

Being Hmong, Being American: Making Sense of U.S. Citizenship

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Dedication

For Theodore Frank Kohan, and all those sojourners who have found themselves in a new
land.

Abstract

This ethnographic case study was conducted in one 12th-grade American Government class at a public high school in a large Mid-western city. The class included 10 Hmong students, and eight of these youth agreed to participate in the study. Multiple data sources were analyzed for themes, patterns, and issues, including classroom observations and document analyses of instructional texts and American Government curriculum utilized in the observed classroom. All eight participants contributed to at least two focus group interviews, and four of these eight students completed two additional individual interviews, acting as focal contributors to this research. Two formal and various informal interviews were also conducted with the classroom teacher regarding her ideas and intentions around citizenship education for her students.

Three significant findings emerged in this study. First, the American Government classroom was a space for civic and political identity construction for Hmong youth. Second, the American Government classroom was not the only active political socialization agent; Hmong youth shaped and negotiated their citizenship identities with others including family members, and in other venues like youth clubs and cultural activities. Third, Hmong youth negotiated their citizenship identities in relationship to race, gender, and class. However, as Hmong youth prepared for adult, democratic citizenship, they experienced little opportunity in their American Government course to practice ways to navigate racialization, gender issues, and economic challenge in their personal lives. Ongoing professional development is needed to help social studies

educators address critical issues around race, gender, and class in their classrooms and schools, especially for immigrant students.

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Chapter One -- Introduction to the Research Problem

The immigrant population in the United States is growing. In 2009, 12.5% of the total U.S. population was comprised of immigrants, while in 2010 the percentage increased to 12.7% of the populace (Migration Policy Institute, 2010). In 2006, immigrants accounted for 12.1% of the United States population, the second highest percentage of the populace since 1920.¹ The number of immigrant youth in the United States is increasing as well, which is an important factor in the contemporary transformation of United States society. Between 1994 and 2006, the number of immigrant youth and children born in the United States and whose parents were also born in another country had almost doubled, increasing by nearly 1 million. During that same period the number of U.S. children born only to U.S.-born parents increased by just over ½ million (Marcelo & Lopez, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006a, 2006b). In 2000, 19.1% of all children under the age of 18 lived with at least one immigrant parent; in 2010 23.8% of children in the U.S. lived with at least one immigrant parent.

In addition, there were more immigrants in the 18- to 29-year-old age bracket (15.4%) than in any other age cohort, immigrant youth reported some of the lowest levels of in-school status (27.2%), and immigrant youth were less likely than U.S.-born youth to have a high school diploma (Marcelo & Lopez, 2006; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Immigrant citizens without a high school diploma increased 13% percent between 2000 and 2009. In 2009, 32.3% of the U.S. immigrant population lacked a high school diploma, compared to 11.4% of the native population (Migration Policy Institute, 2010).

¹ The highest rate was in 2005 (Marcelo & Lopez, 2006).

Further, in 2009, of all the U.S. families with income below the poverty line, 30.5% were children with at least one immigrant parent (Migration Policy Institute, 2010).

Hmong Immigration History

The Hmong people have experienced an extensive migration history (Yang, 2008). It is thought that the Hmong moved from Eurasia to north-central China where they established themselves in the Honan, Hupeh, and Hunan provinces around A.D. 400. In China, the Hmong encountered multiple conflicts over sovereignty. In the early 19th century, about ½ million Hmong migrated to Indochina, to what is now Vietnam and Laos. During the Vietnam War (1959-1975), many Hmong fought alongside U.S. troops until the American military left Laos in 1975. When the U.S. military exited Laos, they left the Hmong people to fight against the North Vietnamese and communist Pathet Lao soldiers. One-third of the Hmong people died during American intervention and another 1/3 of the Hmong were killed after the Vietnam War ended (Yang, 2008, p. 3). To escape the bloodshed and terror, many Hmong hiked through dangerous Laotian jungles in order to reach and cross the Mekong River where they could find sanctuary in Thai refugee camps. Many Hmong stayed in the refugee camps for months or even years until they migrated again, this time to Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, the United States, and elsewhere.

Currently, there are over 260,000 Hmong immigrants in the United States, with the largest concentrations in Fresno, California; Minneapolis and St. Paul; Minnesota, and Wausau, Wisconsin (Pfeifer, Sullivan, Yang, & Yang, 2012; Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, 2011). From 1990 to 2010, the U.S. Hmong population

increased 175%, although calculations by Carroll and Udalova (2005) and Pfeifer et al. (2012) suggest that there are more Hmong in the United States populace than are usually reported in the census. In the United States, Hmong experience some of the highest individual poverty rates when compared to other Asian groups in the country and are among the poorest of *all* demographic groups with a median household income of \$45,608 (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, 2011). Hmong maintain the youngest median age of all Asian-Americans at 20.5 years, and most Hmong children speak some Hmong at home with their family members (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Further, some Hmong immigrant students enter U.S. schools preliterate (i.e., knowledge and information transferred orally) and without prior formal school experiences (Vang, 2005). Of those Hmong 25 years and older, 38.3% lacked a high school diploma (Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, 2011).

The demographic data regarding Hmong immigrants are important because social context has been shown to impact civic and political engagement (Middaugh & Kahne, 2008). Political socialization research suggests that fewer educational experiences and lower socio-economic levels during childhood and adolescence influence civic and political participation in adulthood (Callahan, Muller, & Schiller, 2008; Chapin, 2001; Glanville, 1999). Low levels of education and socioeconomic status in childhood (both of which are experienced by many Hmong) tend to be related to lower political participation in adulthood. The data show that many Hmong will have the opportunity for full legal U.S. citizenship in the near future with the opportunity to vote and exercise additional rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Previous research shows that schools play a critical role in preparing youth for adult citizenship participation (Davies, 2002; Galston, 2001; Glanville, 1999; Hahn & Alviar-Martin, 2008; McIntosh & Youniss, 2010; Root & Billig, 2008; Torney-Purta, 2002). There is also some scholarship investigating how immigrant youth view themselves as citizens in the United States, and the roles that schools play in their construction of citizenship (Conover & Searing, 2000; DeJaeghere & McCleary, 2010; Marien, 2006; Rubin, 2007). However, the political socialization of Hmong immigrant youth has not received as much attention in scholarly literature; there is little research on how Hmong adolescent citizenship identities are being shaped in U.S. schools especially via curriculum and instruction. The purpose of this ethnographic case study then is to explore how Hmong adolescent citizenship identities are shaped and negotiated in a 12th-grade American Government class. In essence, I want to understand more about how Hmong adolescents are making sense of being U.S. citizens and how their American government classroom experiences shape their political and civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Problem Statement

There are significant reasons to study how Hmong youth shape and negotiate their citizenship identities. First, although previous scholarship details the development of Hmong adolescent ethnic and cultural identities (Lee, 2005; Ngo, 2002), there is little scholarship around how Hmong youth construct their civic and political identities. Similarly, scant literature exists regarding how Hmong youth shape their citizenship identities vis-à-vis the school environment. School activities, academic curriculum and

instruction, teachers, and peers all have the potential to hinder civic and political engagement or to help youth develop civic knowledge, prepare them for civic participation, and create environments that foster political development.

Second, several studies show that immigrants have fewer opportunities to practice civics skills (Gimpel, Lay, & Schuknecht, 2003; Lopez, Levine, Both, Kiesa, Kirby, & Marcelo, 2006). For example, in a 2006 study, Fridkin, Kenney, and Crittenden determined that European American students were significantly more trusting of the government, were more connected to major political parties, and felt more efficacious as citizens than did minority youth who included immigrants. Conversely, minority youth had fewer opportunities to practice civic skills and were less knowledgeable about government and politics. The scholars concluded that the early disparity between European American and minority youth could critically impact political participation later in life: Middle class, European American adolescents experienced more practice and preparation for impending civic activity while minority youth had fewer opportunities and resources available to develop the civic skills needed for future political life.

Third, because we live in a democracy, it is critical that *all* youth are educated in ways that help develop the motivation, skills, and understandings needed to fully participate as adult citizens (Bennett, 1997; Conover & Searing, 2000; Foner, 2001; Niemi & Smith, 2001). The political voices of some immigrant groups in U.S. society, including the Hmong, are less often heard (Ramakrishnan & Baldassarre, 2004); improved citizenship preparation might help these new citizens become more civically engaged than they are at present. When immigrants' rates of civic and political participation

increase, they may be better served by public and social policies that directly affect them (Middaugh & Kahne, 2008).

Fourth, I chose to study the political socialization of Hmong adolescent immigrant students because of the significant number of Hmong that live in and continue to immigrate to the major urban area in which I live, learn, and teach.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purposes of this ethnographic case study are to: (a) explore how Hmong adolescent students in a 12th-grade American Government class construct their conceptions of citizenship, and (b) investigate the roles of teachers, peers, and curriculum and instruction as Hmong students shape their citizenship identities. The overall research questions of this study are: *How are Hmong adolescent citizenship identities shaped and negotiated in a 12th-grade American government class? How do Hmong adolescents make sense of being a citizen of the United States?* To investigate the research problem in detail, I will also address the following sub-question: What classroom experiences shape Hmong youths' political and civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes?

Research Approach

I conducted this ethnographic case study in one 12th-grade American Government class at a public high school in a large Mid-western city. I analyzed multiple data sources for themes, patterns, and issues, while at the same time remaining aware of cultural patterns of behavior. For example, I conducted classroom observations every day during one class period, throughout the course of one school trimester from March 2011 to June 2011. In addition, I performed document analyses on instructional texts and American

Government curriculum utilized in the observed classroom. The class included 10 Hmong students, and eight of these youth agreed to participate in the study. All eight participants contributed to at least two focus group interviews, and four of these eight students completed two additional individual interviews, acting as focal contributors to this research. I also conducted two formal and various informal interviews with the classroom teacher regarding her ideas and intentions around citizenship education for her students.

Rationale and Significance

Rationale. Through this qualitative study, I aspire to contribute to our thinking about how Hmong adolescents experience civic life. The rationale for the present study emanates from my desire to uncover curricular and instructional practices that better prepare Hmong youth for civic and political participation as adults. Further, I seek educational practices focused on improving the welfare of all students, endeavors resulting in greater justice, unity, and equality.

In addition, I seek to challenge deficit theories through this dissertation. Sonia Nieto (1992) defined deficit theory as the notion that some children are inferior to other children because of genetic, cultural, or experiential differences (p. 3). Deficit theory assumptions emerge when educators approach students' language, culture, and social class as negative or inadequate, and use these characteristics to explain school failure (Nieto, 1992; Roy & Roxas, 2011). Conversely, talents and abilities these students bring to school from their various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds may be discounted, silenced, ignored, or dismissed because they don't conform to defined, mainstream

notions of educational preparation. I hope to provide insight into the citizenship experiences of some of those whose stories have to this point remained untold.

Significance. From this study I envision potential contributions to theory, practical applications, and policy improvements.

Contributions to theory. There is a great need for additional scholarly work around the political socialization of Hmong youth because of the significant numbers of Hmong living in the United States (with additional immigrants currently arriving) and due to the relatively scant amount of relevant research completed to date. Of the existing immigrant political socialization studies which will be detailed in Chapter Two, several utilized large surveys to gather data while fewer works used qualitative, interpretive methods to develop insights. Survey research may produce tentative universal generalizations based on large samples of people, but it often fails to uncover individual insight, experience, thought, or difference. The study of Hmong immigrant youth could benefit from additional field observations and ethnographic studies. Naturalistic types of studies could help address the personal experiences of these immigrants as they construct their citizenship identities, uncovering the meaning of citizenship from the perspective of the individual immigrant student.

In addition, the present study exclusively considers Hmong immigrant youth participants; the majority of immigrant political socialization studies focus on immigrant adolescents in general, or a combination of immigrant and native-born youth. Additional studies consolidate all Asian participants into one large pan-ethnic group, which is problematic because significant differences exist between various immigrant ethnicities.

Categorizing all Asians into one population may conceal distinctions between specific Asian communities (Ngo & Lee, 2007). The present study focuses on a single immigrant group and uses a naturalistic, ethnographic case study methodology to help illustrate the experiences of Hmong adolescents as they situate themselves as citizens in the United States.

Practical applications. Further scholarship around the negotiation of Hmong immigrant youth citizenship identities via their American Government course may help us better understand how classroom experiences and pedagogical practices prepare these young people for civic life in a democracy. Callahan et al. (2008) found that children of Asian immigrants were less likely to register to vote and to vote in certain elections than many other immigrant and native-born youth groups. However, children of immigrant parents (including Asian immigrants) who participated in more social studies classes, reported higher levels of voter registration and voting (p. 23). Study findings suggest that high school social studies classes and coursework predicted active citizenship participation in early adulthood and this connection was even more important for children of immigrants than it was for children of native-born parents (Callahan et al., 2008, p. 24).

Pedagogical practices also may play a significant role in how Hmong adolescent youth shape their citizenship identities. There are few studies directly investigating teacher instructional styles with immigrant learners. Cherukuri's (2007) study showed that Latino students received higher mean scores on civic knowledge tests taken in social studies classes they rated as exemplary. In their research that included immigrant youth,

Gimpel et al. (2003) and Fridkin et al. (2006) found that good teachers positively impacted students and when students enjoyed their civic education classes, they learned more and felt more politically efficacious. Therefore, it is particularly valuable for immigrant youth who may feel disconnected from the political sphere to experience a trusting, positive relationship with a social studies teacher: These connections may result in students developing greater political and civic knowledge, while feeling better equipped for civic and political engagement. My study then, may help us determine ways that social studies education and teachers can prepare Hmong immigrant students for active participation in U.S. political life.

Policy improvements. The primary purpose of social studies education is to prepare students, including immigrant youth, for their roles as local, national, and global citizens (NCSS, 2010). Previous research shows how important social studies education is in preparing immigrant youth for citizenship in the United States (Callahan et al., 2008; McDevitt & Kiouisis, 2006). If young learners are to become effective, participating members of democratic society, then social studies education must be a significant part of the curriculum. However, students receive less political and civic education today than in the past: civics education is usually condensed into a single trimester class while in the 1960s, students often participated in three courses including democracy, civics, and government (CIRCLE, 2003). Further, at present, many immigrant students tend to take even fewer social studies classes than their native-born peers (Callahan et al., 2008).

It is problematic that although social studies education plays a significant role in preparing U.S. youth for the responsibilities of citizenship, many students, including

immigrant youth who need this coursework the most, are receiving less social studies instruction. To better prepare students for civic life under current curricular circumstances, CIRCLE (2003) encourages “researchers [to] develop and implement more rigorous studies about effective civic education approaches” (p. 7). Through this study, it is my goal to uncover successful practice in civics and government curriculum and instruction (especially for immigrant youth) that could inform policy around civics and government education.

Researcher Perspectives

I am a social studies educator of diverse adolescent and adult learners, and at the same time a life-long student of social studies education. I am also the grandchild of a transnational – a sojourner who returned to his Eastern European homeland at least one time before settling in the United States due to global war. These experiences have left me with questions about the immigrant experience and what it means for citizenship in the United States.

At the end of my undergraduate studies in political science, I travelled to Morocco, North Africa, and lived there for a year studying under a female professor of health and nutrition. When I returned, I looked for work in an education field because I wanted to return to school to earn a teaching license. I was hired by the largest school district in the state to work as a paraprofessional in an early childhood education program in a housing project on the impoverished north side of the city. This was my first experience working with Hmong families. As a classroom teacher I instructed pre-school age children, a few being African American, but the majority were Hmong. In the

classroom next to mine, the infant area, was a Hmong teacher named Cha, who also brought her own non-school age children to work each day.² Cha immediately invited me into her classroom, acting as an advisor and interpreter whenever I needed help. As we became better friends, more than once she asked me to join her family for dinner -- usually soup with homemade noodles. I did not ask for enough assistance though. One day I saw thin red marks on the back of one of my male students. I did not know what these marks were, but instead of telling Cha, I told the European American, lead-teacher of the entire school program. She called child protection and the family of the young boy came under scrutiny. Little did I know that the family had practiced 'coining,' a traditional form of Hmong healing, and the marks on the child's back were only a sign of this practice, not abuse. I learned a hard cultural lesson and believe the Hmong families in the school program lost trust and respect in me from that time on. However, this first school experience, along with my travels to Morocco, opened my eyes and heart to the cultures, worldviews, and experiences of others.

I did not have the opportunity to regain the trust of the Hmong families because I left the early childhood school when I was accepted into a social studies teaching baccalaureate licensure program. At the conclusion of my studies, I was hired as an 8th-grade U.S. history teacher in a first-ring suburb to two major Midwestern U.S. cities. I instructed five classes every day, each containing approximately 30 students. As my school district bordered two major urban areas each with its own school district, families living at the boundaries had the opportunity to enroll their children in any of the three school systems. One of the largest concentrations of Hmong Americans in the United

² All names have been changed to protect participant identity.

States lives in one of the urban areas, and many of the Hmong children in that city, attended school in my district. Hmong students were enrolled in most of my classes and I worked with various Hmong families over the 12 years that I instructed eighth grade. I shared my classroom with Hmong students from various backgrounds: 1st, 1.5, and 2nd generation immigrants (see Table 1 for a description of immigrant generations), a nephew to a state senator, English Language Learners (ELL), special education students, gang members, overachievers, and ‘average’ students. I learned from the Hmong youth and their families the importance of school, family, and community in their lives, and I often wondered about their experiences as an immigrant group in the United States.

Table 1

Immigrant Generational Status

Generational Status	Definition	Attributes
First Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual born in another country and moves to the United States as an adult or late in adolescence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds greater appreciation for occupational and educational opportunities in the United States. • Identity remains oriented toward country of origin.
1.5 Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person born abroad but raised for most of life in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciates American opportunities, learns how to take advantage of those opportunities. • Combines characteristics and traditions from the home country and culture with the new society.
Second Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person born in the United States with at least one foreign-born parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns more about U.S. culture than parents, but appreciates the advantages less. • Personal identity toward the United States. • Faces the challenge of assimilating into United States culture while trying to remain within the cultural community of parents.
Third Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual, parents, and grandparents born in the United States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete integration into the economic and social majority of the United States. • First language is now English.

Note. Data for this table come from Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2005, 2006; and Stepick & Stepick, 2002.

As a social studies educator, I firmly believe that one of the most important aspects of social studies education is preparing students for citizenship in a democracy, a belief that is supported by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2008,

2009, 2010). When I was teaching I often asked myself how immigrants situated themselves as citizens in the United States. These citizenship questions followed me into my graduate studies, where I continued to think about what citizenship means for immigrants in the United States. This dissertation then, is an extension of those queries, thoughts, and experiences.

Definitions of Key Terminology Used in This Study

There are multiple concepts important to the study of Hmong adolescent conceptions of citizenship. I will use the definitions for the terms found below throughout the course of this dissertation.

Citizenship. Citizenship is membership in a state or group. Sherrod, Flanagan, and Youniss (2002) and Conover and Searing (2002) note that citizenship is often considered in its legal, political sense, but that connections to groups including family, community, religion, and ethnicity are germane to citizenship as well.

Civic engagement. Civic engagement refers to a person's connections to groups outside of the home, that work in community in pursuit of similar ideals. Student civic engagement refers for example, to the students' connections with the school and outside communities in such endeavors as volunteer work.

Civic identity. Civic identity reflects the psychological elements of membership in a political community, and denotes the meanings and connections people make to their political and civic environments. Beth Rubin (2012) considers two aspects central to young peoples' civic identity: "students' experiences in relation to the learned ideals of the United States," and "students' attitudes toward civic participation" (p. 6).

Mainstream education. Mainstream education reflects European American standards and values and tends to place non-European American students at a disadvantage (Nieto, 1992, p. 274).

Mainstream student. Mainstream student refers to learners who are European American, White, and middle class.

Political agency. The exercise of personal, social, and/or group rights, capacities, and possibilities for political engagement and action.

Political efficacy. Kahne and Westheimer (2006) define political efficacy as the “sense of one’s ability to participate effectively in the political process” (p. 289).

Political engagement. Political engagement denotes those personal actions that impact legislative, electoral, or judicial processes and public decision-making (McBride, Benitez, & Sherraden, 2003).

Political identity. Political identity reflects how an individual understands and expresses herself politically. Collective forms of political identity include class, race, religion, and nation. Huddy (2001) describes political identity as identification with a major political party or the adoption of an ideological name or term used in self-description.

Political socialization. Political socialization is the way a society or culture transfers its political values and norms to its youth, and about how those children comprehend, interpret, and attribute meaning to those values and norms to develop their civic identity (Avery, 2002, p. 191).

Political tolerance. Political tolerance is “the willingness to accord basic civil liberties to individuals or groups one dislikes or with whom one disagrees” (Avery, 2002, p. 191).

Racialization. Lauri Olsen (1997) describes racialization in detail: “The process of the social construction of race is termed racialization. The concept of racialization rests on an understanding that race is a social construct that is constantly being taught, learned, recreated, and renegotiated. As people learn the expectations and beliefs that others have for them because of their skin color, they are becoming racialized. As our society decides on new categories of race, and determines the importance and implications of those categories, we are engaging in racializing” (p. 254).

Transnational. Transnationals are sometimes also termed multinationals or bi-nationals. Transnationals are immigrants who maintain familial, political, and economic relationships with their homeland, understanding that they may return to their country of origin rather than stay in the United States.

Dissertation Organization

The remainder of this dissertation includes five additional chapters. Chapter Two presents a literature review of four significant themes related to this study -- Political and Civic Conceptions of Citizenship, Political Socialization of Immigrant Youth, Immigrant Identity, and Immigrants’ Citizenship Education and School Experiences. A narrative and graphic description of the conceptual framework is also presented in this section. Chapter Three introduces the research methodology, demographic data and school setting, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, issues of reflexivity and trustworthiness,

and study limitations. Chapter Four presents findings in case study format for each of the four focal contributors to this study (Andrew, Sandy, Oliver, and Soua). Chapter Five provides an overall discussion of the findings while Chapter Six concludes the dissertation with suggestions for policy, practice, and future research.

Chapter Two -- Review of the Literature

Overview

The purpose of this ethnographic case study is to explore how Hmong adolescent students in a 12th-grade American Government class construct their conceptions of citizenship. I seek to investigate the roles of teachers, peers, and curriculum and instruction as Hmong students negotiate their citizenship identities in a 12th-grade American government class. I want to learn how Hmong adolescents make sense of being a citizen. The following integrated, critical review of literature situates the research problem within the larger body of research.

Rationale for Topics

This critical review explores the connections between four major areas of literature: Political and Civic Conceptions of Citizenship, Political Socialization of Immigrant Youth, Immigrant Identity, and Immigrants' Citizenship Education and School Experiences. The previous research on immigrant political socialization reveals how immigrant youth are coming to understand themselves as citizens. Although some of the following research addresses Hmong adolescents in particular, most of the literature addresses immigrant youth in general; overall there is little research regarding how Hmong youth conceptualize their own citizenship. Previous research from the four areas noted above lay the foundations for this ethnographic case study as I seek to learn how Hmong adolescents situate themselves as citizens.

Political and Civic Conceptions of Citizenship

There are multiple constructions and understandings of citizenship. Citizenship is concerned with how members of a political community engage and act in public life and how those people make group decisions. Citizenship can be considered as a legal status (e.g., those who have rights and responsibilities in a polity versus those who do not), and/or as an administrative category (e.g., legal status is ranked and ordered with particular rights and responsibilities offered to certain people, as in the pre-19th Amendment United States when men were allowed to vote while women were denied the same opportunity).

Several scholars have defined various constructions of citizenship, often emphasizing the relationship between the government and the governed. For example, Sherrod, Flanagan, and Youniss (2002) and Conover and Searing (2002) note that citizenship is often considered in its legal, political sense, but that connections to groups including family, community, religion, and ethnicity are relevant to citizenship as well. Maira (2009) describes citizenship as “identification with or dissent from the nation-state, built on an affective as well as political logic of national belonging that has different meanings for various groups within the nation and is a crucial site for the constitution of imperial power” (p. 25). Siu (2001) defines citizenship as the “behaviors, discourses, and practices that give meaning to citizenship as lived experience” in the context of “an uneven and complex field of structural inequalities and webs of power relations” (p. 9).

In their daily lives, people experience intersecting and concurrent forms of citizenship (e.g., civic, contested, cultural, flexible, economic, political, and

transnational). This section of the literature review will focus on civic and political constructions of citizenship originating from political science and political psychology literature and connected to education research.

Conventional Political Activity Versus Social Movements

In the IEA Study, Torney-Purta et al. (2001) established that 14-year-olds tended to describe good citizenship in terms of *conventional political activity* or *social movements*. Conventional political activities included voting in elections, joining political parties, engaging in political discussions, and showing respect for government officials. Students generally found the social movement dimension of citizenship to be more meaningful and important than conventional political activity: In their conceptions of positive citizenship practice for adults, 14-year-olds were more likely to support participation in environmental groups and human rights activities, as opposed to more conventional political and civic activities.

Responsibility, Participation, and Justice

Another conception of citizenship focuses on the themes of personal responsibility, participation, and justice. Using observations, interviews, and pre/post surveys, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) studied 10 democratic education programs in the United States over two years. Although all of the education programs were successful, each focused on different democratic priorities, goals, and strategies, and therefore resulted in very different types of citizenship preparation and outcomes. For example, after instruction some students showed an increase in civic knowledge while others were participating in extra-governmental social activism.

Using democratic theory and the education programs' goals and practices as foundations, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) developed three conceptions of citizenship. *Personally responsible* citizens for example, act in a responsible way in their environment by obeying the law or donating blood. *Participatory* citizens engage in civic activities at local, state, and/or national levels, usually in collective, group-oriented efforts. *Justice-oriented* citizens analyze the relationship between social, economic, and political affairs and act on their findings. Each type of citizenship reflects the ways that civic education programs tend to frame curriculum and instruction to educate students for democratic citizenship.

Membership, Sense of Citizenship, and Practice

Conover and Searing (2002) consider membership, sense of citizenship, and practice the most significant components of citizenship. *Membership* is defined by one's "legal status" or "standing" in the political community (Conover & Searing, 2002, p. 92). From one's legal position in society comes various levels and nuances of citizenship (e.g., local, regional, state, national, multi-national like the European Union, and global). *Sense of citizenship* refers to identity and understanding, the psychological elements of membership in a political community. Identity denotes the meanings and connections people make to their political environment while understanding includes the belief citizens create and maintain about their relationship to the political environment,

including other citizens.³ Conover and Searing's final facet of citizenship is *practice* – the actions in which citizens participate in their public endeavors.

Conover and Searing (2002) questioned what being a contemporary citizen entails:

To think clearly what kind of citizenship ought to exist and how best to achieve it, we need to know first what actually does exist...we need to know a great deal more than we do at present about how citizens themselves understand their conduct as citizens. (p. 110)

Conover and Searing then combined the membership, sense of citizenship, and practice components of citizenship with classroom activities, discussions, and focus groups to investigate the meaning of citizenship for junior and senior high school adolescents and their parents in Great Britain and the United States. Some of this research (Conover & Searing, 2000) will be further reviewed later in this chapter.

Post-national, Cosmopolitan Patriot, and Liberal National Citizenship

Myers and Zaman (2009) wanted to know how globalization affects people's understandings of citizenship and to detect possible supranational forms of citizenship. To achieve these goals, they conducted a mixed-methods case study that included a questionnaire and an interview. Seventy-seven high school students participated in the study, 19 of whom were immigrants. The authors separated their participants into two groups based on Immigrant Youth (IM) or Dominant Culture (DC) status.

³ Conover and Searing's (2002) explanation of identity focuses on civic identity. Civic identity is shaped through one's psychological relationships to political communities (e.g., the Democratic Party) and to citizenship categories (e.g., *citizen*).

From the students' ideas, three constructions of citizenship emerged, locating civic beliefs on a continuum between national and global citizenship. Students designated *Liberal-nationalists* thought globalism was idealistic and basically impossible, unneeded, and disadvantageous. These youth deemed nation-states as the most promising venue toward solving world problems and helping people on a global scale. Students labeled *Cosmopolitan-patriots* were concerned with the human race but also felt pride in and support for their national cultural and political communities; these students balanced concern for the world with an allegiance to their own country. Students supporting *Post-national* citizenship thought one's primary responsibility was to the human race and alleviating shared worldwide problems. These participants believed that citizenship involved global responsibility and activity and that people held less responsibility toward the nation-state. Further, *Post-national* citizenry extended to all people regardless of where they lived or their socioeconomic or ethnic status.

Myers and Zaman (2009) found that IM and DC students had distinct, but overlapping citizenship conceptions: Immigrant students tended to support positions that emphasized a common, global citizenry while dominant culture youth upheld standpoints that focused on national sovereignty over global affiliation.

Conclusions: Citizenship as a Nuanced Construct

It is clear from the literature that there are many ways to approach the meaning of citizenship. The conceptions of citizenship detailed in this section help create a layered, nuanced, and concurrent conceptualization of citizenship as depicted in Figure 1., *Private Citizenship* represents the legal, contractual relationship between community members.

The private citizen votes in elections, joins political parties, and obeys laws, but does so in order to protect her or his private interests. In the *Participatory Citizenship* domain, citizens engage in civic activity at local, state, and national levels. Political participation may include individual endeavors at this point, but trends toward the group and community or consideration of community in local political spheres. At the *Citizenship for Social Movement* level, citizens participate in environmental groups and human rights activities, and their connection to each other expands from the local, state, and national levels to the global arena. In the *Citizenship for Justice and Change* domain, citizens analyze relations between social, economic, and political affairs at the local, state, national, and global levels and act on their findings to create justice-based change.

The political science and political psychology literature helps characterize how people define their role and practice of citizenship; however, there is little political science/psychology research that directly investigates how immigrant adolescents (including Hmong) conceptualize citizenship.

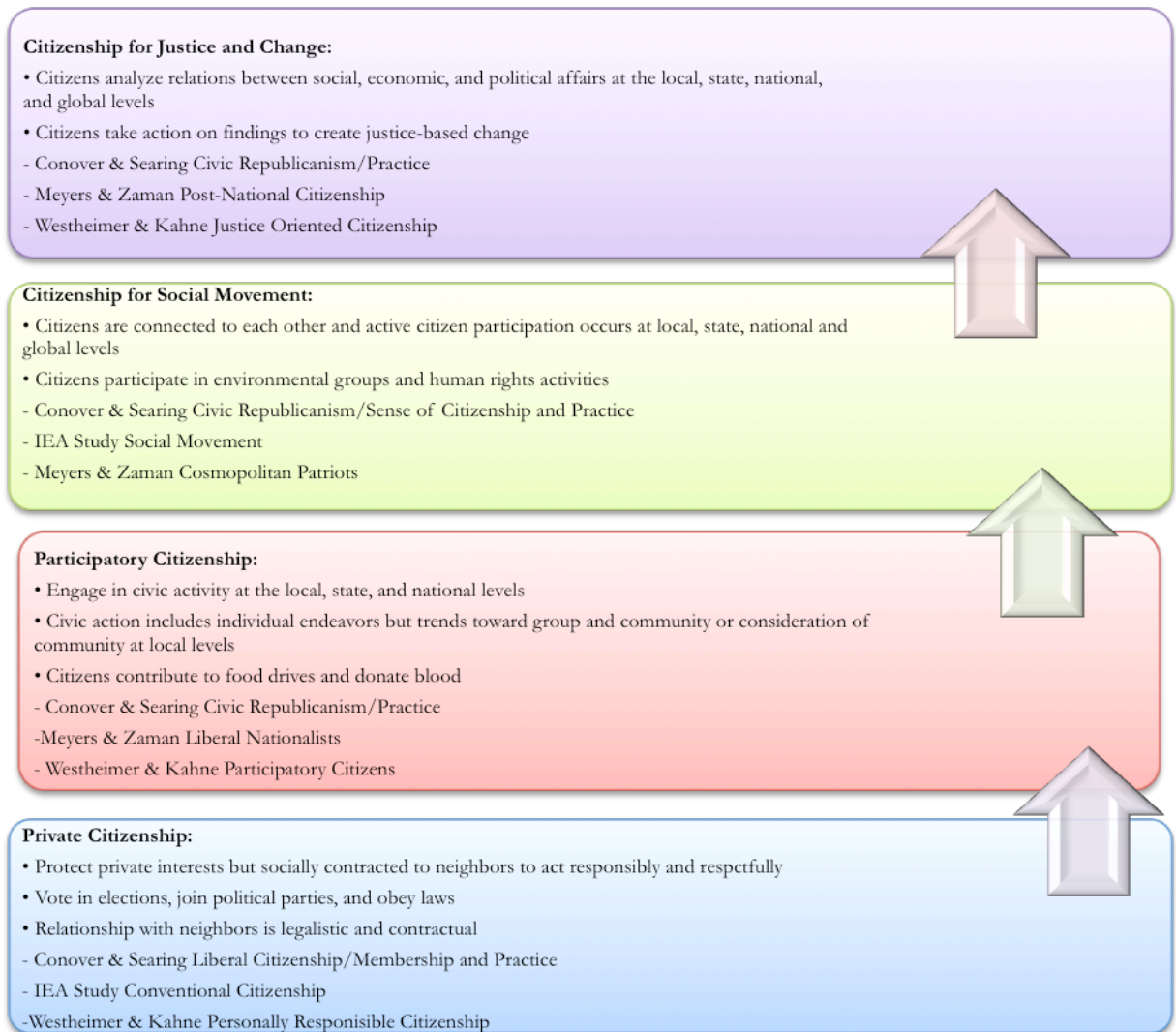
The next section of the literature review addresses previous research regarding how immigrant youth have been prepared for citizenship through the process of political socialization.

Previous Research

What Do We Know About the Political Socialization of Immigrant Youth?

Political socialization is the way a society or culture transfers its political values and norms to its youth, and about how those children comprehend, interpret, and attribute meaning to those values and norms to develop their civic identity (Avery, 2002). The

Figure 1. Conceptions of Citizenship



body of political socialization work is vast and much of it is beyond the scope of this review. Although there is some political socialization research that investigates immigrant youth, there are very few studies of Hmong youths' political socialization experiences. Therefore, the political socialization studies in this section are multidisciplinary and grounded in the fields of political science, political psychology, cultural diversity, and education; address youth 25 years old and younger; and include

immigrant youth as participants or address immigrant issues as part of the context of the study or the study's conclusions. Several themes emerged from this analysis of the immigrant youth political socialization research and are described below.

An Immigrant's Previous Life Experiences Shape Civic and Political Experiences in Their New Country

The politics of an immigrant's country of origin may affect his or her political participation, experiences, and understandings in a new country (de la Garza, 2004; Tam Cho, 1999). For example, Eisikovits (2005) utilized semi-structured interviews with 30 18-year-old high school senior immigrants to investigate how students from several European republics of the former USSR participated in Israeli civic life.⁴ The immigrant adolescents were all citizens of former Soviet satellite countries in Eastern Europe and immigrated to Israel as young adolescents during the early 1990s. Eisikovits identified three types of attitudes among the students: One group was politically well-informed, and interested in elections and the public sphere (*critical-knowledgeable*); a second group was labeled *integrationist-uninformed* and these all-female students were politically unaware but cognizant of their lack of knowledge; a third group of all males was also *politically-uninformed*, but acted uninterested or in opposition to civic activity. Eisikovits found that the political history and experiences that students brought with them from their birth countries to Israel discouraged the development of civic competence and participation; the students did not see themselves having the power to change government. Eisikovits explained how the ex-Soviet citizens saw themselves as subjects

⁴ Eisikovits' (2005) study is multifaceted and addresses family and peer relationships in addition to the influence of the media. I reference the study several times in this literature review.

of the government rather than political participants. The students in Eisikovits' study seldom contributed to political discussion in Israel because they considered discussion a teaching method reflective of their education in the USSR. The students' attitudes toward participating in political discussion were negatively impacted by their previous educational and citizenship experiences.

In addition to one's prior political experiences, an immigrant's socioeconomic background is crucial to later political activity. Fridkin et al. (2006) found that minority (including Latino immigrants), African American, and European American youth differed substantially in their knowledge of political information and civic practice as early as the 8th grade. In this study, schools with large numbers of minority students also tended to have the most economically disadvantaged students and the lowest levels of school resources. The scholars surveyed 439 8th-grade students about their civic knowledge, attitudes, and participation. European Americans were significantly more trustful of government, were more connected to major political parties, and felt more efficacious as citizens than did minority youth. Conversely, minority youth had fewer opportunities to practice civic skills and were less knowledgeable about government and politics. The authors concluded that the early disparity between European American and minority youth could have a critical impact on political participation later in life: Middle class European American early-adolescents experienced more practice and preparation for future civic activity while minority youth had the fewest opportunities and resources available to develop the civic skills needed for future political life.

Being an immigrant positively impacted one's tolerance and opinions toward other immigrants. In a large (n = 90,000), multifaceted project, Torney-Purta, Lehman, Oswald, and Schultz (2001) surveyed 13- to 15-year-old students in 28 countries as part of the IEA study. The IEA endeavor was a two-phased multinational civics education project entitled *Citizenship and Education in Twenty-Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen*. The goal of the study was to "identify and examine in a comparative framework the ways in which young people are prepared to undertake their role as citizens in democracies" (Torney-Purta et al., 2001, p. 13).⁵ One section of the survey included an eight-item scale that addressed immigrants' opportunities to enjoy the same rights as others, vote, maintain customs, receive the same education as others, and to speak their native language. In most of the participating countries, students who were immigrants themselves supported other immigrants and their rights more often than those who did not share the émigré experience. Being an immigrant then may influence how she or he views political engagement (e.g., the opportunity to experience the same rights as others in a culture, including the right to vote) in the new country of residence.

Tensions Between Cultural Value Differences

United States culture is considered highly individualistic and emotionally independent (Conover, Crewe, & Searing, 1991; Hui, 1988; Olneck, 2003). Characteristics of individualism include the separation of young people from their parents in early adulthood, high self-esteem, self-actualization, and the development of a personal identity (Hui, 1988; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Conversely, a collectivist value

⁵ For more information about the IEA study see Torney-Purta (2000, 2001, 2002, 2004), Torney-Purta and Amadeo (2003), Torney-Purta and Schwille (1986), Torney-Purta, Schwille, and Amadeo (1999).

orientation is characterized by concern for the implications of one's acts on others, sharing personal resources, emotional dependence on others, and group harmony and solidarity (Rhee, Uleman, Roman, & Lee, 1995). Several youth political socialization studies conclude that minority and immigrant groups tend to be more collectivist in nature and that this value orientation may be incompatible with the curriculum, instruction, and philosophy that these students experience at school (Conover, 1984; Conover & Searing, 2000). Additional studies suggest that immigrant students' social, cultural, and political backgrounds differ from the norms of contemporary United States society.

As Conover and Searing (2000) explain, the social norms and cultural backgrounds of immigrant groups impact their civic and political behavior and attitudes. The scholars studied the psychological and social contexts of political socialization among 379 rural, suburban, urban, and immigrant high school students with the goal of better understanding what citizenship means from each of these perspectives. Teachers and students in the four communities were interviewed about the meaning of citizenship, their rights and responsibilities as citizens, the amount of discussion and deliberation they experienced in various settings (e.g., home, school, church, with friends), and the levels of tolerance that they held for other groups of people. Students in the immigrant community lived in San Antonio, Texas, were Mexican-American, lower-working class, and mostly Catholic.

Conover and Searing (2000) found that social norms within the Mexican-American community emphasized respect for seniors and social civility, while at the

same time discouraged political discussion and deliberation. Further, these immigrants exhibited low levels of tolerance for homosexuals and extremist groups, attitudes perhaps impacted by the conservative religious and ethnic background of the people (Conover & Searing, 2000, p. 107). The immigrant students reported the lowest levels of discussion among the four communities in this study. Conover and Searing explained that people must understand what actions citizens perform in a democracy before they can carry out these behaviors. Civic discussion and tolerance are central to life in a democracy, but students in this study's immigrant community had few opportunities to practice either because of their ethnic and cultural norms. The scholars suggested that school experiences should offer additional opportunities for students to practice civic dialogue and social interaction in preparation for future participation as citizens in a democracy.

Mexican-American students are not the only youth whose ethnic background sometimes conflicts with mainstream United States culture. There is some research that illustrates how collectivist and individualistic value orientations can impact Hmong students' school experiences and family life. Stacey Lee (2002) described how first- and second-generation Hmong youth developed ideas and understandings about American culture, civic life, and being American from their school experiences. Lee conducted ethnographic interviews and observations with 119 Hmong students in a Wisconsin high school during the 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 school years. She also interviewed teachers and school administrators about the experiences of Hmong American students, analyzed pertinent documents, and participated in district meetings for Southeast Asian families. Students, teachers, and administrators agreed that a culture of "whiteness" reinforced

pervading social and cultural inequalities regarding race. As non-whites and second-generation immigrants, Hmong Americans in this study learned that their cultural differences established them as “foreign” and “un-American” (Lee, 2002, p. 243). Further, the problems that Hmong students faced at school were due to cultural disconnects between the students’ ethnicity and the culture of the school.

