Civic Identity and Transnationalism in Rural Minnesota

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Abstract

This embedded case study was conducted in two racial and culturally diverse seventh grade Civics classrooms taught by the same teacher at a small town high school in rural Minnesota. Beginning in the 1990s, the high school and community experienced a rapid demographic change due to immigration. This study examined how young people from various cultural backgrounds (Bosnian, Latino, Vietnamese, and White) living in the town construct and negotiate their civic identity. Data were collected over the course of five months, from October 2013 through February 2014. I utilized qualitative research methods, including interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, with the purpose to investigate how the curriculum, instruction, classroom climate, social interactions, family, and cultural backgrounds factor into how youth living in a rural community conceptualize their civic identity. Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1988) ecological model of human development, transnationalism (Ong, 1999) and imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) form the framework that guides this study.

Significant finding include: First, the students' opportunities for civic engagement vary. While the rural community and school is a safe, welcoming space, the White majority students have more support and encouragement from peers, teachers, and families to participate in school and community activities than the immigrant minority students. Second, the students have unequal experiences in the Civics classroom. White, male students are most likely to participate in large group discussions, and immigrant youth are more silenced. Furthermore, the curriculum and instruction of the Civics classroom enforces a nationalistic, U.S.-centric perspective that marginalizes immigrant

and minority youth. Third, for immigrant students, language use was an important factor in feeling American and feeling their heritage culture. Fourth, students' experiences indicate that attachment to homeland may be maintained in second-generation youth despite not having physically visited the country of their cultural heritage. This study demonstrates that the political socialization of youth is a complex process, but it is an important evolving process that must be dissected, for it offers insight of how future citizens are prepared for living and participating in a pluralistic, multicultural democracy and global society.

Table of Contents

Chapter Title	Page Numbers
Acknowledgments	i
Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature	18
Chapter Three: Methodology	55
Chapter Four: Being American, Being Bosnian	79
Chapter Five: Being Latino and American	109
Chapter Six: “I Am Vietnamese.”	146
Chapter Seven: Discussion	168
Chapter Eight: Conclusion	209
References	219
Appendix A: Student Questionnaire	249
Appendix B: Interview Protocol Time 1	251
Appendix C: Interview Protocol Time 2	254
Appendix D: Interview Protocol Time 3	256
Appendix E: Classroom Observation Guide	259

List of Tables

Title	Page Number
Table 1. List of Social Studies Subjects by Grade Level	61
Table 2. Classroom Demographics	64
Table 3. Focal Students	66
Table 4. Community and School Participation and Engagement	188

List of Figures

Title	Page Number
Figure 1. Diagram of Embedded Case Boundaries	57

Chapter One: Introduction

Background

I was raised in a small town in rural Minnesota, a town surrounded by rolling farm hills, groves of trees, and a plethora of lakes. The first sights upon entering the town are the grain elevator and water tower. In the town there are two large Lutheran churches, a general convenience store, and a main street comprised of a bank, a post office, a drugstore, a restaurant, and a few antique shops. This town, like other small towns, reflects an idyllic image of rural America. When thinking of the ambiance of such towns, words such as *historic*, *quaint*, and *charming* come to mind. Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion* public radio show has celebrated the image of Lutheran, small-town ways of life in the American heartland. They are places where good people live with strong morals. However, small towns also carry negative connotations and are sometimes considered less picturesque. For example, the author Sinclair Lewis in his book *Main Street* (1920) portrays the narrowness of small-town life in its rigid demand for conformity, high levels of gossip, and lack of intellectual concern. In sum, depending on one's perspective, small towns may conjure both positive and negative images.

Small towns are also frequently depicted as linguistically, culturally, racially, and ethnically homogeneous (Lay, 2012). Garrison Keillor's images of rural towns exhibit representations of White social and moral values. Put another way, there is a "symbolic association of small towns and rurality with whiteness" (Leitner, 2012, p. 829). However, for many small rural towns, this representation is not true; towns are continuously changing due to migrations of groups of people. For example, in some towns in

Minnesota, along with native-born citizens, there are refugees who fled persecution and civil war in Somalia, Cambodia, and the Sudan, and migrants from Mexico and Central America. These small towns have become locations where the lives of multiple people intersect. They are places where people from the United States and other parts of the world, with differing social, cultural, and racial identities, interests, and contrasting socioeconomic positions come together (Leitner, 2012).

My initial research interest for this dissertation study was sparked when I first heard that a neighboring town, Lilydale[1], similar to my hometown in size (fewer than 3,000 people) and cultural history (majority of people with Norwegian and German descent) had gained a more ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse population. Lilydale had opened a meat processing plant that attracted individuals seeking jobs from multiple countries including Bosnia, Somalia, Vietnam, Guatemala, and Mexico. Beginning in the 1990s, hundreds of immigrants and refugees had arrived in Lilydale to live permanently, changing the face and demographics of the town. Currently, there are multiple spoken languages and immigrant-owned small businesses. For example, on Lilydale's main street, there is a Mexican market and taqueria restaurant; next to the grain elevator, there is a Halal meat store that sells food acceptable for Islamic dietary guidelines. As the school in Lilydale became more diverse, it dramatically expanded its English language program. Reflecting on my own upbringing in a culturally and ethnically homogenous community, I was curious to learn how these changes impacted the lives of youth living in Lilydale; specifically, I was most interested in youth between

[1] Personal identifiers including the name of the community, school, teacher, and students are pseudonyms.

the ages of 12 and 18. I was eager to explore their experiences learning and understanding citizenship and how young people in rural Minnesota living in this cultural diverse context conceptualize citizenship and their civic identity.

Changing Demographics

The U.S. immigrant population is growing. At the national level, the population of people born outside of the United States increased from 19,767,316 to 31,107,889 between 1990 and 2000, representing a change of 57.4 percent, and grew from 31,107,889 to 40,377,860 (29.8 percent) between 2000 and 2011 (Migration Policy Institute, 2013). As a state, Minnesota's population became more diverse between 2000 and 2010; the population of people born outside of the United States changed from 260,463 to 388,839, representing a change of 49.3 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In 2011, 7.3 percent of Minnesota's total population was comprised of individuals born outside of the United States, compared to 5.3 percent in 2000 and 2.6 percent in 1990 (Migration Policy Institute, 2013). In 2011, the state placed 22nd in the nation for the highest percentage of non-U.S. born residents (Minnesota Compass, 2013). Hispanics represent the fasting growing group. There were nearly 107,000 more Hispanic residents in Minnesota in 2010 than there were ten years ago — a jump of 74 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Overall, immigrants from Latin America and Asia, followed by immigrants from East Africa, comprise the largest proportion of Minnesota's non-U.S. born population (Minnesota Compass, 2013).

Small, rural Minnesota towns are becoming more racially diverse. Twelve rural counties have experienced increased populations between 1990 and 2010 due to growth

in their minority populations (Census, 2010), and anecdotal and demographic studies suggest that these are likely to be immigrants (Guntzel, 2011). Most immigrants settle in urban centers, however, increasing levels of immigrants are migrating to rural areas (Lay, 2012). In rural Minnesota, the highest concentrations of individuals born outside of the United States reside in the Southern and Western regions of the state, where Latinos, East Africans, and Southeast Asians are working in poultry processing, meatpacking, and other large agricultural operations (Minneapolis Foundation, 2010). Industry officials have argued that they had to hire non-U.S. born individuals because native-born Americans did not want to work in difficult conditions with low wages (Grey & Woodrick, 2005). Some non-U.S. born individuals also desired to move because they perceived rural areas to be safer and more affordable, to have better housing, and to offer better opportunities for their children (Dalla, Ellis, & Cramer, 2005). Once social networks were established, other non-U.S. born individuals followed, creating a rise of the minority population (Lay, 2012). In addition, due to migration, rural school districts have experienced a significant growth in the number of students representing a wide spectrum of national, racial, and ethnic backgrounds (Nathan, 2006).

There are social and economic effects of immigration. First, the demographic changes have the potential to bring benefits; for example, individuals encounter opportunities for cultural exchange and learning. Second, an increased population of immigrants yields economic opportunities for local businesses and increases the numbers at local schools. Nevertheless, demographic changes also present challenges due to possible misunderstandings between groups, potentially causing conflict and perpetuating

intolerance. In addition, language use is an important factor: Some native-born citizens expect immigrants to speak English immediately upon arrival. For some individuals, English proficiency is perceived as a reflection of core American values (Fennelly, 2008); the inability to speak English represents an unwillingness to assimilate to the American culture.

Given the social and economic effects, the changing demographics in Minnesota should motivate educators to reflect and reexamine how education has been provided and experienced in rural communities. Within classroom spaces, teachers and students of the same community from various backgrounds interact on a daily basis. However, given the demographic changes, teachers and administrators may not be prepared to implement culturally relevant pedagogies and provide adequate learning opportunities for all students. This is a concern because the curriculum and educational interactions influence students' identities and shape how they see themselves as citizens. Furthermore, these educational experiences within local contexts in part shape how youth negotiate their civic identity.

