appreciated what she gained from her PULSE class, which fulfilled her theology and philosophy course requirements, because it helped inform the values and approach of her future work: "At least we learned in PULSE, if you want to make a change in one person's life, it's as meaningful as making dramatic changes."

The last category in this domain, College Extracurricular Involvement, was General for the high CC group and Typical for the low CC group. For students to have this category represented in their interview, they had to have discussed their involvement with clubs, organizations, jobs, service placements, and other extracurricular activities during their college years that was relevant to their purpose. These types of experiences could be connected to educational classes. For example, through her PULSE class, Risa worked at an organization that supported homeless youth. Chris, given his alternative plan of becoming a history teacher, was student teaching at a local urban high school as part of a class requirement. Tom talked about tutoring Chinese high school students for the SAT exam and connected the experience to his potential aspiration of becoming a school counselor. When talking about this experience, Tom lamented, "There's only so much that I can do. I feel if there was someone who could fight for them on that front,

that would change everything for them. I feel that's what a school counselor could do." Sarah had continued tutoring, an activity she did in high school. To help reflect on his path to teaching, Peter went on a retreat, an experience he viewed as very helpful. He explained, "Right before I started the academic year, I went on Halftime, which is kind of a vocational discernment one... That's when I was like, 'Okay, I'm really confident that I want to be a teacher,' and that gave me the energy to go through this whole year." Finally, Iris worked as an Excel Program coach and helped various student organizations on her college campus; she described it as "more like leadership coaching, which is something [she] wants to do in the future."

Identity

The Identity domain captured the various aspects of participants' selves that contributed to their purpose development. There were six categories in this domain: Marginalized Identity(s), Demographic Information, Hometown, Religious Beliefs, Values, and Privileged Identity(s). The Marginalized Identity(s) category was Typical for the high CC group and Variant for the low CC group. Marginalized identities are those that restrict access to some form of social power in U.S. society. Notably, in order for participants to receive a Marginalized or Privileged Identity category, they had to demonstrate an awareness or stance that they were either marginalized or privileged based on that identity. If these judgments were not clear, aspects of identity were coded instead as Demographic Information.

Common marginalized identities included race, gender, immigration status, mental health status, and sexual orientation. For example, Ana felt marginalized as a woman of color at her university; she said about her university, "As an institution, their

expectations of women of color is to just fail, and to be behind men and behind men of color." Given Ana's identity as a child of immigrants, she wanted to work with bilingual youth as an SLP. Risa's struggles with her identity facilitated her deep empathy for the youth with whom she wanted to work; her family moved around frequently, partially to avoid involvement in the social services system. Risa noted about her identity, "It's kind of like an outsider thing… I'm not that Americanized enough to be considered Asian American." She felt motivated to work with young people who may have struggled with some aspect of their identity, such as adopted and immigrant youth. When talking about her ability to work with these youth, she explained, "I can kind of relate to them, and then in a way, they also heal me every time I see them coming back, and I see their struggles. It tells me something about my own identity." Dara wanted to help queer populations with her purpose, and her marginalized identity as a queer person was extraordinarily salient to her purpose. She explained,

> I identify as queer, and that's a huge part of what makes my community here, and that's why I want to pursue advocacy - because community is such a huge important part of me. There's me as an individual and my interdependent, interpersonal relationships with everyone, not from similar experiences, but a shared identity or something within the marginalized communities.

Even though Peter acknowledged that his sexual orientation was a marginalized identity, he felt well-supported at his university and felt that "it's not really a taboo topic to talk about things like this." As noted in previous domains, Peter's marginalized identity had a salient role regarding the intended beneficiaries of his purpose (LGBTQ youth in the high school setting).

As noted previously, the Demographic Information category was created to capture the various ways students described themselves, though the information that was

provided was not discussed in relation to privilege or marginalization. The Demographic Information category was General for the high CC group and Typical for the low CC group. Peter mentioned his "100% Italian" family and the closeness of his family relationships; these supportive relationships helped foster Peter's value of education. Carol discussed her Irish identity and how it was connected to her side passion for music; she stated, "My Irish heritage has been really big in my family, so that's always been a very big part of who I am. How I actually got into music was my dad used to sing Irish jigs all the time." Carol was trying to decide if music therapy could be a part of her career, in light of her desire to work in education or applied psychology settings. Rachel said that her Irish and Italian identities influenced her family's close relationships and love of cooking. Her family had been very supportive of Rachel pursuing a career in nursing.

The third category in the Identity domain was Hometown, which was a Typical category for both the high and low CC groups. Multiple students mentioned the relevance of their hometown for their purpose; most often, students explained that their hometowns were either problematically homogenous or refreshingly diverse. A few of the students grew up in New York City and often spoke of its diversity; Iris said New York City was "extremely diverse," and Dara said the city was a "huge melting pot." These students were not sheltered from seeing the harsher realities of life (e.g., homelessness) because of their development in this diverse environment; this exposure sparked Dara's interest in working with homeless populations. Because Steve grew up in New York City and his family still lived there, he had clear hopes of returning to his hometown. He said, "New York is definitely important… I definitely plan on staying in New York for most of my

life." Ana grew up in an urban area with a "majority immigrant population," which made working with children of immigrants an important goal for her. She said the following about her hometown:

> It has given me, or it's sort of helped my sense of purpose in life because I know that I want to give back to my community - because I know for me to even be here at [my university], it's taken a community to get me here.

When Molly described her hometown, she said that, "Everyone was the same, like race, incomes… I had this like super drive to see more of the world and get more perspective on different things." Molly's drive to "see more of the world," in part, facilitated her interest in the experiences of women in India.

The Religious Beliefs category, which included religious or spiritual beliefs relevant to one's purpose, was a Typical category for the high CC group and a General category for the low CC group. Unsurprisingly, given the Jesuit identity of the university from which the sample was taken, many of the participants were Catholic. For students in the high CC group, religious and spiritual beliefs sometimes connected closely to their desired prosocial benefits, as well as their commitment to social justice and working with marginalized populations. For example, Tom said "Social justice work is obviously super important because, I guess, this goes back to Catholic social teaching, but the dignity of the person is something that I still very much hold in high regard." Similarly, Chris espoused social justice values because of how he learned about religion in his family. He revealed, "In our family, we have an interpretation of Catholicism that's more like, I don't know, more centered around charity, and the poor, and the persecuted and stuff." Steve, from the low CC group, said his Catholic beliefs were essentially the most fundamental driver of his sense of purpose. He explained that his Catholicism is what "it boils down to

in the end. That's the main factor. Then, contributing factors being my family and my experiences in my past where I've been tested with my values." Maria's spiritual beliefs were highly relevant to her purpose, as they helped her view her career as a "calling." When she talked about her commitment to becoming a teacher, Maria explained, "I know it's what I want to do, and I know that's what God wants me to do as well… I honestly consider it as my calling." Religion and spirituality were also sources of coping for students, particularly people facing trauma and mental illness. Risa said that her Christian beliefs and trust in God were instrumental in her ability to feel hopeful and make meaning out of her challenging experiences; she said, "My religion is like, when I felt so hopeless, I know there's God… I know he's always there for me… He will lead me out of the situation in His own way… He's always there."

The fifth category in the Identity domain, Values, was a Typical category for the high CC group and a General category for the low CC group. Values included the personal principles that participants held most dear. Participants described having values that were often quite consistent with the careers they were hoping to pursue. For example, Chris and Steve described having some similar values, given their shared interest in the military and/or police work. Chris said he valued "the idea of a brotherhood… working together, teamwork, and then just stuff like bravery and just standing your ground," making the Navy SEALS a good fit. Similarly, Steve explained, "Police officers often [say] that's like their other family. So for me, that's also been an important factor - having a 'band of brothers' is very important to me." Police work helped Steve "integrate" his values of brotherhood, family, and duty. Other students described the extent to which they valued the Jesuit ideals of their university and how that shaped their purpose. Molly

said that "the Jesuit ideals of going out and changing the world" largely brought her to her university, and they influenced her lofty goals of making sustainable change for women in developing countries. Ana and Iris strongly valued education, in part because of how much their parents struggled and instilled in them the idea that "education is the most important thing." Ana elaborated that pursuing higher education was "taking advantage of the opportunities that [her] parents never had - [she] needed to do that."

The final category in the Identity domain was Privileged Identity(s), which was a Typical category for both the high and low CC groups. Privileged identities are those that afford people access to power based on certain social membership categories. For some students, having privileged identities made them feel more responsible and driven to succeed so that they could make the most of the opportunities afforded to them, especially when their parents lacked those opportunities. For example, Iris explained, "I feel like I have privilege in that sense. And I feel like because my parents are so educated, but their circumstances were so hard, I feel like that kind of drives my desire to succeed." Even as a person with multiple marginalized identities, Ana recognized her privileged identities and how they instilled in her a sense of responsibility to put her talents and education to good use. She said,

> I'm in a mixed status family. I was born here… I'm able to come to college and get financial aid. I'm able to get in-state tuition… I have the knowledge of English to be able to be about in the world… Once I graduate, I'm able to have that degree as something that will help me in the future.

Other students who talked about their privileged identities felt compelled to be mindful of their privilege as they decided what contributions they wanted to make with their purpose. Carol grew up in a more affluent, well-educated family, and she said that her "mom and dad have worked very hard to keep [her] updated and in check with [her]

privilege." As noted previously, Molly noted similar reservations about entering spaces and communities as an outsider and wanted to be mindful about not talking down to the women she hoped to help.

Uncertainty

The final domain was Uncertainty, which was created to reflect the multiple instances of some degree of uncertainty in the purpose development journeys that students described, as well as the pattern of people switching directions at some point on their path. The first category in this domain was Changing Purpose, which included the stories of changing plans. Changing Purpose was a Variant category for both the high and low CC groups. When talking about his decision to switch career plans from the military to police work, Steve said that "considerations of being apart from [his] family more than any other element of that turned [him] off from it." Before Jackie decided that she wanted to be an English teacher, she thought she wanted to be a journalist, until she reflected on what job would best suit her passions, strengths, and skills. She explained,

> There was a very long time where I wanted to be a journalist. Then, as I was working on the school newspaper, I was like, 'I do like writing.' But honestly, one of my favorite things to do was interviewing people, because I just really liked talking to them, and I really liked the idea of making them feel comfortable… Then, I suddenly realized I wanted to be a teacher, but I feel like just a lot of those experiences up to that point, I must have been having this kind of unconscious, slow buildup to realizing it.