United States schools are a major source of socialization for Hmong students, and their parents realize the importance of school for their children (Vang & Flores, 1999). However, schools in the United States encourage adolescent independence and self-expression, which is culturally at odds with certain Hmong traditions. There is some indication that pedagogical practices consonant with ethnic values tend to result in better academic success by Hmong students (Chiang, 2000; Xiong & Detzner, 2005).

Formal Institutions are Important in the Political Socialization of Immigrant Youth

In addition to schools, the family, media, and peers influence the political socialization of immigrant youth.

The family. Much socialization research points to the family as a crucial source of political attitudes: The family is held second to school as a source of political influence (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 1997; Camp, 2003; Flanagan & Gallay, 1995; Jankowski, 1992; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Niemi & Jennings, 1991; Ramakrishnan & Espenshade, 2001). In general, children who talk to their parents about politics score higher on tests of civic knowledge and political attitudes than those youth who do not engage in political dialogue with their guardians (Fridkin et al., 2006). Conversely, parents who are politically inactive model that behavior for their youngsters as well (Hart

& Atkins, 2002). Although immigrant families possess various resources as they assimilate into a new culture, the family unit provides significant support as immigrants integrate into their new society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Few studies, however, have investigated the connections between the family and young immigrants' political learning, including within the Hmong immigrant community.

One part of Eisikovits' (2005) study focused on how participating youth interacted with their families, while other aspects of the research addressed peers and the media. *Critical-knowledgeable* students identified the family as the foundation of their own political attitudes and ideas; however, they acknowledged that their parents held different concerns than they did and that they would make their own political choices as necessary. Political discussion within the family was foreign to the *Integrationist-uninformed* youth. These students stated that they were seldom aware of their parents' political positions because they had no time to discuss political matters within the family unit. *Oppositionary-uninformed* adolescents declared that they did not know and did not care about their parents' political opinions. For example, one youth said: "Why should I care about my family's opinions on the elections? Personally, I don't give a damn about politics, so why vote? This stuff means nothing to me" (Eisikovits, 2005, p. 465).

Family resources like education and income impact the political socialization of immigrant youth, and in the United States, income and education levels can vary based on racial and ethnic background. Fridkin et al. (2006) and Portes and Rumbaut (2006) explained how parents with advanced education more successfully impart social and political skills and ideas to their children. Further, the higher the family income, the more

likely children have access to political information from resources like newspapers, news magazines, and the Internet. Fridken et al. (2006) found that students who talked to their parents about politics and government and paid attention to news scored higher on political knowledge tests. Immigrant and minority children with access to fewer educational and financial resources lagged behind their European American peers in political socialization and development.

Media. Although it has been determined that newspapers, news magazines, Internet sources, and television play some role in immigrant civic development, the extent of media impact on immigrant political socialization is unclear. Part of the reason for this uncertainty is because few studies have analyzed immigrants, the media, and political socialization specifically. However, one study was found that examined the role of media in immigrant civic development. In a section of Eisikovits' (2005) study of former Soviet émigrés to Israel that focused on media, *Critical-knowledgeable* students stated that they read the newspaper daily, participated in political commentary on the Internet, and watched political programs on television. *Integrationist-uninformed* immigrants explained that due to their family's poorer financial situations, there usually was only one television in the house and therefore civic or political broadcasts were seldom viewed. Some youth in this same group shared that they had access to newspapers, the majority of which were Russian-language Israeli presses. The *Oppositionary-uniformed* students declared that they held little trust in newspapers in any language and did not view the "propaganda" found on television (Eisikovits, 2005, p. 464).

Peer groups. Although there is scant literature available compared to studies regarding the influence of the school, family, and media, available data indicate that youth affect their peers' political socialization. Ehman (1980, p. 111) showed that peers were a very important socialization agent while Tedin (1980) found that on certain political topics such as the legalization of marijuana, adolescents were more influenced by their peers than by their own parents. Torney-Purta (2001) also established the important influence of friends as adolescents become participating adult citizens (p. 47).

Only one study (Eisikovits, 2005) was found that investigated the impact of peers on an immigrant youth's political socialization, and this research was previously mentioned in this review. Students in all three of Eisikovits' political attitude groups asserted that they seldom discussed civic ideas with their Russian counterparts, and that political communication with Israeli peers was limited because they wanted to prevent conflicts with their friends and classmates. In general, political communication, conversation, and discussion between peers is a desirable component of social studies education (Hess, 2008, 2009; Parker, 2008). However, in the case of Eisikovits' participants, students spoke less openly about politics with their peers rather than participating in an open discussion.

“American” Citizenship Identity is Experienced Differently Among Immigrant Youth

Citizenship is often considered in its legal sense – membership in a polity with entitlement to rights and privileges. However, whether one holds legal citizenship status or not, there is a psychological dimension to citizenship that involves issues of loyalty,

social responsibility, and patriotism (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002). As an immigrant acculturates into U.S. society, she or he develops a new citizenship identity that unites one's culture of origin with that of the United States. Each immigrant's acculturation process and cultural identity experience is unique and connected to legal, psychological, economic, generational, and other aspects of citizenship. Although few political socialization studies investigated young immigrants' American identity development, relevant findings were identified in three studies.

In a two-phased study, Tsai, Mortensen, Wong, and Hess (2002) compared how the meaning of "being American" differed for Hmong, Chinese, and European American groups in the United States. Using a questionnaire, college undergraduate students were asked what it meant to be American and what was significant about American culture. Responses from the three ethnic groups were coded into six categories: Cultural exposure (one's experience with other cultures), social status (the position of one's group as minority or majority), customs/tradition (references to specific rules and expectations in U.S. society), ethnic diversity (cultural diversity in the U.S. population), patriotism (pride about being American), and political ideology (themes of equality, opportunity, and justice). When describing what it meant to be American, Hmong students described the importance of social status and customs/traditional behavior more often, and discussed patriotism fewer times than did their European American counterparts. For example, one Hmong participant said, "Being American means being an individual...being able to do what you want to do" (Tsai et al., 2002, p. 265). In certain ways, the Chinese- and European Americans expressed different associations with "being American." Chinese

Americans tended to cite customs/traditional behavior more and ethnic diversity less often than did the European Americans. However, there were no significant differences in how Chinese- and European Americans described “being American” vis-à-vis cultural exposure, social status, patriotism, and political ideology. For both the Chinese- and Hmong American students, “being American,” related more to specific American customs and traditional behaviors than for the European Americans (e.g., being an individual, being able to do what one wants to do). The scholars concluded that differences between the groups reflected the students’ immigrant or citizenship status, social and political concerns, and personal experiences.

A student’s cultural background can influence personal political identity. Jennifer Marien (2006) conducted classroom observations, student interviews, and focus groups in order to determine how youth viewed themselves as citizens in the United States. Participants in the study (12 of 14 were immigrants) described their citizenship self-identities in such a way as to be clustered in three groups: “Embracing,” “Ambivalence,” and “Rejecting.” *Embracing* students accepted the “American Dream.” Youth in the *Ambivalence* category questioned, but ultimately accepted cultural ideology in the United States, and *Rejecting* learners did not believe or agree with mainstream American cultural creeds. Across all three groups, students addressed individualism, equality/racism, and assimilation based on their personal, cultural, and ethnic perspective and background. For example, most students in the *Ambivalence* cluster compared the promise of equality in the United States to the daily reality of social, economic, and political inequities. Generally, these students thought that life was better in the United States than in other

countries, but it was still not fair and equal (Marien, 2006, p. 232). Ambivalent students most often combined their American citizenship identity with other affiliations, usually connected to their parents' home countries. Marien (2006, p. 257) concluded that students' responses revealed a more nuanced and complicated sense of citizenship than previously described in political socialization literature. Further, she stated that in their social studies classes, students were reflecting on and talking about their political identities as United States citizens.

In Stacey Lee's (2002) study of Hmong youth, she found that in school, some Hmong students learned that their citizenship and "Americanness" was valued less than that of their European American peers. Whiteness remained the cultural norm while those ethnicities other than European American were considered foreign, unusual, and inadequate. Hmong Americans perceived that their culture was not completely understood or respected by others in the school, including teachers, administration, and student peers. Perhaps in response to this, the Hmong youth attempted to accentuate their "American" attributes like wearing certain stylish clothing while expunging more culturally Hmong traditions.

Immigrants Tend to Hold a More Active View of the Responsibilities of Citizenship

While they do not always exhibit it in their daily behavior and routines, immigrants sometimes possess a greater sense of the responsibilities of citizenship than do non-immigrant youth (Conover & Searing, 2000). For example, Cherukuri (2007) investigated Latino students' knowledge and perceptions of American citizenship. In this study, although Latino students exhibited limited civic knowledge, they considered moral

and ethical behavior and the ability to make wise decisions significant qualities of a good, responsible citizen. Immigrant youth in the Lopez et al. (2006) study were more likely than native-born youth to view political involvement as their personal responsibility rather than their choice. Conversely, most United States youth focus on their rights as citizens rather than their responsibilities (Conover & Searing, 2000; Niemi & Junn, 1998). Although they engaged in the lowest levels of discussion among youth in the study, immigrant students in San Antonio, Texas believed that “staying informed” and “participating in public discussions” were important duties of citizenship (Conover & Searing, 2000, p. 108). However, cultural context is crucial here: Behavioral norms within Latino immigrant communities emphasizing civility towards others and respect for seniors often discourage students from participating in discussion or other political behavior. Thus, many immigrant youth support certain political responsibilities and actions but often do not convert their understanding of civic duty into action in everyday life.

Conclusions: What We Know About the Political Socialization of Immigrant Youth

In summary, the body of research reveals several important findings regarding the political socialization of immigrant students. First, an immigrant’s previous life experiences shape civic and political experiences in their new country. Second, value differences exist between those of an immigrant’s country of origin, and the cultural and political norms in the United States. Many new immigrants arrive in a highly individualistic United States society from decidedly collectivist cultures, and this change can be problematic for immigrants and their families. Third, formal institutions influence

immigrant political socialization processes. School activities, the family, media, and peer groups all have the potential to deter civic and political engagement or to help students develop civic knowledge, prepare youth for civic participation, and create environments that foster political development. Fourth, being “American” is experienced differently by various immigrant youth, often based on school and immigration experiences, and ethnic background. Finally, immigrant students often possess a greater understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship when compared to non-immigrant youth. However, immigrants do not always perform those citizenship duties in their daily lives. Although the previous studies reveal various findings on immigrant political socialization, overall there is little research investigating the political socialization of Hmong immigrant youth. I now turn to immigrant identity scholarship, and examine immigrants’ civic and political identity development in relationship to U.S. citizenship.

Multifaceted Immigrant Citizenship Identities

Identity is central to the study of how Hmong youth conceptualize citizenship. This section of the literature review explores theoretical aspects of identity, identity construction among immigrant adolescents, and Hmong adolescent constructions of social and cultural identity.

Identity Theory

James Paul Gee (2001) described identity as “being recognized as a certain kind of person in a given context,” and as a way of looking at who we are as individuals (p. 99). Gee explained that people have multiple identities that are connected to their experiences and relationships in society and that there are four ways to view identity: As

Nature-identity, Institution-identity, Discourse-identity, and Affinity-identity. The Nature-identity (or N-identity) emanates from forces over which we have no control, like the genes we carry as human beings. The Institutional-identity (I-identity) is conferred through institutional authorization, imparting identity through a set of rules, laws, and traditions, as when someone receives the degree of medical doctor. The Discursive-identity (D-identity) is granted by recognition or acknowledgment from others in society and can also be viewed as an accomplishment (e.g., being charismatic or high-achieving). The Affinity-identity (A-identity) is attained through participation or sharing a certain set of practices with other people like being on a soccer team or in a church choir. People in these groups have “allegiance to, access to, and participation in specific practices that provide group members with specific experiences” (Gee, 2001, p. 105). Gee further explained that (a) a person cannot hold any identity without an existing “interpretive system” in society that acknowledges the identity, and (b) almost any aspect of identity (including citizenship identity) can be approached through each of the four interpretive systems (p. 107).

Individuals can challenge, accept, and navigate the N-, I-, D-, or A-identities, but what is crucial is how others in society acknowledge the specific identity. Social, cultural, and historical experiences help people recognize identity combinations, and any arrangement that results in a recognized type of person (e.g. doctor, toddler) is what Gee (2001) calls a “discourse” (p. 110). Discourses describe ways of being a particular kind of person and each person works out her or his identity by making sense of what it means to be, for example a female, a laborer, or a Hmong U.S. citizen. No one can create an

identity alone; identity needs to be negotiated through and with others in society. Identity creation has become even more complex in the postmodern world because of changes in traditional conceptions of citizenship (e.g. allegiance to one nation-state).

Steph Lawler (2008) took a more sociological approach toward identity than did Gee; she argued that identities are formed by the social world and that identity is shaped between rather than within persons. Like Gee, Lawler found that individual identity is the core that makes a person what she or he is, but emphasized the importance of social relations to identity production.

In addition to the importance of the social world in the development of identity, Lawler (2008) explained personal identities as dynamic, constantly changing, and created through narratives, or stories. Narratives, which include characters, action, and plot, help create personal identities; these narrative identities connect oneself to others, and the past to the present. Each person's individual narrative develops *in relation to* the narratives of others and each narrative depicts the story of an evolving identity. Identity is produced through various actions over time during which a person interprets and reinterprets her or his memories and experiences, expressed in narrative form. I now turn to specific research into how immigrants, including Hmong adolescents, construct various identities.

Constructions of Identity Among Immigrant Adolescents

Identity Theory suggests that personal identities are shaped and interpreted by the social world. Few studies were located that describe young immigrants' (including Hmong) cultural, ethnic, and racial identity construction, or that examined the civic and

political identity of immigrant youth. Further, no studies were found concerning Hmong adolescents' construction of their citizenship identity.

Young immigrants' identity and political engagement. Jane Junn and Natalia Masuoka (2008) asked Latino and Asian American young adults (ages 19 to 26) about the significance of their racial and ethnic identity to their political engagement. They were specifically concerned with racial group consciousness (an awareness of the best interests of the minority group). The study included 33 in-depth interviews and 209 surveys. Overall the scholars found little relationship between racial group identity and political engagement, but Junn and Masuoka drew three conclusions from the data. First, they determined that asking the participants direct questions about their racial identity did not result in reliable measures of racial group consciousness. In addition to their own Asian or Latino/a American communities, some youth in this study claimed membership in additional racial or ethnic groups. Second, racial group cues were not the only information used when participants made electoral choices. They also took a candidate's political party and issue positions into account during elections. Third, participants felt tension between voting based on their racial identity and the belief that race should not play a role in political decisions. Junn and Masuoka (2008) suggest that their participants worried that support for their own racial/ethnic group conflicted with the concept of "color blindness" (p. 98).

Young immigrants' identity and civic engagement. Beth Rubin (2007, 2012) conducted focus groups and interviews in two middle schools and two high schools to investigate how adolescents from various backgrounds described what it means to be an

American citizen and to participate in democratic civic life. Rubin also considered how her participants' daily experiences with racial and socioeconomic inequality became part of their citizenship identities. While all the schools included youth from various socioeconomic backgrounds, Somerset Middle School in particular served many families who recently immigrated to the United States.

Rubin (2007, 2012) determined that her student participants fell into one of four quadrants as they described how they understood and considered their civic identity. *Aware* students expressed their belief in the need for equity and fairness in U.S. society. These students understood that they are privileged and that others do not enjoy the same quality of life. Further, they learned about injustice in school or from family members, but not via personal experience. *Empowered* students reported that change is a personal and community necessity. These youth experienced social injustice first-hand and believed in their ability to transform the system. *Complacent* youth don't think change is necessary because the United States is "all well" (Rubin, 2007, p. 470). Students in this quadrant support the status quo and do not know about or acknowledge social injustices experienced by others. *Discouraged* youth described life in the United States as unfair and unalterable. These students personally experienced social injustice and feel cynical about the possibility of systematic improvements. Few immigrant youth in Rubin's study were categorized as *Aware* or *Discouraged* while most identified as *Empowered* and *Complacent*.⁶ Rubin suggested that students at Somerset Middle School may have developed a more complacent civic identity because the instructional practices at the

⁶ Rubin offers analyses for each school in her study, but I do not elaborate on that information here because these schools included few immigrant students.

school unsuccessfully engaged the youth in a critical analysis of U.S. civic society. The scholar described the seminars at Somerset Middle School as “sedate forums of agreement in which students affirmed each others’ feelings of patriotism and allegiance without mention of challenges within U.S. society” (Rubin, 2007, p. 476). Rubin concluded that civic identity is constructed both at the local (e.g., school) and societal levels.

Lene Arnett Jensen (2008) compared immigrants from El Salvador and India to investigate how their cultural identities affected their levels of civic engagement. Jensen conducted interviews with 40 El Salvadoran and 40 Indian immigrants, and both ethnic groups included parent-adolescent pairs. Using grounded theory, Jensen determined that all participants found it important to be civically engaged at the community level while almost all believed the same for political activities. When Jensen asked her adolescent and parent participants to describe their cultural motivations for political and civic engagement, seven themes emerged: (a) cultural remembrance, in an effort to maintain cultural identity and traditions; (b) a history of service to others, often related to the Catholic Salvadoran and Hindu Indian religious traditions; (c) ensuring the welfare of immigrant and cultural communities; (d) assistance to country of origin; (e) bridging communities and getting to know others in America; (f) developing a new social network; and, (e) appreciation for American democracy, especially aspects of rights and freedoms.

Although the majority of the participants were *not* involved in a culturally focused civic or political activity, 25% reported that they involved themselves in culturally

centered political activities while 34% of the respondents acknowledged that they were engaged in their community through a cultural organization. When participants spoke of disengagement, they explained that they worked too hard and too often to be civically active, they felt quite ethnically excluded from and unwelcomed to participate in civic and political activities, and their lack of legal citizenship resulted in low levels of engagement. Overall, Jensen asserted that an immigrant's cultural identity is more of a motivator for civic engagement than a deterrent.

Hmong Adolescents' Constructions of Identity

Although I found no research that investigated how Hmong youth construct their civic and political identities, three studies address how Hmong adolescents construct their cultural and ethnic identities. Lee (2005) observed that Hmong youth create their personal ethnic and cultural identities under unequal class, gender, race, and power relations in school. Lee conducted an ethnographic study for a year and a half in a Midwestern high school, observing and interviewing 65 Hmong American high school students and their school's staff. In Lee's study, Hmong youth understood race to be dictated by the hegemonic European American majority who viewed the Hmong as culturally different, foreign, and therefore un-American. Lee argued that the racialization process was central to Hmong becoming American; Hmong youth re-created their cultural identities in response to the dominant European American society. The racialization process was a progression from viewing the self and peers in terms of national and linguistic characteristics to seeing oneself as a racial category within a hierarchy, on top of which were European Americans. In school, some Hmong students

learned that their citizenship and “Americaness” was valued less than that of their European American peers; whiteness remained the cultural norm while other ethnicities were considered foreign, unusual, and inadequate (Lee, 2002). Hmong Americans knew that their culture was not completely understood or respected by others in the school, including teachers, administration, and student peers.

Like Lee, Olneck (2003) and Zhou (1997) examined identity construction in terms of race and power. Olneck (2003) conducted a literature review on the education of immigrant children and youth, including the Hmong, and analyzed the messages immigrants receive from their schools. Olneck determined that schools offer unequal opportunities to Hmong and other immigrant youth based on their class and race. For immigrants, the schools acted as places where immigrants must search out and stake a place as racialized minorities.

Zhou (1997) investigated the literature around straight-line and segmented assimilation, and how those theories apply to the ways immigrants adapt to U.S. society. *Straight-line assimilation* assumes that an individual immigrant’s values, behaviors, and personal characteristics acculturate at parallel rates to other newcomers. *Segmented assimilation* results when immigrants are integrated and accepted into the U.S. mainstream at differing speeds due to factors such as the generational experiences of immigrants, the economic, social, and cultural barriers met by immigrants, and the community resources available to help immigrants cope with those obstacles. Zhou concluded that as they assimilated, Hmong students came to understand the advantages European American students earned in school, based on their privileged race and class.

Hmong students in turn shaped and negotiated their own identities to conform to or contradict the dominant race.

Three major points emerge from the literature on Hmong adolescent cultural and ethnic constructions of identity. First, European Americans are dominant, hegemonic and considered 'normal.' Others, including Hmong youth, construct their cultural and ethnic identities in relation to European American society. Second, in addition to creating their identities vis-à-vis European Americans, Hmong youth also construct their identities under unequal class, gender, and power relations in school. Third, the racialization process is central to becoming an American and schools are places where Hmong youth must situate themselves as a racialized minority.

Conclusions: Immigrants' Negotiated Identities

Each individual experiences multiple identities that are connected to her or his relationships and encounters in society. A personal identity, including citizenship identity, is not created in solitude, but is negotiated with others. Thus, immigrant youth negotiate their citizenship identities in relation to others and with certain cultural, racial, and social understandings. Through school and everyday life, immigrants learn that European Americans are dominant, hegemonic, and considered the 'normal' ethnic group. Instructional practices and peers at school may play a part in shaping an immigrant's citizenship identity. Overall, there are very few studies addressing immigrants', and in particular Hmong immigrants' citizenship identity. I now turn to the final body of work for review: Civics education in the United States and how immigrant youth experience preparation for citizenship through the schools.

Immigrants' Citizenship Education and School Experiences

From the late 1700s to the present, civics instruction has been central to education in U.S. schools and has been endorsed by political as well as educational leaders. The *National Standards for Civics and Government*, created by civics education experts at the Center for Civic Education, established criteria for teaching civics, government, and citizenship education. These standards state that, "Education has a civic mission: To prepare informed, rational, humane, and participating citizens committed to the values and principles of American constitutional democracy" (Center for Civic Education, 1994, p. v). Although support exists for civics education in U.S. schools, to what extent does contemporary civics instruction adequately prepare immigrant students for U.S. citizenship? This review of research on civics and government education in U.S. secondary schools addresses how civics and government education may prepare immigrant students for future active citizenship participation, the role of teachers and pedagogy in an immigrant's civic education and engagement, and how extracurricular activities may predict an immigrant youth's future civic and political participation.

Immigrants and Civics Curriculum

Although there is research available on civics and government curriculum and models, there is little information on civics and government curriculum and immigrant students (Evans, 2008; Ross, 2008; Zipin & Reid, 2008). In addition to Callahan et al. (2008) as described in Chapter One, two studies showed that classroom civics curriculum and activities may affect the political socialization of immigrant youth. *Kids Voting USA* (KVUSA) is a civics curriculum used by approximately 4.3 million U.S. students to help

promote the *Civic Mission of Schools* (CIRCLE, 2003). KVUSA was designed for use during election campaigns and focuses on candidate races and electoral news coverage. The goal of KVUSA was to encourage and increase future voting behavior in high school students and their parents, with particular focus on student political discussion, media literacy, civic and community involvement, and family interaction around politics and government.

Two inquiries investigated the KVUSA civics curriculum using mixed data collection methods. The first study (McDevitt, Kiouisis, Wu, Losch, & Ripley, 2003) included 559 high school juniors and seniors from African American, European American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American backgrounds with immigrants specifically from Arizona, Colorado, and Florida. Multiple methods including questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews were used to determine the long-term effects of the KVUSA curriculum on participating students and their parents. The scholars concluded that (a) KVUSA curriculum helped narrow the civic knowledge gap between European American and non European American students, (b) classroom discussion was a particularly effective component of the curriculum for all students including immigrants, and (c) the curriculum may have indirectly affected participating students' parents (e.g., KVUSA stimulated parents' political discussions with others).

A subsequent study (McDevitt & Kiouisis, 2006) was conducted with 491 students from the same ethnic backgrounds, communities, and grade levels as in the previous study. Methods in the 2006 inquiry were qualitatively and quantitatively mixed, and included student, parent, and focus group interviews. Further, in 2006, the scholars

conducted a curriculum evaluation as students participated in KVUSA projects. While participating in the curriculum activities, lower-income students (who are also often immigrants and children from diverse ethnic backgrounds) shared their opinions less often than did their wealthier peers and were not as personally involved in political issues. When they did speak about politics, lower-income students shared some of their civic discontent: “People in general would get more involved if they felt their opinions mattered” (McDevitt & Kiouisis, 2006, p. 35). However, the KVUSA curriculum appeared to narrow the civic involvement gap between European American, Hispanic, and low-income students between 2002 and 2004 (McDevitt & Kiouisis, 2006). These two studies showed that classroom discussion and student support of their peers’ civic participation and engagement (two essential components of the KVUSA curriculum) had the potential to positively impact civic development among youth.

Teachers, Pedagogy, and the Opportunity for Civics Education

Teacher interaction at school with immigrant youth plays a role in students’ civic engagement. Lee (2002) found that Hmong students believed that their teachers considered certain aspects of Hmong culture to be backward and/or offensive; therefore, the Hmong students spoke out in class and shared ideas with others less often, in an attempt to hide particular cultural aspects from their peers and school staff. This silencing negatively impacted Hmong students’ academic progress and the civic development of their non-Hmong classmates: Hmong students who did not trust their instructors asked them for help less often and peers of the Hmong learners had fewer opportunities to gain

knowledge about other cultures and ethnicities because they heard from the Hmong students less often in class.

In addition to interactional behavior, teacher instructional styles and content knowledge may impact immigrant youths' civic education. Previous political socialization research by Callahan and Obenchain (2012), Hahn (1998), and Niemi and Junn (1998) illustrated the effects of staffing on civic education. Teachers who were highly interested in social studies material and practiced creative ways of conveying civics concepts to their students helped learners become more politically interested. Although there are few studies directly investigating teacher instructional styles and immigrant students, Cherukuri's (2007) study showed that Latino students received higher mean scores on civic knowledge tests in social studies classes that they rated as exemplary. In their research that included immigrant youth, Gimpel et al. (2003) and Fridkin et al. (2006) found that good teachers positively impacted students and when students enjoyed their civic education classes, they learned more and felt more politically efficacious. It may be particularly valuable for immigrant youth then, to experience a trusting, positive relationship with a social studies teacher: These connections may result in greater student political participation and civic knowledge.

Political discussion. Discussion activities encourage the civic development of older adolescents (Niemi & Junn, 1998). In school, students may practice and participate in political discussion, which is valuable preparation for various life experiences in a democracy (Chapin, 2001). Classroom discussions have the potential to deepen students'

political knowledge and develop participatory citizen identities (Conover & Searing, 2000; Hahn, 2001; Torney-Purta, 2001).

Results from Conover and Searing's (2000) study revealed that Mexican-American youth reported lower levels of political discussion in school compared to rural and suburban youth. Although urban Mexican Americans experienced the lowest levels of discussion in the study, as a group they considered being informed citizens and participating in public deliberation essential duties of citizenship. The immigrant students understood that discussing civic issues was important, but they seldom performed this citizenship behavior in their daily lives. Civic education and discussion in school then may help create opportunities for immigrants' future political deliberation and participation.

Civics education opportunities. In a survey of 3,000 high school youth including immigrants, it was determined that as students experienced additional civics classes, levels of political discussion, declarative political and civic knowledge, and internal political efficacy increased (Gimpel et al., 2003). Political knowledge and efficacy levels were higher among juniors and seniors than among 9th-grade students. However, immigrants and minorities reported taking fewer civics and government classes and participating in political discussions infrequently while in school, potentially resulting in lower levels of political deliberation, participation, and understanding compared to their native-born, non-minority peers.

Civic education opportunities are less available to immigrants. In a report from Phase II of the IEA study, Hahn (2003) described how students who came from family

backgrounds with the lowest educational and economic resources often attended schools that offered the fewest educational opportunities designed to increase civic understanding. Further, Hahn stated that in school, many urban students participated in low-level thinking activities more often than challenging, higher-order assignments. Some urban students then, many who are immigrants (Fridkin et al., 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), may not receive the same opportunities to practice civic participation skills or obtain civic knowledge as their non-urban peers.

School Experiences and Immigrant Civic and Political Behavior

Several studies help clarify the connections between school experiences and immigrant civic and political behavior. Schools play a critical role in political socialization: Schools have the potential to help students develop civic knowledge, prepare youth for civic participation (especially voting), and offer safe environments where learners can deliberate and discuss political perspectives (Davies, 2002; Galston, 2001; Glanville, 1999; Torney-Purta, 2002). Schooling offers students the opportunity to participate in a community, and for many youth this is the first such type of experience. This preliminary community encounter potentially facilitates future relationships between students and local, national, and global communities.

School experiences. Several studies investigated the relationship between school experiences outside of civics and government classes and immigrant students' political behavior. School activities play a particularly significant role for immigrant youth and findings from various studies illustrate how participation in extracurricular activities can predict a student's future political engagement.

For example, Conover and Searing (2000) determined that students, including Mexican-American immigrants, who were involved in more than one extracurricular activity in high school (e.g., the theater club) were more apt to view political discussion as a positive citizenship behavior and demonstrate greater personal levels of political awareness. Participating in school activities gives youth the opportunity to work with others, problem solve, create networks, talk about many topics, and exchange different viewpoints. Some suburban and rural student groups in the study reported participating in 8 to 10 extracurricular activities. However, 50% of the immigrant youth in the study belonged to only one extracurricular group while the other 50% reported that they did not participate in *any* additional groups or activities. Conover and Searing concluded by stating that school activities are an important element to citizenship development, and immigrant youth may not participate in these activities at the same rates as some of their peers.

Davila and Mora's (2007) findings support many of Conover and Searing's (2000) conclusions regarding school activities and subsequent civic engagement among immigrant students. Davila and Mora (2007) analyzed data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS). The NELS survey included over 15,000 African American, European American, Asian, and Hispanic students in grades 8, 10, and 12 and attempted to determine how civic engagement varied across diverse ethnic groups. Race and ethnicity played a role in high school civic engagement (e.g., community service, participation in student government): Asian Americans, 42% of whom were immigrants, demonstrated the highest levels of civic participation while Hispanics (14.3% immigrant)

were the least politically engaged and active. Similar to findings in several studies (Conover & Searing, 2000; Lopez & Marcelo, 2006; McDevitt & Kiouisis, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), Hispanic youth and adults who were mostly of Mexican origin, demonstrated some of the lowest levels of education, political participation, and civic engagement. However, Hispanics verbally supported school and civic activities at much higher rates than their actual participation in these endeavors. Hispanic adolescents were least likely to participate in sports, community service, and student government compared to other students in the study, but they were more often employed, sometimes working more than 20 hours per week.

Davila and Mora (2007) determined that participating in school groups and activities impacted civic engagement in high school and into adulthood; Hispanics' lack of school participation could therefore result in lower levels of political participation after graduation. Compared to the other students in this study, Hispanic students were more likely to drop out of high school and less likely to graduate from college. Low civic participation rates among Hispanic students were due to relatively low educational expectations, fewer community connections, and personal time constraints, not because of disinterest in civic and political engagement. Regardless of immigrant status, students who performed community service (either as a class expectation or in a volunteer capacity) experienced greater academic progress than those who did not participate; those who were more civically engaged experienced greater scholastic progress in math, science, and history. Like Conover and Searing (2000), Davila and Mora suggest that

more participation in school activities may result in positive social, educational, and civic outcomes for all students, including immigrants.

Conclusions: Civics Education and Immigrant Youth

Several important themes emerge from the available literature on civics education, school activities, and immigrant youth. Much of the scholarship around civics education and immigrants suggests that exceptional citizenship education would help immigrant youth be more prepared for civic and political participation, resulting in increased political discussion with others, community participation, voting behaviors, and political interest. Teachers are important to an immigrant student's citizenship development. A positive and strong student-teacher relationship may play a role in an immigrant youth's civic engagement and political knowledge. Discussion, dynamic learning activities, and more time spent in civics and government class results in increased student political knowledge. However, immigrant students may experience discussion in school and civics and government class instruction less often than mainstream peers. And, participating in extracurricular groups and activities may impact civic engagement in high school and into adulthood. Again, immigrant students report less extracurricular participation in school than many of their peers.

Conceptual Framework

The previous review of the four literature areas (Political and Civic Conceptions of Citizenship, Political Socialization of Immigrant Youth, Immigrant Identity, and Immigrants' Citizenship Education and School Experiences) contribute to the conceptual framework presented graphically in Figure 2, and will ground this ethnographic case

study. Hmong adolescent youth are at the center of the study because how these youth situate themselves as citizens is central to this dissertation. The themes in the four smaller circles inform methodology, data-collection, and analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of the dissertation findings: These themes are not hierarchical, but share an overlapping, intertwined relationship to a Hmong youth's construction of her or his citizenship identity.

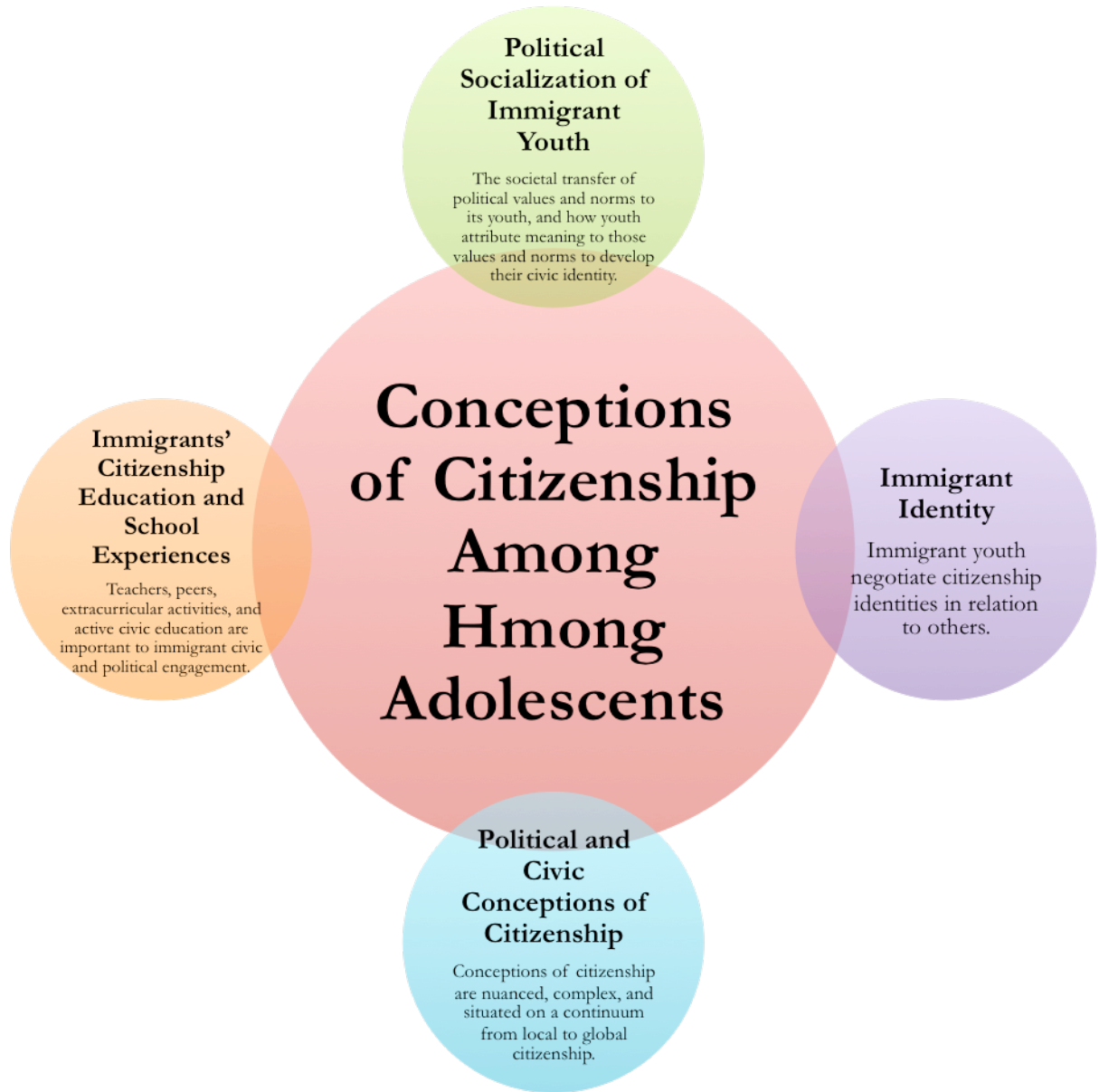
Each theme offers important insight to this study. The literature shows how citizenship is a nuanced, complex construct that can be situated on a local-to-global continuum, and often reflects the relationship between a government and its citizens. Prior studies also suggest that family, peers, school, culture, and the media play a significant role in an immigrant youth's construction of citizenship. Literature on identity illustrates how personal identities, including citizenship identities, are negotiated with and through others. A person cannot have an identity without an existing interpretive system, and Gee's (2001) work depicts how citizenship identity can be approached through *Nature*, *Institutional*, *Discursive*, and *Affinity* interpretive systems. Schooling plays a significant role in an immigrant's civic and political engagement. Teachers, peers, extracurricular programs, and an active, participatory civics and government education curriculum can all help immigrant youth involve themselves in civic and political endeavors at higher rates.

Research reflecting the four themes illustrate how Hmong youth in particular confront various challenges as they negotiate their citizenship identities in school. Ngo and Lee's (2007) review indicated that Hmong youth "face significant obstacles to

educational achievement and attainment” (p. 430). Hmong youth are often included in a model minority stereotype that suggests that all Asian youth are succeeding in school (Ngo & Lee, 2007), when sometimes, the stereotype conceals academic and achievement differences between Asian ethnic groups. Hmong youth construct their identities under unequal class, gender, and power relations in school. In addition, the racialization process is part of a Hmong youth’s experience while becoming an American. Schools are places where Hmong youth must situate themselves as a racialized minority.

Although previous research is limited, available studies allow us to better understand how immigrant youth construct certain aspects of their identity; however, little scholarship exists regarding how Hmong adolescents shape and construct their citizenship identities. The literature reviewed in this chapter will help address the larger research questions of this dissertation – *How are Hmong adolescent citizenship identities shaped and negotiated in a 12th-grade American Government class? How do Hmong adolescents make sense of being a citizen of the United States? And, what classroom experiences shape Hmong youths’ political and civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes?* From this literature review I now move to Chapter Three, Research Methods.

Figure 2. Graphic Presentation of the Conceptual Framework



Chapter Three -- Research Methods

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this ethnographic case study is to explore how Hmong adolescent students in a 12th-grade American Government class construct their conceptions of citizenship. I seek to investigate the roles of teachers, peers, and curriculum and instruction as Hmong students shape their citizenship identities. This chapter of the dissertation describes how I conducted the ethnography. I review the research site and participants, ethnographic case study research design, data-collection methods, data analysis process, issues of reflexivity and trustworthiness, and limitations of the study.

An Overview of Ethnographic Case Study Research Design

Harry Wolcott (1999) describes ethnography as a way of seeing and looking. Usually, ethnography involves viewing groups of people behaving in their everyday lives with particular emphasis on cultural aspects of the community. Ethnography is distinguished by several characteristics. First, the ethnographer goes somewhere to study phenomena, and when there she gathers her own data rather than use information collected by others. Ethnography includes experiencing, inquiring, and examining in the research field. *Experiencing* describes how the ethnographer attends to the phenomena through participant observation, with all the information garnered through the human senses. Ethnographic *inquiry* involves interviewing and taking an active role in investigating what is going on in an environment. *Examination* reflects the ethnographer's analysis of artifacts, archives, documents, photographs, or other sources of relevant information.

Qualitative case studies are common in educational research. Merriam (1998) explains a case study as an “intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 27). However, the most defining characteristic of a case study is its bounded nature; the case is limited so that data collection is finite. According to Becker (1968) the purposes of case studies are to thoroughly understand the group(s) being studied and to advance theory about the group’s social structure and processes. Further, case studies help us to discover unique experiences and events, of which we may not have been previously aware.

Qualitative case studies that focus on school culture, specific student groups, or classroom incidents are referred to as ethnographic case studies. This type of research methodology involves investigating particular cases of people interacting in their school lives with a concern for cultural aspects of the educational community. My current study investigates how Hmong adolescent students in one 12th-grade American government classroom construct their conceptions of citizenship. Four of the 10 Hmong students acted as focal participants in this dissertation and it is around their four cases that this study pivots.

Research Site and Participants

The greater school community. Data collection took place at Creekview Senior High School (CSHS), which is situated in the suburb of Creekview Park.⁷ Creekview Park is a first-tier suburb to a large Midwestern metropolitan area in the United States that includes approximately 75,000 inhabitants. According to the 2010 Census, the

⁷ The names of the city, school district, and senior high schools have been changed to protect the identities of study participants.

majority of Creekview Park's citizens are European American (52%), while 24% are African American, 15% Asian, 1% Native American, .5% Pacific Islander, 4% are from other ethnicities, and 4% identify with two or more races. About 5.1% of the city's population lives below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Creekview Park is served by three separate school districts, CSHS being part of the Osceola Area School District.

The Creekview Senior High School environment, students, and staff. CSHS is a public, non-charter school for students in grades ten through twelve. At the time of this study, there were 84 classroom teachers instructing 1,390 students -- a student to teacher ratio of 16.5 to 1. CSHS was under the leadership of one principal and two assistant principals. The school's enrollment by race/ethnicity includes 464 African American, 412 European American, 416 Asian/Pacific Islanders, 88 Hispanic, and 10 American Indian or Alaskan students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Over 56% of CSHS students are eligible for free (n=627) or reduced-priced (n=154) lunch. I purposefully chose this location as an ethnographic site because the school and district include one of the highest percentages of Hmong students in the entire metropolitan area and because the school offers American Government class in grade twelve.