Civic Identity

Identity is a complex concept because it includes a multitude of elements that define one's commitments and social connections. According to Palmer (1998), identity is "an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute one's life converge in the mystery of self" (p. 13). It includes one's experiences, culture, loved ones, relationship with others, and choices made. Identity is entrenched in the "intersection of the diverse

forces that make up one's life" (Palmer, p. 13). Moreover, identity is complex, inclusive of all experiences, created through narratives, and is dynamic over time (Lawler, 2008).

Conceptions of identity embrace various dimensions (e.g., cultural, ethnic, gender). For this study, I focused on one dimension of identity: civic identity. Civic identity reflects the emotional significance (Conover & Searing, 2000) and the psychological elements of being a citizen with rights, responsibilities, and national allegiances in a particular political community. It entails the establishment of individual and collective senses of social agency, responsibility for society, and political moral awareness (Yates & Youniss, 1999). Civic identity is constructed on a multitude of factors. For this study, I primarily focus on three factors: positionality, personal experience, and globalization.

First, civic identity is shaped by positionality or one's specific position in any context as defined by gender, race, class, culture, and social class. Any exploration of civic identity requires attention to power and diversity-related issues present in society. Nasir and Saxe (2003) explain that civic identity is "multifaceted and dynamic as people position themselves and are positioned in relation to varied social practices" (p. 17). For example, researchers (e.g., Abu El-Haj, 2007; Rubin, 2007) have examined how immigrants and marginalized groups construct their civic identity and have found disparities amongst specific groups due to power imbalances present in society. Some students may feel marginalized from society and sense they are not considered by the majority to be citizens with full rights. Rubin (2007) posits that more researchers should

investigate young people's daily experiences with education and civic institutions amid the cultural practices and structural inequalities that surround them.

Second, civic identity is defined through experience. Civic identity forms during adolescence and becomes rooted in youths' everyday lives through experiences in schools and communities, collective action, and practiced social responsibility (Flanagan, 2013; Verba, Schloman, & Brady, 1995). Included with experience is an individual's sense of connection to his or her school, town, and neighborhood communities. Youth will likely hold a stronger sense of civic identity if they indicate a strong sense of belonging to their home communities (Atkins & Hart, 2003). In addition, Foley and Edwards (1996) incorporate a social justice component to civic identity. They believe that youth should practice political and civic engagement to challenge norms present in society and to create social change for the betterment of democracy.

Third, global migrations play a role in constructing civic identity. The world is full of people who have multiple and sometimes competing nationalities and citizenships (Sapiro, 2004). Therefore, potential research questions include: How do youth negotiate multiple national allegiances? To what extent do youth feel American? What makes them feel like this? What social and political processes establish the sense of feeling American? Questions such as these are important, and as Ong (1999) notes, "Seldom is attention focused on the everyday processes whereby people, especially immigrants, are made into subjects of a particular nation-state" (p. 263). Furthermore, individuals may have multiple identifications and attachments including those to "the worldwide community of human beings" (Nussbaum, 2002, p. 4).

To summarize, civic identity is associated with multiple contexts including the diverse communities and social settings of which citizens are a part. Within these contexts, civic identity is the sense of how an individual perceives being a citizen and a social and political actor. It is a sense of belonging to and having responsibilities for a community (Aitkins & Hart, 2003). It is the feeling of allegiance and solidarity to a political or cultural community that is formed over time (Nasir & Saxe, 2003). Civic identity is important because democratic societies' health and stability depend on the individuals living in the country. A strong sense of civic identity motivates people to do such things as: assist their neighbors, volunteer, vote in local and national elections, and join the military. In addition, a strong sense of civic identity promotes generalized reciprocity and high levels of interpersonal trust (Flanagan & Faison, 2001); it empowers political discussion, protest of social inequalities, and participation in political and civic life (Hart, Richardson, & Wilkenfeld, 2011).

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

This study examined how youth from various cultural backgrounds (i.e., Bosnian, Latino, Somali, White) living in the same small rural town construct and negotiate their civic identity. I am concerned with how youth come to understand being American, conceptualize their roles as citizens, define national and global citizenship, and what influences their efficacy or perceived abilities to participate in civic and political activities. I consider how civic identity is shaped by the current era of transnationalism, which is important since transnational migration shows no signs of receding (Bakker, 2011; Castles & Davidson, 2005; Nagel & Staeheli, 2004; Tyrell, White, Laoire, &

Mendez, 2013). The notion that each individual is a citizen of just one nation-state no longer corresponds with the reality of many U.S. migrant youth. Building upon past work (e.g., Conover & Searing, 2000; Rubin, 2008), I am also concerned with how youth experience and interpret their civic education and how this correlates with their civic identity. Given this study occurs in a rural setting, I focus on how youth identity and political development are influenced by the social, cultural, political, and historical context of the rural community.

The principal aim of this study was to understand how young people from multiple diverse backgrounds in rural Minnesota construct and negotiate their civic identity. The primary and secondary research questions guiding this study were:

1. How do adolescents from differing backgrounds living in rural Minnesota construct and negotiate their civic identity?
    - *How do school and community contexts impact adolescents' civic identities and their thinking about citizenship?*
2. How does civic education influence civic identity?
    - *To which symbols, ideas, and/or groups do students form attachments?*
3. What aspects of youth experiences are particularly important as young people develop ideas about being American in the United States and form attachments to these ideas?
    - *To what extent do youth form allegiances to other social, cultural, and national groups?*

- *To what degree do youth construct political and social identities that include elements of national, transnational, global, and cultural citizenship?*
- *With which imagined communities do youth identify?*

This qualitative study takes place in one public secondary school located in rural Minnesota. It includes students from two Civics classrooms taught by the same teacher. I attended the two Civics classes in which I wrote field notes, audio recorded class sessions, and casually chatted with students. In addition, 14 focal students were each interviewed three times. All interviews and select classroom observations were transcribed. I also collected class assignments and student work to uncover themes and patterns related to civic identity. Building upon related political socialization research, I considered how the curriculum, instruction, classroom climate, and social interactions factored into how youth perceive their current and future civic identity. Through the use of qualitative methods, I hoped to gain a greater understanding of the complex and often competing ways in which youth negotiate their civic identity.

Significance

This study contributes to research related to political socialization, minority youth in rural towns, and transnational experiences of migrant youth. Practically speaking, this study contributes to seeking ways to lessen unequal levels of civic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and engagement and to support inclusive social studies education.

Theoretical significance. This study builds upon the past efforts of political socialization scholars that have examined how young people experience civic education,

participate in civic and political activities, and construct "their particular relationships to the political contexts in which they live" (Sapiro, 2004, p. 3). Scholars in this area examine how political systems instill norms and practices in their citizens and how political culture is transmitted; they consider how several agents (e.g., family, school, religion) are associated with political socialization. Political socialization is a complex process; it depends on factors such as: youths' personal, communal, ethnic, and national experiences (Eisikovits, 2005); youths' school environment, access to political and community organizations, social groups; and youths' exposure to adult conversations and activities (Sapiro, 2004). Thus, more studies are needed to understand this complex process. For example, Hahn (2010) suggests that studies should investigate how ethnic and other subgroups within countries experience civic learning differently.

Context matters in how youth are politically socialized. Some research has been done on the role of the local context in the political socialization process (e.g., Conover & Searing, 2000; Leitner, 2012; Sanchez-Jankowski, 1986) and where the local context has been examined, the focus has more often been on adults rather than adolescents (Gimpel, Lay, & Schuknecht, 2003). In addition, the majority of political socialization research of youth has occurred within urban and suburban areas; lacking is research of youth living in rural areas. Lay (2012) argues there is a shortage of scholarly interest in developing a complex understanding of people living and growing up in small rural towns. Since there is a lack of research, stereotypes of simple, fearful people in rural towns are prevalent. To debunk these stereotypes, Lay recommends more research on what happens in rural towns with diverse populations. Furthermore, researchers should explore individuals'

experiences living in small rural towns that have had rapid changing demographics due to immigration of ethnic minorities (Lay, 2012; Saenz, 2001).

Past research includes studies of how immigrant and minority youth view themselves as American and/or global citizens and what roles schools play in youth development of citizenship (e.g., Abu El-Haj, 2007; Conover & Searing, 2000; Hall, 2002; Jahromi, 2011, Rubin, 2007). Overall, however, the development of national identity and its implications for citizenship have not been studied much in the United States because some scholars assumed that immigrants would immediately want to identify as Americans, leaving their former nationalities behind (Sapiro, 2004). More research should examine ways in which immigrants' conceptions of citizenship are integrated with their previous experiences as citizens of another country (Avery, 2007). As more people travel and migrate globally, communities, affiliations, and citizenship status takes on more complex significance (Hua, 2007). This study is influenced by similar studies (e.g., Lay, 2012; Leitner, 2012; Nagel & Staeheli, 2004) that examine how individuals, both immigrants and non-immigrants, are impacted by migration.