Before Molly developed her interest in menstrual health, she thought she wanted to be a teacher. She knew that she wanted to "create sustainable change, be involved with kids, [and] help people make the world a better place," but she recognized that teaching might not be the best fit for her passions. The change in direction resulted in her decision to switch majors from teacher education to Applied Psychology and Human Development.

As opposed to Changing Purpose, which included more definitive decisions about new plans, the Purpose Uncertainty category captured the ways in which several participants were still wrestling with different career ideas. Indeed, students could present as purposeful but have not yet figured out a job or career path that would be the best fit for their purpose. The Purpose Uncertainty category was Typical for the high CC group and General for the low CC group. All four of the low CC participants expressed some uncertainty about their purpose, although this finding may be partially reflective of their younger average age. Risa, for example, knew that she wanted to go into "a helping profession," but was not sure if she wanted to be a psychologist, social worker, or school counselor. Even though Tom expressed an interest in becoming a school counselor, he said he was "not 100 percent sure about that" and was "still exploring." Carol said that she was interested in "either education or psychology" and working with adolescents, but she was still navigating the ideas of teaching, becoming a social worker, working with the criminal justice system, and finding a way to incorporate music therapy into her career.

The third category in the Uncertainty domain was Purpose Activity Uncertainty, which was a Variant category for the high CC group and a Typical category for the low CC group. This category was more future-oriented than many of the other categories and captured some of the more brief comments students offered regarding their uncertainty about how to productively engage in purposeful activities in the near future. The Purpose Activity Uncertainty category was also very often related to the Purpose Uncertainty category. For example, because Risa did not know what mental health career path she wanted to pursue, she was unsure about her four-year class plan. Ideas included taking the class "Introduction to Social Work," working toward "a trauma certificate," and/or

applying for one of the "five year [graduate] programs." Sarah was a nanny last summer, which was relevant to her interest in teaching, but she was not sure yet if she would "work at a camp," "work at a store," or pursue another activity this summer. Carol had similar questions about internship opportunities, and Emily had questions about what majors to choose, in light of questions about their career trajectories.

The last category in this domain was Post-Graduate Uncertainty, which was a Variant category for both the low and high CC groups. This category captured students' uncertainty about how they would pursue their purpose immediately after college. Even though Emily was very interested in marketing for a sneaker company, she thought about trying to obtain a consulting job right after graduation. When talking about her nursing career, Rachel said, "I have considered doing a Nurses Without Borders type thing, but I'm not sure if that will be my first step. I might establish myself, working in a hospital setting…" Maria would like to be a teacher after college, but she was not sure if she would want to take a position at a high school because of her difficulties with the staff and faculty at her high school. She explained, "I don't know if I'm going to want to teach high or school or not… because I know that's where most of my issues were."

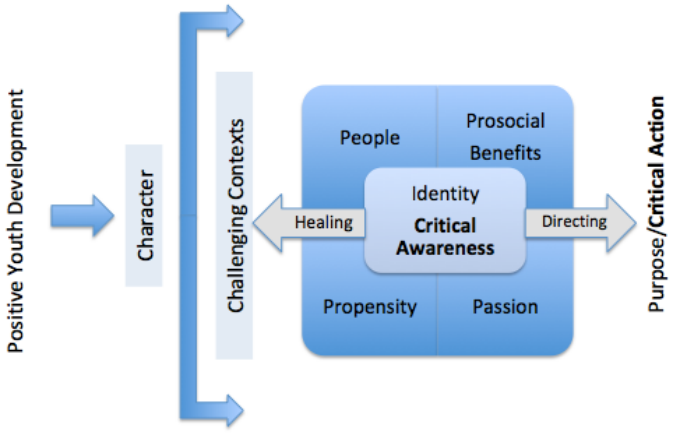
CC and Purpose Development

As demonstrated by the aforementioned categories, there were several factors that contributed to the purpose development of the students in this sample. Across all participants, the following categories occurred most frequently: Family, Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment, Strengths/Goodness of Fit, General Prosocial Benefits, Awareness of Systems of Oppression, Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement, and Demographic Information. Taken together, participants offered information that family

support; passion; a goodness of fit based on strengths and skills; a desire to make a prosocial contribution; and high school extracurricular activities were particularly salient factors that contributed to their purpose development. While all students demonstrated that they had some knowledge of systems of oppression, CC was relevant to students' purpose development to varying degrees.

Beyond the delineation of categories, revisiting of the data revealed that CC facilitated purpose development via two primary avenues, which were not mutually exclusive: healing and directing. Consistent with Hill and colleagues' (2005) suggestion that visual depictions be used to represent the data, Figure 2 shows a model of how CC facilitated purpose development via the healing and directing pathways. In this model, critical awareness, including an acknowledgement of the relevance of one's identity, ultimately facilitated a sense of purpose and/or critical action. Challenging Contexts was added to this figure to highlight that participants often had either personally experienced or had been exposed to (e.g., through service work) oppressive circumstances, which prompted a motivation to increase their CC.

Figure 2: Revised Model of Purpose Development Informed by Critical Consciousness. Informed by the work of Lerner et al., 2005a; Liang et al., 2017a; and Diemer et al., 2016



CC as Healing

In the contexts of Barriers/Adversity, Marginalization and Trauma, and Marginalized Identities, CC often seemed to function as a source of healing for participants. Notably, among the eight categories that described specific types of Adversity and Barriers to purpose development, seven out of the eight categories were Typical for the high CC group. Eight out of the 13 participants in the high CC group described an experience of marginalization or trauma and/or mental or physical health problems. Moreover, 10 out of the 13 students in the high CC group had a Marginalized Identity, and all but one of the high CC students discussed Consciousness Raising Activities. Indeed, Consciousness Raising Activities, as well as supportive People, were integral to the healing process. In turn, participants became increasingly aware of their Propensity for their purpose. In many cases, participants' purposes were a good fit for them due to the empathy and wisdom they gained from their challenging experiences.

As seen in the cases of Risa, Jackie, Rachel, and Ana, for example, the process of developing CC helped them understand their experiences and their identities and facilitate a commitment to helping people who faced similar circumstances. Risa described her aspirations to help youth in the social services system, a system in which she had been involved. In the context of healing from debilitating mental illness, Jackie said that she wanted to teach young people who had endured similar challenges to her in the public school system. After witnessing a health crisis in her family, Rachel wanted to become a nurse. Given her upbringing in a marginalized community of immigrants, Ana wanted to be a bilingual speech and language pathologist for children of immigrants, a choice she viewed as a key part of her "liberation." Indeed, it appeared that CC served as

a piece of the reflection process that helped heal and move these students from adversity to purpose.

CC as Directing

In addition to facilitating the healing process, CC could also serve as a source of direction and guidance, sometimes in the contexts of Privileged Identities and Activities. CC, especially Consciousness Raising Activities, sparked more specific Passions (e.g., Social Justice and Benefitting Marginalized Populations). CC also appeared to give students, particularly those with a greater number of privileged identities, a population with which to direct their prosocial intentions - perhaps evolving from General Prosocial Benefits to increasingly specific beneficiaries. In the context of multiple privileged identities, Molly had a clear sense that she wanted to help support women's menstrual health, particularly Indian women. Peter wanted to become a high school principal and serve as a mentor to students with minority sexual orientations. Dara wanted to work with homeless and/or queer populations, two populations with whom she shared idenitites or to which she had been exposed. Molly, Peter, and Dara all described salient high school and/or college Extracurricular Activities in which they participated that gave them this sense of thoughtful direction. In sum, CC appeared to facilitate students' understanding of who would benefit the most from their unique constellation of experiences, identities, strengths, passions, and skills.

Purpose Without CC

Although CC appeared to serve a productive function for numerous students in the sample as they developed a sense of purpose, indeed, some students were able to become purposeful without CC. The low CC group's model of purpose development was

more closely aligned with the original 4 P's framework (i.e., People, Propensity, Passion, and Prosocial Benefits; Liang et., 2017a), though it is important to also highlight the salience of Identity variables for this group. Values, Religious Beliefs, and Self-Oriented Aim were General categories for the low CC group. The salience of these categories could be observed across the interviews with Steve, Sarah, Emily, and Tina. For instance, Values and Religious Beliefs were highly salient to Steve's purpose and intentions of becoming a police officer, and these aspects of his identity served as clear directors of his purpose in the absence of CC. A Self-Oriented Aim seemed highly relevant for Sarah and Emily, as Sarah had a longstanding interest in becoming a teacher and had a passion for kids, and Emily was creative and had a passion for sneakers. A passionate commitment to one's SO pursuits could serve as an instigator of purpose, though these purposes obviously lacked the explicit, socially valued prosocial intention that other students described. Tina, however, was perhaps one of the least purposeful students in the sample. She expressed a considerable amount of Purpose Uncertainty, as she waffled between a mental health and business career. She may have been on the cusp of developing CC, as she expressed some discomfort and excitement about learning about social justice issues in her classes.

Case Examples

As is consistent with CQR recommendations (Hill et al., 2005), five interviews will be discussed in greater depth to exemplify how CC either contributed to purpose development, or how purpose development occurred for students in the absence of CC. Risa, Molly, and Ana were in the high CC group; CC appeared to serve as a source of healing for Risa, as a source of directing her prosocial motivations for Molly, and as a

source of both directing and healing for Ana. For Steve, a participant in the low CC group, his values and Catholic identity played a similar role to how CC functioned for Molly, in particular. His Identity provided a helpful direction for his sense of purpose. For Sarah, the final case example, her passion for children fueled her purpose.

CC as Healing: The Case of Risa

Risa poignantly discussed her purpose development journey. Perhaps most emblematic of her journey was the following quote:

> People might say it's a traumatic experience. I can transform that into something that's really powerful and that gives me hope to continue like my life. Like all the way, it doesn't mean there's no challenges; there are high standards and a lot of struggle. [There's time] to heal and stuff like that. But then, as long as I have a goal, like one thing to become a professional helper, and I just care to reach one kid, just one kid… Every single volunteer experience, it gives my life a purpose underneath.