The original CSHS building was constructed in 1971 and is one of four high schools in the Osceola School District. The brick school structure is part of a larger educational campus that includes an attached junior high school, baseball fields, a football field, tennis courts, and staff and student parking lots. The relatively clean corridors include carpeted floors encompassed by brown brick or movable off-white

walls. In addition, student academic and artistic work, activity posters, and clusters of student lockers hang throughout the hallways of CSHS. The building that holds the high school classrooms is square shaped, and two floors high. The media center is in the middle of the school, and is surrounded by a hallway, while classrooms are situated on the outside of the hallway. The lunchroom, administrative offices, band and music rooms, and gymnasium are found in different areas of the expansive school campus.

The American Government classroom. On the first day of the third trimester at CSHS in Ms. Oakland's 12th grade, period one (7:30 to 8:25 AM), mandatory American Government course, 23 of 31 seniors arrived to class. Nine hexagon-shaped tables were positioned within the confines of the classroom. For the first class session, Ms. Oakland did not assign students' seating, but only directed them to sit four at a table. The busy, cluttered classroom included one small window on the north side and one door into the classroom, four large beige file cabinets, and three large shelves with textbooks and other curricular materials. Additional smaller shelves, chock-full of pictures, textbooks, stuffed manila files of papers, and various assignments and activities for American Government and IB World History, the two subjects Ms. Oakland instructed this trimester, were dotted around the perimeter of the room. Ms. Oakland used two teacher desks in her classroom, a larger one in the front of the room and a smaller desk at the back, near the telephone. Although her computer rested on the front desk, both desks held many clipped papers on which Ms. Oakland left post-it notes to herself – "photocopy for tomorrow," "complete for department meeting," "period one essays," and so forth. One large American flag draped over the smaller teacher desk in the back of the classroom.

The students in the observed classroom. I conducted this ethnographic case study in a diverse 12th-grade American government classroom that included 31 (17 male and 14 female) students who were approximately 17 to 18 years old. The class was comprised of 13 Asian (10 of whom were Hmong), 12 African American, four European American, and two Hispanic students (see Table 2).

Table 2
Classroom Demographics

	Female	Male	Total
African American	6	6	12
Asian	7	6	13
European American	1	3	4
Hispanic	0	2	2
Total	14	17	31

Table 3
All Student Members of the 12th-Grade American Government Class

Student Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Participation Status
Abdou	M	African American	Classroom Participant
Andrew	M	Asian	Focal Hmong Student
Anita	F	Asian	Participating Hmong Student
Anthony	M	European American	Classroom Participant
Beth	F	African American	Classroom Participant
Carrie	F	African American	Classroom Participant
Carter	M	African American	Classroom Participant
Danial	M	European American	Classroom Participant
David	M	African American	Classroom Participant
Dean	M	European American	Classroom Participant
Donna	F	European American	Classroom Participant
Donny	M	African American	Classroom Participant
Edwardo	M	Hispanic	Classroom Participant
Eliza	F	African American	Classroom Participant
John	M	Asian	Classroom Participant
Jesus	M	Hispanic	Classroom Participant
Josie	F	Asian	Classroom Participant
Mark	M	Asian	Participating Hmong Student
Martha	F	African American	Classroom Participant
Mee	F	Asian	Participating Hmong Student
Nora	F	African American	Classroom Participant
Oliver	M	Asian	Focal Hmong Student
Poua	F	Asian	Non-participating Hmong Student

Ringo	M	African American	Classroom Participant
Rose	F	African American	Classroom Participant
Sandy	F	Asian	Focal Hmong Student
Soua	F	Asian	Focal Hmong Student
Todd	M	African American	Classroom Participant
Violet	F	Asian	Classroom Participant
Vou	M	Asian	Non-participating Hmong Student
Xiong	M	Asian	Participating Hmong Student

Youth at this age are important for this research because in many U.S. schools, students study American Government for the last time in 12th-grade before graduating from high school; they are in the transitional process of becoming adult citizens (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Pace & Bixby, 2008). Table 3 presents information about all of the students in the American Government classroom.

At the beginning of the trimester, ten Hmong youth were enrolled in the observed American Government class. All of these students were asked to join this study: Eight students agreed to participate (four females and four males), while two students declined to participate. Poua was 17 years old and reported that her parents would not allow her to participate in the research. Vou, also 17, chose not to participate in the study, and ultimately left the American Government class about mid-trimester as suggested by his academic counselor, due to problems with his grades in multiple classes. All of the eight participating students are considered second-generation immigrants because their parents were born in either Laos or Thailand; reported that they speak English at home always or almost always, but also speak Hmong with various family members, and indicated that they usually received A's or B's in school. Four students -- Andrew, Sandy, Oliver, and Soua -- acted as key informants, reflecting their participation in all three focus groups and both the pre- and post-interviews. Anita, Mark, Mee, and Xiong contributed to this study

by participating in two of the three focus group interviews. Each of the eight participating students, with special emphasis on the four focal youths, will be described below. Table 4 summarizes information about the participating Hmong students in the American Government classroom.

Table 4

Participating Hmong Students in the 12th-grade American Government Class

Student Name	Gender	Age	Study Participation Status	Parents' Country of Birth	English at Home	Grades in School
Andrew	M	18	Focal Hmong Student	Mother- Laos Father- Laos	Always or almost always	A's and B's
Anita	F	18	Participating Hmong Student	Mother- Laos Father- Laos	Always or almost always	B's
Mark	M	18	Participating Hmong Student	Mother – Thailand Father- Thailand	Always or almost always	B's
Mee	F	18	Participating Hmong Student	Mother- Laos Father- Laos	Always or almost always	A's
Oliver	M	17	Focal Hmong Student	Mother- Laos Father- Laos	Always or almost always	B's
Sandy	F	18	Focal Hmong Student	Mother- Laos Father- Laos	Always or almost always	A's
Soua	F	17	Focal Hmong Student	Mother- Laos Father- Laos	Always or almost always	B's
Xiong	M	17	Participating Hmong Student	Mother- Laos Father- Laos	Always or almost always	A's

Focal participants.

Andrew. Andrew usually looked quite comfortable in class. He often wore layered clothing--a grey hoodie sweatshirt with a T-shirt underneath, and sweat pants with navy blue breezers over the sweats. His black hair was styled in a close crew cut. On many days, Andrew's voice projected so that I could hear a good part of the conversation he held with his peers, even though I remained in the back of the class and he sat at a table at the front of the room, near the whiteboard and projection screen. Andrew often

greeted Sandy and Soua as he entered class in the morning, audibly enough for others and myself to hear; however, he seldom acknowledged any other students. It was Andrew who was the first of the Hmong, and all enrolled American Government students, to speak out in class, on the second day of the trimester.

Andrew reported a close relationship to his father and other Hmong male elders in his family, and aspired to take a leadership role as a Hmong elder in his future. Although many of Andrew's family members, including his parents, identified as Shaman, Andrew described himself as both Shaman and Christian and explained that it was a very difficult decision for him to choose between Shamanism and Christianity. He thought that at this point, he was the only Christian in his family and that if his family knew he was Christian, "they would say a little bit bad things about me."

As a junior and senior high student, Andrew joined a variety of groups and sports, but was most interested in activities related to leadership. Andrew prepared himself for future leadership by participating in seminars that were available to youth of all backgrounds, not just Hmong adolescents; he said that he attended leadership conferences, conventions, and classes one to three days a week. Of the four periods of American Government class that he missed, two of the days he was in Louisville, Kentucky, attending a leadership event. In junior high he was a member of the International Teen Club, which was comprised mainly of Hmong youth. The goal of this club was to serve the local community, and Andrew explained how the group created a video for the county library. At CSHS, Andrew joined the Asian Club, but he reported

that it was not a very popular organization. Andrew played on the school football team for the past five years and indicated that he received mostly A's and B's in school.

Sandy. Sandy, a petite, quiet, and casual student was well liked by her classmates. Her daily outfit usually included a hoodie sweatshirt and jeans. She wore hoodies of many different colors: red, navy blue, lime green, and grey (with the words "Love Pink" on the back). In addition to her hoodies and jeans, she usually wore a pair of UGG-like brown suede boots or suede moccasin flats, and carried a white backpack with multi-colored hearts and black trim. On one occasion during the trimester Sandy wore a light blue dress, elegant shoes, an off-white sweater, and black skinny jeans underneath the dress. Like her clothing, Sandy's hairstyle was similar from day to day: She usually wore her long, straight, black hair in a ponytail, although on one instance she wore her hair naturally straight and parted on the right side.

Sandy lived with her mom, dad, and one younger sister, and they identified religiously as Shaman. She reported experiencing a close relationship with her father, although they "butt heads" because they "think alike." Sandy and her father spoke Hmong together during most of their interactions; they talked about their culture and religion, and their personal beliefs. However, she said that sometimes she did not want to speak Hmong with him, but that it was "hard to look into his eyes and be like, I don't want to talk Hmong anymore." Sandy's father told her that she got her name when her parents came to America:

They didn't know of any American names, so one of the interpreters said you should call her Sandy because Sandy to me is a very beautiful name, so

you should just call her Sandy. And, my dad was like, yeah. So, that's how

I got my name. (INT1; 3/24/11)

In addition to attending school most days (she attended American Government class 47 of 53 class sessions, and reported receiving mostly A's in school), Sandy worked 20 to 25 hours a week (usually on Tuesdays and Wednesdays) at a local grocery store as a cashier and pricing clerk. She said that she would rather work than "stay at home and stress over something there" and that if she stayed at home she would just "take a nap and get crabby, so [she'd] rather do something to get [herself] out." Sandy also volunteered in her community "a few times each month" by hanging and organizing clothes at the City Thrift Shop or by bringing food to elderly people at a local nursing home.

Because of her full academic and employment schedule, Sandy did not participate in as many activities in CSHS and Creekview Park as in the past. However, she shared information about her experiences with a variety of civic, cultural, and community groups from elementary school to the present. When she was in 5th- and 6th-grades, Sandy joined the student council and "thought it was pretty cool." Her foremost memory of student council was helping the school and other students. In junior high, Sandy was involved in the Hmong Circle, a cultural association for early adolescent females. Hmong Circle met about two times a week after school, and allowed the girls space to share stories and talk about problems they faced as Hmong adolescent females. In junior high, Sandy was a member of a traditional Hmong dance team and played girls' volleyball and flag football.

Oliver. Oliver was a very quiet, gentle, soft-spoken student. Oliver often sported a white T-shirt and sturdy bottomed black leather shoes, and he arrived to class almost

every day in faded blue jeans. He wore black-rimmed, plastic glasses and carried a black backpack. Like Andrew, Oliver's black hair was cut quite short so that it was spiked. For most of the trimester, he sat at a table in the back of the classroom.

Oliver described his family as close-knit. He explained that at home, he spoke Hmong with his family quite often, especially with his parents because "they have the generation that's a little older." Oliver was a middle child with three older and three younger sisters, and one younger brother; all of his grandparents were deceased. He attended the First Hmong Baptist Church with his family where they participated in fundraisers to help their church and the greater Hmong community, and Oliver acted as a substitute church school teacher for elementary-aged youth (which he described as "a lot of work"). Every year, Oliver and his family attended an international Hmong Baptist Church convention, which convened somewhere in the United States. At this event, Oliver participated in volleyball tournaments and other activities that he described as fun.

School played an academic and spiritual role in Oliver's life. He missed American Government class only two days during the trimester and he reported that he usually received B's in his classes. He held a full academic load during the trimester: After his first period American Government class, he attended English, French, Art of Film, math, and physics each day. He participated in a Hmong prayer group in the gym at CSHS two to three mornings each week. Oliver said that the group consisted mostly of Hmong students, but that he invited "other races to come down and just listen to the word of the Gospel and the word of God."

Soua. Initially, Soua arrived to class about 20 minutes early each day because she received a ride to school from a family member rather than taking the bus to CSHS. While waiting for class to start, she sat at her table often listening to music through headphones or texting on her iPhone. Physically, she was quite petite and wore distinctive, dark brown contact lenses. The lenses were noticeable because they covered more of her pupil and iris than a regular lens.

Soua's dark brown hair fell below her shoulders and was usually fashionably styled; she often styled her hair pulled up in a messy, but trendy bun, with long, tight waves and curls, or with a shiny, sparkling hairpiece placed on the left side of her head. Not only did she style her hair on trend, but she dressed fashionably as well. For example, one day, Soua wore a black sweater with a scarf, light yellow pants, and cream-colored ballet slipper shoes. Another day, she was dressed in a red knit sweater with a black and red plaid scarf. Her full make-up complemented her clothing and hairstyle.

About a month after the trimester started, I noticed a gradual change in Soua's dress and appearance. Her hair became more disheveled, she did not wear as much make-up, or sometimes none at all, and her clothing was more casual, less coordinated. One day, Soua came to class without make-up (or at least wearing very little, almost unnoticeable), her hair was pinned up in a loose bun, and she was dressed in a white T-shirt and navy blue shorts with two vertical white stripes down each hip. During this class period Andrew said to Soua "you look like you just had volleyball." Although she was still usually the first student in the classroom, she started to arrive later and later, and when she got to her assigned seat, she dropped her backpack to the floor and rested her

head on top of the table. She told me she was “so tired,” but did not explain why she felt fatigued.

Soua’s parents were divorced and her mother had re-married a British man. Because her step-dad did not speak Hmong, Soua almost always conversed in English at home. Soua had seven siblings including two older sisters who, she revealed, “did not do so good” through adolescence. Soua added, “my sisters and I have chosen different paths in life, and they made bad choices.” She explained that many people in her family participated in welfare programs, including her mother.

Soua focused on school and employment throughout her senior year at CSHS. She missed only two days of American Government class through the trimester and said that most often she received B’s in school. Soua planned to attend a state university in the coming fall. In addition to attending school, Soua worked as a cashier at an Asian grocery store on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. During 9th-, 10th-, and 11th-grades, Soua had more time to volunteer in school-related organizations. She participated four or more times a week, after school in a Hmong group that worked to improve both the school and local communities. She explained that with this group she made eggrolls and sold candies and cookies as fundraisers to help install a bench in a local park. She enjoyed tutoring students at elementary schools in the district, but stopped volunteering when she started working as a cashier. In her junior year she was a member of the 11th-grade Executive Committee and worked to raise money for and promote the senior class prom event.

Participating, non-focal, students.

Anita. Of all eight participating Hmong youth, Anita missed the most days of school: Anita attended American Government class 26 out of 53 possible school days. A month after the class started, Ringo, another class member said to her at the beginning of the period, “You are in this class? I have never seen you before.” Anita responded, “Yeah, since the class started.”

Due to her many absences, Anita was missing several assignments and projects. To remedy this situation, she and her mother came to conferences in late April and created an action plan with Ms. Oakland. Although her absences decreased after conferences, Anita continued to miss class sessions and failed to complete certain assignments. In mid-May, Ms. Oakland and I discussed Anita’s progress. Ms. Oakland shared:

Anita, I don’t know what her deal is, ’cause we had a really nice conference. I want [her] to pass but [she] needs to come to school. She was gone yesterday, and she still has never made up, she has missed all the tests. Her grade is still really low even though she is doing these little worksheets. This worksheet is worth 10 points, and that test is worth 50. She thinks she is doing all this work. I feel bad, her grade is still like 20%.

Although she barely passed the American Government class at the end of the trimester, Anita maintained that she usually received B’s in school.

Anita’s clothing was casual and sporty while her make-up was dramatic. In particular, her eyeliner resembled the fashionable cat eye look mimicking the late Amy Winehouse, including fake eyelashes that accentuated her already dark eyes. Like Soua,

Anita frequently wore hoodies (usually cream colored), with a T-shirt underneath. She also dressed regularly in black yoga-like knit pants and furry black suede slippers. She carried a black lamb's wool backpack that mimicked the fur inside her shoes.

When I asked Anita if she participated in various organizations, she indicated that she was a member of a student council and a group that volunteered to improve her local community, and attended meetings or activities for these groups a few times each month. She did not expand on the length of time she was involved with the groups nor did she indicate the type of community group in which she volunteered. However, Anita explained that she did not often take part in various groups because she did not have enough time.

Mark. Although he was one of the first participants to show interest in and agree to join this study, Mark appeared to withdraw over the course of the trimester. While he joined and fully participated in the first and second focus groups, his initial interview was abbreviated because he had “things to do,” and he declined participation in the final interview for the same reason.

Mark explained that he and his family lived in a rural area in a bordering state, experienced unresolved harassment in the previous school district, and moved to Creekview Park to elude continued racial problems. Mark and his family identified as Shaman and he explained that spending time with his family, especially during celebrations, was important. He happily described recently attending a family event to celebrate the birth of a baby. Mark added that he did not have a job nor did he often join

school or community organizations because he was “very busy after school with the family everyday.”

Like Andrew and Oliver, Mark had short, spiky black hair but he also wore a thin, dark moustache. His trendy attire included slightly wrinkly button-down shirts, layered T-shirts, baggy khaki pants or jeans, black tennis or brown sturdy suede shoes, and a camouflage sack. Mark missed American Government class five days of the term and reported most often getting B’s in school. He frequently completed his American Government class work with other students, mostly but not always Hmong classmates, and moved independently from his assigned seat in order to work collaboratively with others. Although he did not have the time to participate in many school activities, Mark shared that one time while he was at CSHS, he volunteered to work in the library at a district elementary school, by placing stickers on books.

Mee. Mee worked diligently in American Government throughout the trimester. She was usually quite engaged in her studies during the class period and reported that she achieved A’s most often in school. She sometimes engaged in leadership roles during collaborative work time in Ms. Oakland’s class. For example, on the third day of class, Ms. Oakland asked students to talk together about the structure of government. Mee posed questions to her table group from the assignment sheet (e.g., “Who will settle these disputes? Should everyone have a voice?”), and then acted as recorder, taking notes for her peers. Mee and Xiong worked together almost on a daily basis. When they had the opportunity to choose their seats, they immediately found each other. Although Mee missed 12 days of school during the trimester (10 of those days she was on vacation with

her family), when she returned to CSHS she stayed after school with Ms. Oakland or went to Ms. Oakland's room during her 6th period study hall until she completed all unfinished assignments and exams.

Mee's apparel can be described as athletic, reflecting her declaration that, "I love to stay physically active." She wore sweat suits to class regularly, and most of them included some shade of pink. One outfit consisted of a light pink top and dark pink sweat pants with "Hollister" written on the derriere; another ensemble reflected the professional football team that represented the area in which she lived. Mee usually styled her long black hair in a ponytail, reflecting her sporty clothing. When I asked if she participated in any clubs or organizations, Mee responded that she played on sports teams in the past, but had not joined any academic, cultural, civic, or political groups.

Xiong. Like Mee, Xiong was very studious and stated that he usually received A's in school. The March CSHS newsletter indicated that he was on the A honor roll for the senior class (a fact of which he was unaware). When I talked to him about the honor roll he cracked a very small, humble smile, entered the classroom, and moved directly to his assigned seat. On the days that Mee was absent from class, Xiong opted to work independently rather than with other students in the room.

Xiong styled his hair short and spiky with a slight Mohawk up the middle. His standard wardrobe contained a variety of comfortable, but stylish clothes including hoodies, sweat pants, jeans, black high top tennis shoes, and T-shirts -- most with graphics or words emblazoned on the front. Although his clothing reflected variety, he

almost always wore a silver chain around his neck and carried a black backpack, which he consistently placed on the floor next to his seat.

Xiong's academic progress was very important to him. Although he agreed to participate in this study, he told me: "I have many classes to catch up on so I won't be able to make it to all of the focus groups. I also work afterschool at 1:30 PM, so the after school focus groups won't work either." Fortunately, by the end of the term, Xiong was able to contribute to two focus groups with his peers. In addition to school and work, Xiong joined a computer club and a sports team, and indicated that he participated in these activities one to three times each week. However, he did not elaborate on these groups during our conversations.

The teacher in the observed classroom. I asked Ms. Oakland, the American Government teacher, to participate in this study based on several criteria that I confirmed with her before I joined her classroom community. First, she instructed 12th-grade American Government to a class that included multiple Hmong adolescents. Second, Ms. Oakland explained that she emphasized citizenship during her instruction and believed that an integral aspect of social studies education was to prepare students for citizenship. Third, Ms. Oakland utilized effective social studies teaching strategies including developing key concepts and themes in depth and by emphasizing necessary skills, as described by NCSS. Finally, Ms. Oakland allowed me to join her first period class and observe as she instructed her students every day through the trimester.

Ms. Oakland instructed social studies for 12 years. Although neither she nor her husband had previous connections to Creekview Park or the Osceola Area School

District, they moved across state lines when she was offered a teaching position at Oak Park High School, which is one of the four high schools within the Osceola District. During her first three years of teaching, Ms. Oakland instructed political science, economics, American history, and Asian and African world studies courses. However, Ms. Oakland did not feel a strong personal connection to Oak Park High School. Consequently, after three years teaching there she was granted a one-year leave of absence from the Osceola Area School District, and took a teaching position at a charter school for refugee students. Ms. Oakland said that this position was more aligned with her skills and interests and that after her year of leave, she could not go back to Oak Park High School because it did not suit her background. One of Ms. Oakland's colleagues worked at CSHS and talked often about Creekview's student body and demographic diversity. Ms. Oakland felt that if there was a position open at CSHS, the students there would be similar to the learners she enjoyed so much at the charter school. After inquiring, Ms. Oakland found that there was an open social studies position at CSHS and she has been teaching there for the last eight years. Ms. Oakland felt professionally dedicated to teaching students from diverse cultural backgrounds, as evidenced by her thoughtful choice of school settings.

During her 12 years of teaching, Ms. Oakland always instructed grades 10, 11, and 12. However, she explained that it was rare for her to teach the same disciplines from year to year: Ms. Oakland taught all required Osceola Area School District social studies courses,⁸ interdisciplinary English/Social Studies, and International Baccalaureate (IB)

⁸ Required courses at CSHS are as follows: Grade 10, U.S. History 1940-present, two trimesters; Grade 11, Geography and World History, three trimesters; Grade 12, Government and Economics, one trimester each.

history. In addition, four years prior to this study she started teaching an ELL sheltered curriculum social studies class, which focused on integrating language and content instruction in order to provide mainstream, grade-level content and promote the development of English language skills.

Curriculum and instruction in the observed classroom. Twelfth grade American Government is mandatory for graduation from the Osceola School District. The Osceola School District Social Studies scope and sequence follows local, state, and national social studies graduation standards, and includes a rationale statement for the entire social studies program, as well as separate descriptions for each individual discipline area. For example, the Osceola School District Social Studies Program Rationale states:

The primary purpose of social studies education is to inspire and prepare students to be responsible, respectful, and productive citizens in a democratic society within a complex and dynamic interdependent world. Through an integrated study of social studies disciplines, students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and perspectives necessary to become lifelong learners and willing participants in the democratic process. (Osceola Area School District website, March 15, 2012)

Further, the strategic objectives for social studies across the Osceola Area School District direct students to “develop an understanding of meaningful social studies concepts, be involved in their community at the local, national, and global levels, and recognize the dignity of all human beings and their contributions to the world” (Osceola Area School

District website, March 15, 2012).

Over the course of the school year CSHS followed a trimester system and each day students attended six different class periods. The 12th-grade social studies curriculum included one trimester of American government and a second trimester of economics.

The CSHS 12th-grade American Government course description asserted that:

American government and citizenship is the focus of this course. Students will study the roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government at the national, state, and local levels as well as the foundations of American government. Students will examine the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy and will apply the fundamental principles of U.S. government to analyze elections and public policy. (Osceola Area School

District website, March 15, 2012)

Table 5 shows how the units of study in Ms. Oakland’s third Trimester American Government class reflected the CSHS 12th-grade American Government course description.

Table 5

American Government Units of Study

Unit Title	Date of Study	Topics and Themes
Unit One: Foundations of Government	3/14/11- 4/7/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship between government and citizens • Political philosophies of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke • Rights (e.g., natural, inalienable, human, minority, individual, equal) • Historical events impacting early government (Articles of Confederation, Constitutional Convention, Federalist/Anti-Federalist debates) • Introduction to the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government
Unit 2:	4/8/11- 5/3/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political ideology and the political spectrum (liberal, conservative, libertarian)

Political Participation and Ideology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political parties and their platforms (Democratic, Green, Independent, Republican) • Voting (polling, voting rights, voting patterns and behavior, voter suppression) • Campaign finance • Media in politics (political advertising, campaign advertising) • Electoral College system • Political Action Committees and Special Interest Groups
Unit Three: The Legislative Branch of Government	5/4/11-5/25/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressional Powers (implied, expressed, legislative) • Legislative process (how a bill becomes a law) • Public Policy • Budget deficit versus debt • Gerrymandering • Congressional leaders
Unit 4: The Judiciary	5/26/11-6/3/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicial review • Rights and freedoms (constitutional role in protecting rights, minority and majority rights) • Bill of Rights (1st Amendment, 4th Amendment, 5th Amendment, 6th Amendment, 8th Amendment, 14th Amendment) • Landmark court cases (<i>Brown v. Plata</i>, <i>Minersville v. Gobitis</i>, <i>West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette</i>, <i>Texas v. Johnson</i>, <i>Miranda v. Arizona</i>)
Final Examinations	6/6/11-6/7/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test preparation • Final examination

Data-Collection Methods: Experiencing, Inquiring, and Examining

To gather information about what citizenship means to Hmong adolescents, I attended and observed the 12th-grade American Government class each day during the third trimester of the 2010-2011 school year; analyzed classroom curricular and instructional materials; directed three focus groups with all participating Hmong students; conducted pre- and post- individual interviews with four focal students who were selected based on the diversity of their opinions and willingness to participate in reflective conversations; and conducted two formal individual interviews and various informal interviews with Ms. Oakland, the American Government teacher. During the data collection, analysis, and writing process, I kept a field journal to document classroom

experiences, and a personal, reflexive journal to maintain a paper trail to ensure trustworthiness.

Experiencing: Classroom observations. As I observed the American Government classroom, I composed field notes on my daily experiences. I define my role in the classroom as a “non-participant participant observer,” as described by Wolcott (1999, p. 48). This means that I did not hide my research activities from the students and the teacher in the classroom (nor from other staff in the school building), but at the same time I was not as completely available to them as would be a participant observer. My goal was to be present in the classroom, but not to interfere with daily classroom activities. When I observed each class period, I concentrated on the extent to which the topic of the class session was connected to citizenship, if any aspect of what it means to be a U.S. citizen arose, what pedagogical methods and instructional materials were used, and what students actually *did* or *performed* during the lesson. On a daily basis, I followed and completed the Classroom Observation Guide, presented in Appendix A, to help direct and document my analysis of the classroom.

Inquiring: Student focus groups. I chose to conduct focus groups for several reasons. Focus group methodology allows the researcher to listen and gather information from participants. Those involved in a focus group discussion are encouraged to share their perceptions and points of view in a non-threatening environment. Focus group members influence each other and encourage conversation by responding to the thoughts and ideas of others (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Further, research shows that Hmong learners tend to be field-sensitive and prefer to work with others while focusing on social

cues (Timm, Chiang, & Finn, 1998). Focus group methodology also helps in developing themes and generating hypotheses that emerge from group insights and ideas; focus groups result in qualitative data that will help us better understand how Hmong adolescents construct their citizenship identities (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 288). Torney-Purta, Amadeo, and Andolina (2010) described how focus groups were particularly helpful when investigating political socialization processes. Focus groups permit participants to develop a sense of democratic community. As the focus group moderator, my job was to listen, not to speak for the others, as focus group methodology allows people to speak for themselves. At the same time, participants had the opportunity to listen to their peers' conceptualizations of citizenship and learn how other citizens construct democratic meaning and thinking.

During the first week of the third trimester, I invited all ten Hmong youth in the American Government classroom to join this study. After the eight Hmong students (and parents if necessary) assented or consented to the research, I encouraged each youth to complete a short demographic questionnaire that asked students about their engagement in various organizations, and their initial thoughts about democratic life (see Appendix B).⁹ The questionnaire also included an invitation to participate in two individual interviews. I verbally asked each study participant to join in the three focus groups.

The first focus group took place during the second and third weeks of the trimester, on April 6 and 14. Due to student schedules and a snowstorm during the second week of the trimester, I conducted two different focus groups to accommodate all the

⁹ Survey item 10g was adapted from Westheimer & Kahne (2004). All other survey items originated from Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schultz (2001).

participants; the April 6 focus group took place after school in Ms. Oakland's classroom and was about one hour in length; the April 14 event was conducted during the students' homeroom period in the CSHS media center and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The first focus group conversation centered on the participants' meaning and understanding of citizenship. We also addressed the degree to which the students identified as both Hmong and American citizens. The second focus group occurred in the CSHS media center in two parts during the sixth week of the trimester, on May 3rd and 5th, both during the students' homeroom period, and each about 30 minutes in length. The topic of this group conversation centered on how the students learned about citizenship through their classroom experiences. The third and final focus group happened on June 2nd, during the last full week of school for these high school seniors. Again, this focus group took place during the students' homeroom period, in the CSHS media center, and lasted about 30 minutes. During the final focus group, the students reflected on their American Government class experiences over the course of the trimester, and about how their ideas of citizenship changed from the beginning to the end of the course. All focus group protocols can be found in Appendices C, D, and E.

Inquiring: A rationale for student and teacher interviews. Qualitative interviews allow researchers to become aware of another's perspective and experience, and are particularly effective at uncovering social and political processes (Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Data from in-depth, qualitative interviews also offer responses to unanswered social, historical, and political questions. Because I explored how Hmong adolescents in a 12th-grade American Government class construct their conceptions of

citizenship (ideas of which cannot be uncovered simply or briefly, nor have been studied extensively), qualitative interviews with the teacher and students were an appropriate means of data collection. My goal was to generate a deep understanding of Hmong adolescent conceptions of citizenship, and interviews with the Hmong students and American Government teacher in addition to the student focus groups helped uncover this information.

Student interviews. When the eight Hmong students completed the Citizenship Focus Group Survey, I invited them to participate as key informants in two semi-structured, open-ended, individual interviews. Key informant interviewing refers to garnering significant sources of information for one's research from one or more informants (Wolcott, 1999). Five students (Andrew, Mark, Oliver, Sandy, and Soua) offered to participate as key informants. Mark completed the first interview, but was unable to complete the second due to his busy academic and personal schedule. I interviewed the remaining four key informants two times each over the course of the trimester (the first interview occurred at the beginning of the trimester and the second toward the end) to see how and if their ideas of citizenship changed, and to talk about how their learning in American Government class shaped their ideas about citizenship. All of the student interviews took place during the students' homeroom period, in the CSHS media center, and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Occasional, informal conversations with the youth occurred before and after class, in the school hallways, and in the classroom during unstructured time periods. See Appendices F and G for the Pre- and Post-Student Interview Protocols.

Teacher interviews. I worked to build trust with Ms. Oakland before the research started via email and telephone contact, but also over the course of data collection while observing in her classroom. I conducted two formal interviews with the American Government teacher – one before the trimester started, and one immediately after the end of the term; each interview lasted approximately one hour. The interview data helped create a more comprehensive picture of the youths’ citizenship experiences. Through the interviews, I was able to develop an understanding of Ms. Oakland’s hopes for, fears about, and expectations regarding citizenship for Hmong youth. In addition to the formal interviews, Ms. Oakland and I shared informal conversations about the students, curriculum, and instruction on a weekly basis. See Appendices H and I for the pre- and post-teacher interview protocols.

Examining: Document analysis. Wolcott (1999) considers any document that proves valuable as a source of information as an archive, and appropriate for analysis by the ethnographer (p. 59). I catalogued curricular and instructional materials prepared by Ms. Oakland and utilized by the students in the American Government classroom. I analyzed the classroom environment for posters, letters, or other artifacts that reflect American government, civics, and citizenship education. I also reviewed school handbooks and other school-wide documents pertinent to civics and citizenship (see Appendix J for the Template for Document Analysis). Table 6 summarizes the data collection timetable during the field experience, and Table 7 recaps the dates for each Hmong student’s individual and focus group interview participation.

Table 6

Data Collection Timetable

	March 2011	April 2011	May 2011	June 2011
Student Focus Groups	• Conducted first focus group April 6 and 14, 2011	• Conducted second mid-term focus group May 3 and 5, 2011		• Conducted final focus group June 2, 2011.
Student Survey	• Conducted during first week of field experience (March 14-18, 2011)			
Formal Individual Student Interviews	• Conducted first interviews between April 5 and 21, 2011			• Conducted second interviews between May 12 and 26, 2011
Informal Individual Student Interviews	←Conducted throughout field experience→			
Formal Teacher Interviews	• Conducted pre-interview February 23, 2011			• Conducted post-interview June 9, 2011
Informal Teacher Interviews	←Conducted throughout field experience→			
Classroom Observation	←Conducted each day throughout field experience→			
Document Analysis	←Conducted each day throughout field experience→			

Table 7

Among Students' Focus Group and Individual Interview Dates

Student Name	Interview #1	Interview #2	Focus Group #1	Focus Group #2	Focus Group #3
Andrew	4/21/11	5/24/11	4/14/11	5/10/11	6/2/11
Anita	NA	NA	4/14/11	5/10/11	NA
Mark	4/7/11	NA	4/6/11	5/10/11	NA
Mee	NA	NA	4/14/11	NA	6/2/11
Oliver	4/5/11	5/26/11	4/6/11	5/5/11 & 5/10/11	6/2/11
Sandy	3/24/11	5/12/11	4/14/11	5/10/11	6/2/11
Soua	4/19/11	5/19/11	4/6/11	5/5/11 & 5/10/11	6/2/11
Xiong	NA	NA	4/14/11	NA	6/2/11

Data Analysis and Synthesis

One purpose of analysis is to extract and construct significant concepts from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I followed Frederick Erickson's (1986) procedures for analyzing qualitative data to help me organize and analyze the findings from classroom observations, document analysis, focus groups, and individual interviews. Analysis was an iterative process and continued throughout the field and writing experiences. The first step of Erickson's protocol is to code and categorize the data. This initial part of the analytic process included transcribing the focus group and interview tapes, sorting and arranging the transcription data, and categorizing, coding, and recoding the data until it was completely classified. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest specific ways to code qualitative data including how to create codes, name codes, and develop levels of coding (p. 55-72). In addition to using Miles and Huberman's coding schemes, I employed NVIVO software to help organize all of the data. From the codes, I identified frequently occurring patterns and themes including "being American," "being Hmong," "political identity," and "racism," amongst others.

Following Erickson's next analytical phase, I developed assertions on significant patterns that emerged from the data. Then, based on the third stage of Erickson's process, I expanded each assertion into a narrative vignette that described the context of the situation including, but not limited to, a description of the physical setting, non-verbal behaviors, and direct quotations from participants. I compared and contrasted new findings to the existing literature and situated them within the conceptual framework

previously presented. I repeated this analytical process so that narrative vignettes were created for all major patterns and themes.

Matters of Reflexivity

There are various definitions of reflexivity in research, but most focus on the complex relationship between the researcher and the researched while creating knowledge (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Virginia Olesen (2005) explained that researcher reflexivity includes:

- (a) an acute awareness of the contributions of hidden or unrecognized elements in the researcher's background, (b) an acknowledgement of the relationship between subject and object rather than a denial of its existence, and (c) researcher relinquishment of unilateral control over the researcher – researched relationship (p. 251).

Throughout the dissertation process I reflected on my relationship with the youth and adult participants in the study. I recognize that I entered the American Government classroom as a veteran social studies teacher, as a European American, and female researcher, all positions of authority. As a privileged European American, I am cognizant of the power differentials I bring to the research endeavor. However, in my relationship with the participants, I worked diligently to include them in the decision-making process regarding all aspects of their involvement in the study, especially those things associated with their data collection preferences. For example, I gave participants a short ballot that allowed them to choose the best times and places to convene focus groups (see Appendix K for an example).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) detail four criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative studies. *Credibility* can be developed by prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, and triangulation of sources and methods. I conducted observations in the American Government classroom each day over the course of one trimester; performed member checks with the classroom teacher throughout the course of the data collection period; shared interview transcripts with the teacher; and triangulated sources (one teacher and eight students) and methods (classroom observations, document analysis, student survey, student focus group interviews, and individual student and teacher interviews).

The second criteria, *transferability*, is ascertained via thick, rich, and deep description in my findings and analysis. *Dependability* and *confirmability* are strengthened through my audit trail – the written documentation of my research process. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that researchers must “log and describe procedures clearly enough so that others can understand them, reconstruct them, and subject them to scrutiny” (p. 281). In order to carefully document all components of my research process, and to buttress all four trustworthiness criteria, I maintained a field journal and a reflexive journal. My entries in both journals are guided by Van Maanen’s (1988) *Tales of the Field*, and Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw’s (1995) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Limitations of the Study

There are at least three limitations to this study. First, I observed the American Government classroom for only one trimester. Because students at CSHS receive one

single trimester of government education, this is the length of time that I could observe the particular students in the classroom. Traditional ethnography suggests a longer observation period (Fetterman, 1998; Van Maanen, 1988). Further, I observed the American Government classroom everyday during the term. There was little time between class sessions for deep reflection and analysis as the trimester passed very quickly. Second, as a European American female researcher, I was considered an ‘outsider’ to the government classroom community and to the Hmong ethnic community, both of which could limit my study. However, I gained access and acceptance into the American Government classroom after I created a safe relationship with all students in the classroom and their teacher. Further, I focused my study on how Hmong adolescents conceptualize citizenship – not how I think they conceptualize citizenship. Third, because the Institutional Review Board (IRB) stipulated that I was not to obtain contact information for my student participants, I was unable to communicate and conduct member checks with these youth after I left the research site.

Ethical Considerations

I received human subjects clearance from both the University of Minnesota IRB and the Osceola Area School District. Before joining this research project, all participants were informed of the research activities involved in the study and alerted to the fact that I would audiotape each class session, interview, and focus group. All Hmong participants (and their parents/guardians, if necessary) were presented with consent and assent forms, and signed those documents prior to joining this study. All non-Hmong students in the American Government classroom were presented with an information sheet that

explained this research to them and their parents/guardians. All consent and assent forms can be found in the appendices and include the: Consent for Parents of Youths Involved in Observed Government Class, English Language (Appendix L), Consent for Parents of Youths Involved in Observed Government Class, Hmong language (Appendix M), Assent Form for Youth Participating in the Hmong Citizenship Project (Appendix N), Consent Form for Adolescents Ages 18+, Participating in the Hmong Citizenship Project (Appendix O), Teacher Consent Form (Appendix P), and Information Sheet for Non-Hmong Student Participants and their Parents/Guardians (Appendix Q).

Chapter Four – The Cases

The purposes of this ethnographic case study are to: (a) explore how Hmong adolescent students in a 12th-grade American government class construct their conceptions of citizenship, and (b) investigate the roles of teachers, peers, and curriculum and instruction as Hmong students shape their citizenship identities. The overall research questions of this study are: *How are Hmong adolescent citizenship identities shaped and negotiated in a 12th-grade American government class? How do Hmong adolescents make sense of being a citizen of the United States?* This chapter presents key findings obtained from three student focus groups, ten in-depth individual interviews (eight student and two teacher), American Government class observation field notes taken over the course of one trimester, and document analysis of activities assigned in the American Government class. Although specific focus group and interview questions can be found in the appendices, most questions focused on what citizenship meant to the student, how the participant learned about citizenship to this point in her or his life, and changes in thinking about political and civic engagement.

The findings chapter focuses on the four focal cases (Andrew, Sandy, Oliver, and Soua), but also includes the experiences and ideas of the other four Hmong participants, as well as interactions with other non-Hmong youth in the class and the teacher Ms. Oakland. Each case illustrates ways in which Hmong adolescent youth are making sense of being U.S. citizens. Following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) second criteria for establishing trustworthiness, *transferability*, I emphasize the students' voices through

quotations from interviews, focus groups, and classroom interaction. My goal is to offer the reader thick, rich, and deep description in my findings and analysis.

Andrew

On the first day of American Government class, Ms. Oakland distributed a political engagement survey to the students. The questionnaire asked them about the extent to which they followed politics in the news, if they were registered to vote, if their families discussed politics at home, and which issues, in their opinions, were most significant to the country at the time. After students completed the survey, Ms. Oakland reviewed classroom expectations and procedures for the upcoming term. A few students laid their heads on the tabletops as Ms. Oakland spoke while a few others sent or reviewed text messages. Thus started the last trimester of K-12 education for many of these youth as they made their transition into adulthood.