Practical significance. Some studies show that immigrants and minorities have fewer opportunities to practice civic skills (e.g., Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). For example, many immigrant students tend to take even fewer social studies classes than their native-born peers (Callahan, Muller, & Schiller, 2008). They also tend to participate less frequently in civic learning experiences such as political discussions (Gimpel et al., 2003). Levinson (2012) argues that there is a profound "civic empowerment gap" between privileged students and low-income

minority students. She argues that public schools that serve low-income students do not consistently teach the civic knowledge and skills that students need for effective political engagement.

The present study offers suggestions for addressing these disparities. Schools can potentially play a positive role in developing students' citizenship knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Hahn, 1998). It is important that social studies curriculum and instruction support political efficacy and engagement. When youth are given appropriate social studies educational experiences and acquire the necessary political knowledge and skills, they may be encouraged to actively practice citizenship. Increased knowledge helps citizens comprehend their political interests as individuals and as members of a group, to accurately defend their interests, and participate in the political process (Galston, 2004).

Social studies curriculum has an important role, but its formation and implementation present challenges. In the multicultural society of the United States, one of the greatest challenges is to support inclusive education. Banks (2004) states that the goal of creating a democratic, inclusive classroom is to:

> Respect and acknowledge the community cultures and knowledge of students while at the same time helping to construct a democratic public community with an overarching set of values to which all students will have a commitment and with which all will identify. (p. 12)

The tension between diversity and unity is at the core of defining citizenship in the United States and other multicultural nation-states (Banks, 2004). The challenge is to seek balance between incorporating rights for all, while simultaneously creating a shared

vision of citizenry. Because the idea of citizenship and being a citizen is socially constructed, it is important for teachers and education researchers to examine what contributes to how youth see themselves as members of a nation and as participatory members of a democratic society.

In summary, students' civic identities are influenced and shaped by their attitudes toward civic education, political engagement, national allegiances, and being American. Educational practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers must therefore pay careful attention to students' civic identities and the contexts in which they are formed when seeking to implement an inclusive educational experience for immigrant and minority students in rural areas.

Conclusion

This study explores how youth in a rural, small town construct and negotiate their civic identity. Several students in this study represent multiple national backgrounds and, therefore, likely embrace differing ideas of what it means to be a citizen and what it means to be American. I focus on how young people who represent multiple national contexts intersect with local contexts and how this creates unique ways of constructing identity. Civic identity takes on complex meaning due to globalization, migration, technology, advancing forms of communication, and flows of ideas (Appadurai, 1996). As such, exploring civic identity redefines traditional notions of citizenship by replacing an individual's singular national loyalty with the ability to belong to multiple nation-states and/or to a global society. Such loyalties shape individual notions of civic identity and political and cultural allegiances.

Terminology

Following are key terms used throughout the dissertation:

Documented and undocumented immigrants. *Documented immigrants* are individuals who meet the criteria for legal citizenship set forth by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. *Undocumented immigrants* are those who have come to the United States through illegal means.

Globalization. Globalization can be conceived as "a process (or set of processes) that embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, expressed in transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and power" (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999, p. 16).

Immigration categories. A *first-generation* immigrant is someone who was born outside of the United States and arrived in the United States as an adult. A *1.5-generation immigrant* was born outside the United States but arrived in the United States as a pre-adolescent child. A second-generation immigrant is the child of a first- or 1.5-generation immigrant.

Latino. *Latino* is a category that encompasses individuals of different Latin American heritages and with distinct immigration histories (Masuoka, 2007).

Migration. Migration represents the physical movement of individuals across national boundaries.

Minority. A minority is a member of a group of people who are different from the larger group in a given area in some way (race, culture, or religion). Put another way,

a minority is a part of a population differing from others in some characteristics and often subjected to differential treatment (Merriam Webster, n.d.).

Political efficacy. There are two types of political efficacy: *Internal efficacy* is a citizen's self-confidence in their ability to understand and participate in politics. *External efficacy* is the belief that one can trust, participate, and influence political affairs; for example, it is the assumption that the government will respond to one's demands (Niemi, Craig, & Mattei, 1991).

Political and civic participation. Political participation is typically confined to electoral activities, including voting and working on political campaigns. In contrast, civic participation focuses on community issues, volunteering for nonprofits, participating in fund-raising activities for charitable organizations, and so on. However, political and civic activities or behaviors may overlap (Keeter, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002).

Political socialization. Political socialization is the process by which political culture is passed on within a given society. At the macro level, political socialization frames research on how political societies and systems transmit norms and practices to citizens. At the micro level, it "frames research on the patterns and processes by which individuals engage in political development and learning, constructing their particular relationships to the political contexts in which they live" (Sapiro, 2004, p. 3).

Refugee. A refugee is a subcategory of immigrants that refers to persons who have arrived in a host country in order to escape warfare or persecution in their country of origin.

Transnational. The term "transnational" applies to human activities and social institutions that extend across national borders. Transnationalism, then, refers "to nation-states as bounded political entities whose borders are crossed by flows of people, money or information and are spanned by social networks, organizations, or fields" (Bauböck, 2003, p. 701).

Dissertation Format

In the next chapter, I discuss the literature in social studies and political socialization that relates to civic education, citizenship, civic identity, and youth perspectives. I also introduce the conceptual framework that guides this study: Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1988) ecological model of human development, together with the constructs of transnationalism (Ong, 1999) and imagined communities (Anderson, 1983). This framework provides the lens to understand how students from rural Minnesota understand citizenship and negotiate their civic identity. Chapter Three details the methodology, data collection, and analysis methods utilized for this study. Chapters Four, Five, and Six are dedicated to describing the students' experiences. Chapter Seven presents the overall findings and discussion. Chapter Eight concludes the dissertation with recommendations for social studies educators and researchers.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I review political socialization and social studies education literature related to (a) conceptions of citizenship, with specific attention to minority rights and individuals with transnational affiliations; (b) civic education and learning; (c) civic identity; and (d) transnational youth and migration. I conclude with a description of the conceptual framework that guides this study.

Conceptions of Citizenship

There are multiple conceptions of citizenship (e.g., liberal, civic republican, multicultural, flexible, transnational, critical, feminist). In Western political thought, citizenship is most often defined as the relationship between individuals and their nation-state. This conception of national citizenship stems from the Enlightenment and has gained prominence with the recognition of modern nation-states. Currently, liberal notions of citizenship that focus on individual rights over group rights ground Western political thought. Citizenship in this sense is composed of three primary dimensions (Cohen, 1999). The first dimension of citizenship includes specific rights categorized as civil, political, and social rights (see Marshall, 1950). The second dimension regards citizens as political agents and to what degree they actively participate in political institutions and claim legal protections in courts of law. The third dimension refers to citizenship as a sense of belonging to a political community that establishes a distinct source of shared identity (Cohen, 1999; Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). The third dimension is subjective because it includes an individual's sense of loyalty and belonging (de la Paz, 2004), however, due to structural inequalities and discrimination, some

citizens may not feel the same level of belonging. As a result, these dimensions exhibit limitations. Even if individuals have legal citizenship, they may not *feel* like citizens or may not be *perceived* as citizens with rights by the majority. Citizens' language, religion, culture, class, gender, and race often influence how they feel or are viewed by others.

Arguments against a liberal notion of citizenship focus on the need to acknowledge diversity within democracies (Banks, 2008; Flores & Benmayor, 1997; Kymlicka, 1995). To begin, liberal citizenship practices do not consistently take into account minority rights and, consequently, perpetuate assimilation practices of citizenship that often marginalize and exclude minority groups from full participation (Kymlicka, 1995). A second argument against this notion of liberal citizenship addresses the pressures perpetuated by globalization on the territorial, nation-state (Castles & Davidson, 2000). Such pressures included increased migration between nation-states due to the global flow of people (Appadurai, 1996), increased minority populations, regional integration, and transnational affiliations (Bauböck, 1994; Ong, 1999). This argument demonstrates the idea that citizens of the same country may no longer share a common national identity (Castles & Davidson, 2000) but, rather citizens may have multiple or transnational identities. In sum, arguments against the liberal notions of citizenship are driven by the need to recognize minority rights and transnational migration in the current global era.

Scholars who have challenged liberal conceptions of citizenship have suggested alternatives. For example, Kymlicka (1995) and Rosaldo and Flores (1997) posit that immigrant and ethnic groups should be able to fully participate in the national civic

culture, while retaining elements of their own cultures. The dominant culture of the nation-state should, in turn, incorporate aspects of the minority groups' experiences, cultures, and languages. This exchange will enrich the mainstream culture as well as help marginalized groups experience civic equality and recognition (Gutmann, 2004). Rights allocated to individuals and groups may include the rights to practice religion and learn one's first language (Kymlicka, 1995). In sum, alternative conceptions of citizenship "raise basic questions about identity (who we are as citizens), membership (who belongs, and the location of the boundaries), and agency (how we might best enact citizenship)" (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 657). In addition, a key shift in thought has been emerging toward the recognition of citizenship as a personal and flexible construction with experience (Held, 2002; Kennedy, 2007).

In the following section, two alternative conceptions of citizenship relevant to immigrant and minority experiences as citizens are described: *transnational citizenship* and *cultural citizenship*.