Risa, a freshman woman whose country of origin was Taiwan, had aspirations of becoming a "professional helper." She had considered becoming a psychologist, a social worker, or a school counselor. Although she was not sure which career path was the best fit, Risa was committed to the idea of "trauma-informed schools." Among all participants, Risa was the most vocal about her Awareness of Systems of Oppression; to name just a few examples, she voiced her extensive knowledge about "the high risk of developing mental health issues" among children requiring social services assistance, as well as the "systematic problems" that affected their development and the likelihood that these youth would endure ongoing trauma. Risa believed that "trauma-informed schools" would help address some of the systemic issues that these children experienced from a valuable, systems-wide approach.

Risa first developed her aspirations when she was 11 years old after experiencing multiple instances of Adversity (e.g., requiring intervention from "Child Protective Services" and surviving several international moves, as her family tried to avoid "the system"). Despite the challenges present in her family, Risa's story highlighted the important role that People can play in students' purpose development. As a high school student, Risa began to work toward her career aspirations by volunteering and talking to the "social workers and professional helpers" who worked at these organizations and served as valuable mentors. She said, "There are a lot of role models there, and they showed me how they struggled through, but they found their sense of purpose. They found their area that they can really be functional… They taught me a lot." Risa discussed a famous therapist in Taiwan who explicitly noticed her potential and offered to be a future mentor. Risa also mentioned the incomparable role that one of the teachers at her middle school, which was in the United States, had on her life. The teacher had a graduate degree from Risa's current university, which contributed to Risa's desire to return to this university for her undergraduate and graduate degrees. The Affirmation support that this teacher provided was palpable. During middle school, the teacher gave Risa a bracelet that said "courage" on it, an item that Risa still owns. Although Risa has not had contact with this teacher in years, though she admitted to checking on this teacher on social media platforms, Risa said,

> She's awesome, she's there for me, and she cares. She's a good person, [and] that's a secure base for me to reconstruct a good world, or to know that there's someone there for me who sees me, rather than a whole system that might be hurtful in a way.

Furthermore, Risa's deep faith in God was "planted inside [her], even before [she] got involved in the system." She said that, "Growing up in church, you are told that you are

valuable, and God has a plan for your life." Risa's sense of her own worthiness, as well as the comfort and source of meaning she received from her spiritual background, were enormously helpful as she tried to make meaning of her traumatic experiences. Taken together, in the absence of family support, which all other students in the sample discussed, Risa found several important People to nurture her sense of purpose through a combination of Affirmation and Role Modeling or Mentoring.

Prosocial Benefits, Passion, and Propensity were also highly relevant factors for Risa's development of purpose, all of which highlighted her high level of CC. Risa described at length her Passion for helping Marginalized Populations, which was evidenced by her involvement in multiple organizations during high school and college (i.e., Activities): an orphanage and adoption center, an organization aimed at helping youth experiencing homelessness, a mental health Crisis Text Line, a tutoring center, and others. All of these Activities helped enhance Risa's CC, though she was also motivated to increase her CC through reading materials and talking to People because of her adversity. Regarding her strengths and skills (i.e., Propensity), Risa talked about how she was fortunate to always have been academically talented. Whether she was living in the United States or Taiwan, Risa felt that she benefited from people wanting to support her in school settings because of her academic talent. Moreover, in light of her traumas, Risa believed she had a great capacity for empathy. She explained how she developed this awareness of her gifts:

> And then I realized I have two choices: I could go down that path, or I could choose that I want to make some changes, and that it gives my life meaning and a sense of purpose. That it's not just a trauma - it's a gift that I was able to see things through a client's perspective… So that's kind of [when] I realized that, I can see the experience as a gift that's something that makes me understand others' suffering, that helps me understand how the system works… So, that's when I

> realized that, okay, I'll use that. The more I can get out from that experience is the more meaning I can create for them [her clients].

Notably, Risa also was able to develop a new narrative for understanding her adversity because of her mental health treatment and experiences in therapy. Given Risa's positive experiences in therapy, she believed that therapists and other helping professionals could make a profound difference in young people's lives.

In sum, some of the categories most relevant to Risa's purpose development narrative were all categories within the Critical Consciousness domain, several of the People categories (e.g., Pre-College Educators and Therapist), Types of Support categories (Affirmation and Role Modeling or Mentoring), Barriers/Adversity categories (e.g., Marginalization and Trauma and Physical or Mental Health), and Identity categories (e.g., Marginalized Identity and Religious Beliefs). Risa had an extensive Awareness of Systems of Oppression and had engaged in significant reflection to increase her Awareness of her Positionality. All of these factors together set the stage for Risa's CC to ultimately be a facilitator of her purpose vis-a-vis a healing pathway.

CC as Directing: The Case of Molly

Sometimes in the absence of marginalization or trauma and/or in the context of a considerable number of privileged identities, CC could also facilitate purpose development via a directing pathway, as was the case for Molly. Molly, a freshman, grew up in the midwest, was a self-described "classic first born" child, and had well-educated parents. She attended Catholic schools for the entirety of her educational career. She believed that her strong interest in women's issues first emerged in high school, given that she attended a "super liberal, super feminist, all girls" school. Molly explained that she "used to Irish dance, and [she] would always complain that when [she] was on [her]

period, [she would] have to go to Irish dance." Molly voiced this complaint until her rather serendipitous series of Consciousness Raising Activities.

The first in a series of Consciousness Raising Activities (as well as Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement) was Molly's discovery of a "YouTuber called Lily Sing," who "posted a video called Girl Love." The video discussed "the fact that women do not support each other in the workplace, in schools, and that's really prevalent in all girls schools." Molly was involved with her high school student government at the time and brought the "Girl Love" movement to her school, leading to groups of students having conversations about girls supporting each other and watching related videos. One such video was a TED Talk on a menstrual health group called Days for Girls, which gave her a new perspective on her complaints and the ways that women in the United States are allowed to manage their menstruation. Molly further explained her Awareness of Systems of Oppression regarding access to menstrual health resources in India, the area of the world in which she is most interested. She explained, "I think the statistic is 3% of women in India have access to a pad… Like 3% of women there! And it's one of the most populated countries." Thereafter, Molly sought to increase her CC and watched a documentary on Netflix called *Period*, which highlights the pervasive stigma and misinformation about women's menstrual health. Molly's story highlighted the powerful ways that social media and digital technologies can enhance CC.

Lucky for Molly, the woman who had delivered the Days for Girls TED Talk gave a presentation at her high school a few months after she had seen the clip, starting a chain reaction of service and critical action. Molly spoke to the woman, who said that the organization needed donations. For Christmas that year, Molly asked all her family

members to donate money to the Days for Girls organization. The CEO of this organization was so impressed with Molly's efforts that she personally contacted her and said, "We want to stay in contact," and "We actually are looking for a site to package and hand sew these products." As a result, Molly planned and hosted a multi-year volunteer event at her high school that included "50 sewing machines" and hundreds of high school volunteers and their families sewing menstrual health products that were sent to India.

This volunteer event was not the only service experience Molly had in high school. She mentioned the importance of her Advanced Religion teacher and her provision of Affirmation, as well as the senior year service projects this teacher organized. Molly was chosen with a select group of students to live in a community with nuns for two weeks, engage in a variety of service projects, and listen to speakers who talked "about ways that they were changing their community." Because of the aforementioned Consciousness Raising Activities, Molly expressed her desire to continue supporting women's menstrual health in developing countries, a desire that reflects the Values she holds most dearly. She said she believed "social justice is the most important thing." Education was also an important value for Molly, and she explained that her strong belief in women's right to an education was a foundational component of her interest in menstrual health. Supporting menstrual health was in service of increasing access to education.

Although Molly was a model of translating Critical Awareness into Critical Action among the participants, her purpose development journey was not without its challenges. Molly felt that she was at a "crossroads" because she had to decide her undergraduate majors, which at the time were Applied Psychology and Human

Development and Elementary Education. Despite Molly's commitment to education, she could not see herself in the classroom. She wrestled with her mother's support of her aspirations and her father's cautions that her desired educational path - with a focus on social justice - was not practical. While Molly was quite clear in her purpose, she still had questions about the most strategic way to achieve her career goals. Nevertheless, her story illustrated the valuable contributions people with privileged identities can make in service of social justice. In light of her values, CC provided Molly with an important direction for her prosocial intentions.

CC as Healing and Directing: The Case of Ana

Ana, the final case example from the high CC group, had dreams of becoming a bilingual SLP, either in a school or clinical/hospital setting. Ana was leaning toward working in a school setting, but the financial pull to work in a hospital setting was strong. She had an Applied Psychology and Human Development major, a Hispanic Studies minor, and a Special Education concentration. She explained her plans as,

> So, I'd want to go to grad school directly after undergraduate. I want to be a bilingual speech therapist in a school setting. When I first took the survey, I thought I knew I wanted be an SLP, but I didn't know bilingual. I wanted to work with adults in the more clinical setting. After my internship this past summer, I was like, I like working with kids, and that's what I'm good at. I think that's where my personality and my skills come together, working with children but also wanting to learn more about being an SLP, and being in a school setting.

With the help of CC, this purpose first provided her with a sense of healing, as she grew up with multiple Marginalized Identities (e.g., being raised in a mixed-status/citizenship family, realizing that she attended an underfunded public school with primarily students of color, and feeling like an outsider on her college campus because of her identities). Ana frequently spoke of the ways in which CC had contributed to her healing process,

namely the process of increasing her sense of her self-worth. When describing her Consciousness Raising Activities, Ana said, “I've learned a lot of vocabulary, and reading, and all these things, I think have opened my mind to what liberation means for me and what social justice work should like.” Ana spoke of wanting to “decolonize” herself, which included “feeling comfortable with the way my hair looks, the way my skin looks, [how] my accent comes out;” this process had largely been occuring with the help of Consciousness Raising Activities.

Although Ana expressed interest in community-based advocacy work (e.g., supporting undocumented youth) given her family’s circumstances, she did not want “advocacy” to comprise her entire career. She explained,

> As a human being, I don’t think that anyone should be just devoted to advocacy work, and then that’s it. We all have different purposes in life, and just because my parents have TPS [Temporary Protected Status], and just because I understand what it’s like to be in a mixed status family, it doesn’t mean that’s all I should focus on, and that’s what my life revolves around. That’s so unhealthy.