American Government students experienced their first opportunity to speak together and to contribute to whole-class discussion on the second day of the term. After Ms. Oakland took attendance, she told the students that the purpose of their first academically-focused lesson would be to investigate “why we have a class like this.” Ms. Oakland checked that there were at least two students at each table and then told them, “I am going to make you talk to each other,” which she described as one of her instructional goals for the American Government class. She projected a deserted island survival scenario on the power point screen, and asked students to discuss the following questions: How will you survive? Will you establish any rules? How will you make decisions? Students discussed the scenario at their tables and then Ms. Oakland presented a new

aspect to the situation – How would you answer the same questions if the island was not deserted, but rather occupied by another group? When Ms. Oakland presented the new scenario to the entire class, Andrew was the first of all students to respond:

Andrew: I'd leave them alone because they could still steal, cheat, or lie to you. But that's the number one rule with other people, another group that is already established, and you are established, they are not going to trust us. I would not do anything, I would just leave them alone.

Ms. Oakland: So you don't have enough trust with them to negotiate, to do any diplomacy?

Andrew: Yes [correct].

During the first opportunity in class for students to speak openly, Andrew showed his interest in taking an active role in discussion and leadership by sharing his ideas about how to relate to others politically. This was only the beginning of his enthusiastic participation in American Government class.

The American Government Classroom as a Site of Citizenship Negotiation

U.S. schools are a major source of socialization for Hmong students (Vang & Flores, 1999) and Ms. Oakland's American Government classroom functioned as a significant site of citizenship identity negotiation for Andrew. At the beginning of the first focus group meeting (4/14/11) Andrew explained that school was a "major influence" on how he learned about citizenship. Andrew added that his teachers gave him ideas about the general nature of citizenship. However, he revealed that he could not remember much of what his previous teachers taught him about the role of citizen, and in

his current American Government class, Andrew and his classmates did not engage in specific, deliberate discussion regarding the meaning or definition of citizenship. As will be further discussed below, Andrew shared some inaccuracies and assumptions about U.S. citizenship that he held to this point in his education. He also conveyed uncertainty about the nature of his own citizenship. As the trimester continued, Andrew's ideas about citizenship evolved so that he articulated citizenship in terms of civic and political knowledge and participation, political party identification, and connection to or detachment from "mainstream" American culture.

The classroom as a site of knowledge acquisition and preparation for civic participation. The first focus group interview (4/14/11) was held in a busy media center filled with students from all parts of the school who gathered together in groups eating snacks, talking, texting, and laughing during their homeroom period. At the beginning of this focus group Andrew seemed nervous; his face became flushed red and then blotchy as he spoke. However, he participated fully in the focus group activities. I asked the Hmong youth to describe citizenship and Andrew responded that "a person must be born in the U.S." and "have a card" to be a citizen. In his first individual interview (4/21/11), one week after the focus group, Andrew continued to describe citizenship in what Conover and Searing (2002) described as administrative or legal terms: "You have to be 18 years old, born in the United States, or lived here for five years." In addition to conveying legalistic ideas of citizenship, some of Andrew's assumptions about citizenship emerged in the first individual interview, including that it was "a lot easier to be a citizen in the United States than in other societies," "in the United States everybody

has no power over another,” and that a person must live in the country for at least five years before she or he becomes a citizen.

Andrew and his classmates studied the Foundations of Government in Ms. Oakland’s class from 3/14/11 to 4/7/11, at the same time the first focus group and interviews occurred (see Table 5 for a review of each unit of study). The curriculum in this unit focused on historical aspects of government with special consideration given to natural rights. By the second focus group event (5/10/11), Andrew’s ideas about citizenship began to expand. When I asked him what citizenship meant to him, he responded: “Everyone is qualified to have a say in government, to express their opinions, to make the best choice, the right to live, the right to pursue happiness. That’s what I think.” Andrew’s response reflected what he learned about John Locke’s philosophy of natural rights during the first unit of study, and started to depart from the more legalistic notions of citizenship he previously articulated.

Following the Foundations of Government, Ms. Oakland taught a unit on Political Participation and Ideology from 4/8/11 to 5/3/11. Her lessons addressed the political spectrum (e.g., radical, liberal, conservative, reactionary), U.S. political parties and their platforms, and voting. During the second focus group meeting on 5/10/11, I asked Andrew how his ideas about citizenship had changed from the beginning of the trimester. Andrew’s notions of citizenship reflected his new knowledge about political participation acquired in American Government class:

Yeah, [this class] opened my eyes, it widened my perspective a little bit more.

It made me realize more, how much more involved I can get. Just knowing

that it's out there, like when [we] were talking about the primaries, I didn't know that you could go and support them, so, that means that I can go out there and find out who I really want for a Republican candidate or a Democratic candidate. And, then just go run for it, I didn't know that for the past years, until now.

The third unit of study from 5/4/11 to 5/25/11 addressed the Legislative Branch of government and public policy. During this unit students conducted extensive research on a public policy issue of interest to them, and then they created a bill to present to a simulated congressional committee in which they participated. Andrew chose to research welfare policy and then wrote a bill to reduce people's need for welfare. The fourth and final mini-unit of the trimester quickly considered the Judiciary, with particular focus on the Bill of Rights. I consider the final unit a mini-unit because it lasted only six class sessions from 5/26/11 to 6/3/11, much shorter than the previous units, which were each approximately 3-4 weeks in length.

Andrew's second interview took place on 5/24/11, before the final unit of study. To learn more about Andrew's conceptions of citizenship, I again asked him how his ideas of citizenship had changed from the beginning of the trimester to the present. He said:

Well, they changed a lot. [This class] made me think more, I think be more interactive instead of just, okay, I guess I've gotta do this, just look at the TV and then vote. But, at the end, what Ms. Oakland taught, I can actually get more involved and see what other citizens do and that way, I can be part of

their world and they can be a part of my world, too. I will try to donate as much money as I can and I want to try to attend a rally and support a future candidate. Again, Andrew's evolving conception of citizenship reflected his new learning in American Government class. Ms. Oakland spent some time in the Political Participation unit showing her students how to critically analyze political campaigns and advertisements (not just passively watch television), and about voting behavior among young adults and various socioeconomic groups in the United States. Andrew and his peers learned that minorities and young adults voted in elections at lower rates than people in other demographics, and about the importance of participating in various elections. For Andrew, the meaning of citizenship not only assumed more thoughtful and participatory engagement, but also started to take on a global dimension. When Andrew stated that he could be a part of other citizens' worlds, and they could be a part of his, he showed how his thinking about citizenship was expanding from that of membership or legal status in a political community to a more supranational conception (Myers & Zaman, 2009).

The third focus group interview (6/2/11) allowed Andrew to share his ideas about citizenship with me one final time. Again, for Andrew, citizenship meant participation and knowledge. He said that: "I didn't know before that we could actually become more interactive. I mean, you can see how people go and protest or go to rallies but we didn't know that we could just join them too." In addition to participation, Andrew explained how he gained knowledge about the U.S. political system and about his rights as a citizen saying, "a lot of my ideas of citizenship changed because I have a deeper understanding

of how our system works and which role citizens play. Now I know where I lie and how much power I have.”

Although the fourth unit was short, Andrew and his classmates learned about citizens’ rights by studying the Bill of Rights and seminal court cases like *Miranda v. Arizona* (5th Amendment). Andrew’s new learning was reflected in the understanding he conveyed about his own power as a citizen. While his knowledge of citizens’ rights grew, so did his awareness of governmental power over the people. Andrew expressed apprehension about abuses of power that he had not shared in the previous focus groups or interview. He stated that it was important to know our rights, “because if you were ever to be abused by the government, if someone were to go and get abused, you can just immediately know your rights and confront them and take it to a higher court.”

In addition to whole class review and analysis of various cases, Ms. Oakland assigned students an in-depth investigation into a landmark Supreme Court case. For this project, Andrew chose *Brown v. Board of Education* because:

I remember hearing about it, but didn’t know too much about it, so I was like, okay, I’ll go with this one, and it was one that I’d been pondering about for a couple of years now. It is very interesting because I think it was, I believe it was when the civil rights movements had already been passed, but they went, they’re saying, ah, people are separate that is pretty much being segregated, so I think, I didn’t really like that. But, thankfully, that’s behind us. (FG3; 6/2/11)

Jane Bolgatz (2005) explained how students sometimes characterize racism as a thing of the past rather than acknowledging and studying its current forms. Andrew’s last

sentence suggesting that segregation and separation are parts of the historical past reflect his assumptions about current racial relations and experiences, topics of which students had very little opportunity in American Government class to examine or question. Further, many of Andrew's previously described assumptions about citizenship remained unchecked and he continued to hold inaccurate notions of citizenship at the end of the trimester. Andrew was unable to further explore his assumptions and inaccuracies in his American Government class as he was about to graduate from high school and move toward full adult citizenship.

The classroom as a site of political tension. Ms. Oakland spent more time teaching Political Participation and Ideology than she did instructing each of the other three units. She described Political Participation and Ideology as a particular interest of hers, and noted that many of her previous students showed special interest in topics and activities within this unit of study. Ms. Oakland held several instructional goals for her students as they learned about political participation and the political spectrum. She wanted her students to understand the election process, receive various sources of pertinent information, know where and how to find sources, and analyze their personal political values, thinking critically about the origin of their own political thought.

In one of the earliest discussions about the political spectrum (4/8/11), Ms. Oakland explained to the class that they resided in "an interesting political area" because Creekview Park citizens typically voted Democratic, but the city was surrounded by a larger, more conservative environment. Although she did not ask students to share their political values openly with their peers, she established that, "it would be likely that more

of my students would find themselves on the liberal side of things.” Within this politically-liberal milieu, seven of the Hmong students participating in this ethnographic case study considered themselves liberal or Democratic while Andrew was the only participant who identified with the Republican Party and as a conservative. In the American Government classroom, Andrew faced tension while shaping his political identity because he aligned himself with the Republican Party, making him a minority in a more Democratic environment.

Although Andrew shared very little information about his personal political affiliation in the first focus group (4/14/11) and interview (4/21/11), as he became more comfortable with me and with the American Government classroom community, he started to share aspects of his political ideas and perspectives with his peers and me. It was during the Political Party Platform class project (4/12-4/14) that students had a preliminary opportunity to talk together about the four political parties. Ms. Oakland presented students with political platforms for the Democratic, Green, Independent, and Republican parties (but did not invite students to investigate additional political parties beyond these four). By table groups, students read and interpreted all four party platforms, searching for information about two current issues assigned by Ms. Oakland. On the Political Party Platform assignment, Andrew and his tablemates (Danial, Edwardo, and Martha) were assigned the topics of jobs and gun control. Andrew took the lead in his group by dividing up the work and asking his peers to complete certain tasks. The other three students looked to Andrew for leadership throughout the assignment, and asked him questions when they were unsure of something. For example, Danial

confirmed with Andrew that he should write information about guns in a certain place on their assignment sheet. Eduardo asked Andrew to clarify positions on the political spectrum and Andrew responded, “Liberal is left, conservative is right. Democrat is liberal, it’s on the left.” At one point during the work session, Danial expressed anger at a Republican religious statement he read in the platform document:

Danial: I was just getting really mad.

Andrew: About?

Danial: There was a pretty Republican opinion, it was titled religion.

Andrew: Alright. There is nothing wrong with that.

Danial: I just hate when people try to shove religion down people’s throats.

That’s annoying.

Andrew: I don’t think it’s annoying, it’s a choice. You have a choice to do it or not.

Although his self-disclosure was very slight, it was during this conversation that Andrew started to openly share some of his political beliefs with peers.

One week later (4/21/11), Ms. Oakland accompanied students to the computer lab to complete a Campaign Advertisement Analysis. Each time American Government class was held in the media center, students chose their seating arrangement and had the opportunity to talk freely with classmates about a variety of civic, political, and personal topics. On this day, Andrew, Anthony, Donna, and Sandy sat together at a small square table in the center of the computer lab. Andrew and Anthony engaged in a political conversation regarding the previous presidential election where Andrew further disclosed

information about his conservative political beliefs, while at the same time taking a personal stand by encouraging voting for all citizens:

Anthony: Are you going for Obama again?

Andrew: No, I never went for Obama, I was for McCain.

Anthony: Me neither. I think that people should have to take a test [to vote] or something.

Andrew: I don't think so. Every American has the right to vote. Every vote is very valuable. You are actually pushing that boundary.

In the second focus group (5/10/11), I asked participants where they would situate themselves on the political spectrum and if this placement had changed at all to that point in the trimester. Although all other Hmong participants identified as liberal or Democratic, Andrew responded confidently in front of his peers, "I was a conservative and now I'm still conservative. Nothing changed besides having more perspective." He added, "I think I will get rich, and that's why I want to be Republican." Later in the same focus group he underscored that his learning in American Government class did not radically alter his conservative beliefs, but rather instructional activities like the Political Party Platform assignment and Campaign Advertisement analysis made his support for the Republican Party even stronger. He also openly acknowledged that he held a different political philosophy than other people in his classroom, civic, and cultural communities

when he said, “I am a Republican. Most Hmong, Whites, and Hispanics lean toward Democrat.”¹⁰

During our final interview (5/24/11), Andrew’s expanding political perspective was evident when he talked about the Democratic and Republican parties in terms that he had previously not used. He revealed a broader, more open view toward the Democratic Party when he said that he “really liked” the Democrats because “you can get involved with them too, and you can get a little help [from them].” However, he maintained his conservative stance and chose a Republican congressperson to portray in the Congressional Committee simulation activity. Andrew said, “He is our representative for the House of Representatives, that is why I chose him, and he is a Republican, which I am.”

Andrew and his classmates experienced formal (but usually unstructured) and informal opportunities for political discussion in their American Government class. In general, political communication and conversation between peers is a desirable component of social studies education because these activities may encourage civic development (Hess, 2008, 2009; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Parker, 2008). For example, in the Judiciary unit, students discussed flag burning, symbolic speech, mandatory Pledge of Allegiance, and the death penalty. It was the opportunity to discuss with his peers that allowed Andrew to learn about others’ political perspectives and at the same time reflect on his own ideas. It was also through open class dialogue that Andrew learned that he was not the only Republican in class:

¹⁰ The Pew Research Center (2012) reported that since 2008, more whites (38%) identify as independents than call themselves Republicans (32%) or Democrats (26%). In 2008, party identification among whites was more evenly divided: 33% were independents, 30% Democrats and 31% Republicans.

The other day in the library we were just talking and we were able to express our ideas and what we thought about everything and I really thought about that, I wasn't the only Republican, there was two other people in the class that was Republican. It felt okay because I was like, relieved because I wasn't the only one that like, if I were to be in an argument with the class, let's say, and I would be the only Republican and they would be all Democratic, of course they would win because of the numbers, but if I had more people with me, I would know that we could argue a little bit.

It was not until the end of the trimester (6/2/11) that Andrew revealed to me that he felt relieved of the tension he experienced as a political minority in the American Government classroom. Ms. Oakland did not intentionally ask her pupils to talk about the differences and similarities between their own political philosophies. However, the instructional strategies Ms. Oakland used supported knowledge development and prompted the opportunity to discuss civic and political issues. It was the students who further constructed civic and political conversation around instructional concepts, issues, and topics covered in American Government class.

The classroom as a site of belonging, a site of exclusion. Conover and Searing (2002) described identity and understanding as the psychological elements of citizenship. Identity includes the meanings and connections people make to their political environs, while understanding includes the belief citizens create and maintain about their relationship to the political milieu, including other citizens. Psychologically, the

classroom acted as a site of belonging, of being “American” for Andrew, but it was also a site of separation, a place of division between “us” and “them.”

Andrew described certain things that made him feel like being an “American.” He said that just living in the United States made him feel American, along with having the freedom to work, and the rights to speech and religion. School, however, was a place where Andrew felt like he was *truly* a part of U.S. culture. When he explained the connection between school and citizenship, Andrew stated that he felt particularly American when:

Coming to school every day and learning American history, learning English, American literatures and stuff like that, that’s when I just start feeling that I’m actually, I’m learning American, the American language and their customs and their language. (INT1; 4/21/11)

When talking about being American, Andrew considered and described American history and literature, and English language as “learning...*their* customs and *their* language.” Andrew’s use of the pronoun *their* demonstrates the paradox between how he placed himself outside of mainstream American culture in school and American Government class, while at the same time expressing that school is the place where he felt most American.

Talking About Race In The Classroom

Lee (2005) and Rubin (2007) described how students’ daily experiences with race and racism became a part of their cultural and citizenship identities. Andrew’s experiences in American Government class with issues of race played a role in his

negotiation of U.S. citizenship. Unfortunately, the American Government classroom environment seldom offered Andrew and his peers extensive opportunities to examine race and racism: Discussion around historical and contemporary issues of race seldom occurred.

One example of a potential opportunity to hold a discussion around race transpired early in the trimester (3/24/11). Ms. Oakland introduced her students to problems inherent in the Articles of Confederation (e.g., governmental representation, election processes, slave trade, the power to declare war). She told her students that “there were fights over the Constitution” and that with their tablemates, they would build arguments for and against aspects of the new Constitution. These arguments would then be presented to the whole class in a modified debate format. Each table group was responsible for determining the main points of their assigned topic from various perspectives of those at the Constitutional Convention, and then to defend those positions; Andrew’s group received the slave trade question.

Andrew struggled with the assignment from day one of the activity. After Rose, Martha, David (all African American), and Danial (a European American) refused to defend Constitutional support of the Colonial Era slave trade, Andrew was left as the only student in the work group to argue for continued slavery, and this he did hesitantly. Andrew articulated how difficult he thought the activity would be, both to his work group and to Ms. Oakland lamenting, “we are going to have such a hard time,” and that “this is not my kinda thinking process.” Ms. Oakland tried to help the group with their concerns about their assignment:

I know this is the hardest one. Don't feel like you guys have to argue about the morality of enslaving people 'cause we really don't want to touch that stuff. What we are talking about is, you are going to build a country, you have all of these states whose economies rest on this thing, they are not going to sign the piece of paper if you take this issue away. Whoever is on that side, you do not have to say that this issue is a good thing to do because I don't want to put students in that position of having to say that. But, what they are talking about is states' rights to make up their own policies.

After Ms. Oakland spoke with the group, Andrew expressed how supporting the slave trade went against his beliefs: "This goes against all of my morals. Like how can we do this?" Even after talking with Ms. Oakland, Andrew felt so concerned about offending anyone in the class that he developed a presentation plan, which he shared with his group mates:

I am going to be very careful with my words. If I am gonna say something I am gonna say I am sorry if I offend anybody. That is how I am gonna start tomorrow. Cause I don't want to offend anybody and this is not my thoughts.

Andrew, Danial, David, Martha, and Rose used the remaining work time to develop the arguments they would present to their peers the following day.

At the beginning of the second day of the Constitutional Convention activity, Ms. Oakland shared with students her participation expectations for the graded discussion. For example, she asked students to present their position first (then move to discussion on the position), allow everyone to speak, and to refrain from side conversations when

acting as an audience member. She then allowed the students a few minutes to get organized for their presentations. Group One disputed how members of the lower house of Congress should be elected, and then Andrew's group was called to argue perspectives toward the slave trade. Ms. Oakland was clearly aware that these students felt challenged by the assigned topic and therefore gave the entire class a synopsis of the slave trade problem from an historical view.

Andrew bravely presented reasons to support the continuation of the slave trade, without the help of a classmate. He started his presentation as he planned on the previous day saying, "Sorry if I offend anybody, please forgive me. Don't take it to heart or don't take it personally. My position is that we should not interfere with the slave trade." Andrew and David continued by debating reasons to support and oppose the slave trade while Danial and Martha remained silent. Rose was absent from class. At the end of the debate, Ms. Oakland repeated that she knew this was a tough topic for the group, Andrew and David shook hands in a show of friendship, and again Andrew apologized to the class if he offended them in any way.

The Constitutional Convention assignment challenged Andrew and his work group. Although Ms. Oakland knew that Andrew and his peer partners were uncomfortable with their assigned task (Andrew clearly verbalized several times that he did not want to support slavery), she seemed unaware that the conversation she had with Andrew and his group during the previous class session did not rectify the problematic learning activity. But rather the oral presentation left Andrew, a student from a marginalized group, to individually defend the slave trade as the remaining students

refused to support the continuation of slavery. It was not until later in the trimester that I had the opportunity to talk further with Andrew about this classroom activity (I will revisit this conversation shortly).

In the Constitutional Convention activity, Andrew found himself in an uncomfortable instructional and racial situation. Framing the assignment differently while including various levels of scaffolding may have supported students' learning and comfort as they moved through the instructional tasks. For example, the Constitutional Convention assignment may have been a less threatening learning activity if it would have been framed so that students had the opportunity to investigate and present multiple historical viewpoints toward the slave trade rather than defend an individual position. Further, students may have been more comfortable talking about slavery, a challenging topic, if discussing past controversial issues or painful histories would have been scaffolded. The topic of slavery was presented to students nine days into the trimester, and over the course of those initial class sessions, students had not yet had the occasion to talk about issues of race, nor did they have the opportunity to build a classroom community where race and racism could be safely broached.

Because students had not yet talked about issues of race within the American Government classroom, they did not yet hold what Jane Bolgatz (2005) termed racial literacy, "the ability to interact with others to challenge undemocratic practices" (p. 1). Students in Ms. Oakland's first period class did not yet possess the tools necessary to meaningfully discuss race and racism, either as an historic or contemporary challenge. Andrew found taking a pro-slavery position awkward and uncomfortable because he had

not yet had the chance to develop racial literacy skills. Unfortunately, with the exception of a later lesson analyzing voter behavior by various socioeconomic indicators, Andrew and his classmates had little opportunity to further develop the ability to critically discuss race and racism in their American Government class.

Over the course of the trimester, Andrew did not share his feelings about the Constitutional Convention activity with me during any individual or focus group interview, or private conversation until the final focus group on June 2nd. During the third focus group I asked Andrew and the other Hmong participants about times when they felt particularly engaged in their American Government class. The following exchange of ideas ensued:

Soua: I did like the one in the beginning where we were really talking. That was interesting because we had to pretend to be for that position or that thing.

Andrew: As long as you didn't have the slavery one...

Annette: You had the slavery topic. How did that go for you?

Andrew: Um, it really did go against my ideas, but I had it in my best to try to do something, so I tried to defend it, but...

Annette: So, what you are saying is it went against your personal beliefs or philosophies, but because of the activity in class, you had to argue for the other side?

Andrew: Yeah, yeah. I didn't like that.

Andrew harbored his uneasiness about the Constitutional Convention activity until the end of the trimester. However, during the final focus group he had a small opportunity to

reflect on various instructional activities he experienced over the course of the term. The lack of attention to race and racism in the American Government classroom gave Andrew little preparation for future conversations about similar topics like prejudice, discrimination, intolerance, and human violence.

Civic and Political Engagement and Leadership

As an 18-year-old senior in high school, Andrew is civically and politically engaged at several levels – in American Government class, at school, and within his Hmong community. Although Andrew’s American Government class provided civic and political knowledge, and his school experiences offered opportunities for civic engagement, it was the leadership activities in which Andrew participated outside of CSHS that best prepared him for engaged, participatory citizenship during and after high school.

Active engagement: American Government class and school activities. As previously illustrated, Andrew’s leadership and participation in his American Government class was evident throughout the course. He spoke often during whole-class activities, participated actively in classroom projects and assignments, was approached by his peers for help and information, and often took leadership roles while completing group activities. Andrew was the most engaged, vocal participant in this ethnographic case study, attending all individual and focus group interviews. Outside of Ms. Oakland’s classroom but within the CSHS community, Andrew played on the football team and was a member of the Asian Club. In junior high, he was involved in the International Teen Club at his school. Andrew participated actively in his school communities as a student.

Learning about and preparing for civic and political engagement outside of school. In our first individual interview, I asked Andrew about the people who helped him learn about citizenship. In addition to Ms. Oakland and his previous social studies teachers, Andrew stated that he learned a great deal from his father through his use of Hmong fables. The stories communicated important information about how to interact with others, represent one's kinship network, and maintain Hmong values, norms, and cultural practices. However, a divide existed between discussing engagement within the Hmong community and political practice within wider U.S. society. Andrew said that when he asked his parents, they would not tell him whom they voted for in the previous presidential election. Further, he stated that he did not know his parents' political affiliations and acknowledged that their political ideas could be very different from his conservative thought.

Unlike the mystery surrounding his parents' political leanings, Andrew indicated that he participated in explicit political conversations with one of his uncles, and these communications influenced his own political thinking. For example, one day when Andrew was with his uncle, a man from the Democratic Party called the uncle and asked him to support a local candidate. Andrew explained how his uncle and the caller engaged in "cross-cutting political talk" -- both partners in the conversation were exposed to oppositional political perspectives over the course of their telephone exchange (Mutz, 2006). After hearing his uncle convey numerous reasons for supporting the Republican Party, Andrew said his uncle "changed my moral ideas about becoming Democrat or Republican."

In addition to his father and uncle, Andrew learned about community engagement from other male leaders of his clan group. Andrew admired the Hmong elders of his clan and said that he hoped to be a Hmong leader in the future because he wanted “to be looked up as by the elders to show them, I would like to have their respect and then to be looked up to by other people.” Looking to the future as an elder, Andrew anticipated contributing to the whole clan by learning from elders and then passing those cultural values to others within his extended family.

Active political engagement. Andrew was aware of and engaged in politics within the Hmong community. The Vietnam War, the Secret War, and General Vang Pao, were especially important aspects of Andrew’s political life. Andrew explained how the Hmong people served in the Vietnam and Secret Wars by helping the “Americans fight off communism.” He added that the Secret War was part of the Vietnam War, but occurred outside of Vietnam and Laos, which reflects some misunderstanding on his part.¹¹ Andrew shared his opinions about the role Hmong people played in both wars:

I really wish that [the U.S. government] would actually see and appreciate that, you know, what the Hmong people did, so they should allow some more to come here [United States], but just don’t ignore them because of what they did, but they should become a citizen here in America. (INT1; 4/21/11)

¹¹ Technically, the Secret War occurred in Laos. Laotian Civil War (1953-75) combatants included the Communist Pathet Lao, many of whom were North Vietnamese of Lao lineage, and the Royal Lao government. Both sides received military support from global superpowers involved in the Cold War. Some CIA and Hmong veterans of the conflict referred to the Laotian Civil War as the Secret War, or Quiet War (Fadiman, 1997; Yang, 2008).

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) supported General Vang Pao as the Hmong leader of the Armée Clandestine during the Secret War. Many in the U.S. Hmong community revered General Vang Pao in the years after the Vietnam and Secret Wars. While Andrew and I waited for his peers to attend the final focus group, he told me that he was present at the soul release ceremony for General Vang Pao over the Memorial Day weekend (5/27-29/2011). I asked if there were many people there and he said not as many as were at the funeral, which he also attended. Andrew explained that there were two ceremonies when a Hmong person dies, a funeral immediately followed by the soul release. The soul release helped the soul arrive at a place for the spirits, a location away from Earth. Usually, a soul release lasted one day but three days were observed for General Vang Pao because his funeral was in January while the soul release occurred several months later. Andrew explained how his community advocated for a special military burial. He said, “We notified the American government that we would like to honor [General Vang Pao] and to bury him at a memorial site in Washington D.C., but we were declined with that.”

Leadership training. Throughout our conversations, Andrew shared that he learned a great deal about citizenship from the leadership classes in which he was involved. Andrew’s participation in multiple leadership academies, seminars, and workshops significantly impacted his high levels of civic and political engagement. Further, leadership training allowed Andrew to think about citizenship in more global terms. Andrew said:

When I think about it, the leadership classes I go to, they actually help me

out a lot because they make you think, okay, if I can succeed with this, then, yeah, [I can] become a citizen in the world or the society.

When I asked Andrew what kind of things he learned at the leadership workshops, he said that the curriculum focused on “success principles, just learning how to be successful in the world so then that way, I can have a job and a life, so then I can be part of society.” Zhou’s (1997) study found that Hmong students shaped and negotiated their own identities to conform to or contradict dominant European American privilege and power. Andrew’s suggestion that he “can be part of society” through participation in leadership seminars again conveyed a sense of otherness and separation, and reflected his personal search for ways to become a more mainstream member of U.S. society and culture.

Andrew worked to apply his learning from the leadership classes to his everyday life. He described how after he attended a conference, he tried to help some of his friends who had crises in their lives, sharing with them ideas he learned through the seminars. For example, I noticed Andrew comforting and advising both Sandy and Anita on days American Government class was held in the media center. One day at the end of the semester (6/3/11), Andrew and Sandy talked at length about pressure Sandy sensed from other people in her life. Using his leadership skills, Andrew suggested that Sandy:

Don’t let those people get to you too much. When you have your own opinions and ideas, own morals and beliefs, there will be other people who bash you down, knock you down, tell you that is no good. If you need more help, just ask. I am there to help. Trust me.

Andrew sought resources that provided support for his civic and political engagement, leadership, and participation at multiple levels – in American Government class, at school, and within his Hmong community. He discovered tools outside of American Government class and the school community through participation in leadership training. The leadership events were not specifically for Hmong youth, but open to young people of all ethnic backgrounds. In certain ways, the leadership groups helped prepare Andrew for immediate, participatory U.S. citizenship more than his American Government classroom activities and projects because the leadership courses presented Andrew with concrete resources that he could apply to various life experiences with his family and clan, at school, or as a U.S. and global citizen. Conversely, the American Government class helped Andrew and his peers increase their knowledge of American government and politics, and become aware of and encourage ways to be civically and politically active in the future, but did little to immediately engage students in civic activities at local, state, national, and/or global levels.

Conclusion

Throughout the trimester, American Government classroom experiences helped Andrew shape his political and civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes: the American Government classroom acted as a site of citizenship identity development for Andrew. While in Ms. Oakland's class, (a) Andrew's conception of citizenship evolved from a legalistic view to a more global perspective; (b) Andrew gained significant knowledge of the U.S. governmental system, particularly about early political philosophy and the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government; (c) Andrew experienced civic

and political discussion with his classmates and these conversations broadened his political perspective; and (d) the importance of active, involved citizen participation within the U.S. democracy was clearly conveyed to Andrew and his peers.

Ms. Oakland's American Government classroom community failed to support Andrew's evolving sense of citizenship in other ways. Although much declarative knowledge was delivered in daily curriculum and instruction, Andrew graduated from high school maintaining some inaccuracies and assumptions about U.S. government, politics, and citizenship. At certain times tension existed within the American Government classroom and Andrew felt like a political minority for a considerable part of the trimester. Although Andrew felt most American in school and in Ms. Oakland's class, it was also a place where he felt separated, a site where he experienced racialization as a student situated outside of mainstream European American culture. Students experienced few opportunities to develop their racial literacy skills, and this reality left Andrew very uncomfortable during the Constitutional Convention assignment. Framing this activity differently before, and significant scaffolding during the project, may have helped Andrew and his work group to be more academically successful on their assigned tasks.

The American Government classroom was not the only place where Andrew constructed his civic and political identity. Andrew's father, uncles, Hmong elders, and out-of-school leadership seminars played a considerable role in how Andrew shaped his civic and political identity as an active, engaged citizen. In his endeavors to be a leader in his educational, civic, and cultural communities, his involvement in leadership

workshops and seminars outside of school better prepared Andrew for immediate, tangible, participatory U.S. citizenship than did his American Government class curriculum and instruction.

Sandy

In one class session during the Political Participation and Ideology unit, Ms. Oakland's pupils viewed a presidential debate between Senators John McCain and Barack Obama. Students were instructed to utilize a list of criteria to analyze and evaluate debating performance and then to separate content from strategy within the debates. Sandy intently watched Obama on the big video screen. She folded her arms in front of her as she leaned on the table. She continued to watch and listen to Obama speak and then wrote some information on her Debate Viewing Guide. She continued to write as McCain formulated his points, stopped writing for a moment while she reviewed her assignment sheet, and then proceeded to watch Senator McCain as he spoke. Carter and Ringo, who shared Sandy's table, laughed at something and Sandy quickly glanced their way. She then returned her gaze to the screen.

Toward the end of the class period, Ms. Oakland paused the video clip and asked her students which candidate performed better to this point in the debate. Most responded with "Obama," but a few said "McCain." Several students in the class started talking excitedly and loudly, and one of the most heated conversations of the trimester ensued. Dean explained why he thought Obama was a superior speaker; Anthony responded in support of McCain's platform, regardless of his speaking skills, but also interjected that he "really [did] not like Obama." Ringo and Donny responded briskly to Anthony while

Donna talked over the other students at her table. Ringo and Anthony continued to volley the merits of each candidate's public speaking skills across the classroom. The bell rang, Ms. Oakland commended the class for being aware of various political issues, and students prepared their belongings for dismissal. Anthony and Donna continued to argue about the candidates as they exited Ms. Oakland's classroom.

Sandy (and her Hmong peers) did not verbally participate in the class-wide McCain-Obama arguments, but sat quietly and observed others engage in dispute. Although Sandy remained silent as her classmates argued over the presidential candidates, she attentively watched the debate video and listened to her peers' interactions. It was not until our second interview that Sandy shared with me that she did not fully understand the contents of the video and therefore did not verbally contribute to her classmates' reactions to Senators McCain and Obama.

This section of Chapter 4 shows how during the spring trimester, Sandy gained political and civic knowledge, considered future civic participation, and was introduced to multiple perspectives in Ms. Oakland's classroom. The American Government classroom acted as a central space of civic and political knowledge attainment and development for Sandy as she shaped her understanding of citizenship; however, it was not the only political socialization site influencing Sandy's developing citizenship identity--her family (especially her father) also emerged as a significant socialization factor, and intersected with school to help shape Sandy's citizenship discourse. The combination of civic and political experiences within school and the family left Sandy

with many unanswered questions about race, gender, and ethnicity in relation to citizenship identity.

Learning About American Government and Politics, Civic Participation, and Multiple Perspectives

In Ms. Oakland's American Government class Sandy acquired civic and political knowledge, learned about engaged civic participation within the U.S. democracy, and encountered multiple political perspectives. While her ideas about citizenship emerged over the course of the trimester, Sandy maintained that she knew little about government and politics. She often described herself as "clueless" or "stupid" when she talked about her political and civic awareness and knowledge. Sandy's political self-deprecation differed from Andrew and Oliver, who periodically admitted that they did not know certain things about government and politics, but never referred to themselves in negative terms.

Discourses of political uncertainty and knowledge acquisition. Sandy identified joblessness and a slow economy as two significant current political issues on the Political Engagement Survey, distributed to her on the first day of class. Regardless of her survey responses and previous involvement in a variety of school and community activities, when I inquired about citizenship during our first interview (3/24/11), Sandy revealed a sense of self-doubt. She replied, "I'm drawing a blank. I've never really talked about it so, I'm like new to the subject, you know." Sandy seemed uncertain when I asked her what she had learned about citizenship to that point in her life:

I don't know, so, what have I learned about citizenship? I don't know if I'm

going to answer your question, um, I don't know how to say it. (pause)

Citizenship to me is just like, I think, being responsible for your goals, I don't know. I'm sorry. I'm trying to find an answer. I'm so sorry. I don't want to sound so stupid right now. (pause) I can't get anything to come to my head. I think government systems and teachers, they do talk to you about you playing a role as a citizen. Honestly, citizenship is a broad topic, I've never touched on it, you know what I mean? So, talking about the impact of it, I'm not quite sure how to put it together. (INT1; 3/24/11)

Sandy's tentative approach to citizenship continued when I asked the first focus group (4/14/11) participants what citizenship meant to them. Again, she tripped over her words as she responded:

What it means to be a citizen is about, stuff like because we were born here. Knowing that citizen is, that's how we have citizenship, you know, so other than that, what is it about, you know.

Although Sandy claimed that she did not know much about citizenship issues, on her Political Engagement Survey and during her first individual and focus group interviews, she conveyed aspects of political and civic knowledge and understanding. Her initial ideas about citizenship centered on legal membership due to birth in the United States (Conover & Searing, 2002), responsible citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), and active participation in society (Conover & Searing, 2002; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Further, Sandy did not recognize that her previous volunteer positions in student council, at the clothes shelf, and in a nursing home reflected engaged, active citizenship.

About mid-trimester Sandy reflected on American Government class curriculum and instruction with her Hmong peers (5/10/11). I asked study participants to describe times they felt particularly engrossed in or disengaged from class. In addition to conveying an initial sense of apathy, Sandy's discourse of uncertainty persisted when she said:

At the beginning of the tri, I wasn't interested at all. I didn't know anything about politics and watched the clock, and was like, I don't know, like, I didn't understand a single thing. And, I think that's why I wasn't engaged in the class.

Two days later, Sandy and I met for her second individual interview (5/12/11) and I asked her what she learned about U.S. government and politics. In this conversation, Sandy recognized that her knowledge of U.S. government and politics increased due to Ms. Oakland's class. However, the discourse of political uncertainty and lack of knowledge continued. For example, when she described what she learned in class she focused on political parties, reporting that:

Mainly, we just focused on the [Democrats and Republicans]. Those were the main ones that I have any knowledge about. Like, the Green Party, the Independent, I hadn't really seen, they never really made a big impact. So, for me, when they talk about the Independence Party, my mind just goes numb, because I have no knowledge. But, when they say Republican, Democratic, when they talk about them, I know what they're coming from, because I've learned about their views and I have some kind of knowledge about it, so it was easier for me to understand their views.

Thinking about her discourse of political uncertainty, I asked what would help her better prepare for citizenship after high school. She shared her desire for clearer instruction, and to have complicated political concepts and ideas reduced into smaller parts for easier comprehension. In addition, Sandy suggested that not only was her political knowledge deficient, but that some of her peers were similarly situated:

We students, it's not that we don't want to understand, it's the way [teachers] talk to us, it is so astonishing. It's like, when I hear it, I can't understand it because it is so much, you know. And, I want it to be broken down, to be like, this is what they are talking about, this is their point. Like, when I was watching the [debate] video earlier, I was a bit confused because I didn't understand what was the point they were trying to get at that. I just, I want it to be broken down more so we as students can understand it.

Before Ms. Oakland projected the debate video clip, she introduced and explained different types of logical fallacies (e.g., false logic ad hominem, argumentum ad hominem), explained how students should complete the debate guide, and then started the video. She did not stop the clip to discuss political issues or logical fallacies until the end of the class period, when she asked students who was winning the debate. Some students, including Sandy, may have comprehended debate issues better, and perhaps even verbally participated in the class discussion, if Ms. Oakland would have periodically stopped the video and asked students clarifying questions regarding debate topics, themes, and ideas.

As with Andrew, a cautious tone emerged during a later conversation with Sandy. While completing our second interview, she shared a fear of reprisal for her perceived lack of political knowledge and said:

As I learn more about it, if I don't care about it and I don't understand anything and I go out, people will take advantage of me, because I don't know anything about the government system, and they would cheat me. So, this class has made me realize that I have to learn and know where I am living at, and the system that we live in. (INT2; 5/12/11)

During the final focus group (6/2/11), Sandy summarized the most important civic and political concepts and ideas she learned, which included various interpretations of the Bill of Rights, the limits of governmental power, citizens' voting rights, and U.S. political parties. Sandy declared that she acquired significant political and civic knowledge over the term, but maintained her discourse of uncertainty. She stated that everything that she learned in American Government class would help her in the future as a U.S. citizen because she did "not know anything about the topic." Sandy did not explain the contradiction between her comments; it is unclear why she said that she learned a great deal in American Government class, but maintained that she did not know anything about civics and politics, even at the end of the course.

Civic participation and multiple perspectives. In addition to learning declarative civic and political knowledge in American Government class, Sandy explained that the course helped her better understand the importance of future civic participation, and exposed her to multiple historical and political perspectives, as well as

her classmates' personal political opinions and ideas (as described earlier in the presidential debate video class discussion).

Civic and political participation. Although she stated in the first interview that she had never “touched on it,” one of Sandy’s initial civic ideas focused on active citizenship, about “playing a role as a citizen.” Her thoughts about dynamic civic and political engagement expanded further over the trimester, even though she continued to describe herself as “clueless” about politics. Moving toward Justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), Sandy acknowledged racism in her community and described herself as being ready to do something about it (FG1; 4/14/11). She said, “I don’t want to stand here and not do anything about it. I want to do something about it.” However, because the dismissal bell rang and it was time to go to the next class, she did not say what she would do to combat racism, nor did she describe any previous activities in which she engaged to act on her racial concerns. Nevertheless, Sandy thoughtfully considered racial relations in her civic environment, recognizing racism as problematic, and an issue requiring her personal attention and action.

Two months into the trimester (5/12/11), I asked Sandy if her ideas about citizenship had changed since the beginning of the term. She responded emphatically in terms of civic engagement and participation:

Oh my God, I think a lot. I know so much more. Before, I was just like I didn’t know anything about it, honestly. But, now, we are citizens and we have to take the role. It takes, it honestly takes one person to change. It starts from one person and then just goes on, like a domino effect. We all have to

take initiative.

Sandy's response reflected a combination of civic action and practice in public endeavors, in relationship to others in the community, but what the practice and action entailed was unclear. Further, Sandy's idea of community was ambiguous: She did not specify whether she considered community to be local, national, global, or other.

In the last focus group (6/2/11) during the closing week of school, Sandy reiterated the importance of civic and political participation: "Being a citizen is more than just sitting here and being born in the United States. It's about taking a role and playing a part in society." She also formulated a slightly more cogent understanding of *how* citizens can take action and make a difference in their communities, including effort, education, actions like voting, and helping others. She said that:

Becoming a citizen takes effort and you have to put some kind of effort into it.

Citizenship means being involved and trying to learn new things about politics.