Transnational citizenship. Transnational citizenship interconnects with globalization, migration, technology, ease of communication between place, and flows of ideas (Appadurai, 1996). It focuses on the relationships between the local, national, and international communities and how travel and displacement cause individuals to respond fluidly to changing political conditions (Ong, 1999). This conception of citizenship redefines traditional notions of citizenship by replacing an individual's singular national loyalty with the ability to belong to multiple nation-states.

Transnational citizenship has several dimensions. At one extreme, transnationalism can mean cosmopolitan attitudes that transcend nation-states and point toward the consciousness of an emerging global society (Castles, 2004). This includes the expansion of a primary allegiance and sense of belonging from the locality or nationality to the global humanity (Nussbaum, 2002). However, the idea of world, global, or cosmopolitan citizenship, does not necessarily have a cross-border, transnational dimension in terms of community membership or rights (Fox, 2005; Hutchings & Dannreuther 1999). In addition, the term *transnational citizenship* is somewhat less expansive than *global citizenship* because it focuses on the cross-border interactions rather than allegiances to the entire world or human kind (Fox, 2005).

The majority of literature on transnationalism describes two dimensions (Fitzgerald, 2004a). First, it includes the sense of affiliation with a nation despite physical absence. Second, it describes the dual nationalism of political identifications with two different nations. In this situation a citizen may hold two (or more) passports and freely move between each nation. Transnational citizenship, therefore, opens the discussion of how individuals negotiate and adapt their identity in recognition of multiple national and international stages and how youth carry their cultural identity, experiences, and ways of knowing to their new locations. However, as Mitchell and Parker (2008) assert, fixed categories of citizenship continuously adapt to each location and experience because these allegiances are socially constructed and therefore contingent.

Transnational citizenship and cultural citizenships have similarities. The term *cultural citizenship* has come to refer to a similar inclusionary respect for multiple

identities and difference but without specific reference to a cross-border dimension (Flores & Benmayor, 1997).

Cultural citizenship. Renato Rosaldo is credited with the first use of the term *cultural citizenship* to consider the everyday cultural practices through which minority groups claim space and the right to be full members of society (Flores & Benmayor, 1997). Cultural citizenship encompasses the acquisition of rights and the recognition of those rights by the majority. Minorities have found traditional citizenship to be a "role and identity purchased at a high price, as citizenship identities can require assimilation and thus prove inhospitable and harmful to cultural identities that are of great importance to individuals and groups" (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 669). For immigrants and minorities, the impressions of being assimilated and/or marginalized emphasizes a "struggle to build communities, claim social rights, and become recognized as active agents in society" (Flores & Benmayor, 1997, p. 2). For example, minorities may have the legal right to vote, but social, economic, and cultural exclusion impinges on opportunities of political participation and representation (Castles & Davidson, 2000).

To promote minority voice, activism, and rights, cultural citizenship encompasses a broad range of social and political activities including everyday interactions in the community, belonging to organizations, and political participation. This involves the claim to one's cultural traditions and also to the rights of full citizenship: Rather than accepting the dominant ideology, minority groups, even in contexts of inequality, have a right to their distinctive heritage. A key aspect of the concept is to secure the social space in which minority individuals may "imagine" belonging to a greater community

(Anderson, 1983). Cultural citizenship examines how minorities perceive their communities and how they envision themselves as part of larger society (Benmayor, 2002; Flores, 1997, 2003; Rosaldo, 1994).

The conceptions of transnational and cultural citizenship offer opportunities to examine ways in which migration and globalization influence the construction of civic identity. Moreover, this is pertinent in the current era in which youth are born into a world that is interdependent and interconnected (Mitchel & Parker, 2008) and are "growing up global" (Katz, 2004). Youth are thus likely to embody conceptions of citizenship that are flexible, multiple, global, and transnational. In the next section, I discuss how these various conceptions of citizenship have influenced civic education. Then I will explain how youth from diverse backgrounds learn citizenship and experience civic education.

Education for Citizenship in the United States

In the United States, civic education broadly encompasses: "all the ways in which young people come to think of themselves as citizens of local and cultural communities, the nation, and local society" (Hahn, 2008). It includes youths' experiences within their families, communities, cultural organizations, and schools. Most civic education scholars investigate the formal, deliberate programs of instruction within schools and examine how teachers and schools impact students' civic and political lives (e.g., Conover & Searing, 2000; Hahn, 1998; Niemi & Junn, 1998). A smaller area of research examines civic education that takes place at all stages of life and in many venues other than

schools. However, since my study primarily investigates the formal influences of school, the majority of studies I include in this chapter do the same.

Formal education taught in schools is a critical link between education and citizenship (Niemi & Junn, 1998) and teaching for citizenship "is probably the most popular mission for public schools in the United States" (Parker, 1996, p. 104). Nevertheless, *what* and *how* to teach for citizenship is a challenging topic and a site of debate and controversy (Hahn, 2008; Osler & Starkey, 2003). Moreover, the past and current political and social climate have increased tension around the nature and purpose of citizenship education (McAvoy & Hess, 2013; Evans, 2004; Symcox, 2002) as various groups call for alternative approaches (e.g., DeJaeghere, 2009; Parker, 1996; Banks, 1997; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

Abowitz and Harnish (2006) employed discourse analysis to examine commonly used k-12 curriculum materials and documents. They found that civic republican and liberal conceptions of citizenship dominated the majority of the curriculum. As described by Abowitz and Harnish, civic republicanism advocates focus on increasing civic knowledge and transmitting patriotism and allegiance to U.S. democracy, while civic liberalism advocates emphasize rights and civic discussion. However, advocates for alternative forms of citizenship (such as cultural citizenship and transnational citizenship) assert that civic republican and liberal conceptions of citizenship marginalize minority groups. For example, educational scholars (Banks, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Parker, 1996) have argued that assimilation pedagogies and practices are pervasive in today's public schools.

Assimilation practices encourage immigrants and minorities to learn the national language and to take on the social and cultural practices of the majority community, while not encouraging their native languages and cultural practices (Castles, 2004). Ladson-Billings (2004) asserts that assimilation in schools excludes minorities from full citizenship. She states that Whiteness is needed for full membership, and thus, minority groups often feel isolated and excluded due to race. Banks (2008) argues that citizenship education should stray away from assimilation policies and that schools should be restructured so that they reflect the cultures and languages of minorities and immigrants. Banks posits that group cultural rights (Flores & Benmayor, 1997; Rosaldo, 1994) should be present in citizenship education because it would help reduce structural, social, economic, and political inequalities present in United States society. Parker (1996) agrees that civic education should reduce assimilation practices and explains that civic education should also focus on the tensions and disagreements inherent in a culturally pluralistic democracy.

Increasing levels of diversity in nation-states throughout the world raise new and complex questions about educating students for effective citizenship. Scholars (e.g., Kahne & Middaugh, 2008; Levinson, 2012; Rubin, 2007) have examined how U.S. students from various cultural, racial, ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds experience differentiated access to quality citizenship learning opportunities. They assert that minorities are not learning and preparing for citizenship on a level playing ground with White students. These inequalities demonstrate, as Banks (2008), Ladson-Billings

(2004), and Parker (1996) suggest, a need to rethink current civic education practices to include students from all backgrounds.

In addition, some scholars argue that citizenship education should be redesigned to consider globalization, migration, and people with multiple and transnational identities (Castles, 2004). Myers and Zaman (2009) posit that citizenship education should focus on the intersection of national with global issues and affiliations, thereby helping students to recognize their flexible and multiple identities. However, the transnational and cultural conceptions have yet to significantly challenge the dominant discourses that shape citizenship education in schools (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

Other citizenship education frameworks challenge traditional practices. For example, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) developed three conceptions of citizenship for education purposes. First, *personally responsible* citizens act in a responsible way in their environment by obeying the law, recycling, or contributing to clothing drives. *Participatory* citizens participate in civic activities at local, state, and/or national levels. They direct or assist in collective, group-oriented efforts such as organizing food drives. *Justice-oriented* citizens examine the relationship between social, economic, and political affairs and then address specific problems. Each type of citizenship demonstrates how education programs tend to frame curriculum to prepare students for citizenship. The personally responsible citizen has been the most common conception promoted in civic education. Westheimer and Kahne argue that this is an inadequate response to the challenges of educating a democratic citizenry, and that instead, schools should incorporate more of a participatory and justice-orientated approach. Abowitz and Harnish

(2006) and Westheimer and Kahne (2004) recognize the benefits of participatory and justice-oriented forms of citizenship, but they assert that schools continue to instill submissive and passive forms of citizenship.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century and the spread of mass public education, citizenship education has been a primary goal for U.S. public education; its purpose has been to create good citizens, imbue students with loyalty to American ideals, and teach basic political knowledge and processes (Hahn, 2008). Throughout U.S. educational history, civic education has remained influenced by republican and liberal conceptions of citizenship (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Less influential are alternative forms of civic education such as those influenced by cultural and transnational citizenship, justice-orientated forms of participation (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) and forms that focus on the tensions inherent in a culturally pluralistic democracy (Parker, 1996). Thus, alternatives to traditional citizenship education have been proposed by scholars, but have rarely been put into practice.