Ana recognized her unique positionality and ability to understand the experiences of undocumented youth and their families, but she also reflected on what career path would feel healthy to her. A career in SLP gave her a refreshing way to step somewhat outside of her own experiences and pursue additional interests that felt adaptive to her.

Notably, supportive People were highly relevant to Ana’s purpose development and supported the healing process. Given her parents’ lack of educational opportunities, her family instilled in her the Value of education, leading Ana toward a path of college and graduate school. Her high school guidance counselor noticed Ana’s academic strengths and Cultivated them, ensuring that she kept her expectations of Ana high in a context where this may have not often been the case for other students of color at her school. One of Ana’s peers told her about the internship programs at a world-renowned

hospital near her hometown, which gave Ana hands-on experience and exposure to SLPs working in a clinical setting over several years. Moreover, in college, Ana had been involved with a prestigious program that helps underserved students pursue graduate school. Through this program, Ana had increased access to social capital, supportive People, and research Activities to help her move along the path to graduate school.

In the context of several Activities, CC functioned via a directing pathway, as Ana developed a critical awareness of the issues facing bilingual children. Specifically, according to Ana, bilingual children of color can be either over or underdiagnosed with speech and language difficulties, and they are less likely to receive the necessary supports for treating their disorders. Relatedly, she felt that her own identity as a bilingual person made being a bilingual SLP a good fit for her. She explained,

> I think [my identity as a bilingual student] really shaped my career because… I understand their experiences, and am able to be more empathetic with them. I feel like I'm able to understand what their struggles are… I think that, which I didn't really see as an identity before I came here, because I grew up [with the] majority of people around me speaking Spanish, or English, or a different language… I think that I'm able to understand what lessons are better for them, what things they need help with.

Interestingly, the quote above highlights that although Ana's experiences on her college campus have sometimes been quite challenging, it was in college that she was able to realize the ways in which she would be able to specifically be helpful for bilingual students. CC directed Ana to recognize populations to whom she could be most helpful, in light of her experiences. She also identified the strength and wisdom she had in light of her Marginalized Identities in an environment where she often felt devalued for them; indeed, CC can serve as a helpful psychological resource to draw upon during times of stress (Diemer et al., 2006). Ana's internship experiences (i.e., Activites) were also

highly informative for helping her better understand what she most enjoys doing. As stated in a previous quote, Ana's interest in working with children reflected the intersection of her "personality" and "skills," an insight she only gained after a relevant internship last summer.

In light of Ana's Values and desired Prosocial Benefits, she also mentioned the importance of earning potential when she planned for her future career, especially given her desire to economically support herself and her family and give back to the community in which she was raised. Indeed, Ana's financial motivations for her purpose were often related to her Marginalized Identities. Taken together, CC represented the reflective and active process whereby Ana was able to identify her purpose through a process of healing (i.e., from Marginalization) and directing (i.e., to help a specific group of students whom she was in a uniquely good position to help). Ana's purpose reflected an intersection of her interests, strengths, skills, Values, Awareness of Systems of Oppression, and desire to Benefit her Loved Ones and Marginalized Populations.

Values as Directing: The Case of Steve

Steve, a participant in the low CC group, was fiercely committed to becoming a police officer. Steve was a freshman and reported having the highest SES out of all the participants (9 out of 10); he had several Privileged Identities and did not report having any Marginalized Identities. The Identity domain, particularly the Hometown, Religious Beliefs, and Values categories, was highly relevant to Steve's purpose development. Steve was raised in New York City and wanted to return to his hometown to work for the New York City Police Department (NYPD). His devoutly religious grandparents and his Catholic high school helped shape his strong Catholic identity and sense of duty, and his

Italian American heritage facilitated a commitment to family and his wish to make his family proud. With regard to giving him direction, Steve's commitment to his values and pursuit of a career that aligned with his values appeared to 'compensate' for his lack of CC. Some of Steve's comments revealed a clear lack of CC, more so than other participants. For example, he valued individual change over social change, and he deemed poverty a largely unsolvable problem, therefore necessitating less intervention. Even so, some of his values erred on the side of justice. He explained, "Catholic social justice focuses heavily on doing the right thing, and it's not about being punitive, it's about reformative." Steve hoped to bring these values to his police work. Steve was also clear about his Prosocial Benefits. When asked what was appealing about law enforcement, Steve said, "It's a very palpable way to help other people."

Propensity was also a domain that emerged frequently for Steve; he had a clear sense of his desired work environment, as well as his strengths, skills, and weaknesses. For example, Steve wanted to attend the nearby Catholic high school, instead of his local public school, for the "structure" and because he recognized that he performed better "under a highly regulated kind of environment." He felt like he was "physically and mentally prepared" for police work. Steve offered one of the clearest examples of the Changing Purpose category after recognizing that the military was not a good fit for him, primarily because it would require him to be away from his family for extended periods of time. Relatedly, Family was a frequent category in Steve's interview. He felt well-supported by his family to pursue police work, even though he would not be able to make the same type of salary as his father, "a Wall Street Guy." Steve's father told his son, "'Do what makes you happy, what gives you purpose.'"

Notably, perhaps as a result of his Privileged Identities, Steve had considerable access to social capital and had positioned himself well to be able to enroll in the police academy after college. He had a clear sense of all the steps it would take to become a police officer and had already begun the process, given that there is a "four year hiring process" before joining the police academy. Steve had also already done a lot of "networking" with the support of his father, "who is [his] biggest advocate more than anyone in [his] family." When describing the networking, Steve stated, "So, [my father] knows an ex-FBI agent from the Golf Club, so I made contact with him, and his cousin is a lieutenant in the NYPD for the Recruitment Division. So that was pretty helpful." He also said that his mother "has friends" in the various counties he was considering as back-up plans if the NYPD did not offer him a position. Reflecting on the networking process, Steve said, "I realized that I can't do everything on my own, and that no matter how much you can read from a website, it's not as valuable… as a person helping you through the process." Steve exhibited a clear sense of gratitude for all the People who had helped him on his purpose development journey.

In sum, Steve's Identity and Values - particularly his Catholic identity - gave him a clear sense of direction and purpose. Although Steve was in the low CC group, one might argue that his Values served a similar function as CC may have for some of the other students; his Values and identity formation process represented a directing pathway to purpose. Moreover, the People who supported him, the goodness of fit of law enforcement, and his prosocial intentions collectively contributed to his purpose development.

Passion as Directing: The Case of Sarah

The final case example, Sarah, was a freshman who was interested in either pursuing a career as an elementary school/math teacher or person in business. She described several SO motivations for pursuing her purpose, but she also stated that she valued "helping others" and that she was "compassionate" and "generous." She was a low CC participant, and out of all interviews, the interview with Sarah lasted the briefest amount of time. Although she offered insight about her purpose development, the interview lacked some of the depth of reflection present in many of the other interviews. In contrast to many of the high CC participants, Sarah stated that she had never considered the possible connection between her identity and purpose prior to the interview. She was the only participant who did not report any Barriers or Adversity relevant to her purpose development. She did not report having any Marginalized Identities or Consciousness Raising Activities. When talking about her purpose, Sarah explained,

> I'm kind of on two tracks right now. I kind of want to overlap them somehow. I'm majoring in Elementary Education and Math. I have always wanted to be a teacher. That's definitely going to happen at some point. I also really love the intellectual challenge of math. So I'm considering right now, right out of college, doing something with the math degree and maybe working at a business or something related to math and analytics.

Passion, particularly a Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment, was the most relevant domain for Sarah's purpose development. She frequently cited her passion for teaching, children, and math. When she was younger, she babysat, volunteered in a first grade classroom, worked in a daycare, and tutored children. She was looking forward to gaining additional teaching experience in college through her education courses and teaching practicum requirements.

Sarah's Privileged Identities and People also served as contributors to her purpose development. Sarah was raised in a town about 30 minutes away from her university "with a good school system." Her father was supportive of his daughter's career goals, given his shared interest in math. Sarah's mother was a teacher; as such, her mother served as a significant Role Model for her career aspirations. Sarah shared that she had "good teachers" throughout her educational career, and her friend's cousin gave her the idea of teaching people math skills in a business setting, a job Sarah had been considering. Despite Sarah's discussion of business and Purpose Uncertainty, it appeared that her passion for working with children as a teacher was her strongest interest. When asked if she had any desires to teach particular student populations, she said that she would like to work in a suburban setting or at "a place that has more resources." While she had considered doing "inner city work," she thought she might become "tired" and "exhausted" from this type of work. When asked her thoughts about social justice, Sarah said, "Well, I think in terms of education, it's really important that there is equal access to education. Equal access to resources and good teachers all around." Although she offered a short elaboration on this view, she did not acknowledge an awareness of education injustices or an awareness of her positionality as it related to addressing injustice.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Factors that Facilitated Purpose Development

This study examined the purpose development of 17 college students who varied in their levels of CC. As noted previously, the following categories occurred most frequently across all participants: Family (People), Strong or Sustained Interest/Enjoyment (Passion), Strengths/Goodness of Fit (Propensity), General Prosocial Benefits (Prosocial Benefits), Awareness of Systems of Oppression (Critical Consciousness), Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement (Activities), and Demographic Information (Identity). Taken together, supportive people, particularly family members; an invested passion for one's purpose; relevant character strengths and skills; a desire to contribute to the world beyond oneself; and formative experiences (e.g., extracurricular activities and educational classes) were integral for supporting the development of purpose. All participants in the sample demonstrated their Awareness of Systems of Oppression, but this awareness informed purpose trajectories to varying degrees. In addition to these categories, the high CC group had the following General categories: Benefitting Marginalized Populations, Consciousness Raising Activities, Awareness of One's Positionality, and College Extracurricular Involvement. Among the low CC participants, the following categories were uniquely General: Self-Oriented Aim, Education, Internships and Jobs, Affirmation, Cultivation, Weaknesses/Poor Fit, Religious Beliefs, Values, and Purpose Uncertainty.