Government class showed me that we can all make a difference just by voting, so we should never take it for granted. [Citizenship] is helping out others in society and helping better understand politics.

Since our conversation about racism in the first focus group (4/14/11), Sandy's views of civic and political participation reflected conventional citizenship (e.g., voting), personally responsible citizenship (e.g., learning about and better understanding politics), and participatory citizenship (e.g., being involved in civic activities with others).

Although Sandy learned about and felt more prepared for civic and political participation through Ms. Oakland's American Government class, a disconnect existed between

learning about civic and political engagement and actual practice in the U.S. democracy. Sandy and her peers learned about the importance of civic and political engagement, but did not have the opportunity to experience this participation through their American Government class.

Multiple perspectives. Ms. Oakland presented various historical and political perspectives to her students through her curriculum and instruction. For example, Sandy and her table mates investigated options for state representation in the national legislature presented during the Constitutional Convention; analyzed Democratic, Green, Independent, and Republican Party political platforms on the topics of post-secondary education and the environment; and read opposing arguments on several seminal U.S. Supreme Court cases. During one early class session students were asked to share their ideas about the most important human rights, from their own perspectives. In another instructional activity, students created their ideal political party with peers at their tables. During this assignment students had an opportunity to share potentially disparate political perspectives with each other.

Sandy conveyed that learning about various perspectives helped her formulate her own political ideas. She said, “Learning about different views gives you your own view and perspective on why things are run they way they are.” Sandy further described how her American Government class introduced her to various perspectives, and the impact those viewpoints had on her political thinking:

Yeah, so now that I’m in government, I learned how to just listen to what [classmates] have to say. And, they have a good point, they both have

good points. I like that I can see which ones touches my values and what my belief system is, and I can see which one is closer to that, and can agree upon that instead of being like, okay, I'm not going to listen to them at all because they don't know what they're talking about. I just learn how to take both sides. (FG2; 5/12/11)

At the end of the trimester, Sandy described how her political perspectives changed due to American Government class. She said, "I am about the same, I am still a liberal. My ideas are pretty much the same, it's just that I have more views and perspectives on politics now." Ms. Oakland's classroom instruction and interactions offered Sandy new political perspectives, different from previous opinions, particularly those of her family and father. Sandy did not simply accept others' political viewpoints, but thought about "which ones touches my values." American Government class activities allowed Sandy opportunities to think more thoughtfully about diverse perspectives.

The Family Unit as a Site of Political Socialization

The family is second to school as a significant source of political socialization (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 1997; Camp, 2003; Flanagan & Gallay, 1995; Jankowski, 1992; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Niemi & Jennings, 1991; Ramakrishnan & Espenshade, 2001). In Hmong culture, clan, kinship, and family are integral to personal status and integrity, with the family unit providing security and acting as a foundation for learning and belonging (Keown-Bomar, 2004; Koltyk, 1998, p. 38). Sandy's family, especially her father, played a significant role in her negotiation of her civic and political

identity. Sandy's family experiences influenced her citizenship narrative because Sandy brought her cultural and politically liberal background with her into the American Government classroom, learning about American government and politics through a liberal lens.

The family's political influence. Sandy described various political influences within her family, but concentrated on her father's political impact on Sandy, her mother, and her younger sister. Sandy said that her mom "just goes with my dad," and that her sister "knows *nothing*, she doesn't care, she's like, 'I'm going with dad'." Sandy agreed that her own politics resembled those of her family stating, "My political belief is the same as my family." Although she explained that her father's political authority was particularly significant, she also added that she was "influenced a lot from my grandparents, and they're on the liberal side." At the same time, Sandy's political reliance on her father's opinion and perspective mirrored to some extent her mother's modeling of political uncertainty and reticence.

During interviews and focus groups, Sandy talked openly about political dynamics within her immediate family. For example, she told me that her parents shared some of their political ideas with her. She said, "My dad said the Republicans are bad" and "they're trying to ruin us." She also described conversations that she had with her parents about a Hmong, female, state legislator representing a section of their greater metropolitan area. Sandy learned from her parents that the congresswoman influenced the Hmong in the area and that "she represented all of the women in the Hmong community who never had a voice, so that was a big thing." Sandy and her family held occasional

political discussions at home, especially when there was “a big presidential candidate, like we’re electing a president or senator of something, my dad talks about it.” However, “if it is just normal, we don’t really talk about it.” Sandy’s parents also modeled participatory voting behavior as she grew up. Sandy said that her parents “always vote,” and that she went “with them to see how the process was.”

Sandy’s father. Sandy emphasized the significance of her political relationship with her father several times through the trimester. In addition to her belief that she knew little about government and politics, she openly acknowledged that her father heavily influenced her political understanding and engagement. For example, in the first focus group (4/14/11), I asked participants if they envisioned themselves voting as adults. Sandy shared that she could see herself voting because her dad voted “every time there is an election.” She said that if her father said, “vote for this person,” she would do so. Conversely, although Sandy was 18 years old during the previous November election period, she reported that she did not vote because her father left for the polling booth without her. Sandy also referred to her political relationship with her father within class assignments. In the Political Ideology Essay (5/3/11), Sandy wrote that:

Overall, I lean on more towards being a liberal and a Democrat. The reason so is because ever since I was little my dad has been more of a Democrat and his influences got to me and that’s how I started learning more about how and what Democrats are doing.

Sandy continued to describe the political relationship that she and her father shared during the second focus group meeting (5/10/11) and our second individual

interview (5/12/11). Sandy described political interactions in which she and her father engaged and explained that during a typical political discussion:

My dad loves to argue and debate, and I never, ever win. Oh my God, every time, me and my dad butt heads a lot because we think alike. And, I love to argue too and I love to debate, and I'm like, I'm right and he's like, I'm right. And, I know I'm right and my dad is thinking I'm not.

Sandy asserted that her interest in and ability to speak about government and politics increased from the beginning of the term to the second individual interview due to her studies in Ms. Oakland's American Government class. Therefore, it was easier for her to talk to her dad about politics because she could better understand these topics. I asked Sandy if her family accepted political differences and she responded only in reference to her father explaining that she could hold different political viewpoints than her dad without negative consequence:

I mean, my dad, he wouldn't, I guess he doesn't really care about our political views, he's like, as long as you know what you're doing, that's all that matters. Because, it is your opinion and how you want to believe in it. He's not going to make you change your views just because he believes that's not right. (FG2; 5/10/11)

Sandy also attributed her personal political philosophy to her father. When I asked the youth if their political ideology had changed since the beginning of the trimester Sandy reported that it was "about the same because I always thought about it from my dad and always had his opinion, and I am still liberal." However, at this point a change

began to occur as Sandy declared that it was time for her to “explore” by herself, rather than perpetuate a political opinion based on her father’s thoughts and ideas about government and politics. Sandy acknowledged that she acquired her political ideas from her father but that as an adult U.S. citizen, it was her responsibility to form her own political ideas. Although she continued to believe that her political knowledge was limited, she shared her desire to learn more for herself, followed by taking action on that new knowledge:

I don’t know anything about the politics world. I just get it from my dad.

And, I guess that’s kind of bad because it is like connected through me. He’s like putting my own belief in me. And, that’s not a good thing. It’s time for me to go out there and explore for myself. It’s like, as much as I want his opinion to matter, I want to see it for myself. And, I think it’s just about me wanting to learn about it, rather than my dad wanting to teach me about it.

(FG2; 5/10/11)

Perhaps in recognition of the need to develop her personal sense of political agency, Sandy did not refer to her father during the final focus group (6/2/11), but rather emphasized that to her citizenship now meant “trying to learn new things about politics” and better “understanding politics.” As Sandy learned more about her responsibilities as a citizen through her American Government class, she realized the importance of developing her own civic and political ideas, rather than fully incorporating the views of others, especially in this case her father’s political ideas and opinions.

(Unanswered) Questions

It is a paradox that of all participating youth in this study, Sandy asked some of the most thoughtful questions of herself, her peers, and her culture, while at the same time considering herself civically and politically inept. Many of Sandy's inquiries included issues of race, gender, culture, human rights (specifically immigrants' rights), and civic identity as she shaped her construction of citizenship. Sandy explained that as a citizen, she anticipated playing an investigative, analytical role:

I totally want to question some more, I want to know what's going on. I want to, like, if a newspaper comes out, I want to read it and I'm going to try and get as much information as I can instead of just learning from people, oh, that happened, oh. And, instead of getting mad over a certain issue, why not just do some research behind it, too. There is some vision behind why they are arguing, some reasons behind it. So, right now, I'm just trying to find the reason behind all the political views. (INT2; 5/12/11)

Although Sandy openly questioned race, gender, culture, human rights, and civic identity in focus groups and individual interviews, as with the debate video discussion described at the beginning of this section, in Ms. Oakland's course Sandy seldom raised her political voice with her peers in a class-wide forum.

Race and citizenship identity. Sandy questioned race issues both in her wider metropolitan area, and within the Hmong community. Racism emerged in the first focus group (4/14/11) when Mark described being racially harassed at his previous school.

Persistent racial troubles caused Mark and his family to relocate from a rural area in a nearby state to Creekview Park. Mark explained his experience:

My school in [another state], it is like racism, like, every week, we would all be having arguments in school and there's like ten or fifteen Hmong people will be seen together and sometimes white people would be throwing food at us...

This conversation progressed into a group dialogue about a song played on a local radio station about perceived Hmong lifestyles in an adjoining city. The song was recorded to the tune of Eric Clapton's "Tears in Heaven" (1992, track 10), but with lyrics created and presented by the morning show disc jockey. Together, the Hmong students and I listened to the song entitled "30 Hmongs in the House" on YouTube:

No room for a couch
'Cause we sleep on the floor
One big group of Vangs
Hmong family of 24
Kids work in [city name]
Hang out at the mall
'Cause I know they dwell so well
30 Hmongs in the House.

The second verse, the same as the first, a little bit louder, a little bit worse.

Hmong get pregnant early
First baby at 16

Seven kids by 23

Over the hill by 30

Like sardines they live

Packed in a two-room house with the kids

But you know they age quite well

They be Hmong.

Of the eight focus group participants, Andrew and Soua shared that they previously heard the song on the radio, while Mark stated that this was the first time he heard the piece. The remaining five students did not indicate whether they had heard the song or not, but did share their thoughts and feelings. Sandy described the pain she felt due to the lyrics assailing Hmong culture:

It makes me feel like...like you are kind of hurt, it makes Hmong people, they think that what we do is wrong. Like, our parents had to give birth to us at 16 you know. And, we had a big family, it's not because we wanted, you know, it just angers me. (FG1; 4/14/11)

Through this song, the morning show disc jockey attacked a sacred aspect of Hmong culture -- family life. Most Hmong want to be near their family members and of all kinship groups it is the family that has the most significant impact on a Hmong person's life (Koltyk, 1998). Historically in Hmong culture, large families represented economic strength, although many contemporary Hmong parents choose to have fewer children due to the financial challenges inherent in having a large family (Keown-Bomar, 2004). Children are considered a blessing as well as an economic resource because they

are a critical link to other clan groups through marriage, and as adults they will sustain their own kinship groups and fulfill responsibilities and obligations to ancestors. Early marriage within Hmong culture has received negative attention through the mass media, but some research shows that this practice, although complicated, may not be as educationally problematic as previously thought (Hutchinson & McNall, 1994; Ngo & Lee, 2007).

Sandy negotiated racism in various ways over the course of the trimester. First, she *questioned* how racism affected Hmong people and *linked* shame to racism within the Hmong community:

Maybe there are some reasons why some [Hmong] people want to hide.

Like, I'm not trying to play the devil's advocate, but I just think sometimes, some people do just tend to kind of hide away from it because it is something they're ashamed of, you know what I mean. And, there's always a story why, why are you guys ashamed of being yourself? Because it's like, it's goes back to like racism plays a big role, some people are like oh my God, you chink or something and they feel like oh my gosh. (FG1; 4/14/11)

Second, although Sandy described feeling hurt and angry by the song, she also tried to *justify* the DJ's words saying, "I mean, like, maybe he was joking." Her attempted justification of the DJ's racist lyrics reflected a certain discounting of the racialization occurring within her local community. Bolgatz (2005) describes this behavior as a diversion, a way that students respond to discomfort they feel when issues of racism arise. Third, Sandy declared that she "wanted to do something about it," to *take action*,

after hearing the racist tune. She recognized that the song was oppressive and unjust, and that to improve the community situation, action was needed. Her thoughts exhibited aspects of both Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) participatory citizen working to improve society, and the justice-oriented citizen questioning systems that produce injustice within a community. Fourth, Sandy *contradicted* an assertion she made in the first interview (3/24/22) that current American culture is "modernized...not about racism" by stating in the first focus group (4/14/11) that racism existed. Sandy's comment in our first interview suggested that racism was a thing of the past, and played a diminished role in contemporary U.S. society, rather than an ongoing problem (Bolgatz, 2005). However, three weeks later, in the first focus group with her Hmong peers, Sandy acknowledged existing racialization and questioned the impact of racism and prejudice on the Hmong community. Sandy's changed perspective toward racism may have been due to (a) feeling more relaxed, trustful, and open in my presence after she had time to know me better, and to (b) the fact that she was surrounded by her peers in the focus group setting. As Hmong youth tend to be field sensitive (Timm, Chiang, & Finn, 1998), Sandy may have felt more comfortable entering into contentious dialogue with her peers, rather than by herself.

Gender, culture, and citizenship identity. Sandy was the only participant in this study who openly questioned gender divisions within Hmong culture, when I asked the Hmong youth to tell me about important Hmong customs and mores. Although Andrew defended traditional Hmong gender roles by reciting Hmong lore, the remaining participants in the first focus group (4/14/11) remained silent on gender differences. It

was Sandy and Andrew who entered into dialogue regarding gender in the Hmong community, while the others sat quietly and listened.

Sandy: I think Hmong traditions are based on gender. I think that gender plays a big role in the Hmong culture. So, if you're a guy, you have to do this certain thing and girls have to do another. I think the norms are like the guys in the Hmong culture are superior, ladies are the ones that gets... (pause) and I hate that my culture is like that. Like, I know the guys are superior and girls stand for what we believe in. But, now the world, we're all changing and we're trying to change that idea that guys are superior. Girls are now coming up and doing their own things.

Andrew: Relating to what Sandy said, my uncle told me this folk story, it explains why the guy is the head of the family and why the girl is always down listening. To make it short, the guy is the one with the, the reason why he is the head of the family is because he took care of his family and the woman in the story, she is the one who would kill to be on the top. And, then the other customs that I see that my uncle said is when you have a relative over, you always say hello to them and the wife will serve them beverages or something like that.

Although Sandy continued to talk about political issues between her and her father in future interviews and focus groups, she did not comment further on gender dynamics within Hmong culture. In fact, the issue of gender differences within Hmong family and community life emerged again only once during Andrew's first individual interview

(4/21/11) when he further explained the folk story about patriarchy within Hmong culture.

Several cultural core values have remained with the Hmong wherever they emigrated, including respecting others, maintaining harmony and unity, knowing and abiding by cultural customs, and ensuring family well-being and reputation (Keown-Bomar, 2004; Xiong, 2000). Although Sandy commented on gender roles in the Hmong community, she did not openly question her father's role as the political leader in her family. Sandy and her father argued about politics from the same liberal viewpoint, but she did not challenge her father's political leadership in the family hierarchy, therefore upholding the fundamental values of respect, harmony, and unity within her family circle.

At the same time, school acted as a site where Sandy could be more open about her thoughts and opinions, reflecting the growing power and agency she held as a young U.S. citizen. School, and specifically her American Government class, acted as potential sites of civic and political self-efficacy for Sandy. Unfortunately, Sandy's civic and political voice was rarely heard in Ms. Oakland's classroom.

Immigration, human rights, and citizenship identity. Sandy continued to ask significant questions in the second focus group (5/10/11), this time directed at her peers. Grounded in American Government classroom activities on natural rights, and initiated by Sandy's queries, focus group participants considered the rights and freedoms of illegal immigrants. The following conversation occurred between the Hmong youth:

Sandy: I have a question. Since we're on this topic, should immigrants who live here, should their opinion matter?

Soua: Like, illegal immigrants?

Sandy: Ya, like, should their opinion matter to us, or shouldn't it? Should the government consider their opinion or not, because they're not legally in this country, basically, they won't affect it. What do you guys think?

Soua: They try to voice their opinion but they're like, oh, you're illegal.

I don't know, are we talking more about an immigrant who just lived here and done their papers, or?

Sandy: Well, no. Should it matter, or do we not care about it, or what do we do? I don't even know what the government would do. I am confused, that's all.

Andrew: On the computers yesterday, um, one of the welfare programs, it said illegal immigrants shouldn't get any benefits from the welfare program. I was just like, just because they are illegal immigrants, that doesn't mean they shouldn't get the benefits, they should still get the benefits.

Sandy: I think they are human, too, but, do they play a role in our society?

Andrew: Yes, they do. They just don't get to play...(inaudible)

Soua: Well, if you picture this, kind of like if you were to go into another country and you didn't like how it worked, and you think, do you have the right to voice your opinion on how they run their country when you just moved here? I think that would be kind of like, hey, we've been living like this for so long, you can't just come in and change this and that.

Sandy: If everyone is born with natural rights that means that immigrants

could voice their opinion.

While Soua questioned full freedoms for recent émigrés, Sandy and Andrew generally voiced support for illegal immigrants' rights and political engagement, reflecting findings from the IEA study: Being an immigrant may positively impact one's tolerance and opinions toward other immigrants (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). The immigration issue was central to my participants' lives because they were all born in the United States and second-generation immigrants, while their parents were birthed in either Laos or Thailand.¹² As second-generation immigrants, the students may have known people within their immediate family, clan, or kinship network whose immigrant status was considered by the U.S. government to be "legal" and/or "illegal."

Sandy's thoughts and queries about immigrants' rights again reflected aspects of Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) participatory citizen working to improve society, and the justice-oriented citizen questioning systems that (re)produced injustice within a community. Although Sandy initiated the immigration conversation, Sandy, Andrew, and Soua together discussed and investigated immigrants' rights. Within this short exchange the three considered immigrants' political voice in U.S. society; legal status as a precursor to the benefits of citizenship (e.g., welfare); natural, human rights versus legal rights; and the impact of immigration status upon human rights.

Sandy raised and deliberated questions about immigration with her Hmong peers in the focus group, but seldom had the opportunity to continue this conversation in the American Government classroom. Although students talked with each other in Ms.

¹² I am uncertain about the citizenship status of each parent while this study was conducted, but it was clear from the students' surveys that their parents were born in either Laos or Thailand and immigrated to the United States before they had their children.

Oakland's class, the discussions were not always structured enough to support deliberation and consideration of current events, or issues significant to students' current lives. For example, on certain projects, students received or chose a topic to research on their own (e.g., welfare, gun control, abortion, minimum wage, taxation), but there was little dialogue or deliberation with other students connected to the issue. Or, when students engaged in classroom discussion, the conversations were often associated with historical aspects of government and politics rather than controversial, current events.

Ethnicity and citizenship identity. Stephanie Lawler (2008) reminds us that personal identities are dynamic, constantly changing and created through narratives or stories that connect the self to others. Sandy's citizenship identity embraced both Hmong and mainstream American cultures, but was filled with tension and paradox due to her experience as a racialized minority. While school and American Government class acted as sites of inclusion, of being "American," school was also a place where Sandy received the message that she was outside the dominant, European American group.

In our first individual interview (3/24/11), I asked Sandy if she considered herself Hmong or American and she replied, "I am Hmong American because I can't specifically say I'm like a Hmong because I was born here, and I've been exposed to American society." Throughout the first interview, Sandy talked at length about ways that she identified as both Hmong and American, the importance of her connection to both Hmong and American cultures, and the stress she felt due to her dual Hmong and American identities.

Being Hmong. Sandy dearly cherished her Hmong heritage, which was evident when she started to cry during the first interview (3/24/11). Through her tears, she shared her Hmong identity narrative:

Being Hmong, I think it's very special. Like, my tradition, it is very special to me because nowadays, it's sad to think that a lot of people don't know who Hmong people are and it's sad to know that a lot of Hmong people don't even want to be Hmong. And, that's very sad and depressing. And, me being Hmong, I think it's special and it's sacred in me because it makes me feel like I am someone, I want to put Hmong people out there. We are people, we have dreams and goals and we haven't been exposed much to the world, because you know, Hmong people like to keep it to themselves. So, that's what being Hmong means.

Sandy described personal characteristics that she considered central to her Hmong identity, especially certain physical attributes and religious observances. At the same time, she revealed her understanding of "American" as one having blue eyes and blond hair, a long-standing stereotype for European Americans. Keown-Bomar (2004), too, described how Hmong participants in her study almost always used "American" to refer to European American people (p. 26). Sandy continued her story:

Because I don't have blue eyes and blonde hair, I have black eyes, brown eyes, and I have black hair, you know, my physical features basically is why anyone would say I am Hmong. I think [Shamanism] is interesting. Um, my religion is Shaman and my dad is a big Shaman. The reason why I think

we do it is to keep our culture and our religion tied in. I'm still interested, just I'm like, wow. (INT1; 3/24/11)

While she expressed love for her Hmong culture, Sandy shared the tension that she carried in her heart reflecting a division between her Hmong ethnicity and mainstream American culture:

I can't, I have guilt and I don't want to abandon my culture because it makes me feel ashamed. Some people don't understand how hard it is to see what the Americans think. It's hard because people don't understand where you came from and how you are brought up. [The Americans] will never get you, you know what I mean? (INT1; 3/24/11)

Like the students in Lee's (2005) and Zhou's (1997) studies, Sandy constructed her citizenship identity under unequal class and power relations at CSHS and situated herself outside of the privileged, dominant European American group.

Being American. Although Sandy conveyed a great sense of pride and respect for her Hmong identity, she also embraced aspects of her American citizenship, especially in terms of freedom, achievement, the "American Dream," and the English language. Sandy described being American as:

Just about being, a freedom to do what you want. Being American is about obtaining your dreams and goals and like, being American is just achieving more, that's what I think about it. I also think it's the [English] language, and it's the society that I've been brought up to and basically my surroundings is what makes me feel American. (INT1; 3/14/11)

Sandy reflected on the importance of diversity when talking about being an American and how cultural differences acted as a way to draw people together. Further explaining her American narrative, she said:

It's like when you think about being American, it is being surrounded by different ethnicities and different people, you know, instead of just being surrounded by the same people. You are an American and that means that you are exposed to more things, you know. I think it's your friends and people [who make] you belong. I think the diversity here in America nowadays is making me feel more like we actually, so I think that ethnicity and diversity makes me feel like I belong. (INT1; 3/24/11)

A paradox arose as Sandy described how her diversity allowed her to feel connected to American society, but at the same time separated from mainstream American culture. For example, Sandy focused on how speaking Hmong, a significant part of her cultural identity and diverse background, acted as a major point of contention between American and Hmong culture. She said:

There are some things where it's just like, you feel like you don't belong because some people like to think that, I don't know, sometimes, I just don't feel like I belong, maybe it's my height, maybe it's because I'm Hmong. I think the reason why it goes by kids being ashamed to be Hmong and it makes me feel like we are not good enough to be an American. We feel that if we are another kind, then American society will not accept us because we are different. You know, and we can't talk straight English or have an

accent and they make us feel like we are not good enough in a way, to be in American society. I think it's the way that we talk sometimes. When we try and talk our language and then they make fun of it, be like, oh, you're trying to say ching chong or whatever, and it's like that's not, don't say that about my language, it's like degrading how you put us out there and say that we talk like that. We do not sound like that and we know what we are talking about, you know. I mean, we talk our language and it's not we are talking bad stuff, it's just easier for us to communicate with each other if we talk our language, you know. (INT1; 3/24/11)

On April 15th (about three weeks after the first interview), an incident occurred in class that reflected Sandy's concerns for how others perceived her language. Donny, an African American male, made the following comments after I asked if I could audiotape the students' conversations. Donny and Sandy were seated next to each other, although at different tables, while Soua and Oliver worked directly with Donny. Sandy did not say anything to Donny, but watched the exchange in silence.

Annette: Can I tape your conversations about the assignment today?

Soua: Yeah! (Oliver also shakes his head affirmatively)

Annette: Okay. Thank you.

Donny: Shi shi.

Annette: Is that okay with you too?

Donny: Shi shi.

Annette: Thank you.

Donny: That's Chinese, that's not Hmong though.

Shi is Chinese for yes, and Donny was replying affirmatively that I could audiotape his conversations. However, the sarcastic tone he used when he said *shi shi*, reflected Sandy's earlier concern that others were "degrading" or "making fun of" the Hmong youths' language.

Sandy's construction of her citizenship narrative included questioning major societal issues like race relations, gender inequity, human rights, and civic identity. Sandy initiated substantive questions during individual interviews and focus groups, but did not reveal that same voice in her wider American Government classroom. Many of her inquiries remained unanswered because Sandy and her peers experienced few occasions to discuss the topics further in Ms. Oakland's class, although the classroom was a potential site for further inquiry and deliberation as the students prepared for life in a democracy. A more organized discussion format like a Structured Academic Controversy, Fishbowl, or Socratic Seminar, may have allowed students to further examine relevant social, civic, and political topics.

Conclusion

Sandy's civic and political identity evolved over the course of the trimester. In a sense, she felt more prepared as a U.S. citizen after the trimester of American Government with Ms. Oakland. However, Sandy experienced tensions throughout the term due to her: (a) self-perceived lack of civic and political knowledge; (b) desire to question civic and political issues while obtaining little instructional support for these deliberations in American Government class; (c) growing sense of political and civic

independence; and (d) experience as a racialized minority in school and the classroom. The American Government classroom acted as a central space of civic and political knowledge attainment and development for Sandy as she shaped her understanding of citizenship. However, it was not the only political socialization site influencing Sandy's developing citizenship identity--her family also emerged as a significant socialization factor, and intersected with school to help shape Sandy's citizenship discourse. Sandy critically questioned several current issues and verbalized her thoughts in focus groups and interviews. However, the American Government classroom did not always help to answer her questions, or show her ways to inquire about or to approach some of the problems Sandy experienced in her civic, political, and cultural life.

Sandy's increased civic and political agency emerged over the course of the trimester as she shaped and negotiated citizenship through her American Government class, her family's political interactions, and her dual Hmong and American identities. At the beginning of the term, Sandy proclaimed that she knew nothing about government and politics; by June, Sandy not only attained more declarative civic and political knowledge, but revealed her sense of readiness to take action and make more of her own civic and political decisions. Although she confirmed that she learned a great deal about civics and government in Ms. Oakland's class, she maintained a discourse of uncertainty throughout the term. Why she contradicted herself between knowledge acquisition and political ignorance is not completely clear.

Sandy's family, especially her father, played a significant role as she shaped her citizenship identity. Political interests, concerns, and questions were evident within her

family circle, and Sandy's parents modeled certain types of political engagement (i.e., voting, political discussion). The opportunity to talk with her father at home and with her Hmong peers in focus groups allowed Sandy to enter into dialogues around several significant controversial issues facing U.S. society. In these more intimate groups, Sandy felt comfortable enough to broach potentially contentious, contemporary, civic, political, and cultural topics. However, that same political voice was seldom extended to other students in the larger American Government classroom. Sandy seemed to hold more political self-efficacy at home and in small groups than in the whole-class environment.

Sandy seldom initiated controversial conversation in her first period American government class. Due to the instructional nature of the class, Sandy and her peers had few opportunities to discuss and deliberate in a structured format contemporary racism, gender inequity, immigration policy and immigrants' rights, and civic identity issues – all topics relevant to my participants as young people on the cusp of full citizenship. The fact that she seldom spoke out in the classroom was problematic because the room could potentially be a place of agency, power, assertiveness, and political self-efficacy for Sandy and other diverse students. Further, many of Sandy's non-Hmong peers did not have the opportunity to learn from Sandy's cultural and political perspectives. As social studies educators, we strive for students to be prepared for civic and political engagement through practice in the classroom that can be extended into students' lives outside of school. Sandy's silence in the larger classroom arena was not the best preparation (for her or her classmates) for civic and political life after high school.

Oliver

On the first day of the Political Participation and Ideology unit (4/8/11), Ms. Oakland introduced new content topics, asked her American Government students to pay more attention to current events in the daily news, and reminded them of her hope that they would become more “politically literate.” After this short introduction, Ms. Oakland drew a line on the whiteboard and presented students with an overview of conservative and liberal values via direct instruction. As she lectured, Ms. Oakland diagrammed the political spectrum, adding current event examples to reflect various points on the continuum. Students then completed a 25-question self-assessment to help them clarify their own political philosophies. For example, questions asked if the government placed too many restrictions on businesses and if the death penalty was cruel and unusual punishment. After Ms. Oakland reminded the students that they did not need to share their findings with anyone else, students tallied their responses to determine where they tended to fall on the political spectrum (strong liberal, moderate liberal, moderate, moderate conservative, strong conservative), and were asked to use the information as an initial point of reference. Ms. Oakland told students, “I don’t want you to feel that you are locked into how you feel about things right now,” giving them permission to change their political thinking throughout the unit.

On the following day as a review activity, Ms. Oakland instructed students to examine various controversial issues (e.g., separation of church and state, gun control, prayer in schools, censorship, government’s role in business) and to determine with their peers at their table groups where their positions on various issues fell on the political

spectrum. Oliver, Soua, and Donny worked together on this task and were assigned the topic of prayer in school, coincidentally, a subject important to Oliver because he participated in a prayer circle that met at CSHS once a week in the early morning before first period.

During the class activity, various students spoke on behalf of their work groups. Without hesitation, Andrew volunteered to be the first speaker. After three additional students presented their topics, Oliver, who seldom spoke openly in front of the whole class (and when he did on one previous occasion, turned quite red in the face), quietly volunteered to contribute on behalf of his group. He shared his group's assigned issue, "Public school should begin each day with prayer," and then Donny repeated the topic for the whole class, "public school should begin with prayer each day." Ms. Oakland asked, "Who would think that?" and Oliver replied, "Conservative." Ms. Oakland nodded affirmatively and proceeded to explain the legality of prayer in the schools in relation to the separation of church and state. Although Oliver flushed red earlier in the term, his demeanor was calm as he spoke to the class about a personally-relevant topic.

Oliver was probably the most soft-spoken of all study participants, but at the same time, very thoughtful and reflective about his conceptions of citizenship. Further, Oliver seemed to feel more comfortable sharing his opinions one-on-one, rather than in front of the whole class or in the focus group interviews. From our conversations, it became evident that for Oliver, social studies classes, including Ms. Oakland's American Government course, were spaces for civic and political knowledge acquisition and interactions with culturally diverse peers. In addition to school, Oliver's family, both

immediate and extended, played a key role in his civic and political socialization. And, on various levels, Oliver was already a civically and politically engaged young citizen who was preparing to take on additional responsibilities of citizenship.

Reflecting on the Meaning of Citizenship

Oliver fluctuated between contributing introspective, thoughtful comments and being relatively silent during his individual interviews and focus groups. However, when he did share his ideas about the meaning of citizenship, he reflected on the concept introspectively, in a way that no other study participant did over the course of the trimester. For example, I asked Oliver what citizenship meant to him during our first individual interview on 4/5/11. He showed how special U.S. citizenship was to him when he said that it meant “a lot to have this opportunity just to be here,” in the United States, and continued:

Even just to sit here, you know, and have this conversation with you, you know, I’m in the United States territory, and, ah, it is something that you have to cherish, not all of the countries have this. And, ah, it just means a lot.

At the end of this first conversation together, Oliver told me that I should have asked him “What is citizenship?” When I asked him if he wanted to answer his question for me he said, “I shouldn’t have brought it up. It’s a hard one to answer.” However, he continued:

What is citizenship? It’s something, like, I wouldn’t say it would be as strong as love, but it is something that is intangible, you can’t touch. It is something that is just like, air or matter, you can’t touch it, but it is something that you

can grasp onto. And, you take it and be proud of it.

Oliver's first focus group interview occurred the next day (4/6/11). I asked Oliver and the other participants about the meaning of citizenship. Oliver said that to him citizenship meant privileges, specifically having the opportunity to attend school. This response reflected his ideas shared the previous day, regarding the significance of being in the United States and attending school. After this response Oliver became mostly quiet (with the exception of a few quick yes or no answers) for the rest of the focus group. However, he was engaged in the conversation as evidenced by his attentive body language including affirmative head nodding and eye contact.

About a month later (5/5/11), the second focus group interview convened. As with the previous focus group, Oliver shared few verbal responses through the entire discussion. This time however, not only did he seldom contribute ideas, he also physically withdrew from the conversation with his peers. I noticed him often looking down at the paper on the table in front of him. One of the few things Oliver shared with the others was that he had been interested in government and politics for a long time and that the American Government class really "got [him] thinking." He did not expand on what in the class prompted his further contemplation.

Oliver's second individual interview occurred on 5/26/11 and in this more personal venue, he engaged me in another thoughtful conversation regarding his evolving conception of citizenship. During this interview, when I asked Oliver what citizenship meant to him, he focused on engaged civic participation and increased political perspective (at this point in the trimester, the first three instructional units, including

Political Participation, were complete). He said that as a citizen, “you can actually make a difference when it comes to direct votes.” Oliver felt that the class was really changing his mind because of the opportunity to hear what other students had to say. He added that because of the things he learned in American Government class, he was even more interested in government and politics than when the course started. However, when reflecting on what he learned in Ms. Oakland’s class, he remarked, “[the class] taught me but, I’m still trying to learn.”

Oliver offered few ideas during the final focus group (6/2/11), and what he shared reflected his comments in his second individual interview. During the final focus group, Oliver stated that after a trimester of American Government education, citizenship meant being prepared for the future and thinking about various perspectives. To conclude the focus group, I asked the participants if they had any final words to share regarding citizenship. Oliver indicated that this class did not signify the end of his civics and government education when he said, “I still need to grow more in order to be on the exact mark. There is still another stage to come.”

Oliver approached citizenship differently than did his peers in this study: Rather than focusing on legal definitions of citizenship, Oliver considered citizenship in relation to the psychological elements of identity and understanding. Conover and Searing (2002) describe identity and understanding as two significant psychological elements of *Sense of Citizenship*. Oliver’s citizenship identity included opportunities and freedoms he experienced as a citizen: He acknowledged that as a U.S. citizen, he had freedom and opportunity to speak with me, attend public school, and to live in the United States. In

addition, he held and understood certain beliefs about citizenship and his relationship to the political environment. Oliver described a strong emotional connection to citizenship as “something you can’t touch” and something about which to feel proud. He even connected citizenship to love. His understanding of citizenship also included a sense of responsibility, of continued investment and interest when he stated that “there is still another stage to come.”

The Social Studies Classroom as a Site of Civic and Political Knowledge Acquisition

As I had additional chances to talk with Oliver, it became evident that social studies classes and teachers played important roles as he constructed his civic and political identity. Oliver explained that previous social studies teachers changed the way he contemplated government and politics. He further noted that he learned considerable amounts of civic and political knowledge in Ms. Oakland’s American Government classroom, which is not surprising because social studies instruction often emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge (Hess & Posselt, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Pace & Bixby, 2008). Oliver also identified Ms. Oakland’s social studies classroom as a place where he “fit in” with his culturally diverse peers. He contended that what he learned in social studies education through 12th-grade was a start, but that he still needed “to grow more as a citizen” in the future.

Previous social studies teachers. Oliver reflected often on how his social studies teachers helped prepare him for citizenship. In our first individual interview (4/5/2011), I asked Oliver how he learned about citizenship. He described the important role played by

his middle school and high school social studies teachers. In particular, he reflected on a male 8th-grade civics teacher from whom he had learned a great deal, and said:

I had this teacher and he told us a lot about different powers, different branches of government. And, then the test comes and [I was] kind of freaked out, but in the end, like, [I] may have not gotten the best grade in class, but [I] learned something, [I] learned a lot.

Oliver continued to talk about the 8th-grade civics teacher the following day in our first focus group interview (4/6/11). Oliver described studying the Bill of Rights, various amendments, and different types of laws with the teacher. Oliver also remembered some of the projects that he completed in the class including an amendment assignment that focused on income and sales tax (during this project, students were assigned to calculate taxes on goods and services, and to determine tax rates based on personal income). In the same focus group, I asked the participants again about ways that they learned about citizenship and Oliver repeated that it was his various teachers that helped him shape his political knowledge and ideas. Oliver described how each year a teacher would tell the students something about the government and “then another year they would change that up, so that they just really changed your ideas on how you think” about government and politics.

That Oliver remembered his 8th-grade civics teacher as someone who helped him shape his understanding of citizenship is not uncommon. Previous research shows that teacher instructional styles, interactional behavior, and content knowledge may impact youths’ civic education experiences (Cherukuri, 2007; Fridken et al., 2006; Gimpel et al.,

2003; Hahn, 1998; Niemi & Junn, 1998). Oliver remembered his civics teacher as an engaging, knowledgeable, instructional leader who encouraged his students to participate in project-based activities rather than bookwork. These memories remained with Oliver through the end of his senior year of high school.

Ms. Oakland's American Government classroom. Ms. Oakland's classroom was a site of civic and political knowledge acquisition for Oliver, much like it was for Andrew and Sandy. In the second focus group interview (5/5/11), Oliver said that voting was one of the most important things that he learned about in Ms. Oakland's class, and that the Electoral College's potential impact on presidential elections surprised him. He also shared that he learned about the steps one takes to becoming a presidential candidate, but this topic was not as important to him as other things he learned in class. Later in the second focus group he added that he did not find the study of the amendments particularly interesting either because it was "kind of a lot to put in your head."

While in the second focus group, Oliver verbalized only a few of the things that he learned about in American Government class. He did, however, share with me a written list of his new knowledge that included a ranking of the most to least important themes and topics. In addition to learning how to vote, Oliver's list continued in the following order, most to least significant: "governmental positions, House and Senate, statistics of voting, Electoral College system, primary election, presidential positions during elections, off-year elections, gerrymandering, and steps to becoming a running presidential candidate." Oliver recognized his new knowledge, but did not openly share all of his ideas with his peers, choosing to write them instead.

During our second individual interview (5/26/11), Oliver talked at length about a variety of issues related to citizenship knowledge. First, he returned to his list, and explained in greater detail his learning in American Government class about each of the items. For example, Oliver explained that: it was hard to understand the meaning of gerrymandering; he enjoyed watching *Nine Days in New Hampshire* (Discovery Times Channel, 2004), a Discovery Channel documentary about life as a presidential candidate; in different parts of the country, distinct voting procedures were followed; and U.S. senators “serve for a pretty long time.” Second, Oliver indicated that he discovered new things in American Government class in the three weeks since our previous conversation on 5/5/11. His new ideas tended to shift from declarative, knowledge-based learning, to understanding the role of participation, action, and reflection in democratic life. Oliver said, “We can actually make a difference out there, because [Ms. Oakland] shows that you can make a difference rather than just listening all the time.” Further, he described how he learned that “it makes a difference to actually say something” in a democracy and that bias impacted “how we learn about [politics].” In particular he said that because of his own political bias, he realized that sometimes he did not fully listen to other people. Third, Oliver expanded on how his ideas about citizenship changed from the beginning of the term to the present (5/26/11). Although Ms. Oakland told the class that they could change their political perspectives, Oliver stated that he always found himself “on the liberal side,” and that did not change from the beginning of the trimester. However, he said that “[politics] is becoming more interesting to me” because of some of the activities in American Government class, like watching political debate videos. Fourth, Oliver not

only learned about democratic citizenship in Ms. Oakland's class, he became more comfortable with his own political ideas. Oliver noted this transformation: "What's changed is that I am like my own person, rather than you know what other people say, I may have a different view."

Oliver's experiences in social studies classes with peers, teachers, and content influenced his citizenship identity. When Oliver stated that he was "like my own person...I may have a different view," he acknowledged the development of his own personal political identity, one reflecting his own thinking about government and politics, as encouraged in many mainstream schools (Conover, 1984; Conover & Searing, 2000). Oliver learned in American Government class that he could change his mind after he learned new things and that he could have his own opinions, potentially conflicting with traditional Hmong values like the concern for group and family harmony and solidarity.

A place in the diverse classroom. In addition to the classroom being a site of knowledge acquisition, Oliver stated that he felt like he "fit in" in Ms. Oakland's American Government classroom community. In his first individual interview (4/5/11), Oliver conveyed his surprise that the classroom was the place where culturally diverse students worked together:

It surprised me, class is the time, and obviously it's not really a place to hang out, it's to learn. That's probably where I fit in is during class. But, it is good to learn together, [inaudible] Americans, African Americans, and Hispanics, it's cool just hanging out with them.

Conversely, he felt uncomfortable around certain groups at school during lunchtime:

I don't feel I fit in with certain cliques and groups, especially like during lunchtime at school. It's always segregated, you know like, tables. There is a section of Asians, African Americans, and just White Americans. Usually, you think of lunch as a place where differences would be set aside and you can hang with one another.¹³

Oliver stated that he thought it was good to learn and “hang out” with culturally diverse students, and that he enjoyed working and conversing with his classmates. As evidence of these convictions, when students had the opportunity to select their seating arrangement in American Government class, Oliver often sat with students from varied cultural backgrounds, rather than his Hmong peers. On four of the five days that Ms. Oakland's class met in the media center or computer lab, Oliver elected to sit with Abdou, an Oromo immigrant, and Jesus, a Hispanic student. There was one additional class period when Oliver chose to sit with Abdou, Jesus, and two African American females, Beth and Eliza.