Learning About Citizenship

Upon close inspection of social studies classrooms, and despite arguments against current educational practices, there are several positive actions that do occur in classrooms that are beneficial for students. In the following paragraphs, I discuss how teachers' pedagogical decisions, a positive classroom climate, democratic discourse, increased knowledge, and youth motivation impact how youth learn about and practice citizenship.

Teachers' pedagogical decisions. Kahne, Chi, and Middaugh (2006) posit that the social studies curriculum alone does not promote civic engagement, but that teachers' pedagogical decisions shape student civic identity and political practices and student political engagement later in life. Scholarship provides evidence that active learning experiences such as discussion of controversial issues, simulations, participatory action, and reflection, may influence student learning about citizenship (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010). Broadly speaking these practices are not consistently present across all classrooms (Levstik, 2008). For example, Nystrand, Gamoran, and Carbonaro (1998) observed 106 middle and high school social studies classes across the United States and found minimal use of discussion in any classes. Rather what they found was most of the formal work was completed through teacher lecture and call and response questions. Similarly, Niemi and Niemi (2007) observed high school classes of urban, suburban, and rural schools across Upstate New York. They found that students' political opinions were often suppressed and that they were denied opportunities to discuss political issues within classroom space. Niemi and Niemi reported that "teachers controlled the ways in which questions and answers were asked and answered" (p. 55). Lack of substantive discussion and other active learning practices in classrooms may be associated with dependency on textbooks (Wade, 1993), prevalence of lecture based instruction (Reisman, 2012), and emphasis on coverage opposed to deep analysis of content (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). However, research strongly suggests these active democratic learning experiences are important for fostering an engaged and active citizenry (Hess, 2009; Parker & Hess, 2001).

Open classroom climate. Another primary factor that has a positive impact on youth political engagement and efficacy is the presence of an open climate within classrooms. Torney-Purta et al. (2001) define an open classroom climate as one in which "students experience their classrooms as places to investigate issues and explore their opinions and those of their peers" (p. 138). The 1999 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study measured open classroom climate through items such as "teachers encourage us to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions" and "students feel free to disagree openly with their teachers about political and social issues during class" (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). To create an open climate, teachers should welcome students into the learning community of their classrooms, encourage students' capacity to learn, and establish an environment of trust and respect (Meier, 2002).

There are benefits of establishing an open classroom climate. Several research studies (Ehman, 1980; Hahn, 1998; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta et al., 2001) demonstrate how students who report they were encouraged and felt comfortable to discuss controversial public issues in a classroom environment were more likely to have higher levels of civic knowledge, political efficacy, political interest, sense of civic duty, and expectations of voting as adults than peers without such experiences. In summary, when teachers set standards of a positive open climate, they create a democratic setting for learning (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007).

Democratic discourse. Democratic discourse is a dialogue between or among people that respectively exchange information about a topic, co-construct knowledge, and

possibly reach a consensus on a political and social issue, controversy, or event (Hess, 2004). Student engagement in democratic discourse positively influences students' confidence and agency to voice opinions about political and social issues, and in turn, these experiences enrich students' civic identity. Democratic discourse more likely occurs in an open classroom environment. In these spaces, the students and teacher are more likely to discuss substantive public issues in a democratic and respectful way (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005).

Even with a rich literature promoting discussion as an important component of civic education, it is still a relatively infrequent practice (Hess & McAvoy, 2013). Moreover, some research indicates that civic discussion is less likely to occur in heterogeneous classrooms. For example, Campbell (2005) asserted that teachers might be more likely to incorporate discussions of controversial issues when they are in racially homogeneous classrooms. Similarly, MacCurtain et al. (2001) in a project that included students from New York in grades fourth through twelfth indicated that when immigrant students were present, classroom discussions are more brisk. Conover and Searing's (2000) study also provides evidence that students in the immigrant and urban communities are significantly less likely to engage in political discussions in school than are rural and suburban students. They find that immigrant and urban students are less likely to be civically engaged in school and in their communities. Overall, these studies signify that democratic discourse is less frequent when racial and ethnic diversity is present.

Civic knowledge. Democracies require their citizens to have the knowledge that

enables civic participation and critical thought. Consequently, students' level of civic and political knowledge correlates with youth engagement and predicts young adult political participation (Chaffee, 2000; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Niemi & Junn, 1998; Sherrod, 2003). Increased political knowledge does not guarantee students will develop into participatory citizens, but it will ensure they will know how to participate and engage in civic and political affairs.

Recent studies indicate levels of civic knowledge of youth are relatively low. According to studies conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), two out of three U.S. students at grades four, eight, and twelve have at least a basic, but not an in-depth knowledge of Civics. Some questions were repeated on the 1998, 2006, and 2010 NAEP civic education assessment to establish trend lines. At 4th grade, students' scores increased since 1998; at 12th grade, scores declined since 2006 (Levine, 2013). Low levels of political knowledge may be consequence of fewer states requiring civic education, hiring teachers with minimal formal preparation to teach Civics and Government, and increased attention to high-stakes literacy and math testing (Davies, 2008; Galston, 2004). Furthermore, Davies (2008) contends that Civics is most often taught as academic subject that focuses on factual knowledge rather than focusing on community problems and critical political understandings. He posits there is a disjoint between the academic knowledge of civic institutions and the processes and the practical knowledge of civic engagement "or the links between concepts and public contexts" (p. 382).

Civic knowledge is also positively correlated to socioeconomic status and age, (Levinson, 2006; Torney-Purta et al., 2001), and young people's anticipation of future voting (Hart, Donnely, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007). Low-income individuals have fewer opportunities to gain civic knowledge and skills "via education, the workplace, or participation in voluntary associations" (Levinson, 2007, p. 5). Civic knowledge is acquired from families, cultural groups, community associations, and political experience (Galston, 2001). If youth don't gain civic knowledge from these areas, they potentially may not "have the opportunity to develop and practice communication, analysis, organization, and leadership skills relevant to civic and political participation" (Levinson, 2007, p. 5). However, if given quality civic education, low-income students may gain the knowledge and skills needed to be participatory citizens. For example, research (Niemi & Junn, 1998; Torney-Purta et al., 2001) demonstrates that students have higher levels of civic knowledge when they report they were encouraged and felt comfortable to discuss controversial public issues in their classroom environment.

Political and civic knowledge varies across groups. For example, women, African Americans, individuals who are low-income, and the young tend to be less politically knowledgeable than their counterparts (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). In a survey of 439 middle school students, Fridkin, Kenny, & Crittenden (2006) compared Whites (middle and working class), Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans' political knowledge and views of the formal political world. Consistent with previous studies, the Whites from middle class families had greater opportunities to practice democratic activities in school (e.g., give speeches, discuss social issues) and at home (e.g., read the newspaper, watch

the news). Fridkin and her colleagues found that race and ethnicity played a major role in students' level of political knowledge and experience. Similarly, immigrant and minority youth (e.g., Latino, African American) are more skeptical and less trusting of government institutions than are their majority peers (Baldi, Perie, Skidmore, Greenberg, & Hahn, 2001, Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002).

Civics and other social studies coursework may be particularly salient to immigrant and minority groups. Callahan and Obenchain (2013) argue that the curriculum is important for Latino immigrant youth as they transition from adolescence to young adulthood and develop their political and civic identity. Callahan and Obenchain (2013) conducted a qualitative study that examined ten Latino immigrant young adults' (aged 20 to 24) perceptions of how their social studies experiences influenced their civic lives and identities. The young adults were former students of Nationally Board Certified social studies teachers and were university students. Callahan and Obenchain reported that students' participation in civic discourse, application of critical thinking skills, and development of leadership dispositions were products of both young immigrants' life experiences and their secondary social studies school experiences. In addition, Callahan and Obenchain observed that the teachers viewed immigrant students' awareness of political systems outside the United States as a strategy to motivate students to learn about social studies content. Although, this study examined a group of exceptional students and teachers, it indicates that quality social studies coursework and well-intentioned teaching matters. In addition, there is evidence social studies coursework carries the potential to influence immigrant students because it may

provide the political guidance and knowledge not readily available in the home (Callahan et al., 2008). Furthermore, social studies course completion predicts immigrant adolescents' young adult voting habits in a way that it does not for children of U.S.-born parents (Callahan et al., 2008).

Youth motivation. Quality civic instruction also influences student motivation to learn about and build confidence to participate in political and civic activities. A high level of civic and political knowledge is important, but equally important is the interest and motivation to learn about politics. People with higher levels of motivation and skills tend to be better educated about politics (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Motivation may correlate with students' sense of efficacy or agency as learners, and also relate to students' perceptions of how their teachers treat them and fellow students (Bandura, 1997). Research indicates that appreciation for government coursework varies across groups. For example, Stone and Han (2005) found Mexican second-generation eighth and ninth grade students to have less motivation because they perceived low teacher expectations and lack of support as discrimination, which in turn indirectly and negatively was associated with their grades. Their findings are consistent with other research that suggests that youths' experiences within their social contexts are correlated with their performance in school and perceptions of discrimination (Valenzuela, 1999).