Findings regarding factors that contributed to the development of purpose in college students were consistent with the results of other studies. People, Passion,

Propensity, and Prosocial Benefits were relevant to the purpose development of a group of diverse high school students (Liang et al., 2017a); these factors were also relevant to the college students in this sample, regardless of the level of CC. In a study of low-income Guatemalan youth, the effects of the same 4 P's on purpose development were observed, though the influences of Family and Faith were also highly relevant to the students in the sample (Liang et al., 2017b). Just as the Guatemalan youth felt deeply motivated to improve the economic circumstances of their families and were inspired to pursue their purposes in part because of their religious beliefs, several students in this dissertation described similar influences. This study ultimately provides nuance to the 4 P's framework by providing additional dimensions to these four factors. For example, in this study, the key influence of Family support was identified, which has been noted by other scholars (e.g., Malin et al., 2014). In addition to having an enduring interest in one's purpose, Passions can be cultivated through Education and learning about Social Justice issues. Passion, in particular, also appeared to be especially relevant for people with low CC and was sometimes associated with more SO aims. Propensity included an understanding of one's skill deficits or areas of growth, as well as an awareness of one's strengths and personality. Finally, the recipients of one's desired Prosocial Benefits can be quite diverse across youth.

Kashdan and McKnight (2009) identified three pathways to purpose: proactive, reactive, and social learning. The purpose development trajectories described in this study mapped on to this conceptualization of purpose development as well. Proactive pathways to purpose were observed when students engaged in a variety of Activities, such as Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement (e.g., student government), taking

classes relevant to their interests, and participating in college service organizations. Indeed, several students intentionally sought out opportunities to help refine or enhance their understanding of their interests and/or social justice issues. Given that Boston College expressly states that it considers what prospective students "do outside of school" when they make admissions decisions, it is unsurprising that students in this study had a significant level of high school extracurricular involvement (First Year Admission Profile, n.d.). Engagement in purposeful pursuits is also inherent in the definition of youth purpose, making it unsurprising that a high level of engagement in Activities was seen in these purpose exemplars (Damon et al., 2003). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that extracurricular involvement and other types of structured opportunities have been shown to facilitate youth purpose development (Malin et al., 2014).

Findings from this study suggest just how formative Activities can be, especially when students made connections with supportive adults. In this vein, a social learning pathway facilitated purpose development as well, in which participants observed role models and other professionals in the field exemplify how to engage in their desired purposes (Kashdan & McKnight, 2009). These role models and mentors also provided emotional support, cultivated the student's strengths and interests, and offered advice about how to pursue their aspirations, all behaviors that have been linked to youth purpose development before (e.g., Liang et al., 2017a). For example, in this study, a supportive high school principal fostered an interest in becoming a high school math teacher and administrator; a caring high school religion teacher cultivated a student's commitment to service; good teachers inspired their former students or children to want to become teachers themselves; and multiple professionals in the field (e.g., speakers,

therapists) instilled a belief in students that they were capable and had potential to achieve their aspirations.

Scholars have more recently begun to consider the role that stress and marginalization play in the development of purpose. Notably, stress and marginalization appear to both foster a sense of purpose (Gutowski et al., 2017), and a sense of purpose seems to help people cope with adversity (e.g., as astutely noted by Victor Frankl). One conceptualization of the connection between adversity and purpose is the reactive pathway to purpose development (Kashdan & McKnight, 2009). As noted in the stories of several students, purpose can emerge as a reaction to significant life events. For example, a scary medical incident witnessed as a child prompted a nursing career path, and traumatic family stressors and involvement with child protection services inspired a dream of becoming a social worker or therapist. However, stress and adversity can serve as a barrier or a facilitator of purpose, often depending on the level of social support that a young person receives (Gutowski et al., 2017). For marginalized students in particular, purpose development can be thwarted if they have difficulty developing an idea of a meaningful future, experience social isolation, and feel reluctant about engaging in activism (Sumner et al., 2018). For marginalized youth, social support in the form of participating in activism and engaging with others who share oppressed identities may be particularly helpful as they pursue their purpose (Sumner et al., 2018). This idea was seen multiple times among participants' stories, as students with Marginalized Identities found communities, particularly on their college campus, with whom to seek social support and increase their CC. Fortunately, the students in this study largely spoke of sufficient social support - in the forms of Affirmation, Cultivation, Guidance, and Role Modeling and

Mentoring - and, in many cases, social support that went above and beyond the call of duty (Liang et al., 2017a).

Purpose and identity have long been established as closely related constructs (Erikson, 1968), as developing a sense of purpose has been thought to help adolescents resolve their identity crises. It is worth remembering that the identity development process is characterized by exploration and commitment and that youth move through several statuses of identity development before they achieve a high level of integration (Marcia, 1966). Given that college is an important time of exploration (i.e., moratorium; Marcia, 1966), it was unsurprising that almost all students described some type of Purpose Uncertainty. Indeed, one would expect that students would spend their college years reflecting on and exploring their future options (Harren, 1979). Notably, in contrast to the high CC group, all of the low CC students expressed a degree of purpose uncertainty, though most of them were freshmen. Given that an integrated sense of one's vocational identity (or purpose) tends to be lower in underclassmen as compared to upperclassmen (Poe, 1991), and that purpose tends to stabilize throughout college (Malin et al., 2014), one might expect that students would likely experience a reduced level of Purpose Uncertainty as they move through their college years. Moreover, purpose development tends to be more characterized by multidirectional movement than a linear trajectory, suggesting that the Purpose Uncertainty among a majority of participants was developmentally expected (Malin et al., 2014).

Research within the last 10 years has also begun to examine more closely the relationship between specific aspects of identity and purpose (e.g., Bronk, 2011; Sumner et al., 2018). Purpose has been shown to foster healthy identity formation by helping

youth establish a social identity (i.e., a sense of how they fit into the broader social world) and a personal identity (i.e., a sense of who they are). At a more granular level, gender identity has been implicated in the types of purposes people develop (Bronk & Finch, 2010; Hill et al., 2010). Sumner and colleagues (2018) also discussed the ways in which marginalized identities affect purpose development. This study offers an important contribution by highlighting the other identity variables that are relevant for college students' purpose development, including Values, Religious Beliefs, Hometown, and Privileged Identities. Collectively, as has been done in the model presented in the Results of this dissertation, theoretical models of purpose development would do well to more clearly add Identity as a key construct that influences purpose development, especially given the ways in which these constructs have been closely linked in the literature previously (e.g., Erikson, 1968).

One aspect of identity development that emerged repeatedly throughout the participants' stories was Religious Beliefs, particularly for the low CC students. It appeared that, perhaps more often in the absence of CC, Religious Beliefs provided students with some sense of direction of where to direct their prosocial intentions. This finding is consistent with the literature on the connection between spirituality and purpose (e.g., Liang & Ketcham, 2017). Among college students, church attendance and personal prayer and reflection have been correlated with higher scores on Purpose in Life measures (Francis & Burton, 1994; Francis & Evans, 1996; Robbins & Francis, 2009). Mariano and Damon (2008) posited that spirituality can guide youth toward purpose, both because religious beliefs can serve as a source of support to help overcome obstacles and because they can provide a reason for pursuing certain aspirations. In this study,

students reflected on how their religious beliefs helped them cope with a variety of stressors, as well as on how these beliefs provided a frame for their Prosocial Benefits and ultimately their purpose.

Purpose and CC

Regarding the second research question, for the students in the high CC group, CC assisted in the development of purpose via a healing and/or directing pathway. Other scholars have noted that CC can promote healing (i.e., emotional, spiritual, and psychological wellness) among youth who have experienced various forms of marginalization and oppression, and later purpose (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). Understanding the complex social and political forces at work in maintaining systems of oppression can help youth manage the day to day challenges associated with being part of a marginalized group. Creating spaces for conversation about these issues has been documented as central to the consciousness raising and healing processes (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002), as was reported by several students in this study.

The post-traumatic growth (i.e., positive adjustment following trauma) literature also offers important contributions to understanding the link between adversity and purpose via a healing pathway (Kashdan & Kane, 2011). Coping research suggests that meaning making is a central part of the coping process (Gottlieb, 1997). Given that trauma, marginalization, and oppression often threaten people's sense of who they are and how they fit into the social world, meaning making (e.g., cognitive restructuring) is thought to be an imperative part of the process of recovering and growing from these experiences (Cadell, Regehr, & Hemsworth, 2003). Personal meaningfulness is a key part of the definition of purpose (Damon et al., 2003), and for many students in this study,

developing a sense of purpose that was in some way connected to their trauma or oppression was a way for them to make meaning out of these difficult experiences. Several students emphasized the empathy they would have for the future beneficiaries of their purpose because they themselves had experienced related challenges. Moreover, trauma scholars suggest that recovery from traumatic events includes not only attempts to regulate emotions or symptoms that may emerge from trauma, but also a commitment to continuing to pursue valued life goals (Kashdan & Kane, 2011). As such, the purposeful/Consciousness Raising Activities in which the participants engaged likely facilitated an experience of healing over time.

CC also facilitated purpose development in students via a directing pathway. Through the directing pathway, CC helped students develop a more clear sense of how to use their unique strengths, skills, and passions and what populations, in particular, were in need of benefiting from those traits and interests. For some students, they developed a better understanding of who would benefit from their purpose because the purpose was connected to their own experiences (e.g., a bilingual identity fostered an interest in working with bilingual youth). CC unsurprisingly gave students a better sense of who they could help with their purposes and seemed to focus students from having General Prosocial Benefits to, for example, Benefiting Marginalized Populations. Given that critical awareness is a key part of developing CC and that people have no reason to act if they do not understand what and where the need is (Jemal, 2017), it stands to reason that CC afforded people a helpful sense of direction that ultimately inspired a larger purpose. For the case of Tina (a low CC participant), in light of substantial questions about her

purpose, one might wonder if CC may help her gain a more clear sense of direction regarding where to focus her prosocial intentions.

As compared to the healing pathway, the directing pathway often appeared particularly relevant for students with more Privileged Identities. As noted previously, CC has typically been conceptualized as a particularly relevant resource for marginalized populations (Baker & Brookins, 2014). Because the majority of participants in this study identified as privileged in some regard, the data provides an opportunity to consider the unique contributions that CC can offer for more privileged youth, and then in turn, how these youth can make contributions in light of their CC. The directing pathway seems to have provided students with a vision for how they could leverage their privileges for good. Indeed, college students are more likely to engage in social justice efforts when they view themselves as helpful resources (Howard, 2011). Consciousness Raising Activities, particularly involvement in critical service learning or volunteer experiences, has been associated with college students expressing an increased desire to continue helping the people they served in those activities (Kinefuchi, 2010). Ostensibly, students participating in these types of service learning experiences became aware of and invested in populations in need of advocacy and support AND recognized that they had something to offer in addressing these needs (i.e., critical motivation).