Preparing for civic life beyond the classroom. The close of the trimester did not mean the end of civic and political learning for Oliver. Rather, in his estimation, it was just the beginning. In his final individual interview (5/26/11), Oliver made connections between what he learned in American Government to future actions outside of the classroom, and he shared his visions for upcoming civic and political engagement. He explained that usually when he visited a local Hmong organization with his family, he would “just eat and have fun,” while his father participated in civic meetings, including

¹³ The problem of similar ethnic groups sitting together at lunch is not new (Tatum, 1997). In 2002, the Southern Poverty Law Center (2012) established “Mix It Up at Lunch Day” to encourage students to sit with different people during lunch and then to identify, question, and cross social boundaries.

electing organizational leaders. Now he considered joining his father or engaging in other civic endeavors: “I could help out the [Hmong] community, and if not, I was thinking about environmentally helping out the Creekview Park community.” Oliver also said that he contemplated supporting a politician or political group by getting “this and that done for them.”

In a culminating comment during his final individual interview (5/26/11), Oliver shared his reflections on the imminent merging of his new civic and political knowledge with his Hmong heritage when he said, “What is really important is that I keep what I’ve learned in [American Government] class in my mind and [that] it reflects on how I act Hmong outside.” As a second-generation immigrant (both of his parents were born in Laos), Oliver faced the challenge of acculturating into U.S. civic and political culture, while at the same time trying to maintain traditional Hmong values and remain within his parents’ cultural community (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2005, 2006; Stepick & Stepick, 2002). Further, as noted earlier, it is potentially problematic that individualistic aspects of U.S. civic and political culture could be at odds with collectivist aspects of Hmong tradition.

At the end of the final focus group (6//2/11), I invited Oliver and his peers to share any concluding comments about citizenship. Oliver reflected on the political knowledge he gained through the trimester and responded, “All of the things we learned in this class are important” but, “I still need to grow more...there is still another stage to come.” Oliver realized that he was graduating from CSHS and that much of his future civic and political learning would take place outside of school.

Future democratic education for others. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) explain how diverse democratic education programs focus on different priorities, goals, and strategies and therefore result in varied types of citizenship. Ms. Oakland's instruction framed democratic education in terms of knowledge transmission and acquisition, and preparation for *future* civic and political action. Although Oliver reported that his civic and political knowledge increased in Ms. Oakland's class he seemed to sense a disconnect between studying civic and political engagement in the classroom, and actually "doing it" – carrying out civic and political actions in varied community contexts.

In his second individual interview (5/26/11), I asked Oliver if there were ways that his school community could better prepare students for future civic and political participation, and he offered several suggestions. Within the classroom, Oliver thought that students need to do something "other than listening to the teacher talk and watching videos" (although he reported really enjoying various films in class), and that they should be "having debates and really getting into more hands-on stuff. Maybe like actually *doing activities* or maybe perform rallies." Outside Ms. Oakland's classroom but within CSHS, Oliver thought that political components should be added to the school newspaper and daily announcements so that students knew more about government and politics outside the school doors. Oliver suggested that students develop and then report the news stories to their peers. He proposed that teachers, "make students go up and *actually do it*, and people could organize and teachers would help them, and [students] would learn because covering a story would help [them] to see differences."

Family and Father as Political Socialization Agents

School was not the only significant socialization factor in Oliver's life. His immediate and extended family influenced him as he constructed his citizenship identity, reflecting the importance that family plays in Hmong culture and as political socialization agents (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 1997; Camp, 2003; Flanagan & Gallay, 1995; Jankowski, 1992; Koltyk, 1998; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Niemi & Jennings, 1991; Ramakrishnan & Espenshade, 2001).

Political conversation within the family. Oliver engaged in political conversation with his father, older sisters, and younger siblings, along with relatives outside his home. In his second individual interview (5/26/11), Oliver explained how within his immediate family: "We talk about current events, presidential elections, and major stuff that is going on." He added that it was acceptable to hold dissimilar political opinions from others in his family (consistent to what he reported learning in Ms. Oakland's class). In particular, he said, "My sisters have different views about President Obama. But, it is okay in my family to have different political views." Further he said, when "I talk to my dad about politics at home, my dad jokes around. If I have a certain view, we probably might disagree on something stupid and he will just laugh at me." Oliver also talked with his younger siblings about political and controversial issues. Oliver told his younger brother and sisters about the song "30 Hmongs in the House," "So they could understand what is going on." By taking the initiative to talk with his younger siblings, he practiced for his future role as a political leader in his own family (Keown-Bomar, 2004; Koltyk, 1998). At the same time, Oliver's siblings questioned him

about his political interest. In the second focus group (5/10/11), he explained how he was “pretty much the only one in the family aside from one older sister that actually like[d] politics” and that if he was “watching the news” some of his siblings would ask “How come you don’t watch anything fun?”

Oliver engaged in political discussions with extended family members as well as with his immediate family, although he did not share extensive details about these conversations. In his first individual interview (4/5/11) he explained how his younger brother told him that he should “avoid talking about politics when you visit family and friends.” However, Oliver admitted that he tried to talk to his extended family about politics because “it’s kind of fun” and because “they seem to know the stuff quite a lot.”

Parental influence on citizenship identity. Although both of Oliver’s parents helped him negotiate his citizenship identity to some degree, his father influenced his political philosophy, and levels of political participation and action more than did his mother. In the second focus group (5/10/11), I asked participants if they felt politically influenced by their parents. Oliver said that his parents cared deeply about his school performance, but “not so much” about his political preferences. However, Oliver revealed in his second individual interview (5/26/11) following the Political Participation and Ideology unit, that both of his parents leaned liberal on the political spectrum, as did he. Oliver’s mother seldom engaged in political conversation with him and was not as civically and politically active as was his father. Oliver said that his mom did not vote because she could not understand English very well but that his dad voted regularly, although he never took Oliver with him to the election booth. At home then, rather than

engage in civic and political leadership, Oliver's mother modeled a more traditional Hmong female role in her political behavior by deferring civic and political action to Oliver's father (Keown-Bomar, 2004).

Oliver talked openly about how his father helped shape his civic and political knowledge and skills. In his first individual interview (4/5/11), Oliver explained that the earliest things he learned about citizenship were taught by his father: "I learned from my dad as a kid before I went to school, I still remember stories about how he came to the United States and having to go through all of those tests and trials." Sometimes, Oliver approached his dad to talk about politics because "he'll be reading and I'll come and ask him questions and he tells me a lot about [politics]. I would talk to my dad about this for hours." Oliver's father also modeled political engagement, giving Oliver an opportunity to learn and become politically involved as well. As an adolescent, Oliver's father took him to the monthly meetings of a local Hmong association that Oliver described as "political." Oliver explained that the main topic of a recent meeting included a special election to "choose a new chairman that would balance authority with another Hmong leader," in the wider community, so that one would not have too much power over the other. At the same time he was learning from his father, Oliver shared some of the ways that his father approached him regarding civic and political issues. He explained that his dad heard about "30 Hmongs in the House" and, "asked me what it was about, and I told him that on Saturday they were going to protest at the state capital about [the song]." Further, Oliver felt pride that his dad asked him "how you say this and that in English," and that he could translate and help.

Oliver experienced a close personal relationship with his father that included a civic and political dimension, as did Sandy with her father. However, Oliver's rapport with his father was different from Sandy's because Oliver and his father interacted more as equals, more reciprocally, rather than as parent-child like Sandy and her dad. Gender assumptions may play a role here as well. Sandy and Oliver may be expected to take different civic and political roles within their immediate and extended families as adults. Their parents prepared them for these gendered differences through their own civic and political interactions, engagement, and modeling (Keown-Bomar, 2004).

The journey toward U.S. citizenship. Oliver's parents' conversations about family history, the politics of their immigration experiences, and becoming U.S. citizens, were particularly important to Oliver's citizenship negotiation because these stories helped Oliver (and his siblings) understand their cultural history and identity. Oliver's parents recounted stories about what they endured in order to escape violence in Laos and arrive in the United States:

My parents talk to me, what they had to go through to just come here. They are Hmong so in the 60s and 70s, they had the Vietnam War going on. When they came here to the United States, my dad explained, it's not something easy to go through. You hearing stories of them being through a lot, especially in the Midwest area where there are a lot of Hmong people. You can hear all of the things that they've gone through. Listening to relatives talk about their journeys through Laos to America. It's cool because, being born here, you don't go through as much as they do, but

it's just cool to hear their side. (INT1; 4/15/11)

Oliver's parents also told him about political issues during the Vietnam War that led to conflict:

The Hmong, they had this controversy between them and the Laotian government because a lot of the Laotians were communists and the Hmong people were rebellious to communists or communism so my parents being Hmong, they struggled to go through that.

And, his father shared the history of his on-going efforts to become a citizen once in the United States, modeling perseverance and patience:

When my dad came to the United States, he took a [citizenship] test and he told me he failed it the first time. And, you know, he eventually passed, he went through all those trials to just become a citizen.

Within these stories, Oliver not only came to understand more about his cultural identity, but about his citizenship identity as well. Traditionally, Hmong youth listen to their parents for guidance and instruction (Keown-Bomar, 2004). Understanding how the Hmong survived great political and violent conflict, is significant to understanding themselves as people. Further, the diaspora stories can contribute significantly to how Hmong youth make sense of their civic and cultural identities as being both Hmong and American. It is even more significant that Oliver's parents told him many of their migration stories because as a male member of his family in a patrilineal culture, traditionally Oliver is considered the "root of the family" (Koltyk, 1989, p. 39), linked to

both family ancestors and origins, and to future family members. He may be responsible for passing on family histories to future generations.

Oliver, An Engaged Citizen

Like Andrew and Sandy, Oliver is already an engaged, active young citizen on several levels – personal, civic, and political – who is preparing to take on additional responsibilities of citizenship.

Personal citizenship responsibilities. From the first day of American Government class, Oliver indicated that he was quite knowledgeable about politics. However, at the end of the term he stated that he needed to know more, conveying that his civic and political education was far from over. Oliver approached citizenship with a strong sense of responsibility, aspiring to become more knowledgeable, and to further develop civically and politically. For Oliver, citizenship education extended far beyond the social studies classroom as he shared his intentions to be prepared before voting by doing his research and getting informed. Further, he understood good citizenship to include making a difference in the Creekview Park and Hmong communities to which he belonged. This sense of responsibility is not unusual, as some immigrant youth possess a greater sense of the responsibilities of citizenship than do non-immigrant youth (Conover & Searing, 2000).

Civic and political citizenship endeavors. Oliver engaged in civic and political life by following the news and current events, participating in community activities, and preparing for future civic and political involvement. He viewed the television news, especially “debates and stuff” on local and cable (i.e., CSPAN) channels. In addition, he

listened to National Public Radio (NPR) and received news from the Internet, but tried to stay away from “unreliable sources” online. Oliver explained that there were several current events that he was following, including two disaster stories, one about a destructive tornado that hit near his home, and the other regarding the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan. He also monitored several political and economic events including the upcoming fall election, the war in Afghanistan, and health care and tax reform. As an aware citizen, Oliver was cognizant of the “30 Hmongs in the House” protest being planned by the Hmong community, and shared this information with his immediate family.

More often, Oliver participated in political and civic activities outside of CSHS than within the school environment. He attended meetings at a local Hmong Community Center with his father as described earlier, and was highly involved with his religious community. Oliver and his family belonged to the First Hmong Baptist Church and participated in church benefits and gatherings with other congregations around the United States. Oliver explained that fundraising money was used to help his own church thrive, donated to various Hmong groups in his metropolitan area, and used to “look after [our] elders because they do so much for us.” Oliver did not participate in many school activities at CSHS, but he did attend a prayer group some mornings before school:

We meet down by the gyms, and it really is Hmong, but we try to get other races to come down and just listen to the word of the Gospel and the word of God and come together, whether you’re a Christian, Muslim, or different ethnicities and just a place to worship. (INT1; 4/5/11)

That Oliver hoped diverse students would join the prayer group reflects his interest in working, conversing, and studying with a variety of youth, not just other Hmong peers.

Oliver said that Ms. Oakland's American Government class activities and instruction encouraged him to participate in civic and political endeavors outside of school. For example, Oliver was not old enough to vote in the last election, but he said that he intended to start voting when he turned 18 years old. Oliver also considered various ways that he could contribute to his Hmong and neighborhood communities, especially "environmentally help[ing] out the [Creekview Park] community," by volunteering in local recreational areas. Oliver tended to envision his future civic participation in terms of social movements, as well as with conventional political activities like voting in future elections.

Conclusion

For Oliver, Ms. Oakland's American Government course was a space for civic and political knowledge acquisition and allowed for interactions with culturally diverse peers. In addition to school, Oliver's immediate and extended family members, especially his father, played a key role in his civic and political socialization. And, on personal, political, and civic levels, Oliver was already an engaged, participating young citizen who was preparing to take on additional responsibilities of citizenship.

Oliver entered Ms. Oakland's class at the beginning of the trimester knowing "quite a bit about politics." Although he reported that he learned a great deal of civic and political knowledge in American Government class, he suggested that the students do more "hands-on" activities to better prepare youth for engaged, active citizenship. Ms.

Oakland's instruction framed democratic education in terms of knowledge transmission and acquisition, and preparation for *future* civic and political action. Oliver was already prepared during the third trimester (and perhaps even before this class) to take on additional citizenship responsibilities, to actually "do it," but the class as structured did not allow for immediate, authentic, civic and political participation. Including a more active component to the American Government class may have allowed Oliver to get the "hands-on" civic and political engagement that he desired, and through the experiences may have also encouraged him to further examine his political knowledge, thoughts, and ideas.

Oliver's family, especially his father, played a significant role as he shaped his citizenship identity. Oliver experienced political conversations with his immediate and extended family and learned about his parents' journey toward U.S. citizenship. Oliver's family played such an integral role in his political socialization, that he naturally used a familial metaphor in his Political Ideology Essay (5/3/11) when he compared the United Nations to a family unit: "As other nations come together, they may sought to have separate beliefs, there is always one great intention all nations foresee as a family does." The influence of Oliver's family as he negotiated his citizenship identity rivaled the role of school as a political socialization agent in his life.

Oliver was more likely to engage in civic and political activities outside his school community rather than within CSHS, which is due to several factors. First, Oliver participated in many civic activities related to his religious affiliation and with the exception of his morning prayer meetings, most of these activities took place away from

the school. Second, he also enjoyed attending politically charged meetings at the local Hmong association with his father, which again took place outside of school. Third, within school, Oliver asked for more “hands-on” civic and political activities. It seems as though his American Government classroom experiences presented him with new political and civic knowledge, but did not offer him many opportunities to practice citizenship, so he looked to his family, religion, and culture to fulfill those needs.

Soua

On a Sunday evening in early May, U.S. President Barak Obama delivered a special news presentation via multiple media outlets regarding the death of Osama bin Laden. I wondered if the event would surface in Ms. Oakland’s class the next day. The following morning, I arrived to Ms. Oakland’s classroom very early for a Monday, and as usual Soua was already sitting at her table talking to someone on her mobile phone. She left the room for a moment and when she re-entered, this time without her phone in hand, she walked directly to Ms. Oakland who was seated, working at her desk and declared, “We can rest easy because bin Laden is dead.” Ms. Oakland responded, “We can’t rest easy, we must be careful.” Within minutes of my arrival, much before class started, Soua raised the major geopolitical event with her social studies teacher.

As the warning bell sounded, Ms. Oakland projected important information regarding assignments and activities expected over the next two days of American Government class: “vocabulary notes are due tomorrow,” “complete ideology review activity today,” “all unit two late work by tomorrow,” and “test tomorrow!” Soon after the final bell rang, Ms. Oakland reminded students of the impending due dates and then

immediately conveyed the news about bin Laden, showing students a newspaper banner with very large headlines “BIN LADEN IS DEAD.” Ms. Oakland asked her class if they had any questions about the event and students excitedly reacted to bin Laden’s death by engaging in discussion with each other and as a whole class, at the same time. Martha stated, “I understand why the September 11th people would be out there.” Some students questioned if the report was accurate, if bin Laden was truly dead. You asked if bin Laden was really “found in a palace.” Ms. Oakland explained where bin Laden was located and who was known to be involved in the action. When students had no further questions or comments, the class moved to an ideology review activity in preparation for the upcoming exam.

Although Souza broached the bin Laden subject with Ms. Oakland before class started, she listened quietly to her peers’ comments and questions when the entire class discussed the issue together. Souza initially showed awareness of and interest in this important event, but she did not share her ideas with the whole class as she did with Ms. Oakland before the beginning of the period when there were no other students in the room. Unfortunately, the class as a whole did not have the opportunity to learn about Souza’s opinions, ideas, and excitement not only about Osama bin Laden, but about many of the civics and government related topics discussed in American Government during the term.

Social Studies Classes as Sites for Civic and Political Learning and Engagement

Souza’s social studies classes and teachers played significant roles as she negotiated her citizenship identity. In our first focus group interview (4/6/11) Souza stated,

“I don’t think I’ve learned much about citizenship outside of school,” unlike Andrew, Sandy, and Oliver who described the considerable roles that their families (especially their fathers) played as they shaped their citizenship identities. In particular, Souza articulated how previous and present social studies class content and teachers helped her gain knowledge about citizenship, investigate her own political ideology, and realize the importance of active, engaged citizenship participation.

Previous and current social studies education. Souza enjoyed many of her recent social studies courses and teachers and she reported that these classes helped her gain political knowledge, reflect on her political identity, strengthen her political ideology, and develop a stronger sense of the importance of political engagement. Like Oliver, Souza noted that she remembered her first significant social studies education occurring in middle school. It is noteworthy that although she had difficulty recalling specific content, Souza remembered her teachers and how they instructed. She reminisced:

I remember civics in eighth grade, it was my favorite. There was this teacher, he was clear with the information that he was giving and it was interesting, although I forgot almost half of it, it’s been a while now, something about the Preamble. (FG1; 4/6/11)

She also held positive memories of learning about citizenship from her 9th-grade social studies teacher stating, “I just remember that he was really good at explaining about the subject. I don’t remember much [content], but he did a really good job at explaining everything to us” (FG1; 4/6/11). Ms. Oakland’s instruction impacted Souza as well. Souza described how, “I was really interested [in the class] and her [Ms. Oakland’s] voice was

really serious and exactly how politics are, serious” (INT2; 5/19/11). At the end of the trimester Souza explained that “Ms. Oakland got into my head” when they were learning about political perspectives (FG3, 6/2/11). It was not uncommon for Souza to note the important role her teachers played as she shaped and negotiated her civic and political knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Teachers’ interactions with students at school, along with their instructional styles and content knowledge, may result in greater student political participation and knowledge (Cherukuri, 2007; Lee, 2002; Niemi & Junn, 1998). However, it is more unusual for students to report enjoying social studies classes as did Souza. Many secondary students do not enjoy social studies and they report it as their least favorite class (Jenness, 1990; Gallup, 2004).¹⁴ Judith Pace (2008) reported how high school social studies classes, especially government, hold a reputation for being boring and uninteresting for students (p. 26). Conversely, Souza described her interest in politics and social studies as early as eighth grade.

Increased civic and political knowledge. Souza reported that learning experiences in 8th- 9th-, and 12th-grade social studies classes helped increase her levels of civic and political knowledge. Further, she described how particular instruction in her social studies classes enhanced some of her citizenship skills. For example, Souza learned about bias in eighth grade:

[Eighth grade] was the time that I first heard about bias or being unbiased and I had never heard of that before I was in civics. I think at the time, [teacher] was giving us a paragraph and said that we have to say if it is

¹⁴ When the 2004 Gallup Youth Survey asked U.S. students ages 13-17 “*What is your favorite subject in school,*” only 7% responded with history/social studies while the highest percentage of students (23%) answered math.

unbiased or biased and why we think that way. (FG1; 4/6/11)

In ninth grade, Soua's teacher made a connection between immigration and citizenship, topics central to Soua's family members' lives, and content knowledge that she recalled into her senior year of high school:

I remember if you are not a citizen, you have to know a little bit about the history, who was the first president, the second president or when people take the test, and you are not a citizen you've gotta know a little bit about your history to take the citizenship role. When you become a citizen, you have to know a little bit about the country, where it came from, where it evolved to, and the important people. (FG1; 4/6/11)

Although Soua claimed that she learned little from her family about citizenship, she shared stories with me about the citizenship experiences encountered by several of her family members as they traveled from Laos to the United States. She acquired additional understanding of citizenship from the life experiences of her family members during the process of becoming U.S. citizens while living in the United States. Soua's civic and political knowledge increased through experiencing family members' citizenship struggles, and from social studies curriculum and instruction in school.

In 12th-grade American Government, at the beginning of the second instructional unit on political participation (4/8/11), Ms. Oakland told her students, "I don't want you to feel locked into how you feel about [politics] right now." Ms. Oakland's emphasis on political parties and the possibility of political choice and change made a significant

impact on Soua's developing citizenship identity. Soua explained that she learned many different things in American Government class but that:

The most important [was] the different kind of government systems,¹⁵ like the Democratic Party, the Republicans, Independents and so on. I think it's kind of crazy how we stick to one, but it is kind of cool that we have options and our options might change. (INT1; 4/19/11)

Soua learned in Ms. Oakland's class that in a democracy, citizens have political choices to make, and that after learning and reflection one can revise political beliefs and understandings based on new information.

In addition to gaining knowledge about political parties and choice in American Government class, in her first individual interview (4/19/11) Soua remarked that she also learned much about the history and origins of U.S. government and citizens' rights. Soua's focus on citizens' rights is not uncommon, as previous research shows that social studies instructional materials like textbooks (Avery & Simmons, 2001) and Constitution-related curriculum (Niemi & Junn, 1998) often attend more to citizens' rights than responsibilities.

When I asked participants in the second focus group (5/5/11) about their learning in American Government class, Soua replied, "I've learned a lot." Again, she reiterated that this knowledge focused on the origins of U.S. government and on U.S. citizens' rights. In addition, two new themes emerged: First, Soua showed appreciation for the opportunity to hear her classmates' opinions and ideas on various political issues. Again, being receptive to repositioned political thinking, and not being "locked in" as described

¹⁵ Soua described political parties as government systems, a misnomer and a misunderstanding.

by Ms. Oakland, Soua explained how when she and her peers shared their political perspectives in American Government class, “Your point of view might change from listening to the point of view of others.” Second, she explained that although she was interested in historical aspects of U.S. government, she was more concerned about current political events. As the trimester advanced, Soua showed more interest in learning about contemporary social and political issues. This interest may have been encouraged by the research Ms. Oakland’s American Government students completed on contemporary controversial issues. Further, Soua’s interest in current political events reflects Newmann, Secada, and Wehlage’s (1995) contention that curriculum and instruction connected to a student’s life outside of school holds authentic, real value: Soua found interest in incidents like bin Laden’s death because these events linked life in and outside of school.

When Soua and I talked for the last time during the third focus group (6/2/11), Soua recapped all of her new knowledge acquired in American Government class. Most of this knowledge was declarative in nature, and reflected the content covered within the four units of study. She explained:

I learned about different government parties, laws and amendments, the legislature’s structure, about political figures and the representatives of your state, about political ideology, the Supreme Court, and the bill cycle.

Like her peers, it was in the third focus group that Soua voiced concern about the government’s power stating, “There is like so many [laws], I feel like, we could’ve been abused by the government and probably wouldn’t even know it. So, it’s like you want to

be aware of [the law].” Souza’s concern about excessive governmental power occurred after the judicial unit, when students learned about the Bill of Rights, with special attention given to the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments contrasting individual and governmental power.

Souza’s social studies classroom experiences helped shape her civic identity, as evidenced by one of the most significant things Souza shared about her new civics and government knowledge. At the end of the third focus group, Souza explained how at the beginning of the term she thought that citizenship was about government and economics. By the end of the trimester, Souza embraced a different view of citizenship when she said that being a “citizen now means participating and being active in your communities,” two important instructional themes on which Ms. Oakland concentrated during the term.

Developing ideas of active citizenship. Souza’s understanding of the significance of active citizenship developed from a more private to participatory consideration over the trimester in American Government class. In her first individual interview (4/19/11), Souza described the influence that Ms. Oakland had on her intention to vote. Souza said, “I do see myself voting. Because Ms. Oakland explained the importance of our voting, and I feel like, I really got to vote, and do my research and go vote.” Souza’s first comments about her own civic participation focused on voting, an act that Torney-Purta et al. (2001) deemed a conventional political activity and Westheimer and Kahn (2004) approached as a more personal, individual act: these scholars considered voting a significant political endeavor, but not one that necessarily engages one citizen with another, or that results in greater justice or societal change.

In the second focus group (5/10/11), Soua continued to connect civic engagement and citizenship, but her understanding of civic participation surpassed voting and developed into a more emotional form of citizenship emphasizing responsibility. Soua said:

I feel like I care more about politics because, I think that's part of being a citizen in America, you have to learn about your government, or do stuff to learn or get the updates on what's going on in your country. I feel like being a citizen, you have to do some research and know what's going on.

During our second individual interview (5/19/11), Soua's ideas about active citizenship reflected the research activities and public policy analysis projects assigned in American Government class, coupled with active citizenship. Students were to investigate legislation reflecting various perspectives about a topic important to them (Soua chose welfare reform). They used the Thomas files in the Library of Congress (<http://thomas.loc.gov>) and Public Agenda (<http://www.publicagenda.org/>), a nonpartisan source of public policy information to research their topic, and both <http://www.senate.gov> and <http://www.house.gov> to find information about various legislators and their stand on the subject matter. In her second interview, Soua connected her evolving sense of participatory citizenship with her study of previous and current legislation. She said:

I think we have to be more involved, because there's bills that pass every day and we don't really know. And, it is really cool that there are so many bills that are being put out at the same time and going to committees and

we're just sitting here not even thinking about it and it's like, they're constantly revising all the old amendments and laws.

By the final focus group (6/2/11) Soua conveyed a stronger sense of participatory (Westheimer & Kahn, 2004) and emotional (Conover & Searing, 2002) citizenship than at the beginning of the term. She said:

I just feel like ... a citizen. Being citizen of a country is important. You're a part of something. And the best way to not take citizenship for granted is to know your government.

Over the trimester then, Soua's ideas of active, participatory citizenship changed from voting as a sole act of citizenship, to cognitive and emotional engagement in the polity in which she lived.

Strengthened political ideology and identity. In addition to acquiring civic and political knowledge and forming ideas about the importance of active citizenship in American Government class, Soua reported that her political identity became stronger over the course of Ms. Oakland's class, although she continued to identify with the Democratic Party throughout the trimester. In her first individual interview (4/19/11) Soua reported, "I'm closer, or more connected with the Democratic Party. I feel like Republicans are just *me, me, me*, but Democrats are more for the people. I feel like I'm more concerned with what [people] want." Although she continued to identify as a Democrat, in the second focus group (5/10/11) Soua acknowledged that her political identity strengthened in part because of what she learned in American Government class. She said, "I feel like I believe more like the Democrat. I think I became stronger, because

I understand more what the Democrats stand for.” Soua described how watching a political debate encouraged the development of her civic identity. She explained, “Last week when we were watching the debate between Barak Obama and McCain. My thoughts about being Democratic became stronger because I like the values and the issues that they stand for. I feel more strongly about it” (FG2, 5/5/11).

Soua’s connection to the Democratic Party continued to increase so that by her second individual interview (5/19/11) she explained that her identification as a Democrat had “just gotten stronger.” During this interview I asked Soua to describe particular classroom activities that encouraged her connection with the Democrats. Soua explained that how she went about writing the political identity essay (comparing and contrasting the Democratic and Republican Parties) allowed her to reflect on her own political thinking and opinions. Soua detailed her work:

First of all, I did a bullet point about the Democrats and their values and the policies -- about certain issues like divorce, abortion, and education.

Then I did the same for Republican and then after that at the conclusion I just compared them both and said I lean towards the Democratic more

because I can relate more to how they look at these issues and deal with them.

By the final focus group (6/2/11) Soua firmly identified with the Democratic Party, due to the work she completed in American Government class, especially the Political Ideology Essay. Soua said, “I think when I finalized my Political Ideology, I’m like, I’m really down with the Democratic Party. In this class I realized, it was reinforced, that I am a Democrat.”

Experiencing Racism

Although school was a site of civic and political learning and engagement for Soua, it was also a place where she experienced racism. In the first focus group (4/6/11), Soua described personal experiences with racism within school and in the wider community. Further, some of Soua's racial experiences outside of CSHS crept into her educational space like when the local radio station that aired "30 Hmongs in the House" provided musical entertainment for dances and other events at CSHS.

Soua experienced overt racism within CSHS, but seemed to dismiss the seriousness of the incidents. When I asked Soua and her peers in the first focus group (4/6/11) if they experienced racism because of their Hmong ethnicity, Soua responded, "There's some, where [people] joke around, but I don't take it seriously. We [experience] it mainly in school, because we are around many different kinds of races, yeah, mainly in school." I asked Soua to share an example of what she heard in school and she said that people joked around about Hmong being "short" (Oliver and Mark nodded in agreement). But then she added another more detailed, personal experience with race:

Me and a friend were in the bathroom and some girls came in and they went to the stall where we were in. I guess they thought that we left and one of the girls were like, what's that smell? And the other girl was like, it's those Asians. And when they came out and saw we were still there and were like, oh, our bad. And, I'm like, okay. And, I knew it wasn't mean. I don't smell or anything, I didn't take offense or anything."

Soua experienced racism outside of school as well as within CSHS. She shared her reactions to “30 Hmongs in the House” with her peers and at times her comments were at odds with each other: Sometimes Soua considered the radio station’s motives as very hurtful and racist while at other times she dismissed the station’s actions as benign. For example, Soua said, “I heard the song. I was really mad about the song. It hurt.” But then she added, “I’ve been listening to [radio station] for years now. They aren’t trying to hurt anybody. I don’t think they are intentionally trying to hurt anyone.” Further, as the conversation continued, Soua said that she felt sad about the song, but would continue to listen to the radio station because she greatly enjoyed the music. The same radio station played music for various dances at CSHS, and Soua explained that she had fun at the events in part because she heard “good” music when she attended. Soua continued, “[I am] sad but [I’m] not going to do anything about it.” Soua then explained to the focus group participants that she friended the radio station on Facebook and noticed that a state representative sent a public letter to the station owner, protesting the song. To conclude the first focus group conversation, Soua said that she thought writing a letter “made sense,” although she did not indicate that she would speak out against the radio station’s actions or boycott the station in any way.

Although Soua did not report specific instances of racism or prejudice occurring in American Government class, she described overt racial experiences within CSHS. The fact that Soua experienced unconcealed racism in school between classes made it quite possible that she carried those events into the classroom with her, perhaps affecting her learning and her developing identity as a U.S. citizen.

Citizenship Identities in Tension

Soua's citizenship self-identity fluctuated over the course of the trimester, sometimes resulting in tension, conflict, and contradiction. At different times during individual and focus group interviews, Soua identified as Hmong, American, and/or Hmong American. She described ways that she felt particularly Hmong and distinctly American, and experiences that left her feeling outside the circle of U.S. citizenship. Soua's ideas about her own political agency also shifted over the term. Like Sandy, Soua more than once considered herself politically "stupid" and uninterested in politics. However at other times Soua described herself as politically interested, engaged civically and politically within her school and neighborhood communities, and shared that she enjoyed social studies class even as a middle school student. Sometimes, it seemed as though Soua was unaware that her civic behaviors and political knowledge and understanding reflected active, engaged citizenship.

Citizenship self-identity: Being Hmong, being American. Soua and I talked about being Hmong and being American in the first focus group and individual interviews (in later focus groups and her final individual interview, Soua talked less often about her citizenship identity). Soua negotiated her place in U.S. society in such a way that her citizenship self-identity fluctuated within and between our first focus group and individual interviews. At various times through the conversations she identified as Hmong, American, and Hmong American. Homi Bhabha (1994) described this complex place as a boundary, the space *in between* the designations of identity.

Being Hmong. During the first focus group interview (4/6/11), Soua identified as Hmong, and considered her cultural ethnicity particularly beneficial to others. She explained being Hmong as “bringing something different to the table,” including a “different language,” and a “different perspective because we have our history, we have a different perspective of things than an American who’s been here for generations and generations.” Soua said that she felt most Hmong when she spent time with other Hmong family and friends, explaining, for example, how visiting her grandparents at their house reminded her “that I’m Hmong because they’re so traditional.”

She described feeling distinctly Hmong when she participated in major events occurring within the Hmong community. Soua mentioned two activities -- Hmong New Year and the Fourth of July tournament – that were significant due to their participation by the Hmong community on a national level. The Hmong New Year party was held each year in a large city near Soua’s home. Hmong families from the entire metropolitan area (including most of the Hmong participants in this study), as well as Hmong people from locales around the United States attended the multi-day event. Soua’s parents prepared for various Hmong New Year pageants by purchasing traditional Hmong outfits for all of their children. Soua explained: “we dress up” for the Hmong New Year “and that’s why I feel more Hmong.” The Fourth of July tournament was held in the same city, but this occasion combined soccer, flag football, golf, and volleyball competitions, with a “Miss Hmong Teen Pageant,” and traditional Hmong food and merchandise sales. All students in the first focus group described Hmong New Year and the Fourth of July tournament as “a lot of fun” and a good time to see a lot of Hmong people. Soua said that it was:

Big events like the New Year and the July Fourth tournament, when we come together and there are so many Hmongs, it reminds [me] that [I am] still Hmong. It's that reminder that you get every year and it brings you back to the Hmong.

In her first individual interview (4/19/11), Soua continued to describe the positive contributions Hmong culture offered others. She said: "Being Hmong feels great because you have something new that other people don't have, like being able to speak a different language, or culture to offer to the other people."

Being American. In addition to identifying as Hmong, in the first focus group interview (4/6/11), Soua conveyed a legalistic definition of her U. S. citizenship (Conover & Searing, 2002) when she declared, "I'm an American, because I was born here. Just because I was born here, it makes me feel like I am a citizen. I think I am 100% part of U.S. culture." She described several key attributes of U.S. citizenship including "being educated," "knowing the [country's] history," and "possessing rights, like freedom of speech." She stated that she was proud to be an American because U.S. citizens "have more rights," and that she "really appreciate[d] the rights that we have in America." Like many mainstream U.S. adolescents, Soua emphasized the significance of rights held by U.S. citizens, rather than responsibilities (Conover & Searing, 2000; Niemi & Junn, 1998).¹⁶

Later in the same focus group (4/6/11) Soua reconsidered her U.S. citizenship when she and her peers addressed "30 Hmongs in the House." At this point in the

¹⁶ Conversely, Cherukuri (2007), Conover & Searing (2000), Lopez et al. (2006) and Niemi & Junn (1998) found that immigrant youth sometimes embrace the responsibilities of citizenship more than do non-immigrant youth.

conversation she argued “I think that things like [the song] makes me want to draw the line that I’m not an American and I’m just Hmong.” A paradox surfaced: Soua initially stated with certainty that she was a U.S. citizen due to birth: However, racial issues within her community left her feeling of full citizenship diminished.

Again in Soua’s first individual interview (4/19/11) I asked her what it meant to be American. Similar to our conversation in the first focus group, Soua communicated a legal understanding of citizenship. She said:

I feel 100% American because I wasn’t born in a different country. If I was born in Thailand or Laos and been raised there for like five years or like until a teenager, I would feel like half of me is over there because I’ve experienced so much over there. But, since I’ve been in America my whole life, I don’t know how it feels to be Hmong in Thailand, so I feel like being in America is where I belong.”

As Soua described her sense of U.S. citizenship, she explained that she had not spent much time on or “put much thought into” citizenship because “since I was born here I’m automatically a citizen, I don’t really think about it. It would be harder if I wasn’t a citizen, was an immigrant from Laos or Thailand and coming here and trying to get citizenship.” Soua clearly described her legal understanding of citizenship in the first focus group and individual interviews reflecting her civic and political knowledge, but she maintained that she had not often thought about being a U.S. citizen.

In addition to legal aspects of citizenship, a second theme emerged in our first individual interview: Soua described her conception of citizenship as including an

economic component. To Soua, being American equated to personal and financial achievement, and during our first individual interview, certain assumptions and misconceptions arose regarding her ideas of U.S. economic opportunity. She expressed confidence in the “American Dream” when she said that as an American, you can “do whatever you want, the sky is the limit, whatever goals and dreams you have, you can achieve.” Soua did not yet connect issues of race and class to economic challenges within the country, but rather focused on a romanticized version of economic opportunity in the United States. Soua continued by comparing U.S. citizenship to Chinese citizens’ experiences when she said, “[as an American] you have a chance of achieving, unlike in China for example, although you go to college for something, you don’t end up having that major or whatever you want.” Soua assumed that people in China did not have achievement opportunities as did U.S. citizens, but failed to consider that not all U.S. citizens hold equal economic and educational opportunities.

Being Hmong American. Although Soua distinguished between her Hmong and American identities in the first focus group and individual interviews, these distinctions merged when she also addressed herself as Hmong American. When I asked if she considered herself Hmong or American (INT1; 4/19/11), Soua hesitated as she thought about her answer, and then replied:

I am a Hmong American, I don’t know (long pause). I wouldn’t totally deny that I’m an American, but I wouldn’t deny that I am a Hmong, too. So, I’m just like a Hmong American. But, as much as I love being an American, I love being a Hmong, too, it is who I am, so I would say both.

Like the immigrant youth in Lee's (2005) and Rubin's (2007) studies, Soua navigated multiple civic identities, constructing her identity within and outside of school, under unequal race relations.

Unrecognized political efficacy and engagement. Kahne and Westheimer (2006) define political efficacy as the "sense of one's ability to participate effectively in the political process" (p. 289). While participating in this study, Soua seldom conveyed a cognizance of her own political efficacy and engagement. She declared in the first focus group (4/6/11) "I am just so naïve, I would feel kind of stupid voting at 18," and "I am just not that interested in politics." However, by 12th-grade she had already been civically and politically engaged for several years. For example, during 9th-, 10th-, and 11th-grades, Soua participated in the Hmong Youth Leadership (HYL) group at CSHS that worked to support her school, neighborhood, and global communities. Soua explained that HYL raised about \$1,000.00 to help install a bench in a local park and additional money to send members of HYL to China and London on intercultural tours. Soua described her civic experiences as a member of HYL:

In HYL we have meetings and let the community know what we are doing, our local plan and how we are going to execute it and what we need from the community. We host events like fundraising and bring the community together. (INT1; 4/19/11)

Soua also described the significant personal impact of HYL on her life. She said:

Honestly, without HYL, I wouldn't be who I am today. Whenever someone asks me about HYL, I have so much to tell. I could have [made bad life

choices] but I feel with HYL, [I am] able to have a different kind of mindset about life and I want to become a good person and stuff like that. HYL taught me about leadership and helping your community. That's why I started volunteering. So, it feels good. (INT1; 4/19/11)

In addition to participating in HYL, Souza tutored elementary students within the Osceola Area School District, and in her junior year at CSHS she was a member of the 11th-grade Executive Committee that worked to raise funds for and promote the senior class prom. Souza explained the 11th-grade Executive Committee as "the community that fundraises [to] promote prom, and set up prom for the seniors. And you know, come up with ideas how to fundraise money."

Souza also followed current political and economic events, in particular recalling her interest in Osama bin Laden's death, welfare programming, abortion rights, and increased gas prices. She added that, "Sometimes I try and catch some Obama speech or like, the other day I was watching *60 Minutes* with Obama. I think that is interesting."

Looking into the future, Souza envisioned herself participating in political life, but again voiced apprehension and self-doubt about her ability to make appropriate political choices. She said, "I see myself voting but I feel like if I don't know exactly what is right or what is wrong or who has the right debate, I would feel kind of stupid voting, but I do see myself voting." She also described the possibility of a career connected to politics when she said, "I could see myself being a [political] reporter," however she did not think that she held "the potential to become a politician."

Learning About Citizenship with Family

The role of family was important to Souza's developing citizenship identity, but her experiences were slightly different from those of Andrew, Sandy, and Oliver (Souza did not learn as much from her father as did the other three focal participants, perhaps because after Souza's parent's divorce Souza lived with her mother). In the first focus group (4/6/11) Souza stated that she did not think she learned much about citizenship outside of school, but later in the same focus group she explained that she learned from various family members' citizenship experiences. Further, Souza personally experienced the process that several of her family members endured in order to obtain U.S. citizenship.

In the first focus group (4/6/11), I asked Souza how she learned about citizenship outside of school and she said that her parents as well as other family members helped her understand more about immigration and U.S. citizenship. Souza's parents told her stories about going through a very long process to become U.S. citizens, including sharing extensive information about their family medical reports. Souza accompanied her mother when she took the citizenship test and recollected trauma occurring immediately before her mother took the exam:

I remember my mom having a green card when I was younger. I was in elementary, I remember we were coming out of the van and [mom] was coming to get us out, and the passenger seat, where her purse was, and somebody came and stole her purse and then she was stressing to my dad, oh my gosh, my green card is in there, so she was worried. (INT1; 4/19/11)

Soua also witnessed her brother-in-law's quest for U.S. citizenship. Soua reported that he was not born in the United States, and that he had not yet taken his citizenship test, which caused him a great amount of stress and worry (most problematic was preparing for the citizenship exam). She continued to describe her brother-in-law's situation because his parents recently passed their own citizenship tests "so he feels like he is behind because he is younger."