In summary, teachers and schools have a major role to play in the formation of civic identity. When teachers support an open classroom climate and set standards of civility, respect, and equal treatment, they create opportunities to practice being participatory democratic citizens. This is one important strategy to confront societal

inequalities and to equalize opportunities for achievement. Schools and classrooms are also the means by which all youth can potentially develop a sense of themselves as part of the body politic (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007), which is part of the formation of their civic identity.

Civic Identity

Research on civic identity explores the "intersections of diversity, identity, and citizenship" (Hart et al., 2011, p. 780). Civic identity refers to the individual's sense of self as a member of a political or cultural community or society (Nasir & Saxe, 2003), as an actor contributing to the management and the social welfare of that group, and as a participant in that society bearing rights and responsibilities (Aitkins & Hart, 2003). Current interest with civic identity has "arisen in large measure in reaction to, and concern with, the effects of diversity resulting from globalization and immigration" (Hart et al., 2011, p. 781).

The studies that specifically address civic identity cut across multiple disciplines (e.g., sociology, political science, cultural studies, comparative education). These studies explain the impacts schools have on civic identity development and demonstrate how youth from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds view themselves as citizens. They also describe how youths' conceptions of citizenship are fluid, transformative, and dependent on social and cultural contexts.

Hall (2002, 2004) explored civic identity formation in schools and examined how hybrid civic identities were formed among first- and second-generation high school Sikh youth from India living in Britain. She found that cultural politics have a significant role

to play in terms of the formation of nations, yet many more cultural processes are also at work. These processes include the role the media has in perpetuating ethnic and national illustrations and political imaginaries, youth movement between cultural worlds at home and at school, and the cultural ideas that move across transnational communities. Hall suggests that although this Sikh community may live in Britain, they feel a greater sense of belonging to the Sikh community than the British community.

Similar to Hall, Jahromi (2011), Rubin (2007), and Abu El-Haj (2007) explored how diverse youth negotiate citizenship and feel a sense of belonging to the United States. Jahromi (2011) examined immigrant and native-born youth experiences to distinguish important elements of how youth formulate their American identity and define being American. His research team conducted a series of interviews with 22 youth between the ages of 15 and 18 from four different schools. He found that young people's identifications with being American might be associated with their socio-economic context, experiences with diversity, and U.S. History curriculum. Jahromi identifies some experiences that affect how young people negotiate their American identities: attachments to American ideals; the disjoint between American ideals and reality; opportunities for civic and political participation; and ideas about concepts such as the American dream, democratic values, and government. Students in Jahromi's study indicated that the American reality does not live up to American ideals. Similar to Rubin (2007), Jahromi (2011) asserts there is a disjuncture between "the ideal of being American and the specific experiences that these youth have with it" (Jahromi, 2011, p. 88).

Immigrant and minority youth in Jahromi's (2011) and Rubin's (2007) study reported a disjuncture between their daily realities and American ideals. Rubin's study focused on the disparities middle school and high school aged urban youth (from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds) felt as American citizens, how they participated in civic and political activities, and how they negotiated their civic identity. In this study, the majority of privileged White youth emphasized the congruity they experienced between their daily experiences and the ideals expressed in their civic education. In comparison, the majority of urban youth of color pointed to a disjuncture between what they learned about civic ideals and the reality of their lives. Rubin argues that schools have a role to play in ensuring the development of engaged, action-oriented civic identities among students from all backgrounds.

Dejaeghere and McClearly (2010) examined how civic identity is experienced within schools. They explored how cultural and political beliefs and values influenced 18 Mexican students' civic identities and how these imaginaries are acted out and materialized in students' lived experiences. Their study took place in two secondary schools, one urban and one rural, and involved site visits and interviews with educators and youth (aged 14 -20). Dejaeghere and McClearly observed that language policies and language use in schools affected Mexican youths' civic identities. At the urban school, students had greater recognition of their language and cultural identities, yet the language policies still promoted English-speaking immigrants. At the rural school, language policies resulted in an exclusionary discourse. Similar to Rubin (2007) and Jahromi (2011), Dejaeghere and McClearly (2010) assert that students in this setting also

experienced a disjuncture between their culture and the civic norms and values reflected in school.

In a related study, Abu El-Haj (2007) investigated how a group of Palestinian American high school youth negotiated their sense of belonging to the U.S. community, to the Palestinian American community, and to communities in Palestine. Her multisite ethnographic study of Palestinian and other Arab youth demonstrated how the Post-9/11 environment impacted how youth come to terms with how they view themselves and how Palestinian Americans are viewed in the United States. Abu El-Haj reported on the tensions these youth face as they deal with issues such as pledging allegiance to the U.S. flag, teacher harassment, discourses of terrorism, and sense of belonging. Similarly, Ghaffer-Kucher's (2012) study indicates that the Post-9/11 environment influenced the experiences of Pakistani adolescents in the United States. Like Hall (2002. 2004), Ghaffer-Kucher (2012) conducted a multi-site, ethnographic study "to understand the cultural politics involved as immigrants work to be recognized as citizens of a nation" (p. 36). During interviews and focus groups, the high school students in his study responded to being increasingly stereotyped as the "other" and consequently, they rejected an American identity and embraced a Muslim religious identity.

Abu El-Haj's (2007), Ghaffer-Kucher's (2012), and Jahromi's (2011) studies indicate that youth attitudes toward America, citizenship, and civic life are shaped through concrete experiences. Similarly, Mitchell and Parker (2008) reviewed how the post-9/11 environment influenced students' conceptions of citizenship. Their multi-site study involved 250 students at three high schools (two private, one public) and two

middle schools (one private, one public) in an urban area in the United States. The students Mitchell and Parker interviewed appeared to have a preexisting awareness of global interdependence as they discussed nationalism. For example, when discussing how to remember 9/11 events, several students reflected that all people "affected by the fall of the towers should be included" and "not just those who happened to live within a specific national territory" (p. 797). Equally important, the students imagined multiple, flexible, and relational allegiances to national and "cosmopolitanism citizenship" (Nussbaum, 2002). Thus, rather than defining an either/or (national or global) allegiance, their conceptions of citizenship were framed by hybrid, complex, and fluid ways of belonging.

The Pakistani adolescents in Ghaffer-Kucher's (2012) study rejected an American identity. This feeling of not belonging to American culture and society or feeling American is evident in other students of first- and second-generation immigrant youth. To illustrate, the immigrant high school youth in Nguyen's (2008) study viewed themselves as citizens of the United States; nevertheless, they did not view themselves as Americans. They felt that to be American mandated an individual to be White and part of the majority. In addition, Bedolla's (2000) study indicates that Latino high school students did not identify with being American, rather they identified strongly with their families' countries of origin. Bedolla posits "even for those who no longer spoke Spanish or knew much about their ancestral background, being 'Mexican' or 'Latino' held important meaning for them and made them feel set apart from Anglo culture" (p. 111).

These studies open an important issue: They examine if and how immigrants see themselves as citizens of the countries in which they reside. Simply living in a country is

not sufficient to guarantee identification with it (Zhou, Morris, & Benet-Martínez, 2008). However, despite being U.S. citizens, the students in these previous studies seem to have experienced marginalization with schools that restrict the development of an American identity. Furthermore, it is the marginalization from American culture that erodes allegiance to the United States and increases allegiance to the native or sending country (Stepick & Stepick, 2002).

Americanness and developing an American identity are often discussed within a framework of immigration (Jensen & Flanagan, 2008). However, minority youth in the United States also struggle with embracing the American identity. For her dissertation, Ladson-Billings (1984) evaluated how African American eighth-graders perceived their citizenship. She found their sense of citizenship was primarily negotiated with their identities as African Americans. The youth held their racial allegiance first, and in turn, they held their national allegiance as second. To a degree, this indicates that White identity is synonymous with American identity. Ladson-Billings asserts that, "in the United States, for example, Whites have the luxury of substituting their cultural identities for an American identity while simultaneously being viewed as more loyal, more patriotic, and more committed to the public good" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 113). As a consequence, White students are more likely to claim an American identity over their minority and immigrant peers.

Nevertheless, developing a sense of being American or adopting the American culture also varies within minority groups. For example, Zhou and Bankston's (1998) study proposes that academically successful Vietnamese high school students stay

connected with their culture and ethnic community. In contrast, low-achieving students have "succumbed to 'over-Americanization' and [have] lost their culture" (p. 151). Zhou and Bankston assert that the family and community continuously communicate cultural values to Vietnamese American children. These values include working hard, respecting elders, and making decisions only with the approval of their parents. The students who carry these values likely transfer them to their academic work. This study exemplifies how maintaining a strong ethnic culture may be simultaneous with being a successful American student.