Although all students in the sample expressed having a desire to offer General Prosocial Benefits through their purpose, OO purposes tended to be more associated with the high CC group than the low CC group; a Self-Oriented Aim was a General category for the low CC group but not for the high CC group. Although the Self-Oriented Aims of the students in the low CC group were certainly admirable and reflected unique strengths

that the students possessed (e.g., creativity), OO purpose has been associated with psychological health, greater contentment, and openness (Bronk & Finch, 2010; Mariano & Vaillant, 2012). Moreover, OO purposes likely offer important contributions to society that may be less likely seen when people pursue goals primarily for themselves (Damon et al., 2003). Of course, it is difficult to compare the high and CC low groups because of the differences in group size, but it appeared that CC was associated with more thoughtful, committed visions of contribution, particularly for Marginalized Populations. Arguably, this greater sense of clarity in direction is worth noting and cultivating.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study offer several important implications for practice among those who aim to foster youth purpose, particularly in the college student population. Indeed, this study provided additional support for the 4 P's framework of purpose development (Liang et al., 2017a). Therefore, supportive adults in the college context should be encouraged to provide students with affirmation, cultivation, and guidance, and students should be encouraged to seek out the support of professionals in the field and staff and faculty in their university, especially if they are lacking family support as they pursue their goals. Moreover, especially for marginalized youth, finding communities on their college campus can be an important place to raise CC and build community (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014).

This study also offers several ideas for effective Consciousness Raising Activities. Students in this study learned about social justice issues in their classes, in service learning programs and organizations, on social media and via other digital technologies, and in clubs and conversations with their peers. Colleges and universities

can consider the types of clubs and programming they offer on their campuses to help students learn about social justice issues (Seider et al., 2017). Relatedly, Activities are a key component of the purpose and CC development processes (Koshy & Mariano, 2011; Seider et al., 2017). Youth need structured opportunities to explore their interests and should be encouraged to take advantage of the multitude of opportunities that are generally available on their college campuses (Malin et al., 2014; Marcia, 1966). Those who are relatively privileged can be encouraged to pursue critically-informed experiences with people who have fewer privileged identities, as people often feel most compelled to work for social change when they have personal or political reasons to do so (Watts et al., 2011). For some of the students in the sample, their interests in their Social Justice-Oriented Purpose partially emerged after they had formative service experiences, which likely heightened a sense of personal stake in the work.

Purpose development is also a highly reflective process, in which young people seek to make connections among their personality, strengths, skills, relative weaknesses, values, and desired prosocial contributions (Damon et al., 2003). College students should be actively encouraged to make the time and space to think about these dimensions of their purpose. Searching for a sense of purpose and making sense of these parts of one's identity can be a stressful endeavor, and students would likely benefit from some scaffolding to support them through this process (Blattner et al., 2013). Schools, with their intentional programming (e.g. retreats and classes) and supportive adults, can offer this type of helpful scaffolding (Koshy & Mariano, 2011).

Finally, this dissertation highlights the importance of CC for several reasons. In this study, CC helped facilitate purpose via a healing pathway, suggesting that

practitioners who work with youth with marginalized identities and histories of trauma should seek to foster CC in these young people. This finding is particularly relevant for the field of psychotherapy, and mental health clinicians may do well to support the development of CC in their clients who have faced these types of challenging experiences (Ivey, 1995). CC also offered an important sense of direction that would likely be quite valuable to many college students today. For instance, young people experience several stressors as they plan for their futures (Spencer et al., 2018). They have more options for their future paths than ever before (Curran & Hill, 2019), though an abundance of choice can paradoxically be stressful to manage (Schwartz, 2004). However, developing a prosocially motivated purpose is associated with being better able to manage the pressures associated with pursuing one's goals (Spencer et al., 2018). A sense of direction that guides people - across the spectrum of privilege - to help others, in light of their unique strengths and skills, would likely shift an overemphasis on personal success to a sense of purpose that ultimately is beneficial to both self and others.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this dissertation offers important insights into the relationship between CC and purpose, whereby CC helps facilitate the development of purpose, it is not without its limitations. Although the sample size was consistent with CQR guidelines (Hill et al., 2005), the difference in size between the high and low CC groups was not ideal. Because of the difference in group size, it was challenging to make substantive comparisons between the two groups, and it was difficult to make comments about how the experiences of the low CC group may generalize to other populations. Nonetheless, the difference in group size may be informative, as one might speculate that purpose and

CC are highly tied, and that purpose is more common among those with high levels of CC and vice versa. Nevertheless, the relationship between purpose and CC should continue to be explored.

Moreover, the sample used for this study was narrow with respect to a few characteristics. The sample was largely female, and a majority of students were White. Additional studies should be conducted with more diverse samples to ensure that the voices of people with marginalized identities, particularly people of color, are heard, especially given the historical context of CC. All students were enrolled at a private, mid-sized Jesuit university, and a large proportion of students identified as having a Catholic religious background. Similar studies should be conducted with college students from a range of universities and with diverse religious backgrounds, as Religious Beliefs, Values, and other categories may emerge in varying frequencies across samples. Nonetheless, consistent with other research, this study provides evidence that Religious Beliefs can be highly relevant to purpose development (Liang & Ketcham, 2017; Liang et al., 2017b; Mariano & Damon, 2008). Because faith/spiritual values seemed to be an asset in cultivating purpose, more research should be done to understand how to leverage the spiritually-driven motivations and values that students may bring with them to college to foster purpose development. Future practice efforts may include guiding students to reflect on some of the consistent emphases across religious beliefs (e.g., utilizing one's privileges to serve those who are marginalized and in need) and explore ultimately how such spiritually-related purposes can be personally healing.

Future directions should include longitudinal examinations of these research questions. It would be interesting to conduct a qualitative examination to see if Purpose

Uncertainty, for instance, decreases throughout college, as other studies have suggested that it should (e.g., Malin et al., 2014). It would also be worthwhile to follow these students to understand if their level of CC changes throughout college, especially in light of the high number of freshmen in the low CC population. One might wonder if CC might become more linked to purpose among the low CC students throughout college, with the assumption that their CC may increase with greater exposure to course material and the social justice mission of the university.

Future research should also continue to explore the relationship between purpose and CC. The relationship between purpose and CC is likely complicated. It is not clear how the two constructs directly influence each other; the current qualitative data analysis did not identify one linear mechanism. Additional qualitative and quantitative studies on the relationship between purpose and CC are needed to further explore causality. In light of the large number of factors that contributed to students' purpose development, future research could also try to identify the relative weight of each factor that facilitates purpose. Although the relative salience of contributory factors may be too individualized to make generalizable claims, understanding the factors that generally seem to matter the most for facilitating purpose development may be useful for informing purpose interventions. Longitudinal studies may be helpful for exploring these questions about what factors students report as making the biggest difference on their purpose development trajectories.

Finally, in light of the utility of and increasing interest in youth purpose interventions (e.g, Klein et al., 2019), applied research on these topics would be beneficial. For example, might an intervention aimed at increasing CC yield an increase

in sense of purpose? Would adding CC-informed curricula to youth purpose interventions help students develop a greater commitment to their purposes, given the ways in which CC can facilitate a more clear sense of direction? Indeed, given the benefits of purpose and CC, research on the effectiveness of related interventions in the lives of youth are timely.

Conclusion

This study adds to the existing purpose literature on the factors that contribute to purpose development in college students, highlighting the important roles of People, Passion, Propensity, and Prosocial Benefits (Liang et al., 2017a), as well as Identity variables and CC for some students. Specifically, CC fostered purpose development via a healing and/or directing pathway, two pathways that have been highlighted in various forms in the literature before (e.g., Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Jemal, 2017). When CC facilitated purpose development, CC helped students connect experiences of adversity, formative service experiences, and/or social justice values to a larger purpose with specific beneficiaries. Explicit connections in the literature between purpose and CC have generally been quite limited, though there are a few notable exceptions (e.g., Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Kenny et al., 2019). Therefore, this study offers an important contribution by engaging college students in describing their purpose journeys in their own words, as well as illustrating the connection between CC and purpose, whereby CC fosters a sense of purpose.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Purpose Journey Interview Protocol

Interviewer: Thanks for participating today! You've been chosen for this interview because we want to talk about the role that a sense of purpose plays in your life.

Purpose can be described as a long-term, big picture goal/passion—something you want to do or be one day that's very meaningful to you. You might think of it as similar to a life dream that you have. Purpose is also characterized by an active engagement in the pursuit of one's goal(s), meaning that you can see evidence of purpose in people's lives by the activities they choose to do over time. These activities have to do with trying to reach this long-term goal. Does that make sense?

Student responds. If students ask for an example of purpose, give them a couple different examples (i.e., parent, historical figures, etc.).

Interviewer: Great. I also want to ask you some questions about critical consciousness and how it either may or may not relate to your purpose. Critical consciousness is an awareness of parts of your identity (e.g., your race, class, gender, etc.) and the reflection about whether you have advantages or disadvantages because of those identities. If you are critically conscious, you may even feel the desire to take action because of the way you feel about those advantages or disadvantages. Does that make sense? [STUDENT ANSWERS] Do you have any questions before we get started? [STUDENT RESPONDS] Okay. Also, you do not have to answer every question if you do not want to. Before we begin, would you mind completing this ladder that will help me understand how you view your family's income level? [STUDENT COMPLETES SES LADDER]. Thank you.

To start, do you have any ideas about what you would like to do in the future? If you think you have a purpose, can you tell me about it?