Soua, like Andrew, Sandy, and Oliver, reported in the second focus group (5/10/11) that her mom was very traditional and "did not care about politics." However, her father was "always talking about [politics], he's always tripping over it, oh my God, they're doing it wrong and all that." She added that she knew her father "leans more to liberal democrat," but she could not recall her mother's political party affiliation. In her second interview (5/19/11), Soua said that since the start of American Government class in March, her family hadn't discussed politics at home, nor had she shared anything that she learned about American Government and politics in Ms. Oakland's class with her family members.

Soua did, however, choose her Bill Project topic (welfare reform) based on her family experiences. Soua explained that she chose welfare reform because, "A lot of family members are on welfare, my mom's on welfare, too, and I think without it, it would be really hard, there would be a lot of heavy weight on your shoulders." Soua said she researched and wrote her bill on welfare reform because:

I was wanting to improve the programs, to enforce it more, and to educate the people who are on welfare, to get them a better education to find jobs

and try to not stay on welfare. I think that if they were trying to reduce the welfare programs, then I would probably go against it or something.

Because, I think there's so many families out there that needs it.

Soua's passionate feelings about welfare emerged in the second focus group (5/5/11) during a heated, cross-cutting (Mutz, 2006) conversation with Andrew:

Andrew: If you are really poor, you just gotta change your mind set. If you think you are rich, you are going to go out there and go and pursue a job that gets you more money.

Soua: But, if you are born into poverty or whatever, you don't have parents that can give you that kind of mindset, how are you supposed to inspire yourself to think that way?

Andrew: You just gotta look around. Trust that you can go out there and do what you want to do and pursue that wealth that you want.

Soua: But, if you are in poverty, and you are surrounded, you can't have access to big opportunities or whatever you want. I don't understand how you're going to just get out one day and have that kind of mindset that you're going to be a millionaire.

Andrew: I don't know if you can become rich, but you can have a better lifestyle than you already have. You can come from a poor to a medium to the above-average, just right before the medium class.

Soua: So, you're saying that if a single mother has ten kids, she has the responsibility to support all ten of them?

Andrew: Yes.

Soua: So, they would have less help from welfare programs, so you're saying that a single mother should have the responsibility to provide for all ten of them kids without any help?

Andrew: Yes.

Soua: I don't know. I think it's a good thing that the government is somewhat involved.

Andrew: If you are old enough to take care of your own life and old enough to have kids, aren't you old enough to take care of your own finances, too?

Soua: I totally want to argue Andrew. Gosh!

Andrew: Well, I'm defending my beliefs and you are defending your beliefs.

Soua: Okay, I have my opinion. Still, how is a single mother supposed to work two jobs and have time for her kids? What if she can't pay the rent?

Soua connected her family's life experiences and her American Government class activity. Further, she felt comfortable enough to bring the topic to a focus group, openly sharing her experiences, feelings, and ideas about welfare with her Hmong classmates. However, the ideas she shared in the focus group about welfare contradicted some of her other thoughts about the "American Dream." Soua argued that everyone in the United States can "do whatever you want, whatever goals and dreams you have, you can achieve." In her conversation with Andrew, Soua implicitly acknowledged that economic differences exist in the United States, but did not verbalize the possibility of economic inequality – that the American Dream may not exist for everyone.

Conclusion

After observing Soua in American Government class and talking with her over the course of the trimester in focus groups and individual interviews, distinct contradictions became evident. First, school and the American Government classroom were sites for Soua's civic and political learning and engagement and she enjoyed social studies education. At the same time, Soua constructed her citizenship identity within a racialized school environment. Second, throughout the term, Soua's citizenship identities fluctuated and shifted, sometimes resulting in tension. At different times, Soua identified as Hmong, American, and Hmong American. Further, sometimes she lacked political agency and efficacy, although she was civically engaged in her school and local communities. Third, on occasion Soua claimed that her civic and political knowledge was meager or forgotten, that she was politically "stupid" or "naive," and that she learned very little about citizenship from her family. However, she shared with me extensive knowledge about the citizenship experiences and processes encountered by members of her family, personal experience with civic and political engagement, and increased content knowledge ascertained in social studies classes.

Although each family played a significant role in how the four focal students in this study negotiated her or his citizenship identity, Soua's family's experiences helped shape her civic identity in a slightly different way. Andrew, Sandy, and Oliver often described political conversations (especially with their fathers) and family events (e.g., going to the voting booth) that helped prepare them for active citizenship. These three students explicitly stated how their family members helped shape their political identities

and attitudes as *current* U.S. citizens. Souza however, articulated various family members' lived experiences as immigrants in the process of *becoming* U.S. citizens, which often included personal and economic struggle and hardship.

Chapter Five – Discussion

The purposes of this ethnographic case study are to: (a) explore how Hmong adolescent students in a 12th-grade American Government class construct their conceptions of citizenship, and (b) investigate the roles of teachers, peers, and curriculum and instruction as Hmong students shape their citizenship identities. The overarching research questions of this study are: *How are Hmong adolescent citizenship identities shaped and negotiated in a 12th-grade American government class? How do Hmong adolescents make sense of being a citizen of the United States?*

Hmong youths' citizenship identities evolved over the course of the spring trimester in Ms. Oakland's 12th-grade American Government classroom. Each participating Hmong youth negotiated her or his citizenship identity as a personal, unique experience. However, each Hmong youth's individual citizenship identity developed in relationship to the citizenship narratives of others, a process described by Lawler (2008): Individual identity is the core that makes a person what she or he is, but social relations are critical to identity production.

This discussion chapter presents a synthesis and analysis of the previous four case study chapters, and conveys deeper meanings around Hmong youths' negotiation of their citizenship identities. Three significant findings emerged in this ethnographic case study and will be explored in this chapter. First, the American Government classroom is a space for civic and political identity construction for Hmong youth. Second, the American Government classroom is not the only active political socialization agent; Hmong youth are negotiating their citizenship identities with others including family members, and in

other venues like youth clubs and cultural activities. Third, Hmong youth are negotiating their citizenship identities in relationship to race, gender, and class.

The American Government Classroom as a Space for Civic and Political Identity Construction

Over the course of one trimester, Ms. Oakland's 12th-grade American Government class influenced Hmong youths' citizenship identity negotiation in several significant ways. In the class, students (a) learned that they can make a difference as citizens by becoming politically and civically involved in the future; (b) obtained substantial declarative civic and political knowledge; (c) experienced civic and political conversations with peers, gained political perspective, and practiced for future experiences in democratic communities; and (d) expanded their understanding of what it means to be a U.S. citizen. Overall, Ms. Oakland's American Government curriculum and instruction prepared students for *Personally Responsible* and *Participatory* citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). At the same time, American Government classroom curriculum and instruction lacked particular aspects critical to preparation for civic and political engagement.

Future civic and political engagement. Findings from the present study parallel Callahan and Obenchain's (2013) research underscoring the importance of social studies curriculum as immigrant youth transition from adolescence into adulthood: Social studies education helped Hmong youth in Ms. Oakland's class develop their political and civic identities. Some of the most notable changes in citizenship identity reported by Hmong students focused on repositioned ideas about civic and political participation and

engagement. Andrew explained that the class widened his political perspective and in the process he realized that he can become more civically and politically involved in his community. Soua said that before taking the class, citizenship to her was about government and economics, while at the conclusion of the class it meant participating and being active in one's community. Sandy summarized her learning during the final focus group when she said, "[Citizenship] is about taking a role and playing a part in society."

Although Ms. Oakland did not situate students' political engagement in the term *responsibility*, Hmong students came away from the class with the understanding that good citizens were participants and actors in the political world around them, reflecting the findings of Conover and Searing (2000) and Lopez et al. (2006). Hmong students' comments about increased civic participation showed that they comprehended the significant nature of political engagement and the responsibilities of citizenship, although Ms. Oakland explicitly emphasized the rights of citizenship over responsibilities during class. At no time over the course of the trimester did Ms. Oakland explicitly tell her students that it was their *responsibility* to be active, engaged, educated citizens, but she conveyed this expectation to them through the use of curricular materials and instructional activities. For example, as a homework assignment, each week students were asked to critically reflect on an article or document that addressed current political issues, such as health care reform, personal identification for voting, and political advertisement campaigns. Students were instructed to question the authors' viewpoints, create connections to previous readings and activities in class, and evaluate the strengths

and weaknesses of the authors' arguments, all skills needed for active, critical, responsible civic engagement.

Increased declarative civic and political knowledge. In addition to her instructional focus on civic and political participation and engagement, Ms. Oakland continuously emphasized to her students the importance of being educated and informed citizens. Ms. Oakland told her American Government students that one "goal in my class is for my students to know a little more than the average student on the street" and that she wanted her students to "make connections that many Americans don't make." When I asked Hmong students what they learned about citizenship from the class, they confirmed Ms. Oakland's messages. For example, Mee (FG3; 6/2/11) described herself as "more knowledgeable now" and Xiong (FG3; 6/2/11) explained "[This class] changed my thinking. Now [I] am more aware and have more understanding. When doing assignments I felt as if I were actually learning how the government system works."

Hmong study participants in Ms. Oakland's class acquired declarative knowledge regarding the U.S. government system. Over the course of the trimester, Ms. Oakland's American Government curriculum concentrated on four units of study: the foundations of government, political participation, the legislature, and the judiciary. When I asked the study participants what they learned about citizenship from their classroom activities, they shared knowledge about voting behaviors, major documents like the Constitution, the political spectrum, rights (especially the right to vote), and freedoms. Overall, this American Government class offered declarative political knowledge to Hmong youth to help prepare them for future civic participation. With the increase in political knowledge,

Hmong youth may also experience higher levels of political efficacy (Gimpel et al., 2003).

Civic and political conversation and perspective. Hmong study participants in Ms. Oakland's class reported enjoying the opportunity to participate in political conversation with peers, and to learn about their classmates' various political perspectives. For example, when I asked participants what activities they enjoyed most in American Government class, they responded: "[I liked] to see what everyone thinks" (Anita; FG2; 5/5/11); and, "[I learned] different point of views [from classmates]" (Mark; FG2; 5/5/11).

Ms. Oakland arranged student seating at tables in such a way as to facilitate discussion and interaction during class sessions. While in the classroom, Ms. Oakland assigned each student to a table group, but when class convened in the media center or in the computer labs, students chose peers with whom they could talk and work. Ms. Oakland made another purpose for her American Government course clear to students from the very first day of class (3/14/11) when she said, "Why we have a class like this...I am going to make you talk to each other." Although mostly unstructured, through classroom discussion, Hmong youth had the opportunity to practice for future experiences in a democratic community: The activities in which they engaged in American Government class offered them occasions to discuss with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, Hmong youth practiced working with others with whom they shared similar political ideas, as well as those with whom they may have disagreed. Through discussion, Ms. Oakland's American Government course helped Hmong youth

shape their participatory citizen identities and engage in preparatory civic and political communities, both potentially facilitating future relationships between the Hmong youth and other citizens (Chapin, 2001; Conover & Searing, 2000; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta, 2001).

A repositioned conception of U.S. citizenship. Hmong students' ideas about the meaning of citizenship changed over the course of the trimester. When I asked students how, if at all, their ideas about citizenship were transformed over the course of the term, Hmong youth focused on new learning around the power one holds as a citizen, the importance of citizenship as membership in a community, and the importance of critical thinking to citizenship behaviors.

As Hmong youth reflected on the meaning of U.S. citizenship, they considered their political identity – their place on the political spectrum. None of the Hmong participants identified themselves with political parties other than the Democrat or Republican: Of the eight students in this study, seven considered themselves liberal or Democrat while only Andrew identified as a Republican. When asked the extent to which their political identities differed from the beginning of the trimester to the end, most of the students described how their political identity did not radically change, but rather was reinforced or empowered via instructional activities. One notable difference was Xiong, who affirmed at the end of the trimester “I am more of a liberal than a conservative now.”

The null curriculum. While Ms. Oakland's curriculum and instruction encouraged future participatory citizenship practices such as voting and conveyed knowledge about the political system, other aspects of democratic citizenship education

were missing from the class. Flinders, Noddings, and Thornton (1986) describe this missing curriculum as the *null curriculum*, the curriculum that schools and educators do not teach (p. 33). Hmong youth in this study shaped their citizenship identities without certain citizenship options, supports, and perspectives.¹⁷ First, students did not have extensive opportunities to examine various forms and practices of citizenship. Civic education programs in the United States focus on different democratic priorities, goals, and strategies, and therefore result in very different types of citizenship preparation and outcomes (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Ms. Oakland conveyed to her students the importance of being participatory adult citizens and of having substantial knowledge about the American government system. However, Ms. Oakland's curriculum and instruction seldom introduced students to or engaged them in existing social movements (e.g., environmental protection), or familiarized students with alternative citizenship models (e.g., multi-national or global citizenship, as described by Myers and Zaman, 2009). Implicit in this instruction is a message that these students are solely U.S. citizens. Expanded citizenship education may have prepared the students for additional citizenship roles and practice beyond a single U.S. nationality. These broader views of citizenship would have more fully prepared students for engagement in an interdependent world.

Second, students were seldom encouraged to question issues of gender, race, U.S. civic and political culture, and economic structures within the formal curriculum of their American Government classroom. For example, issues of gender, race, and class emerged while students investigated the Declaration of Independence, political redistricting, and

¹⁷ Several constraints impacted the null curriculum in Ms. Oakland's classroom including time (the term was only one trimester in length), and multiple school district and state graduation standards.

slavery arguments within the Constitutional Convention, but classroom curriculum approached these topics historically. Students in the American Government class had little structured opportunity to consider gender, race, and class in a contemporary sense – to address, connect, and question current problems in U.S. culture and society.¹⁸ As another example, students were encouraged to independently investigate various current events of personal interest in American Government class as they reviewed legislative websites and annotated news articles. However, a formal structure for in-class analysis, investigation, and deep, critical thinking about contemporary issues was largely absent from instructional activities. Hmong youth in this study would have had better practice for democratic life if they experienced more high-quality discussion (here I define high quality discussion as *structured discussion methods designed to elicit multiple positions*) and investigation into current issues facing U.S. society within the American Government classroom (Hess, 2009).

Third, curriculum and instruction within Ms. Oakland’s course offered little support for concurrent, active political and civic engagement outside of the classroom. Although Hmong study participants learned about the importance of civic and political engagement during the American Government course, they were not expected to concurrently perform civic or political activities in their lives outside the classroom while they studied American Government at CSHS. Classroom learning supported practice for civic and political life after high school but class curriculum did not require immediate political or civic engagement (e.g., service learning).

¹⁸ Students *may* have had experience critiquing economic inequities in their other 12th-grade social studies class, economics.

In their 2004 study, Westheimer and Kahne described how *Justice-oriented* citizens *analyzed* the relationship between social, economic, and political affairs, and partnered their inquiry with *action* on their findings. Hmong youth in the present study were neither asked nor assigned to transfer their classroom learning to a political arena outside of the American Government classroom, although some of the students understood that action was a necessary aspect of participatory citizenship. For example, Oliver argued in the second focus group (5/26/11) that teachers at his school should: “Make students go up and actually do [participation], and people could organize and teachers would help them. And you know, maybe perform rallies.” The extent to which study participants will connect their present classroom experiences and learning with future political and civic action is unclear, and an important topic for further investigation.

Fourth, curriculum and instruction within the American Government class included certain pedagogical problems. For example, Hmong students described particular classroom activities as uncomfortable and/or boring (e.g., Constitutional Convention activity; bill cycle assignment; note taking; weekly annotated articles; and extensive, independent computer work, especially on the Thomas government site). Most of the assignments that Hmong students reported as uninteresting were activities requiring students to work independently -- unsurprising based on previous research that demonstrates the significance Hmong culture and tradition places on group interaction rather than independent work (Chiang, 2000; Keown-Bomar, 2004; Koltyk, 1998; Xiong & Detzner, 2005). Further, some students left the American Government class holding

inaccurate, inconsistent, and/or inadequate knowledge about U.S. civic and political culture, as reflected in the following comments during our final conversations at the end of the term: “The Supreme Court basically regulates the country” (Mee; FG3; 6/12/11); and “Without the Constitution, we’ll have a corrupt government” (Xiong; FG3; 6/12/11).

These statements about U.S. civic and political culture are particularly problematic due to the fact that these youth were on the verge of graduating from high school and receiving full citizenship responsibilities: This class was the last official civic and/or political education opportunity for these students before they left high school to become “legal” adult citizens. However, the fact that these students were graduating with inaccurate civic and political knowledge was not solely the fault of Ms. Oakland, but rather indicative of instructional and curricular irregularities and problems throughout the students’ educational program.

Fifth, not all voices were heard in the American Government classroom. None of the students in Ms. Oakland’s course had much input into the development of a democratic classroom community structure; Ms. Oakland created and instructed the course without asking for current students’ opinions toward daily aspects of classroom life, perhaps due to the extensive demands placed upon her by district and state educational standards. Although Andrew often contributed verbally in small group study as well as during whole class instruction, rarely were the other seven Hmong participants heard while full class discussion of course content occurred (Ms. Oakland rarely called on *any* individual students who did not indicate their willingness to speak out in class). Often then, their perspectives were missing from the American Government classroom

community. Like the youth in Lee's (2000) study, students in the Ms. Oakland's class rarely had the chance to hear their Hmong peers' civic and political viewpoints, while Hmong youth experienced inadequate opportunities to openly share their voice and perspective. A diverse exchange of civic and political ideas, critical to democratic life, was at times absent in Ms. Oakland's classroom.

In addition, while all American Government students participated in discussion with each other on a daily basis, these conversations often occurred as a result of more general, unstructured talk around curricular themes or topics. Utilization of concrete, prepared discussion formats (e.g., Structured Academic Controversy, Fishbowl, Socratic Seminar) could have scaffolded and facilitated these important conversations in ways that led to deliberative, in-depth discussion of issues critical to life in a democracy. As noted above, study participants enjoyed and desired opportunities for discussion, debate, simulation, and interaction with peers in class; implementing more intentional discussion activities would allow students to practice democratic discussion and deliberation in the classroom, under the guidance of their social studies teacher. Table 8 presents ways that the American Government course supported Hmong youths as they negotiated their citizenship identities, as well as aspects of civic and political learning missing from curriculum and instruction within the class.

Implications of the missing curriculum. As described above, significant civic and political elements were missing from the American Government class, which carries implications for Hmong students (and their peers) as they shape and negotiate their citizenship identities: Hmong youth had little opportunity to explore important issues

related to gender, race, and class; received little support for civic and political engagement concurrent with the course; and seldom had public voice in the classroom.

As such, Hmong participants’ experiences in the American Government class reflect to a certain degree, previous literature describing how some students, many of whom are immigrants (Fridkin et al., 2006; Hahn, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006), receive inadequate opportunities to practice needed civic participation skills (i.e.,

Table 8

The 12th-Grade American Government Classroom as a Site of Hmong Youths’ Citizenship Negotiation

The 12 th -Grade American Government Classroom as a Site of Hmong Youths’ Citizenship Negotiation	
Influences and Opportunities	Missing Elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learned that they can be more politically involved and were encouraged to engage in future political and civic activity. • Supported students’ acquisition of declarative knowledge regarding judicial, executive, and legislative branches of government; political processes and thought; major political parties; and political behavior like voting and debating. • Offered students opportunities to engage in political and civic conversation with peers. Students practiced for future civic and political relationships within democratic communities. • Expanded student understanding of what it means to be responsible U.S. citizens; played a role in shaping citizenship identities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various types of citizenship less obvious through curriculum and instruction. • Students offered little formal opportunity to question issues of gender, race, class, U.S. civic and political culture, and economic structures. • Little support for active political and civic engagement, concurrent with American Government class. • Pedagogical problems: some classroom activities were uncomfortable or uninteresting; some students left the class with misunderstandings about the U.S. governmental system. • Not all voices were heard; students had little input into the structure of the class or creation of a democratic classroom community.

structured discussion and critical analysis with their peers; speaking in a public forum) in their civics and government classes. Although Hmong study participants may not be experiencing certain aspects of civic and political practice in their American Government

class, they may be finding the missing elements described above in other places and with other people.

Citizenship Negotiation Outside of the American Government Classroom

Hmong adolescents in Ms. Oakland's American Government class shaped and negotiated their citizenship identities with their peers and teacher. However, through individual and focus group interviews, it became quite clear from participants' responses that the American Government classroom was only one source of political socialization. The students described the significant role that family members played as they shaped their citizenship identities, but also mentioned their participation in clubs, groups, employment positions, and other activities in and outside of school, as sources of civic and political engagement and activity. Family, clubs, athletics, and other activities offered them opportunities for civic and political conversation, communication, learning, action, and engagement.

The family. After school, the family is the most significant source of political socialization for all youth (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 1997; Camp, 2003; Flanagan & Gallay, 1995; Jankowski, 1992; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Niemi & Jennings, 1991; Ramakrishnan & Espenshade, 2001). In Hmong culture, clan, kinship, and family are integral to personal status and integrity, with the family unit providing security and acting as a foundation for learning and belonging (Keown-Bomar, 2004; Koltyk, 1998). For Hmong youth in this study, family played a dual role as an agent of political socialization and as the foundation of Hmong cultural values. The youth reported varying degrees of political interaction with their family members, but it was clear from participants'

comments in focus group and individual interviews, that family members contributed significantly to their negotiation of citizenship. Hmong study participants described various ways their families demonstrated civic and political dis/engagement and participation.

In addition to *demonstrating* and *modeling*, the family also offered Hmong youth *opportunities* to actively practice and engage in democratic life. The students described how family members, including parents, siblings, and extended relatives, contributed to their political identity via various forms of civic and political engagement. For example, Sandy reported going to the voting booth with her parents at least one time as a child; political conversation occurred within immediate and extended family groups; family members attended and participated in civic activities together (e.g., the Hmong New Year and the Fourth of July Tournament); and as reported by the Hmong students, the process of becoming legal U.S. citizens was often a family event. Anita (FG1; 4/14/11) for example shared how, “My mom took [the test] and it was like a month she was studying for it and just took it and then my brother took it.”

Clubs, groups, and other activities. In addition to the family as a political socialization agent, Hmong youth negotiated their citizenship identities via participation in clubs, groups, and other activities, all of which may play a role in their future political engagement (Conover & Searing, 2000; Davila & Mora, 2007). All study participants described personal roles in at least one school activity (e.g., athletic team, student council), civic and political group (e.g., local Hmong Community Center), volunteer service (e.g., neighborhood clothing shelf), and/or employment position (e.g., grocery

store cashier). Activities in and outside school helped Hmong youth make personal connections with and contributions to U.S. political, civic, economic, and social culture as they negotiated their citizenship identities. It was in these clubs, groups, and other activities that Hmong youth had the opportunity to actively engage in U.S. civic and political culture with peers from a variety of social and cultural backgrounds. However, issues of race, gender, and class surrounded Hmong youths as they negotiated their citizenship identities.

Negotiating Citizenship Identity in Relationship to Race, Gender, and Class

Whether in American Government class, in CSHS, or with family and friends outside of school, Hmong youth negotiated their citizenship identities in relationship to race, gender, and class. Hmong participants' citizenship narratives were written in connection to their peers at CSHS, with race, gender, and class as influential components of the students' evolving citizenship story.

Citizenship identity and racialization. Hmong youth in this study are situated as a racialized minority as they construct their citizenship identities. As described previously, Soua experienced a racist event in the CSHS bathroom, Mark encountered prejudice at his previous school, and all Hmong youth in this study faced the racially-motivated song on the local radio station. Within the American Government classroom, issues of race occurred as part of students' relationships with each other and between Ms. Oakland and her pupils. Ms. Oakland and the Hmong participants approached race and racism in a variety of ways, including through avoidance, complacency, confrontation, conversation, denial, discomfort, justification, and questioning/contestation.

At certain times, Ms. Oakland and the Hmong youth *denied* racism or showed *discomfort* at the prospect of the concept of race entering into the American Government classroom discourse. For example, although Hmong participants discussed multiple racial experiences with me, Ms. Oakland seemed unaware of and/or uncomfortable with the degree to which her students encountered racialization. In our first interview (2/24/11), Ms. Oakland acknowledged that some students would disagree with her depiction of racial relations at CSHS, but did not verbalize the words race, racism, or prejudice when she said:

One of the things that I like about [CSHS] is that our students, it is a really diverse mix of kids, [they] are pretty cool with whatever, because you just don't see, and some students would argue with that, but I've seen other places where it's not quite as fluid. The people are familiar with a range of people who may be very different than themselves. And, I see very little problem that anyone has in dealing with anyone else.

Her description of school life compared to student reports denied the extent to which Hmong youth dealt with racism on a daily basis, and in multiple segments of their lives. Ms. Oakland further denied the issue of race during the Constitutional Convention activity, when Andrew told her that the slavery question was very uncomfortable for him and his group mates overtly refused to defend the expansion of slavery. Ms. Oakland was aware that slavery, a racial issue, was difficult for her students to defend, but she did not realize the extent to which her students were troubled by the assignment content. Thus she did not alter the activity in order to relieve her students of the uncomfortable learning

situation. Hmong youth also denied the reality of racism. Soua's reaction to the bathroom event reflects Rubin's (2007) *Complacent* youth, students who do not know about or acknowledge social injustices. In this case, it was Soua herself who experienced racialized comments from schoolmates, but she denied the overt racism by refuting the behavior.

Hmong youth addressed racism in additional ways. For example, Sandy attempted to *justify* the DJ's racist song lyrics when she said, "Maybe he was joking." In addition to justifying certain racist events, Sandy also openly *questioned* how race affected Hmong people in focus groups with her Hmong peers. Soua justified the racist bathroom comments when she said, "I knew it wasn't mean," and the prejudiced "30 Hmongs in the House" lyrics by stating, "They [radio station] are not trying to hurt anybody." Mark *conversed* openly with his peers in the focus groups about his family's experiences with racism, and he described how his family *removed* themselves from the racialization and prejudice they experienced in their previous city by moving their residence to an entirely new state.

Very seldom did Hmong youth report that they aggressively *confronted* racism. Soua said that she did nothing to challenge the DJ's actions, but rather continued to listen to and attend dances at school with music provided by the same radio station. Some Hmong participants stated they wanted to take future action, but with the exception of individual and focus group interview discussions and family conversations on race, did not report any additional specific ways that they confronted racism in their classroom, school, family, or civic communities.

Jane Bolgatz (2005) and Mica Pollock (2004) argue that race conversations are highly significant to learning in the classroom, but that teachers often do not want or do not know how to engage in these difficult discussions. Unfortunately, Ms. Oakland's relative silence on race (in the interview with me *and* in her classroom with her pupils) resulted in her students receiving little guidance as they navigated racialization in their daily lives. As Hmong youth prepared for adult, democratic citizenship, they learned little in American Government class regarding ways to talk about race, and address prejudice and discrimination on a personal, societal, or civic level.

Tension: School as a place of belonging and a place of racialization. Reflecting studies by Lee (2002), Olneck (2003), and Zhou (1997), Hmong youth in the present study are negotiating and constructing their citizenship identities within unequal racial constructs in school. However, although Hmong youth personally experienced racism in American Government class and at CSHS, they highlighted the importance of their relationships in school with peers from multiple backgrounds. For Hmong youth, tension existed between school as a site of civic and political exclusion versus a site of full inclusion. Although Hmong youth in this study experienced racism in school, they strongly affirmed that interacting and learning with other students at CSHS made them feel particularly American. For example, Oliver stated, "I feel American is being able to go to school." Further, the Hmong youth considered school a place where all the students were considered equal Americans as explained by Mark, "[being American is] like going to school and having the same education that other people does," and Soua, "Through education, I feel like America is for all different kinds of races."

Citizenship identity and gender. Hmong youth negotiated their citizenship identities vis-à-vis gender, both as members of Hmong culture and as students in Ms. Oakland's classroom. For example, when asked in a focus group about norms and traditions in Hmong culture, Sandy and Andrew participated in a relatively cross-cutting conversation about gender roles in the Hmong community. Although Sandy questioned gender roles within the Hmong community, no other study participants challenged the positioning of males and females within or outside Hmong culture. Conversely, in both a focus group and an interview, Andrew defended male-dominated Hmong gender roles as he understood them, giving his uncle credit for his knowledge.

Most Hmong youth reported that it was male family members (especially fathers, but also uncles), who made the most significant impact on their political ideas, philosophies, and engagement. Study participants described how they often discussed politics, went to the voting booth, and attended civic meetings with their fathers. For example, Anita (FG1; 4/6/11) explained that, "I know that my dad will make me vote, since he did for my sisters and brothers too when they turned 18. He tells them to vote for the person he wants them to." And Mark (FG1; 4/6/11) stated clearly that, "I learned about being a citizen from my dad."

It is not unusual for Hmong fathers to act as the political leader within the family. In the United States, although Hmong women are acquiring more education and sometimes take leadership roles in the household and within their wider cultural communities, most Hmong families continue to practice traditional forms of leadership and decision-making (Koltyk, 1998). Hmong family life and social structure is generally

patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal; the oldest male in the home is usually considered the head of the household and ultimately responsible for leading the family. Fathers are considered authority figures while mothers nurture the family unit. Hmong boys are groomed early for adult leadership roles within their immediate and extended families and traditionally, men and boys are trained for political decision-making. Although Hmong women and men may play different roles within family and kinship networks, the division along gender lines does not make all women powerless or submissive, especially as women become more educated (Keown-Bomar, 2004, p. 111). However, Hmong youth in this study shared that female parents were less civically and politically active than various male family members. Gender roles then, may impact the degree to which Hmong youth actively engage in adult civic and political life.

In addition to navigating gender issues within Hmong culture, Hmong youth in Ms. Oakland's classroom witnessed homophobia exhibited by a classmate. Early in the trimester (4/5/2011), Martha, an African American female, announced to the entire class that she was attending prom with another female student (this pupil was not a member of Ms. Oakland's first period American Government course). From across the room Donny asked Martha, "you going to be holding hands?" Although Martha told Donny to "shut up" twice, neither Ms. Oakland, nor any other students challenged Donny's comments. Homophobia emerged, but went largely unaddressed in the class, leaving Hmong youth (and their peers) to deconstruct, navigate, and interpret human rights for themselves: I am not aware of any conversations that took place between the students about this event either within or outside the American Government classroom. Rather than challenging

the degradation of human rights for gays and lesbians in U.S. civic and political culture, the silence resulted in acquiescence to homophobic prejudice. Mica Pollack (2004) states, “When we notice racial patterns and say nothing publicly to dismantle them, we often help ensure these very patterns’ reproduction” (p. 209).

Citizenship identity and class. In addition to race and gender, Hmong youth shaped and negotiated their citizenship identities in relation to class. Over the course of this study, Hmong youth discussed U.S. citizenship through the lens of dual economic narratives: (a) America as the land of opportunity, as the *American Dream*; and (b) America, the land of socioeconomic struggle and poverty.

The American Dream. The American Dream is embodied in a set of ideals that include freedom, and the opportunity for prosperity, success and upward social mobility through hard work (Flores-Gonzalez, 2002; Maira, 2009). Included in this ethos is an assumption that everyone in the United States has the chance to succeed, regardless of social class and ethnic background. Like the *Embracing* students in Marien’s (2006) study, when asked about what it meant to be American, Hmong study participants’ responses often reflected aspects of the American Dream, especially the opportunity to become wealthy, to achieve, and to enjoy the “good life.”

Of all the study participants, it was Andrew perhaps who most deeply embraced the American Dream, and shared these ideas with his peers and me during individual and focus group interviews. However, Andrew was not the only Hmong student to consider the American Dream part of U.S. citizenship; over the trimester, several variations on the American Dream emerged in my conversations with study participants reflecting ideas of

unlimited freedom, opportunity, wealth and prosperity, upward social mobility, consumerism, and life enjoyment.

Limitless freedom and opportunity. Several Hmong youths' conceptions of U.S. citizenship included notions of unlimited freedom and opportunity, like the Hmong youth in Tsai et al. (2002). For example, Andrew clearly conveyed his ideas about the boundless nature of U.S. citizenship when he said, "To me there is no limit because this is America and the land of opportunity, we have a lot of options and have a lot of things that we can do" (FG1; 4/14/11). In her first interview (3/24/11), Sandy explained that her conception of Americanism meant the "freedom to do what you want, about obtaining your dreams and goals, [and] just achieving more." Similarly, Soua (INT1; 4/19/11) said that being American meant, "to have freedom and just do whatever you want. Like the sky is the limit, whatever dreams and goals you have, you can achieve." And Anita exclaimed, "being a [U.S] citizen, you can do whatever you want" (FG1; 4/14/11). Oliver, Mark, and Andrew incorporated an employment component into this theme. For them, working (Oliver; INT1; 4/5/11); having a job (Mark; INT1; 4/7/11); and having the freedom to work (Andrew; INT1; 4/21/11), reflected economic liberties inherent in American opportunity and citizenship.

Wealth, prosperity, and upward social mobility. Andrew was the only study participant who openly stated the desire to become rich; this was perhaps due to economic realities that other study participants faced, and will be discussed in the following section. As Andrew talked about wealth and prosperity, he spoke in terms of binary-like relationships between wealth, race, and political party affiliation. Further,

Andrew shared his opinions about individual opportunity for wealth enhancement, believing that everyone could become rich, regardless of socioeconomic standing. Andrew's ideas reflected *Embracing* youth in Marien's (2006) study and conveyed a Horatio Alger "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" philosophy.

Consumerism and the good life. Maira (2009) describes how the ethos of the American Dream involves the illusion that U.S. lifestyles are filled with fun, relaxation, and consumption. These themes were echoed by three of the Hmong youth as they described their sense of U.S. citizenship. Mark reported that he felt particularly American when shopping in stores and "just enjoying life" (INT1; 4/7/11), while Oliver said being American included relaxing, reading books, watching movies, and "eating and sleeping a lot" (INT1; 4/5/11). Soua said that one of her favorite things to do was "to go shopping when I do have money" (FG1; 4/5/11).

Socioeconomic struggle and poverty. The competing socioeconomic discourse among the study participants was that of financial struggle and poverty, echoing youth in Marien's (2006) *Ambivalence* cluster.¹⁹ Tension arose in the second focus group (5/5/10) when Andrew shared his ideas about the welfare system and personal reliance on the government. Mark (with a skeptical smile on his face) then asked Andrew, "What if you *are* really poor?" Soua followed at length, further bringing socioeconomic inequity into the conversation. Soua was not the only Hmong study participant to broach the subject of poverty, although she was the only one to describe her personal experience with economic hardship. For example, on the Political Engagement Survey, Mark identified

¹⁹ It should be noted that no participants in the present study reflected Marien's (2006) *Rejecting* youth – those who did not believe or agree with mainstream American cultural values and ideas, or Rubin's (2007, 2012) *Discouraged* youth – those who described life in the United States as unfair and unalterable.

poverty as one of the issues he most wanted to understand better. In the Political Ideology Essay assignment, Mee argued that the U.S. government should provide health care and education programs to “kids who grow up in poverty,” while Anita identified herself as a Democrat because she thought the Democratic Party better addressed hardships that single women faced due to “financial instability.”

Professional Development for Critical Citizenship Education

Ms. Oakland dedicated her teaching career to students from diverse backgrounds. Yet as shown in this study, her professional practice lacked some key components for teaching diverse learners for civic and political participation and engagement in a democracy. I argue that extended, ongoing professional development is needed to help novice and veteran social studies teachers alike, address critical issues around race, gender, and class in their classrooms and schools. A lack of specialized professional development around diversity and other critical issues is not unusual as reflected in Cruz, Ellerbrock, Vasquez, and Howes’ (2014) statement that, “explicitly educating teacher educators for teaching diversity is still a rare occurrence in scholarship about ethnic, racial, cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity” (p. ix).

In addition to Bolgatz (2005) and Pollock (2004) as noted above, other scholars offer instructional strategies, techniques, and approaches to help educators address critical issues in the classroom, including race, which could be conveyed through professional development activities and initiatives. DeJaeghere (2009) furthered McLaughlin’s (1992) maximal and minimal citizenship education approaches by proposing a *Critical Citizenship Education* framework. DeJaeghere argued that educators

must consider how youths' citizenship identities are constructed through pedagogy, content, and relations in the classroom, and presented four pedagogical approaches important for implementing Critical Citizenship Education (p. 89). Critical Citizenship Education offers teaching and learning strategies that help young people practice the democratic goals of equality and justice in pluralistic, multicultural societies, while at the same time addressing the civic realities of exclusion and discrimination. DeJaeghere's (2009) four approaches incorporate: (a) including marginalized voices and knowledge in the curriculum; (b) learning and enacting double-consciousness -- examining one's perspectives about citizenship identity through the eyes of another; (c) engaging others in civic relations and spaces through intercultural learning experiences; and (d) utilizing strategies for collective social action (p. 90). For example, DeJaeghere suggests that teachers and students could inquire about and critique how colonialism and imperialism shaped and continues to influence mainstream knowledge about citizens and rights. Leonardo (2013) presents educators with multiple race frameworks, in order to describe cultural factors that result in racialization and racial hierarchies. Feagin (2014) describes the role of education in current antiracist strategies and solutions. In *Talking Diversity with Teachers and Teacher Educators: Exercises and Critical Conversations Across the Curriculum*, Cruz et al. (2014) convey various instructional techniques to be presented in college of education classrooms and professional development workshops, followed by implementation in PreK-12 classrooms (including social studies). Stevenson (2014) offers teachers and school leaders strategies for promoting racial literacy in schools.

Conclusion

Three significant findings were explored in this chapter. First, Ms. Oakland's American Government classroom was a space for civic and political identity construction for Hmong youth. Second, the American Government classroom was not the only active political socialization agent; Hmong youth shaped and negotiated their citizenship identities with others including family members, and in other venues like youth clubs and cultural activities. Third, Hmong youth negotiated their citizenship identities in relationship to race, gender, and class. However, as Hmong youth prepared for adult, democratic citizenship, they learned little in American Government class regarding ways to navigate racialization, gender issues, and economic challenge in their personal lives, or through civic and political engagement at various levels of community. Ongoing professional development is needed to help social studies educators address critical issues around race, gender, and class in their classrooms and schools, especially for immigrant students.

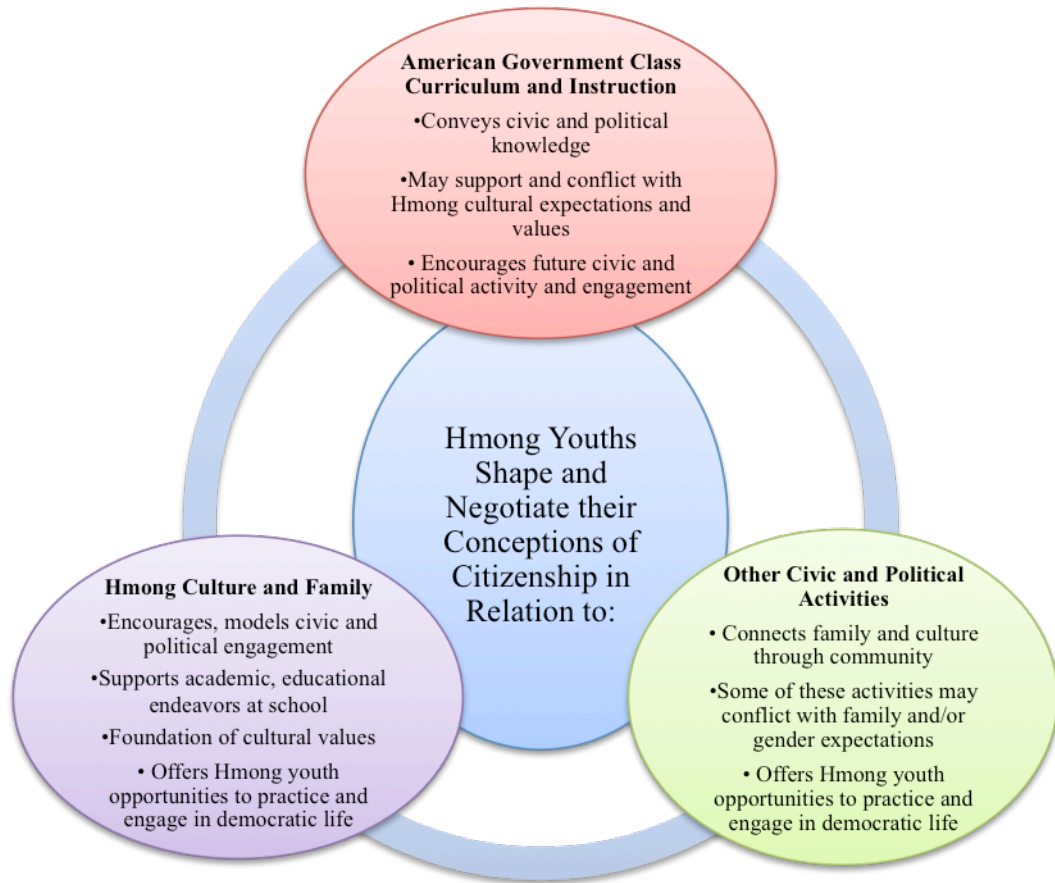
Chapter Six -- Conclusion

Citizenship negotiation for Hmong youth in this study reflected a complex, inter-related process. Hmong youth are making sense of their citizenship identities through an interconnected relationship, between knowledge and content learned in the American Government classroom, Hmong culture and family life, and participation in civic and political activities (see Figure 3). All three aspects contribute to Hmong youths' civic identity cooperatively, but also potentially in tension with each other. Other political socialization agents (e.g., the media, technology) may also influence Hmong youth as they negotiate their citizenship identities, but study participants did not extensively discuss these aspects.