There is a body of literature that examines how the identities of immigrant students respond to cultural, social, and structural forces present in school and society (e.g., Maira, 2002; Ngo, 2010). Broadly speaking, identity, rather than civic identity is the focus of the majority of these studies. However, these studies are relevant to this present study because they highlight how immigrant youth navigate cultures, transnationalism, and multiple spaces in the current global era. For example, Maira (2002) investigated how Indian American second-generation adolescents and young adults maneuver between multiple identities as they move between the spaces of family, school, social groups, and work. She analyzed what youth make of their cultural and ethnic identity and describes how these meanings are materialized at social functions and gatherings. Maira highlights how Indian American youth balance between Indian and American culture. Similarly, but also in contrast, Ngo (2010) asserts that identities of immigrant youth are more complex. Ngo agrees they are multiple or situational, but she contends that identities are "also subdivided, inconsistent, and temporary" (p. 9). Ngo

asserts that we should continuously reflect on what it means to be an immigrant youth for their identities are ever evolving within context.

Researchers have also compared racially, nationally, and culturally diverse students' historical thinking (e.g., Barton & Levstik, 1998; Epstein, 1998, 2000, 2009; Kolikant & Pollack, 2009; Peck, 2010; Wills, 1996; Yeager, Foster, & Greer, 2002). Epstein (2000) examined the historical narratives of 10 adolescents in the same 11th-grade U.S. History class in an urban high school. She found that their racial identities influenced their understanding of the historical experiences of particular racial groups, the role of government in shaping these experiences, and the existence or lack of a common national history or identity. In addition, Epstein's (1998, 2000) study examined the differences in the ways in which African American and European American students approached the topics of nationhood, equality, and freedom. European Americans were more likely to focus on nation formation, individual rights, and progress. On the other hand, African Americans discussed equality, structural racism, and personal attributes of people in the past. Furthermore, the two groups differed in their selection of historically important people and events; both, for instance, were more likely to select members of their own ethnicity or race as significant. Similarly, Peck's (2010) study, that included 26 high school students, indicated that students' ethnic identities impact how they understand Canadian history, and it also influenced their construction of a Canadian narrative. These studies indicate that ethnicity impacts how students understand and negotiate the histories they encounter both in and out of school (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

Along with race, ethnicity, and culture, gender and sexuality affects how youth construct their civic identity. Empirical research in this area is sparse (Hahn, 2008); nevertheless, some researchers have explored lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) experiences with citizenship and have found that sexual minority youth are marginalized from fully engaged citizenship (Russell, 2002). Richardson (2000), in analyzing the relationship between sexuality and politics, described individuals who are gay as partial citizens who are often excluded from basic civil, political, and social rights. In turn, this resonates within education systems. Mayo (2006) argues that policies and practices prevalent in schools marginalize youth; "Policies and practices that ignore anti-LGBT harassment, debates over gay marriage that deny queer youth a sense of futurity, and sex education policies that contribute to the silencing of queer possibility" (p. 471). In sum, marginalization of LGBT youth throughout schools and societies deters citizenship development. However, within schools, Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) have served as places where youth may work collaboratively and support the rights of LGBT individuals (Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012; Russell, 2002) and increase their sense of empowerment (Russell, Muraco, Subramaniam, & Laub, 2009). The presence of GSAs also heightens the sense of safety of LGBT youth (Kosciw et al., 2012; Goodenow, Szalacha, & Westheimer, 2006). However, students in rural areas were least likely to have GSAs, LGBT-related school resources, and supportive school personnel than urban and suburban schools (Kosciw et al., 2012).

Summary

These studies indicate that there are multiple ways to experience being American, however, not all citizens *feel* American. A sense of civic identity is shaped by an individual's culture, ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation. It also depends on an individual's experiences within multiple contexts, including experiences between transnational contexts. For example, the research about civic identity indicates that immigrant secondary students have complex and contradictory transnational identifications. This finding is consistent across studies of Palestinian-American youth by Abu El-Haj (2007), Indian-American youth by Maira (2002), and Urban-American youth by Rubin (2007). Furthermore, research demonstrates that cultural and national identities of immigrant and minority youth are contextual, flexible, and continually reconstructed (Abu El-Haj, 2007).

Diversity and Immigration in Rural Areas

While previous studies have focused on comparisons of urban or suburban students' attitudes (e.g., Abu El-Haj, 2007; Rubin, 2007), little in-depth research has taken place with rural students (Atkins & Hart, 2003; Conover & Searing, 2000; Lay, 2006, 2013; Martin & Chiodo, 2007; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Several of the previously listed studies that occur in rural settings, are parts of larger-scale studies that include students from rural, suburban, and urban settings (e.g., Aitkins & Hart, 2003; Conover & Searing, 2000; Lay, 2006; Torney-Purta et al., 2001). However, the results that include rural students are mixed, indicating more research is necessary. In this section, I focus on three notable points evident in rural contexts: strong social networks, struggles with

discussing diverse issues, and impacts of transnational migration.

Strong community. Although there are mixed results, one theme stands out: rural community social networks contribute to youth knowledge and civic engagement. Lay (2006) compared rural and urban high school youth and found that the close social networks characteristic of rural settings offer opportunities for youth to engage in political discussion and develop greater political knowledge. Moreover, African American adolescents and children from low-income families in rural areas demonstrated greater political knowledge than their urban counterparts. Similar results were noted in Atkins and Hart's (2003) study of youth from urban, suburban, and rural schools. Atkins and Hart contend that youth in rural (also middle and upper class) communities have higher levels of civic knowledge, are more politically tolerant, and more likely to participate in community service than youth in high-poverty urban neighborhoods. Atkins and Hart argue that high-poverty, urban neighborhoods make it more challenging than rural and suburban areas for youth to develop their civic identity.

Conover and Searing (2000) also surveyed students in urban (a blue collar community in Philadelphia, a Hispanic community in San Antonio), suburban (a community in North Carolina), and rural communities (a farm community in Minnesota) to ask students to define *citizenship*. From their study, "nearly 60 percent of the students in suburban and urban communities said, 'A person who has legal rights.' Yet in the rural communities, a majority of the students said that a citizen is 'a member of the community'" (p. 99).

Community and social networks are also noted by youth. Martin and Chiodo (2007) conducted a study utilizing surveys and interviews in rural schools to determine the perceptions of eighth and eleventh grade students regarding citizenship. They wanted to find out what rural students believe are the characteristics of good citizens, how they participate in citizenship activities, and what citizenship activities they believe they will perform as adults. Martin and Chiodo posit that students' views of citizenship were most often grounded in community service and other community activities. In addition, the term "community" was frequently stated in the majority of interview and survey responses. Yet, rarely did the terms "country" or "nation" appear in student comments.

In the youth development literature, young people's health and well-being are consistently correlated with their affective ties to their communities (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). For ethnic minority youth specifically, a sense that they matter to other residents of their communities provides the emotional sustenance that enables them to bridge to the mainstream (McLaughlin, 1993). Thus small, rural towns may grant more opportunities for youth to foster community connections. Community connections matter because how citizens identify with and participate in their social community often predicts civic participation and integration (Delli Carpini, 2000; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997).

Discussing diversity. When working with rural students, researchers have noticed a tendency to detract from discussions about diversity. For example, Gimpel, Lay, and Schuknecht (2003) reported that White high school students in rural areas attending homogeneous (majority White) schools were "slower to respond to questions related to diversity" (p. 21). The researchers explained, "It was obvious from the coaxing we had to

do that they (White students) had never really considered this issue before" (p. 21). Gimpel and colleagues noticed that their rural youth were more reluctant than the suburban youth to state "anything that could be construed as critical or prejudiced toward racial minorities" (p. 21). Perhaps the students were more polite than urban students or maybe they have harbored prejudiced views, nevertheless, they were hesitant to discuss issues about diversity. Washington and Humphries (2012) examined eleventh and twelfth graders at one school in rural Florida comprised of predominantly White, rural, socioeconomically disadvantaged students. During and after discussions of controversial issues, multiple youth expressed racist views either privately with the teacher or during the classroom discussion. Gimpel et al. (2003) and Washington and Humphries' study indicates the school context and the larger community in which it is placed do matter when it comes to discussing diversity and teaching controversial issues. Although both of these studies occurred in homogeneous settings, it should not be generalized that all students in similar settings are reluctant to discuss diversity. Furthermore, this brings in the question of how other White students from ethnically homogeneous and diverse rural towns may respond to similar discussions. And, as some rural towns across the United States are becoming more ethnically diverse, how issues about diversity are discussed should be further researched. As discussed in the next section, transnational migration influences the development of civic identity.

Transnational migration. Transnational migrations of people bring additional elements to the construction of civic identity. As more people travel and migrate globally, communities, affiliations, and citizenship status take on more complex significance.

Often immigration is aligned with urban areas, but growing numbers of immigrants are choosing to settle in small rural towns. The following studies describe how individuals, both immigrants and non-immigrants, are impacted by transnational migration.

Lay (2012) investigated native White youth growing up in five small towns throughout Iowa to examine how political attitudes and inclinations of native adolescents change as a result of changing demographics. She utilized quantitative methods to compare two towns with immigrant populations with three towns that were ethnically homogeneous. Her study indicated that with time, White youth in formerly ethnically homogeneous towns adapt fairly well to rapid ethnic diversification. They are more tolerant of immigrant groups and are less likely to see immigrants as outsiders.