Past: How is your identity related to the way your purpose has developed over the years?	● Great. Thank you for sharing. Now, before I ask more questions about your long-term aspirations and how you developed your purpose, I want to ask you some questions about critical consciousness and your identity. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. I'm wondering about some of the factors that may have motivated you to pursue your purpose. First, I'm hoping you can tell me a little bit about your cultural background or other aspects of your identity that are important to you (e.g., race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). a. Interesting. Have you ever thought about how your identity (e.g., race, gender, social class - among other factors) will or will not impact your future career aspirations/long-term goals? If you think your identity will affect your future career aspirations/purpose, how do you think it will? ● Great. Next, I'm hoping you can tell me how you feel about the following statement: Generally speaking, women, poor children, and certain racialized groups and ethnicities have fewer privileges and opportunities to get ahead in life. Please explain your feelings and thoughts on this statement. (*The components of this question are modifications from the work of* Diemer, Luke, Rapa & Catalina, 2014). ● How do you feel about the idea that one's future aspirations could impact underprivileged or underserved people? Is benefitting underserved people with your purpose important to you? If so, please explain how. ● What are your thoughts on social justice work? By social justice work, I am referring to the concept of promoting justice in a society that entails the equal distribution of wealth, opportunities, privileges, etc. Do you have any interest in doing this type of work? *Provide this example if the respondent needs one*: For

	example, let's say someone's identity as a woman has caused her to be disadvantaged in school or in the workplace and not taken as seriously as the boys and men in her school and workplace. This causes her to want to mentor young girls and women to succeed in the workplace. Similarly, Jack is a first generation college student who grew up in the inner city in a school system where few kids went to college, and now he is interested in becoming a high school guidance counselor to help other kids who have his same background. a. If so, please explain how you might do this work. b. If so, why is this work important to you? c. *If applicable*, how did you develop this interest in social justice work? ● How did you learn about social justice or the inequalities and disadvantages that you described?

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing. Now I want to ask you a little bit more about your purpose.

Future: Where are you going in your life?	- What is your big picture goal/purpose for this year and next year? 1. If you don't have a big picture goal, what are the smaller goals that you are hoping to accomplish over the next year? What are you thinking about for your future? - What is your big picture goal/purpose for the next 5 years? - What is your big picture goal/purpose for your life as an adult?
Future: Why are you going where you are going?	- Why is that long-term purpose or goal important to you? 1. If you don't have a big picture goal, why are the smaller goals important to you? ● Is there anyone that are you are hoping will benefit from your purpose or long-term goals? - What do you think is important about your long-term purpose/goal/short-term goals? - Is it helping you to achieve other goals along the way? - Are your purpose/short-term goal(s) personally meaningful to you?
Future: How did you figure out where you are going?	- Are there certain ***people*** that helped you determine where you are going? Who are those people? - Were there certain ***experiences*** that help you decide where you are going? What are those experiences? - Are there certain ***people*** that have (or tried to) gotten in your way of figuring out where you are going? - Were there certain ***experiences*** that have (or tried to) gotten in your way of figuring where you are going?

Future: How will you get where you are going?	- Are there certain ***people*** that you think will be important in helping you get where you are going? How will they help? What role will they play? - Are there certain ***experiences*** that you think will be important in helping you get where you are going? How will they help? What role will they play? - Do you think there are ***people*** who may get in your way? How? - Do you think there might be ***experiences*** or circumstances that get in your way? How?

Interviewer: Great. Now that you have identified what short-term goals/purpose you want to pursue in life, tell me about where you currently see yourself on your path towards that intention. (*Interviewer then focuses on present-oriented questions*).

Present: Where are you now in your life in relation to your pathway?	- Are you on track to reach your goals/purpose? Are you worried you won't be able to get there? - Have you done things to help you get closer to meeting your goals? Things to help you reach those goals? If you haven't, why not? - Is there more you could be doing to ensure you are able to meet your goals?
Present: What things are most important to you right now?	- Why are those things (e.g., activities, clubs, pursuits, goals) so important? - What role do they play in your life?
Present: What strengths do you have that will help you reach your purpose?	- What are your strengths? - Why/how are they important? - Where did your strengths come from? - How will they help you on your path to reaching your goals/purpose?

Present: What important people are on your path to purpose right now?	- Why are these people important? - How do you know these people? How did you meet them? - What role do they play in your life? - How do you think they might contribute to your path to purpose?
Present: What important experiences have you had recently that will help you achieve your purpose/reach your long-term goal?	- What were the experiences? - Why were they important? - How have they contributed to who you are now? - How will the experiences shape/contribute to your future purpose/goals?

Interviewer: Great. Thank you. Now that you have identified what you have been doing to pursue your short-term goals/purpose, I would love to hear more about how you developed your goals. In other words, I am interested in how your past has influenced your present and your future. (*Interviewer then focuses on past-oriented questions*).

Past: Where did your goals/purpose come from?	- Where were you 1 year ago? - Where were you 2 years ago? - How about 5 years ago?
Past: What things were most important to you in the past?	- Why were those things so important? - What role did they play in your life?
Past: What strengths did you have that have gotten you to where you are?	- What were your strengths 1 year ago? How about 5 years ago? - Why/how were they important? - How have they helped you to get where you are today?

Past: What important people have gotten you to where you are today?	- Why were these people important? - How did you know these people? How did you meet them? - What role did they play in your life? - How do you think they got you to where you are today?
Past: What important experiences did you have that got you to where you are today?	- What were the experiences? - Why were they important? - How did they contribute to who you were then? How about who you are now? - How did the experiences impact where you are today?

Appendix B: Domains and Categories

Letter	Category	Definition	Notes	Exemplar Core Idea
(1) Purpose: The student describes their sense of purpose.				
1a	Self-Oriented Aim	Participant describes having a life aim or goal that lacks (implicitly or explicitly) a prosocial intention	Not necessarily a "bad" purpose, but may be more reflective of, for example, pursuing one's self-oriented passions; This category is also given when the student is unclear about having a prosocial intention, albeit they may have one	Participant's purpose is to work in marketing for an A-brand sneaker company and ultimately do something creative
1b	Prosocial Purpose	Participant describes having a purpose that benefits something or someone beyond themselves	Prosocial intentions must be relatively clear to receive this category	Participant's stated purpose is to go into the helping profession

1c	Social Justice-Oriented Purpose	Participant describes having a purpose that is specifically related to a social justice issue (e.g., working with a marginalized group)	The participant does not have to specifically say "social justice," but it must be clear that that the beneficiaries, for example, are marginalized	Participant states their purpose changed to be a social worker, in part because of the power it gives her to change systems
(2) Purpose Planning: The student describes future activities or experiences in which they will partake relevant to their purpose, and/or steps that they will take to pursue the purpose.				
2a	Learning More About Purpose	Participant says that they want to gather more information about their purpose		Participant is interested in application of their knowledge and talking to experts
2b	Seeking Out Mentors	Participant describes seeking out mentors or other supportive people to help them as they pursue their purpose	Can include support from different schools at BC	Participant wants to talk to educators.
2c	Education	Participant describes education-related tasks that would be beneficial for pursuing their purpose (e.g., taking classes)	This category captures navigating Boston College, classes, and graduate school	Participant wants to take classes in social work

2d	Extracurricular Activities	Participant describes extracurricular activities relevant to their purpose or college experience with which they would like to be involved		Participant plans to pursue leadership roles in clubs
2e	Internships and Jobs	Participant describes an internship(s) or future job(s) they would like to obtain	Can include employment immediately after college	Participant plans to apply for summer jobs in education
2f	Alternative Paths	Participant describes either distant career plans, back-up plans, or any other alternative plans to their primary purpose	This category captures back-up plans and long-term goals	Participant plans on teaching as a backup plan
(3) Types of Support: The student describes specific actions or behaviors that people have taken to support their development of purpose, as well as the qualities of these important relationships.				
3a	Affirmation	Affirming relationships are those in which Participant feels personally valued and believed in	"Important others value my purpose-related choices and actions" (Liang et al., 2017a)	Participant felt genuinely listened to by their mentors.

3b	Role Modeling or Mentoring	Role model: A person looked to by others as someone to be imitated Mentor: An experienced and trusted advisor, often a non-parental adult	Does not have to be identified by the student as this title	Participant looks up to older sister.
3c	Cultivation	Cultivating relationships build upon the potential and purpose they observe in Participant (e.g., identifying the student's skills and strengths)	"Important others nurture my sense of purpose" (Liang et al., 2017a)	Participant's purpose is supported by their friends (e.g., friends help collect data).
3d	Guidance	Guidance includes concrete and direct advice, guidance, and information pertaining to interests and aspirations	"Important others concretely lead me in my sense of purpose" (Liang et al., 2017a)	Participant's teacher provided support by helping her find and internship and sharing experiences about working with kids with special needs
(4) People: The student describes important others relevant to their purpose development.				

4a	Family	Participant describes support received from family members	Includes immediate and extended family	Participant is very close with their family.
4b	Peers	Participant describes receiving support from their similar-aged peers	Captures friends and romantic partners	Participant speaks to how friends push her to be the best possible version of self
4c	Therapist	Participant describes support received from a therapist	Support occurs in the context of therapy	Participant was supported by their therapist.
4d	Pre-College Educators	Participant describes receiving support from pre-college educators	Often refers to high school teachers, staff, etc.	Participant had a good relationship with their high school principal.
4e	Staff/Faculty at Boston College	Participant describes receiving support from staff and/or faculty at Boston College		Participant is inspired by BC faculty.
4f	Professional(s) in the Field	Participant describes support from professionals in the field (e.g., at the workplace, in seminars, etc.)		Participant is supported by their supervisor.
(5) Passion: The student describes having a strong interest and/or excitement about				

their purpose, a particular interest in social justice issues, and/or how they became interested in their purpose.				
5a	Strong or Sustained Interest/ Enjoyment	Participant describes having a strong or sustained interest and enjoyment of their purpose	Includes descriptions that the Participant has had this interest for a very long time (e.g., since they were a kid)	Participant speaks to how nursing is what she loves to do and how nursing challenges her in a positive way
5b	Education	Participant describes becoming more passionate about their purpose through courses they have taken or through other educational avenues		Participant speaks to how incredibly interesting they have found all of their Lynch classes at BC
5c	Interest in Social Justice	Participant describes having a strong interest in social justice issues		Participant also speaks to being passionate about activism and advocacy
(6) Propensity: The student describes personality traits, strengths, or skills that they have or are trying to build, relevant to their purpose, as well as any identified weaknesses that make alternative options to their purpose a poor fit.				

6a	Weaknesses/ Poor Fit	Participant describes aspects of a job and/or lacking the skills, traits, or other personality characteristics, which ultimately make their purpose a poor fit for them		Participant speaks to hating her childbearing clinical
6b	Improving Skills	Participant describes skills related to their purpose that they are currently trying to build or develop in the future	Captures the present and future	Participant is not very skilled with technology, though he would like to become more literate
6c	Strengths/ Goodness of Fit	Participant describes aspects of a job and/or having the skills, traits, or other personality characteristics that make their purpose a good fit for them		Participant speaks to how nursing is a great fit for her given that there is a social justice aspect, empathy is involved, and there is trust in the profession
(7) Prosocial Benefits: The student describes a desire to contribute prosocially to themselves or the world beyond themselves with their purpose.				