American Government Class Curriculum and Instruction

American Government class was an important site of citizenship negotiation: It acted as a space where Hmong youths gained significant amounts of declarative civic and political knowledge. Messages that Hmong youths received in their American Government classroom also conveyed and encouraged post-high school civic and political participation. Hmong study participants reported that they felt most like U.S. citizens when in school and working with their peers. However, the American Government classroom and CSHS were also spaces of racialization, where Hmong youth experienced prejudice and racism. The relationship between school as a space of citizenship, "Americanism," and belonging versus school as a site of racialization reflects one of the most distinct tensions to emerge in this study.

Figure 3. Hmong Youths' Citizenship Identity Negotiation – Cooperation and Tension



Hmong Culture and Family

Potential conflict between Hmong culture, traditions and values, and “mainstream” U.S. culture and values as transmitted in school, emerge as a second tension in this study. School success is important to Hmong families, and Hmong parents encourage and support their children’s academic endeavors at school. At the same time, cultural values (like the importance of family and gender role expectations) are a prominent part of Hmong youths’ upbringing. For example, in American Government class, Hmong youth learned that civic and political participation is key to democratic life for all U.S. citizens, both female and male. However, some aspects of an engaged, U.S.

civic life promote individual endeavors and choice (e.g., voting as independent action and determination), which may challenge Hmong cultural values connected to group decision-making and cooperation, and leadership by gender. Although no study participants reported cultural conflict between the messages they learned in American Government class and those received from their Hmong ethnic heritage, previous studies show that mainstream cultural values and expectations of U.S. society can conflict with the character of various societies around the world, including Hmong culture, and these conflicts can be played out in U.S. schools (Conover, Crewe, & Searing, 1991; Hui, 1988; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Olneck, 2003). I include this cautionary note in light of findings from previous research addressing cultural differences.

Other Civic and Political Activities

Activities, athletics, clubs, and other civic and political groups offered Hmong youth opportunities to engage themselves in various current communities. Some of these activities connect Hmong youth to a more pluralistic U.S. citizenship experience (e.g., the CSHS football team), some groups are strongly linked to Hmong culture (e.g., Hmong Community Center), while other clubs combine both Hmong culture and U.S. civic engagement (e.g., Hmong Youth Leadership group). In a sense, these civic and political activities act as the community-based, public liaison between Hmong culture and family, and civic and political education in school.

Because the American Government class did not explicitly demand and/or facilitate current, active civic and political participation, the extent to which study participants will connect their present classroom experiences and learning with future

political and civic action is unclear. Hmong youth in this study understood the message received in American Government class: It is each citizen's responsibility to be civically and politically engaged in a democracy. However, tension existed between the American Government class as a site for learning civic and political knowledge, versus it being a site of civic and political knowledge acquisition *and* engagement and action.

Implications of the Present Study

This study contributes to theory, practice, and policy in various ways.

Implications for further theory and research. Although the present study elucidates the experiences of eight Hmong youths as they negotiated their civic identities, further questions for future research emerged from this dissertation. First, this study investigated Hmong youth's citizenship negotiation to the end of their senior year in high school. I asked myself often, to what degree will study participants engage in civic and political endeavors after high school? What types of endeavors will their civic and political engagement include? Did the amount of civic and political knowledge learned in a one-trimester senior-level social studies class connect in any way to *actual* civic and political practice after the completion of high school? Second, what contributions would certain curricular and instructional changes make to Hmong youths' citizenship identity negotiation? For example, how would the inclusion of more structured discussion techniques facilitate Hmong youths' civic and political knowledge acquisition and active engagement? And related, what application, if any, is there to other immigrant groups? To what extent does the inclusion of structured discussion better prepare immigrant youth for civic life? Third, what curricular and instructional strategies would encourage

additional Hmong voice in the social studies classroom, while at the same time respectfully reflect Hmong cultural values? Fourth, it is clear from this study that racialization remains a significant problem for culturally diverse youth. How can this experience help create future social studies classrooms that are welcoming, safe sites for all students *and* ready social studies educators to acknowledge and discuss race issues? Further, how can these students be better prepared to contest racism in their everyday lives through social studies education (e.g., *Citizenship for Justice and Change*)? And fifth, how can the social studies classroom facilitate and compliment Hmong culture and U.S. citizenship in combination?

Implications for civic and government education and instructional practice.

From this study emerge several suggestions for civic and government education, curriculum, and instruction. Although these ideas come from the present study with Hmong youth, these strategies have the potential to support civic and government education and instructional practice with various students in the social studies classroom. For example, teachers could (a) structure discussion activities so that they explicitly engage youth in critical, deliberative discussion about civic and political issues related to their lives, rather than allow students to drive their own discussion or worse, repetitively work independently, void of conversation; (b) combine service learning, or some other civic and/or political action component with social studies education, to allow students to practice civic and political endeavors while learning about social studies content in the classroom; (c) offer social studies education that promotes *Citizenship for Justice and Change* (citizens analyze relations between social, economic, and political affairs at the

local, state, national, and global levels, and then take action on their findings to enact justice-based change); (d) connect instruction to students' daily lives -- interconnect curriculum and instruction, and students' interests outside of the classroom to prepare students for citizenship in a way that supports their interests and strengths; and (e) be aware of the null curriculum -- what students do *not* learn in social studies class may be as important as the direct, explicit curriculum.

I reiterate one additional proposal for instructional practice. Ms. Oakland was a committed, caring social studies instructor, dedicated to teaching students from diverse backgrounds. She was an experienced teacher after instructing for 12 years. Further, she personally chose to work with students from multiple backgrounds and acquired additional training in order to help her diverse learners succeed in her social studies classrooms. Nevertheless, she was unaware of the extent to which her students experienced racialization on a daily basis. Further, she seldom broached sensitive contemporary issues around race and gender within her American Government classroom. It is critical that social studies teachers are cognizant of and understand the many significant issues faced by their students, and allow their pupils to raise these topics in social studies courses. I suggest that social studies educators seek to include sensitive issues in their classrooms, in order to prepare students for racialized and gendered experiences occurring inside and outside of the classroom. For example, Jane Bolgatz (2005) and Mica Pollock (2004) offer several ways educators can address issues of race in the classroom and school. Addressing racism in the 12th-grade American Government classroom is particularly important because this is a space (and possibly the last time in

PreK-12 education) where students will have the opportunity to prepare for their democratic lives outside of school. Experiencing discussions and other instructional activities related to race in the American Government classroom gives students practice and tools for the racial experiences and conversations they will have in their everyday lives as U.S. citizens. Ongoing professional development is needed to help social studies educators address critical issues around race, gender, and class in their classrooms and schools.

Implications for policy. Study findings hold implications for educational policy at local, state, and national levels. Social studies is a significant part of contemporary U.S. education because of the role the discipline plays in preparing young people for civic and political life. As such, in order to offer exceptional citizenship education, educational policy at local, state, and national levels should not reduce, but rather expand and extend opportunities for social studies education. Political socialization research suggests that fewer educational experiences during childhood and adolescence influence civic and political participation in adulthood (Callahan, Muller, & Schiller, 2008; Chapin, 2001; Glanville, 1999). If Hmong youth increased their civic and political knowledge and felt more equipped for citizenship after one trimester of 12th-grade American Government class, how much more prepared will they be after participating in additional social studies courses?

The present study demonstrates how important it is for students from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to practice *together*, within the social studies classroom community, for their present and future lives as democratic citizens. At

present, some educational policy allows and/or encourages particular students to be removed from the classroom (e.g., pullout programs). I caution educators to be aware of pedagogical practices that permanently remove or disconnect certain students from the social studies classroom. Hmong participants in this study felt more engaged and included in U.S. civic and political life when discussing, studying, and learning about American Government and politics together with diverse peers.

Conclusion

Social studies curriculum and instruction matters and impacts U.S. democratic citizenship. Although Hmong participants experienced racialization inside and outside of American Government class and school, Hmong youth reported that school is the place where they feel most “American,” because school, and the social studies classroom in particular, were sites where they had the opportunity to talk, work, and learn with classmates from diverse cultural backgrounds, rather than studying in isolation. American Government class acted as a site for Hmong youth in this study to experience citizenship with others, and a place where they reported feeling part of the American experience. It is the role of the social studies educator to continually strive for curriculum and instruction that better prepares students for civic and political life. It is my hope that this dissertation will help social studies educators to better prepare Hmong youth and all of their students, for democratic citizenship.

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Appendix A. Classroom Observation Guide

Classroom Observation Guide	
Date:	Class Period:
1. Describe the topic the class session. What are students learning about in class today?	
a. What aspects of the topic does the teacher emphasize?	
b. What is the teacher’s perspective toward the topic of study?	
2. What pedagogical methods are used in class today (e.g. TPS, lecture)?	
a. What instructional materials are used in class today?	
3. What do students <i>do</i> during the class (e.g. discussion with other student, move around room)?	
a. Which students appear to be engaged? (diagram the classroom space)	
4. To what extent did any aspect of what it means to be an “American” citizen arise in class?	
a. To what extent did any aspect of what it means to be a Hmong citizen arise in class?	
5. To what extent was the topic of today’s class session connected to citizenship?	
6. What type of citizenship is being conveyed in class, if any at all?	
7. To what extent is the lesson connected to students’ lives?	
8. Additional observations.	

Appendix B. Citizenship Focus Group Survey

Citizenship Focus Group Survey

Thank you for participating in the Citizenship Focus Group Survey. Please answer the following questions before we start our focus group.

1. What is your current age?

- 15 16 17 18
- 19 20 Other _____
(please write in age)

2. Are you male or female? male female

3. How often do you speak English at home?
 Never Sometimes Always or almost always

4. What grades do you most often receive in school?
 A's B's C's D's

5. In what country were you born? Check one:

- I was born in the United States.
- I was born in another country. _____ (write in country name)

How old were you when you arrived in the United States? _____ (write in age)
 I don't know.

6. In what country was your mother born? Check one:

- She was born in the United States.
- She was born in another country. _____ (write in country name)
 I don't know.

7. In what country was your father born? Check one:

- He was born in the United States.
- He was born in another country. _____ (write in country name)
 I don't know.

8. Have you participated in the following organizations?

<i>Check the appropriate box in each row.</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>
a. A student council/student government.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. A youth organization affiliated with a political party or union	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. A group which prepares a school newspaper.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. An environmental organization.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. A United Nations or UNESCO Club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. A student exchange or school partnership program.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. A human rights organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h. A group conducting [voluntary] activities to help the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. A charity collecting money for a social cause	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j. Boy or Girl Scouts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k. A cultural association [organization] based on ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l. A computer club.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m. An art, music, or drama organization.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. A sports organization or team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o. An organization sponsored by a religious group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
p. Other (please write in) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. If you have not participated in any of the organizations in question 8, please describe why.

10. Think about all the organizations listed in question 8 above. How often do you attend meetings or activities for any or all of these organizations?

Almost every day (4 or more days a week)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Several days (1 to 3 days a week)	<input type="checkbox"/>
A few times each month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never or almost never	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Interviews can permit us to discover someone else's perspective and experience. I am interested to learn more about your individual citizenship experiences. Be assured that all of your interview responses would be confidential. Would you be willing to be interviewed in more detail about your citizenship experiences? If so, please indicate below.

No, I am not interested in participating in individual interviews.

Yes, I am interested in participating in approximately two individual interviews.

If yes, please share your first and last name _____.

Thank you very much for your help with the survey.

Appendix C. Hmong Focus Group #1 Protocol

Instructions: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for a focus group. As you know, I am interested in finding out how you think about certain aspects of citizenship. I will be audio-taping our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than trying to write while you are talking. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any point during the focus group interview.

1. Please tell us your name and something you enjoy doing in your free time. [warm-up]
2. Our focus today is on citizenship. Write some words and/or draw some pictures that represent citizenship to you. [Citizenship Identities (civic and cultural identity)]
3. What does it mean to you to be American? What does it mean to you to be Hmong?

Follow-up: If someone were to ask you if you were Hmong or American, what would you say? [Citizenship Identities (civic and cultural identity)]

4. Are there particular ways in which you feel American? Hmong?

Probe: To what extent do you feel like you belong to United States society and culture? [Civic and Political Membership and Participation]

5. How have you learned about citizenship?

Probe: What do you learn about being a citizen? What kind of things have you learned about being a citizen?

Probe: What classroom or school experiences impacted the way that you think about citizenship?

Probe: From whom have you learned about citizenship?

Probe: What does your teacher do that helps shape your ideas about citizenship? [Learning about Citizenship Inside and Outside of the Classroom; Sources of Learning and Ideas About Citizenship]

Probe: How have you learned about citizenship outside of school? What citizenship lessons have you learned outside of school?

6. Do you see yourselves voting as adults? Why or why not?

Probe: What other civic and political activities do you see yourselves doing or not doing in the future? [Civic and Political Membership and Participation]
7. I am going to play a song for you that was played on the radio. What does this mean to you? What do you think about this? How does this relate to you as a citizen?
8. Do you think that some people in our society have more rights than others?
9. Is there anything else you want to say about citizenship issues? Is there anything that I forgot to ask? Thank you for participating.

Appendix D. Hmong Focus Group #2 Protocol

Instructions: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for a focus group. As you know, I am interested in finding out how you think about certain aspects of citizenship. I will be audio-taping our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than trying to write while you are talking. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any point during the focus group interview.

Today we will start our focus group with a general question and then we will focus on your government class experiences.

1. Our focus today is on your classroom experiences learning about citizenship. Please reflect on your government classroom learning experiences. Write some words and/or draw some pictures that represent some of the most important citizenship activities from your class. Make a brainstorm list of all the things that you can remember learning in this trimester so far.
2. What are the most important things you have learned in government class? Rank these things on your sheets (1= most important). Then we will talk about your lists.

Probe: What activities in government class were particularly meaningful to you? *(discuss as many activities as the students share)*

Probe: How did this activity change your thinking about citizenship?

Probe: Were there times that you felt particularly engaged in the government classroom? Explain.

3. What are the least important things you have learned in government class?

Probe: Why was a particular activity insignificant to you? *(discuss as many activities as the students share)*

Probe: Were there times that you felt particularly disengaged from what was going on in the government classroom? Explain.

4. Please tell me about _____ *(an activity that I observed in class about which I have questions)*. What if anything did you learn about citizenship from this activity? *(Repeat this question as necessary)*

Probe: Natural rights – what natural rights should all people enjoy? Who is qualified to have a say in government? Why?

Probe: How have your political thoughts and ideas changed at all from the beginning of the trimester to the present?

Probe: Political parties – Is your political attachment/ideas different that you thought they were earlier in the trimester? Have your own beliefs changed at all? Why? To what extent? What have you learned about the political parties? What surprises you?

Probe: Where do you place yourselves on the political spectrum? Why? Is this any different from your family members? If so, does your family accept political differences?

5. What things/events have occurred outside of school that have impacted the way you think about your citizenship?
6. Is there anything else you want to say about citizenship issues? Is there anything that I forgot to ask? Thank you for participating.

Appendix E. Hmong Focus Group #3 Protocol

Instructions: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for a focus group. As you know, I am interested in finding out how you think about certain aspects of citizenship. I will be audio-taping our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than trying to write while you are talking. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any point during the focus group interview.

Today we will start our focus group with a general question and then we will focus on your government class experiences and your ideas about citizenship.

1. Our focus today is on your government class experiences and your ideas about citizenship. Please reflect on your government classroom learning experiences. Write some words and/or draw some pictures that represent some of the most important citizenship activities from your class. Try to be as specific as possible. Brainstorm a list of all the things you remember learning this trimester so far. Rank these items, 1 being the most important to you.

2. Over the course of the trimester, what are the most important things you have learned in government class?

Probe: Why activities in government class were particularly meaningful to you? (*discuss as many activities as the students share*)

Probe: How did this activity change your thinking about citizenship?

Probe: Were there times that you felt particularly engaged in the government classroom? Explain.

3. What are the least important things you have learned in government class?

Probe: Why was a particular activity insignificant to you? (*discuss as many activities as the students share*)

Probe: Were there times that you felt particularly disengaged from what was going on in the government classroom? Explain. Were there any things that you really did not enjoy? Why?

4. Please tell me about _____ (*an activity that I observed in class about which I have questions*). What if anything did you learn about citizenship from this activity? (*Repeat this question as necessary*)

Probe: Why did you choose the landmark Supreme Court case that you did?

5. What actions or behaviors have you participated in that make you feel like a citizen? [Civic and Political Membership and Participation]
6. Think about your ideas about citizenship from the beginning of the trimester to the present. How, if at all have your ideas about citizenship changed?
7. Please reflect on the past trimester of government class. What does citizenship mean to you now after a trimester of civics education class? [Citizenship Identities (civic and cultural identity)]
8. What things/events have occurred outside of school that have impacted the way you think about your citizenship?
9. Is there anything else you want to say about citizenship issues? Is there anything that I forgot to ask? Thank you for participating.

Appendix F. Individual Student Interview #1 Protocol

Instructions: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for an individual interview. As you know, I am interested in finding out how you think about certain aspects of citizenship. I will be audio-taping our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than trying to write while you are talking. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any point during the interview.

1. Thank you for participating in this interview. Today we will focus on what citizenship means to you. What does it mean to be a citizen? Write some words and/or draw some pictures that represent citizenship to you. [Citizenship Identities (civic and cultural identity)]

2. What does it mean to you to be American? What does it mean to you to be Hmong?

Follow-up: If someone were to ask you if you were Hmong or American, what would you say? [Citizenship Identities (civic and cultural identity)]

3. In what ways do you feel American? Hmong?

Probe: To what extent do you feel like you belong to United States society and culture? Do you feel outside of U.S. society and culture in any way? [Civic and Political Membership and Participation]

4. How have you learned about citizenship?

Probe: What do you learn about being a citizen?

Probe: What classroom or school experiences impacted the way that you think about citizenship?

Probe: From whom have you learned about citizenship?

Probe: What does your teacher do that helps shape your ideas about citizenship? [Learning about Citizenship Inside and Outside of the Classroom; Sources of Learning and Ideas About Citizenship]

5. In the focus group you said _____, tell me more about that. (*Probe for greater understanding of the students' ideas and experiences around citizenship.*)

Probe: Ask students about Hmong fairytales regarding women and men.

6. What things/events have occurred outside of school that have impacted the way you think about your citizenship?

Probe: Let's talk about your participation in organizations and activities. Explain any leadership roles you have taken and why you participate.

7. Is there anything else you want to say about citizenship issues? Is there anything that I forgot to ask? Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix G. Individual Student Interview #2 Protocol

Instructions: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for an individual interview. As you know, I am interested in finding out how you think about certain aspects of citizenship. I will be audio-taping our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than trying to write while you are talking. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any point during the interview. Today we will focus on your government class experiences and your ideas about citizenship.

1. Our focus today is on your government class experiences and your ideas about citizenship. Please tell me about _____ (*an activity that I observed in class about which I have questions*). What if anything did you learn about citizenship from this activity? (*Repeat this question as necessary*)

Probe: Review lists the students created in the second focus group.

2. Think about your ideas about citizenship from the beginning of the trimester to the present. How, if at all have your ideas about citizenship changed?
3. How do you envision being civically and politically engaged in the future?
4. Are there ways your school, teachers, and/or government class curriculum could better prepare you for civic and political participation in the future? (ask each of these as a separate question; divide these out)
5. What things/events have occurred outside of school that have impacted the way you think about your citizenship?

Probe: After reading the Mee Moua article, tell me what you think about this story. What does it mean to you? How does this information impact your (civic) life?

Probe: Ask political engagement questions from American Government class.

Probe: Review Bill Project. Why did you choose this topic? What did you learn? To what extent do you think that you will become more involved with this topic after this class?

Probe: Review Congress Person Project. Why did you choose this person? What impact, if any, has this person had on you?

Probe: Tell me about what you have learned in this class that encourages you to determine your own political ideas.

6. Is there anything else you want to say about citizenship issues? Is there anything that I forgot to ask? Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix H. American Government Teacher Interview #1 Protocol

Instructions: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for an individual interview. As you know, I am interested in finding out how you think about certain aspects of citizenship. I will be audio-taping our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than trying to write while you are talking. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any point during the interview. Today we will focus on your government class experiences and your ideas about citizenship.

1. Thank you for participating...a few demographic questions before we continue.
[warm-up]
 - a. How many years have you been teaching? How many years have you been teaching at this school? How many years have you been a social studies teacher? Have you instructed any other disciplines?
 - b. What racial or ethnic group do you consider yourself to belong?
 - c. What was the subject of your undergraduate degree(s); graduate degree(s)?
 - d. *If appropriate* - Where were you born? When did you come to this country? Can you tell me a little about your immigration experiences?
2. What does it mean to you to be a citizen? [Citizenship Identities (civic and cultural identity)]
3. Thinking about the students you teach, what do you think the purpose is for learning government? What do you see as your purpose for teaching government? Is there anything else?
4. What do you want your students to take from this class regarding citizenship?

Probe: What do you think is the most important thing youth need to know about citizenship?

Probe: What messages, if any, about 'what it means to be a citizen' do you want your students to learn while they are in government class?
5. How do you make decisions about instructional content and materials for your government class?

Probe: How do you make decisions about seating arrangements and student grouping?

6. You teach an ethnically diverse class and teach in an ethnically diverse school. To what extent does this affect how you teach about citizenship?

Probe: Because of the diversity, what attempts, if any do you make to key in on notions of citizenship that students bring to class?

Probe: What role, if any, does diversity play when you think about your government instruction?

7. Is there anything else you want to say about citizenship issues or teaching government? Is there anything that I forgot to ask? Thank you for participating in this interview.

Appendix I. American Government Teacher Interview #2 Protocol

Instructions: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today for an individual interview. As you know, I am interested in finding out how you think about certain aspects of citizenship. I will be audio-taping our conversation so that I can focus on what you are saying rather than trying to write while you are talking. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any point during the interview. Today we will focus on your government class activities, experiences, and ideas about citizenship.

1. First I would like to talk with you about instructional units connected to government and citizenship. Please tell me about _____ (a specific classroom activity or event that I observed in class, and connected to government and citizenship, about which I have questions). (Repeat this question as necessary)

Units:

- a) Foundations of Government
- b) Political Ideology and Participation
- c) Legislative Branch
- d) Judiciary Mini-unit

Probe: How did you choose this unit of study?

Probe: How did you choose the curriculum, instruction, and assessments for this unit?

Probe: What helps you determine what you will teach?

Probe: To what extent do you think about preparation for citizenship when instructing, preparing, and assessing these units? Explain.

2. Thinking about the past trimester, what do you see as some of the most meaningful instructional activities, ideas, and moments connected to government and citizenship, for your students?
3. What role, if any, do you think you played as students shaped their civic identities?

Probe: What role, if any, do you think you played as Hmong students shaped their civic identities?

4. This American Government class is one trimester long. What pros and cons do you see with this format/amount of instructional time?

Probe: What would you do differently if you had more or less class time (separate) to teach American Government?

Probe: Has this format changed at all since you started instructing American Government?

Probe: Do other teachers follow the same curriculum, instruction, and assessments? Explain.

Probe: What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum as presented to students?

5. How was this class similar or different to other American Government classes that you have taught? Why do you think this?
6. Is there anything else you want to say about citizenship issues and teaching citizenship? Is there anything that I forgot to ask? Thank you for participating.

Appendix J. Template for Document Analysis (adapted from Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994)

1. Name or type of document:

2. Document No.:

3. Date received:

4. Date of document:

5. Event or issue with which document is associated:

6. Descriptive document
 Evaluative document
 Other type of document:

7.

Page #	Key Words/Concepts	Comments and Relationship to Research Questions

8. Brief summary of contents:

9. Significance or purpose of document:

10. Is there anything contradictory about the document?

Yes:

No

11. Salient Questions/Issues to consider:

12. Additional comments, reflections, and/or issues:

Appendix K. Student Participation Survey

Dear Citizenship Study Participant,

Thank you very much for your participation in my study. I feel so thankful for your help and ideas. I am learning so much from you. Now, I need your feedback about our upcoming focus groups. I want to conduct focus groups when the majority of you can participate, at times that work best for you. Please vote for your preference for how we will conduct the second and third focus groups. Circle the number of your choice.

Choice #1 – I prefer to participate in a focus group after school from 2:05-3:05 on Wednesday May 4 and Wednesday June 1, 2011.

Choice #2 – I prefer to participate in focus groups during Intervention time (10:15-10:45) on Tuesday, May 3, Thursday May 5, Tuesday May 31, and Thursday June 2, 2011.

Choice #3 – I have other ideas about how to conduct the focus groups (write in):

If you have any other comments about any part of the Hmong Citizenship Study, please write those ideas below.

Thank you for your feedback. Please return to Annette when you are done.

**Appendix L. Consent for Parents of Youths Involved in Observed Government
Class, English Language**

***Consent for Parents of Youths
Involved in Hmong Citizenship Project***

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Annette Simmons and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. I instructed 8th-grade social studies in the Twin Cities for twelve years. I want to better understand how Hmong youth think about citizenship and about their experiences in government class. Ms. Oakland has allowed me to observe in and audiotape her classroom during spring trimester 2011. Your son or daughter is part of this class.

The primary purpose of the project is to find out how Hmong youth define their citizenship in the United States. In addition to observing and audio-taping the class, I invite your son or daughter to participate in three small group interviews, with the possibility of participating in two individual interviews. During these interviews I will ask questions about citizenship and civic education such as: *How have you learned about citizenship?* and, *What does citizenship mean to you?* Small group and individual interviews will be conducted at times that are mutually agreeable to the teacher and students. Each interview should last no more than an hour.

I would like to audiotape the interviews, as well as the government classroom activities on a daily basis, so that I can devote my full attention to what the youth and teacher are saying. If the students would like the tape recorder turned off at any point during the interviews, they should let me know and I will turn it off. If the students would like to discontinue participation in the interviews at any point in time, they are free to do so. My advisor, Professor Patricia Avery, and I are the only people who will have access to the tapes.

The information that I collect will be part of my dissertation project. In any publications that result from this project, your child's name will not be used. There are no known benefits or risks associated with your son or daughter participating in this project.

Your decision regarding whether or not to allow your son or daughter to participate in this project will not affect your current or future relationships with me, your relationship with the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, or with the University of Minnesota. Further, participation in this project will not affect your child's grades in the government class or any classes at his/her school, and will have no impact on his/her relationship with his/her teachers or the school. Please feel free to ask me any questions you have about the dissertation activities. You may contact me at:

Annette Simmons, Doctoral Candidate: (612) 280-6542, mill0071@umn.edu or my advisor Professor Patricia Avery at: (612) 625-5802, avery001@umn.edu.

Please know that this form, with your signature, must be returned to me if your son/daughter is to participate in the research project.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk with someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D-528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455; telephone 612-625-1650.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have read the information about the Hmong Adolescent Citizenship dissertation project, and have decided TO ALLOW my son/daughter to participate in activities with Annette Simmons.

Parent or Guardian _____
Date

Name of Daughter/Son: _____

Appendix M. Consent for Parents of Youths Involved in Observed Government Class, Hmong Language

***Consent for Parents of Youths
Involved in Hmong Citizenship Project***

Kev tso cai los ntawm niam txiv ua muaj me nyuam nyob rau haud lub Hmoob Pej xeeem Ntsuam Xyuas

Nyob zoo txog cov niam txiv los sis tus saib xyuas,

Kuv lub npe hu ua Annette Simmons thiab kuv yog ib tug kawm daim (qib) doctoral nyob rau haud lub College of Education and Human Development nyob tom tsev kawm ntawv qib siab University of Minnesota. Kuv qhia ntawv rau qib yim tau kaum ob (12) lub xyoo nyob rau lub Nroog Ntxaib. Kuv xav paub ntxiv txog seb cov tub hluas thiab ntxhais hluas xav li cas txog txoj kev ua pej xeeem thiab lawv qhov kev kawm nyob rau chad ntawm. Ms. Oakland tso cai rau kuv mus saib thiab kaw lawv cov lus rau nws chad thaum lub caij ntuj no xyoo 2011. Koj tus ntxhais los sis tus tub yeej zwm npe kawm nyob rau chav yuav soj ntsuam ntawd.

Lub hom phiaj rau qhov no yog los nrhiav ntsuam xyuas cov tub hluas thiab ntxhais hluas seb lawv xav lis cas txog txoj kev ua pej xeeem Asmesliskas (American) nyob rau teb chaws Asmesliskas (American). Ntxiv rau ntawm qhov kuv yuav mus saib thiab kaw lawv cov lus, kuv xav caw koj tus tub los sis ntxhais tuaj sib tham ua ke nyob rau peb pawg, los sis kuv yuav nrog lawv tham ib leeg ob zaug. Thaum kuv nrog lawv tham kuv yuav nug lawv txog txoj kev ua pej xeeem thiab kev kawm ntawv ntawm lawv chad ib yam li no: Koj kawm li cas txog ua pej xeeem Asmesliskas? Thiab, kev ua pej xeeem Asmesliskas no txhais li cas rau koj? Thaum peb sib tham nrog lawv peb yuav nrhiav ib lub caij kom zoo rau tus xib fwb thiab cov tub ntxhais kawm ntawv. Qhov sij hawm sib tham no yuav tsis mus ntev tshaj li ib teev.

Kuv xav kaw lawv cov lus thiab kaw cov lus tham nyob rau haud lawv chad kom kuv hnov zoo txog cov tub ntxhais kawm ntawv thiab tus xib fwb lawm cov lus. Yog cov tub ntxhais xav kom kuv nres lub kaw lus lawv yuav tsum qhia kuv ces kuv mam muab nres. Yog tus tub ntxhais twg tsis xav nrog kuv tham lawm, lawv muaj txoj cai tawm mus. Kuv tus Xib fwb (Professor) Patricia Avery thiab kuv yog ob tug neeg uas tuav daim kaw lus no xwb.

Cov lus ua kuv yuav kaw cia no yog los rau kuv sau kuv daim ntawv rau tsev kawm ntawv. Yog cov ntawv no yuav luam tawm peb yuav tsis siv koj tus me nyuam lub npe. Yeej tsis muaj ab tsis phem yuav los cuam tshuam tau yog koj tus tub ntxhais koom nrog peb muab kom tau qhov hom phiaj no.

Koj txoj cai cia koj tus tub ntxhais nrog peb tham muab qhov hom phiaj no yog ib qho tsis txuam wb txoj kev raug zoo tam sim nov los sis yad tom ntej, thiab tsis txuam rau lub College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, los sis nrog rau lub tsev kawm ntawv qib siab University of Minnesota. Thiab, cov dej num no yuav tsis txuam nrog koj tus me nyuam cov nqe kawm ntawv rau hauv nws chad los sis tsis txuam nrog nws cov xib fwb thiab tsev kawm ntawv. Thov hu rau kuv yog koj muab lus nug. Koj hu tuaj rau kuv: Annette Simmons, Doctoral Candidate: (612) 280-6542, mill0071@umn.edu los sis kuv tus Xib fwb (Professor) Patricia Avery at: (612) 625-5802, avery001@umn.edu.

Thov koj paub hais tias yog koj tso cai rau koj tus tub/ntxhais nrog peb muab lub hom phiaj no, thov xyuam koj lub npe rau daim ntawv no es muab rau koj tus me nyuam nqa tuaj rau kuv.

Yog koj muaj lus nug ntxiv hais txog qhov peb ua no thiab xav nrog ib tug neeg txawv tham, koj sau ntawv rau Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D-528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455; los sis hu tuaj rau: 612-625-1650.

Ua koj tsaug rau lub sij haum thiab koj kev xam pom.

Kuv tau nyeem daim ntawv no hais txog cov tub ntxhais uas koom muab lub pej xeem hom phiaj no thiab kuv zoo siab tso cai rau kuv tus tub/ntxhais koom ua ke nrog Annette Simmons.

Niam Txiv Xyuam NpeDate / Hnub tim

Tus ntxhais/Tub lub npe: _____

Appendix N. Assent Form for Youth Participating in the Hmong Citizenship Project

Assent for Youths Involved in Hmong Citizenship Project

Dear Student:

My name is Annette Simmons and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. I instructed 8th-grade social studies in the Twin Cities for twelve years. I want to better understand how Hmong youth think about citizenship and about their experiences in government class. Ms. Oakland has allowed me to observe in and audiotape your government classroom during spring trimester 2011.

The primary purpose of the project is to find out how Hmong youth define their citizenship in the United States. In addition to observing and audio-taping the class, I invite you to participate in three small group interviews, with the possibility of participating in two individual interviews. During these interviews I will ask questions about citizenship and civic education such as: *How have you learned about citizenship?* and, *What does citizenship mean to you?* Small group and individual interviews will be conducted at times that are mutually agreeable to you and your government teacher. Each interview should last no more than an hour.

I would like to audiotape the interviews, as well as the government classroom activities on a daily basis, so that I can devote my full attention to what you and your teacher are saying. If you would like the tape recorder turned off at any point during the interviews, you should let me know and I will turn it off. If you would like to discontinue participation in the interviews at any point in time, you are free to do so. My advisor, Professor Patricia Avery, and I are the only people who will have access to the tapes.

The information that I collect will be part of my dissertation project. In any publications that result from this project, your name will not be used. There are no known benefits or risks associated with your participation in this project.

Your decision regarding whether or not to participate in this project will not affect your current or future relationships with me, your relationship with the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, or with the University of Minnesota. Further, participation in this project will not affect your grades in the government class or any classes at your school, and will have no impact on your relationship with your teachers or the school. Please feel free to ask me any questions you have about the dissertation activities. You may contact me at: Annette Simmons, Doctoral Candidate: (612) 280-6542, mill0071@umn.edu or my advisor Professor Patricia Avery at: (612) 625-5802, avery001@umn.edu.

Please know that this form, with your signature, must be returned to me if you are to participate in the research project.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk with someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D-528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455; telephone 612-625-1650.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Statement of Assent

I agree to participate in the trimester-long Hmong Citizenship Research Project with several of my peers. I have been informed of the purpose of the research and the confidentiality of any statements that I may make. I have read all of the above information and have asked and received answers to all of my questions.

Name of Student: _____
(Printed)

Name of Student: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Interviewer: _____
(Printed)

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

**Appendix O. Consent Form for Adolescents Ages 18+, Participating in the Hmong
Citizenship Project**

***Consent for Youths Ages 18+
Involved in Hmong Citizenship Project***

Dear Student:

My name is Annette Simmons and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. I instructed 8th-grade social studies in the Twin Cities for twelve years. I want to better understand how Hmong youth think about citizenship and about their experiences in government class. Ms. Oakland has allowed me to observe in and audiotape your government classroom during spring trimester 2011.

The primary purpose of the project is to find out how Hmong youth define their citizenship in the United States. In addition to observing and audio-taping the class, I invite you to participate in three small group interviews, with the possibility of participating in two individual interviews. During these interviews I will ask questions about citizenship and civic education such as: *How have you learned about citizenship?* and, *What does citizenship mean to you?* Small group and individual interviews will be conducted at times that are mutually agreeable to you and your government teacher. Each interview should last no more than an hour.

I would like to audiotape the interviews, as well as the government classroom activities on a daily basis, so that I can devote my full attention to what you and your teacher are saying. If you would like the tape recorder turned off at any point during the interviews, you should let me know and I will turn it off. If you would like to discontinue participation in the interviews at any point in time, you are free to do so. My advisor, Professor Patricia Avery, and I are the only people who will have access to the tapes.

The information that I collect will be part of my dissertation project. In any publications that result from this project, your name will not be used. There are no known benefits or risks associated with your participation in this project.

Your decision regarding whether or not to participate in this project will not affect your current or future relationships with me, your relationship with the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, or with the University of Minnesota. Further, participation in this project will not affect your grades in the government class or any classes at your school, and will have no impact on your relationship with your teachers or the school. Please feel free to ask me any questions you have about the dissertation activities. You may contact me at: Annette Simmons, Doctoral Candidate: (612) 280-6542, mill0071@umn.edu or my advisor Professor Patricia Avery at: (612) 625-5802, avery001@umn.edu.

Please know that this form, with your signature, must be returned to me if you are to participate in the research project.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk with someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D-528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455; telephone 612-625-1650.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Statement of Consent

I agree to participate in the trimester-long Hmong Citizenship Research Project with several of my peers. I have been informed of the purpose of the research and the confidentiality of any statements that I may make. I have read all of the above information and have asked and received answers to all of my questions.

Name of Student: _____
(Printed)

Name of Student: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Interviewer: _____
(Printed)

Interviewer: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

Appendix P. Teacher Consent Form

Consent for Teacher Involved in Hmong Citizenship Project

Dear Kathryn Oakland,

My name is Annette Simmons and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. I instructed 8th-grade social studies in the Twin Cities for twelve years. I want to better understand how Hmong youth think about citizenship and about their experiences in government class. I ask you to allow me to observe in and audiotape your first period government classroom during third trimester 2011.

The primary purpose of the project is to find out how Hmong youth define their citizenship in the United States. In addition to observing and audio-taping the class, I will invite your students to participate in three small group interviews, with the possibility of participating in two additional individual interviews. I will also invite you to participate in two formal interviews. During these interviews I will ask questions about citizenship and civic education such as: *How have you learned about citizenship?* and, *What does citizenship mean to you?* Small group and individual interviews will be conducted at times that are mutually agreeable to you and your civics students. Each interview should last no more than an hour.

I would like to audiotape the interviews, as well as the government classroom activities on a daily basis, so that I can devote my full attention to what you and your students are saying. If you would like the tape recorder turned off at any point during the interviews or classroom observations, you should let me know and I will turn it off. If you would like to discontinue participation in the interviews or classroom observations at any point in time, you are free to do so. My advisor, Professor Patricia Avery, and I are the only people who will have access to the tapes.

The information that I collect will be part of my dissertation project. In any publications that result from this project, your name will not be used. There are no known benefits or risks associated with your participation in this project.

Your decision regarding whether or not to participate in this project will not affect your current or future relationships with me, your relationship with the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota, or with the University of Minnesota. Please feel free to ask me any questions you have about the dissertation activities. You may contact me at: Annette Simmons, Doctoral Candidate: (612) 280-6542, mill0071@umn.edu or my advisor Professor Patricia Avery at: (612) 625-5802, avery001@umn.edu.

Please know that this form, with your signature, must be returned to me if you are to participate in the research project.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk with someone other than the researcher, you may contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D-528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street, SE, Minneapolis, MN, 55455; telephone 612-625-1650.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have read the information about Hmong Adolescent Citizenship Dissertation Project, and have decided to participate in the project with Annette Simmons.

Teacher Name

Date

Appendix Q. Information Sheet for Non-Hmong Student Participants and their Parents/Guardians

Information Sheet for Non-Hmong Students and Their Parents/Guardians Hmong Adolescent Conceptions of Citizenship

My name is Annette Simmons and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. I instructed 8th-grade social studies in the Twin Cities for twelve years. I want to better understand how Hmong youth think about citizenship and about their experiences in government class. In order to do so, Ms. Oakland has allowed me to observe in and audiotape your government classroom during spring trimester 2011.

The primary purpose of the project is to find out how Hmong youth define their citizenship in the United States. I will audiotape the government classroom activities on a daily basis, so that I can devote my full attention to what some of your classmates and your teacher are saying. However, because you are in the class, your voice may also be recorded during the course of the trimester.

The recordings and transcripts from these classroom observations will be kept private. In any published report of the observations, you will be given a pseudonym (fake name) and there will be no inclusion of information that would make it possible to identify you personally. Interview tapes and transcripts will be coded and kept private and secure. The only people who will have access to the recordings and transcripts are Annette M. Simmons and Dr. Patricia G. Avery (my advisor).

In addition to Hmong youth, I invite non-Hmong students to participate fully in this dissertation project. Please contact me if you are interested in participating in focus groups, a written survey, and/or interviews about your experiences with citizenship in the United States. If you are interested, you will need to sign an assent or consent form, and if you are a minor, your parents or guardians will also need to give written permission for you to participate in the research activities.

Contact and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Annette M. Simmons. You may ask any questions you have at any time by contacting me at 166 Peik Hall, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; (612) 280.6542; mill0071@umn.edu. If you have questions about the nature of this study, you may contact my advisor, Dr. Patricia G. Avery, 170 Peik Hall, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455; (612) 625-5802; avery001@umn.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, contact Research Subjects Advocate line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, (612) 625-1650.