7a	General Prosocial Benefits	Participant describes having a general prosocial intention with their purpose	Often refers to the broad concept of "wanting to help people" but can lack the specificity about who they want to help	Participant speaks to how much joy and enjoyment she gets from knowing she is helping people each day in nursing
7b	Being a Role Model or Mentor	Participant expresses their desire to be a role model or mentor to others as a reason for pursuing their purpose	Can include the desire to be a positive example to others/have a good reputation	Participant believes in the importance of leading by example and being open and kind as a way of preventing crime
7c	Benefitting the Organization	Rather than describing a desire to help people outside of the organization, the participant describes wanting to help the company or organization itself (or people in a company)	Often includes a company (e.g., leaving an "impact" on the company)	Participant would like to affect change in the entire police department in which he works and would like to play a meaningful role in multiple parts of the

				department
7d	Benefitting Loved Ones	Participant describes wanting to help friends, family, or other loved ones as a motivation for choosing their purpose		Participant would like to make his family proud and have a career that his future children will be proud of
7e	Benefitting Marginalized Populations	Participant describes having a desire to help marginalized populations through their purpose		Participant wants to work in underserved communities
(8) Barriers/Adversity: The student describes any sort of challenges (past, present, or future) relevant to their purpose development.				
8a	Lack of Barriers	Participant describes a lack of past, current, or expected challenges as they pursue their purpose		Participant does not anticipate obstacles

8b	Issues with Work	Participant describes some issue(s) with their desired job/purpose, either that they anticipate in the future or that deterred them from pursuing a certain job/career	Can also include difficulties with obtaining a job (e.g., because it's competitive); Can also include any other undesirable aspects of the job	Participant decided against joining the military because he did not want to have to be away from his family with limited contact
8c	Self-Doubt	Participant describes some aspect of self-doubt (e.g., about their skills, ability to pursue their goals) that affects their purpose development	Could also be thought of as a barrier, but the category is under this domain	Participant does not have the skill level to become a professional dancer, and people can only dance for a limited amount of time
8d	Academic	Participant describes academic or education-related challenges that have affected their purpose development		Participant did not receive enough support at her public high school and needed to attend an alternative high school, which she was skeptical of

				until she arrived
8e	Lack of Social Support	Participant describes any type of lack of social support they have had on their purpose journey, as well as a feared loss of social support in the future	This category is intentionally broad; It can include difficulties with fitting in with their college community, lack of parental support, etc.	Participant has felt uncomfortable to walk around BC's campus and feel that other students think she shouldn't be here, and while she knows that she can't know what everyone is thinking, she knows that at least some students have racist ideals

8f	Financial	Participant describes financial/monetary challenges as affecting their purpose development	Can occur among students both from low SES and high SES backgrounds (e.g., an affluent student likely not reaching the same SES as their parents)	Participant believes that being a first generation, low-income student will lead to ongoing significant struggles
8g	Mental or Physical Health	Participant describes having a mental or physical health diagnosis that has resulted in challenges on their purpose journey	Participant can be resilient even in the face of the diagnosis	Participant's mental illness has made getting to college very difficult but believes she has grown a lot from the experience
8h	Marginalization or Trauma	Participant describes experiences of marginalization (i.e., officially, “the treatment of people as ‘insignificant’”) or trauma that have affected their purpose development	Based on race, gender, class, ethnicity, immigration status, sexual orientation, etc.	Participant believes that being a first generation, low-income student will lead to ongoing significant struggles

8i	Other Barriers	Any other barriers not accounted for by the previous categories are documented by this category		At the beginning of college, as compared to now, Participant was less reflective and often thought about doing activities primarily for her resume
8j	Resilience	Participant describes an ability to adapt in the face of adversity	This category often includes a discussion of a barrier/challenge and then a subsequent positive reframe of the challenge	Participant feels out of place at BC and has started to think more about the importance of decolonizing herself (e.g., stop wanting to have lighter skin)
(9) Critical Consciousness: The student describes elements of critical consciousness, including how they developed critical consciousness, signs of critical reflection, and/or indications of their participation in critical action.				

9a	Lack of Critical Consciousness	Participant demonstrates a lack of critical consciousness based on their descriptions of social justice issues, and/or a lack of experience and/or exposure to social justice issues	May include misinformed statements about social justice issues, or the participant may be discussing a time when they were not critically conscious	Participant sometimes feels overwhelmed when her classes discuss controversial topics because she has no idea what to expect, and it feels unusual to her to discuss these issues in a classroom setting
9b	Consciousness - Raising Activities	Activities in which Participant has engaged that have increased their critical consciousness (i.e., an awareness of their positionality, oppressive symptoms, and desire for critical action); these activities often reflect a learning process (i.e., where and how they learned about systems of oppression), and precede or facilitate an awareness of	For students with higher levels of critical consciousness, these activities are likely to have occurred in the past (e.g., in high school); If the student is less critically conscious, the activities might currently be happening	Participant is currently in the Family, School, & Society class and is learning about various social issues

		systems of oppression		
9c	Awareness of Systems of Oppression	Includes general knowledge about oppressive systems and social justice issues (i.e., what the Participant knows)	Students do not have to mention awareness of their positionality for this category; they may have just learned the material in class, for instance	Participant has an awareness that society has a mental health crisis in that many people are not able to receive appropriate treatment
9d	Awareness of One's Positionality	Participant specifically mentions or makes it clear that they have an understanding of their own positionality (i.e. marginalized or privileged identities), perhaps as it relates to social justice issues and an awareness about oppression	Includes awareness of privilege	Participant recognizes that she is privileged, though she has faced some obstacles

9e	Critical Consciousness (Awareness + Action)	The purposeful work in which the Participant intentionally, thoughtfully engages that attempts to dismantle oppressive systems/address social justice issues, in light of their critical awareness	In order for a participant to receive this category, they describe some type of action/behavior (just like how the purpose definition requires a certain level of engagement). This engagement likely foreshadows the type of work they will also be doing in the future.	Participant speaks to considering participating in "Nurses Without Borders" and to her past experience working in a mobile medical clinic
(10) Activities: The student describes any type of extracurricular activity or educational experience - past or present - that has contributed to their purpose development.				
10a	Pre-College Education	Participant describes pre-college educational experiences that have shaped their purpose development	For example, they may mention something about the type of high school they went to	Participant went to an all girls high school and became passionate about women's health issues and working

				with a non-profit at this time
10b	Pre-College Extracurricular Involvement	Participant describes pre-college school experiences and extracurricular activities (e.g., service work) that have shaped their purpose development		Participant formerly worked on her school's newspaper, leading her to consider journalism and then ultimately teaching
10c	Travel	Participant refers to any sort of traveling experiences that have impacted their purpose development	Often refers to study abroad; Can include both past, present, and future travel plans	Participant went to Morocco last weekend and went on a hike to a remote area, and she had flashbacks to previous services trips at BC and reflected on the uniqueness of these

				experiences
10d	College Education	Participant describes any education or course-related activities at Boston College (or another college if they are a transfer student, for instance)		Participant is taking a class in the Lynch School that is teaching her about social justice issues
10e	College Extracurricular Involvement	Participant describes activities in which they have participated in college that are not academic/course-related	Includes internships	Participant has participated on BC's Irish Dance team
(11) Identity: The student describes any aspect of their identity, values they hold, and/or religious and spiritual beliefs that have influenced their purpose development.				
11a	Marginalized Identity(s)	Having a marginalized identity means that such persons are systematically excluded from full participation in the American	e.g., Female; sexual and gender Minorities; People of Color; Immigration	Participant is a low-income, first generation college student

		dream/way of life based on those identities	status; Lower SES	
11b	Demographic Information	Participant describes demographic information about themselves but doesn't necessarily state these characteristics as being a marginalized and/or a privileged identity	e.g., race, sex, class, gender, ethnicity	Participant's grandparents are first generation Americans, and Participant is from Long Island and is Italian
11c	Hometown	Participant describes their hometown as being relevant to their purpose development	Participant can have positive or negative views about their hometown	The New York element of Participant's purpose is very important to him
11d	Religious Beliefs	Participant describes having religious or spiritual beliefs that shape their purpose development		Participant's grandparents are devout Catholics, and Participant went to a Catholic high school, both of which helped him develop his Catholic

				identity
11e	Values	Participant describes having value(s) (i.e. a personal principle) that are relevant to their purpose, which they may have developed from their families, experiences, etc.	Not explicitly religious or spiritual beliefs	Family is very important to Participant
11f	Privileged Identity(s)	Having identity(s) that affords Participant a level of access and power in American culture based on those identities	e.g., White; Male; Sexual and Gender Majority; Higher SES	Participant grew up in an upper middle class family and believes he'll never be able to achieve the same level of wealth with his own family
(12) Uncertainty: The student describes any sort of uncertainty and/or the experience changing directions on their purpose development journeys.				

12a	Changing Purpose	Participant describes how their purpose has changed over time	Participant may describe, for example, how they were interested in one path during high school and how that has changed	Before college, Participant had been set on applying to West Point, but then changed his mind about the military after he weighed the pros and cons
12b	Purpose Uncertainty	Participant describes uncertainty about their purpose	For example, Participant may describe trying to choose between two paths	Participant is not sure if she wants to pursue a mental health or business degree, and while she has an applied psychology major, she thinks that the major is vague and that she can go in a variety of directions

12c	Purpose Activity Uncertainty	Participant expresses uncertainty about what activities they will engage in relevant to their purpose, presumably throughout college	Can include uncertainty about internships, courses, etc.	Participant has been considering leadership and management as a minor or Communications as a second major
12d	Post-Undergraduate Uncertainty	Participant expresses some level of uncertainty about what they will do after college (e.g., what job to pursue or what setting to work in)	May include uncertainty about specific activities/work after college, or uncertainty about the timing of events	Participant speaks to being unsure of what her direct next steps are after college. Participant speaks to a desire to work in a hospital setting and then consider doing Nurses Without Borders service