Scholarship from anthropology has examined the experiences of Latino/as living in the United States. Murillo and Villenas (1997) created the phrase "New Latino Diaspora" to explain areas without traditional Latino presence to which Latinos have increasingly migrated. Research on the New Latino Diaspora has shown negative, positive, and hybrid ways that long-standing White residents decipher newcomers (Wortham, Mortimer, & Allard, 2009). For example, Wortham, Murillo, and Hamann (2002) examined how Mexican immigration has challenged individuals in host communities to make sense of the new community members. They found that in areas where Latinos have lived for more than three decades, negative stereotypes about Mexicans held by the majority are more likely to become entrenched. In other areas of more recent migration, stereotypes of Mexican identity are usually less established; these "locations allow more flexible and sometimes more hopeful immigrant identities"

(Wortham, Mortimer, & Allard, 2009, p. 392). Such towns may potentially offer opportunities to develop models of how communities can productively live together.

Other studies exhibit positive and negative attitudes toward immigrants migrating to rural towns. First, Grey and Woodrick (2005) assert that the majority of the residents in rural towns are ambivalent; they fear immigrants but also hope that they may bring economic and social improvements. Second, Zúñiga and Hernández-León (2005) contend that some native residents welcome immigrants and imagine positive futures living together in their community. On the other hand, Jensen (2006) reports that not all residents may see benefits. Some residents worry about the social and economic impact of immigrants who bring with them different languages, racial makeup, and social class standing. Although negative stereotypes toward diversity persist, people living in small towns with increasingly diverse populations also imagine positive futures. In addition, Jensen indicates that native-born rural residents see immigrants bringing youthful energy, new skills, new economic opportunities, and a low-skilled labor force.

Given the small populations of rural towns, any sizable immigration flow may be profoundly felt. Immigrant newcomers speaking a different language, celebrating cultural events, eating ethnic foods, and practicing different religions may potentially spark intolerance and fear in rural populations that have remained stable for generations. However, immigration presents benefits, especially to towns with declining economies and populations. How immigrants adapt and are accepted in small towns depends upon a conglomerate of factors including social, historical, and cultural processes (Vygotsky, 1978).

How immigrant youth feel a part of the community of their town is just one factor in civic identity development. In the following section, I discuss the conceptual framework that guides how I will examine multiple factors to understand the complexity of how youth construct civic identity.

Conceptual Framework

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1988) ecological model of human development, together with the constructs of transnationalism (Ong, 1999) and imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) form the conceptual framework that guides this study.

Youth experiences are situated (Lave & Wenger, 1991) within social, historical, cultural, and material processes (Vygotsky, 1978). Furthermore, within political and social contexts, several agents (e.g., family, school, religion, media) influence how an individual is politically socialized. Within schools, curriculum, teachers, school climate, and peer groups all may contribute to the political socialization process (Langton, & Jennings, 1968). Civic identity development thus depends upon multiple factors. A strategy to explore these multiple factors is through Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1988) ecological model. This model investigates the complexity of social context and adopts a systemic approach to study youth civic development. It examines how an individual develops and functions within systems such as the family, school, peer groups, organizations, community, and institutions. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model points to the importance of the interconnections between contexts and how circumstances in one context can influence another context. For example, the ecological

model would consider how belonging to a religious organization could possibly ameliorate some of the negative impacts of attending a poorly resourced school.

Bronfenbrenner postulates that the entire ecological system in which personal growth occurs needs to be considered to understand human development. This system is composed of five socially organized subsystems (microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem) that support and guide human development. Furthermore, within and between each system are bi-directional influences. These influences imply that relationships have an impact in two directions, both away from and toward the individual. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model exemplifies how students influence their social environments and are influenced by the multiple social, cultural, and political contexts in which they belong. However, the model does not explicitly point out the influences of transnational experiences. Therefore, embedded within the ecological model, I add a transnational dimension.

Transnationalism defines the heightened interconnectivity between people living or experiencing more than one nation-state. This is important because some students in this study were first- and second-generation immigrants that exhibited social and cultural connections to multiple nations. Because of globalization, the movement across political borders has become increasingly more fluid as people migrate. As individuals move between nation-states, their sense of belonging to a specific nation is redefined with their new experience. In tandem, civic identity is also renegotiated through experiences within and between places. Studies of civic identity thus need to contemplate how migrants live and imagine their transnational lives (Ong, 1999) and define their communities of

belonging. In part, this pertains to their symbolic bonds to their home countries rather than citizenship as a formal and legal status (Faist, 2000; Myers & Zaman, 2009). A way to capture how individuals define and construct their cultural, social, and national communities of belonging is to examine the concept of imagined community.

Anderson (1983) coined the concept "imagined community" to explain how people feel affiliated to a political or cultural group. An imagined community is a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group. This idea differs from an actual community because it is not based on the everyday face-to-face interactions between its members, but rather it is established through national allegiances, communication, and shared culture. Put another way, it is the idea of a person belonging to a larger group in concept only. Imagined communities include social and cultural (e.g., religious and language groups) identities, but most often it refers to nation-states. For example, it defines how individuals feel part of the United States or how Europeans feel a sense of belonging to the European Union. In another example, Anderson defines past Creole states (new world colonies) as imagined communities that were formed and led by people who shared a common language and common descent with those against whom they fought.

Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination. However, the construction of an imagined community is dependent on how people are structurally positioned to participate. Some people may not be equally positioned or do not feel equally positioned to participate fully and on equal basis with other members of the

community (Castles & Davidson, 2000). Minority groups within the United States, for example, may have had a tenuous relationship with the imagined community of the United States as a result of being framed as less than ideal citizens or as foreigners (Ladson-Billings, 2004).

It is an important to note that individuals' conceptions and identities related to citizenship are not fixed, rather they are fundamentally complex, flexible, and multiple (Mitchell & Parker, 2008; Myers, & Zaman, 2009; Ong, 1999). In other words, citizenship is not a fixed legal status: citizen formation is a dynamic process dependent on shifting beliefs, allegiances, and identities dependent on social cultural context. Therefore, how individuals construct their imagined communities or define their role as citizens transforms with experience. Thus, as Mitchell and Parker (2008) have demonstrated, citizenship categories and allegiances are socially complex, constructed, and contingent, and continuously evolving.

Although the ecological model is the primary conceptual framework, transnational and imagined communities take into account the youth experiences of migration and globalization. Together, these concepts provided an in-depth analysis of how individuals construct and negotiate their civic identity.

Conclusion

The examination of how youth feel American and define their sense of belonging is important for maintaining democracy. As Dudley and Gitelson (2002) assert:

> Although one may forcefully argue that the nation continues to flourish as a democratic institution under the present conditions of political literacy and

> engagement, the limited empirical knowledge that we have of the quality of civic life in our country suggests the need for a clearer understanding of what we know about politics and how, if at all, we link that knowledge to civic engagement. Only then can we make informed (and normative) decisions about appropriate standards of civic education and civic engagement for our youth and throughout the life cycle. (p. 180-181)

Adolescence is a period when identity development is crucial, when young people explore who they are, what groups they belong to, and how they and others like them fit into social and cultural communities. Therefore, in order to support and maintain an inclusive democracy, further research should examine how youth from diverse backgrounds construct and negotiate their civic identity, particularly in rural spaces that have remained under-explored throughout the literature.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The primary aim of this study was to understand how young people from multiple diverse backgrounds in rural Minnesota construct and negotiate their civic identity. I employed an embedded case studies design (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2009) in following a group of seventh grade students as they experienced civic education at one rural secondary school. Data were collected over the course of five months, from October 2013 through February 2014. I utilized qualitative research methods, including interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, with the purpose to investigate how the curriculum, instruction, classroom climate, and social interactions factor into how youth living in a rural community conceptualize and negotiate their current and future civic identity.

Research Design

All case study research aims to derive an in-depth, descriptive understanding of single or multiple cases situated in their real world contexts (Yin, 2009). Case study research can be particularly useful for studying an event, process, program, group, or individual in an in-depth, holistic way that allows for deep understanding (Merriam, 1998). Case study is differentiated from other research strategies because the primary focus of the research is a bounded unit or case; the case is "a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries" (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). Case studies are holistic and context sensitive (Patton, 2002) and are designed to capture close-up realities to produce a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of participants' lived experiences. The present study was suitable for a case study design because it represented a bounded system that needed

“detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). The primary units of analysis were the classrooms situated in the rural community. However, subunits – each of the fourteen focal students – were also examined. As such, an embedded case study design was most suitable for this study.

Embedded case studies are studies that contain more than one subunit of analysis and different levels of data are collected (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Yin, 2009). The primary factor in utilizing an embedded design was the embedded or nested nature of the context in which student learning took place. Student learning at the individual level was nested or embedded within the context of the classroom, school, and community. Baxter and Jack (2008) posit the benefit of embedded case study design is the opportunity to examine the case through analysis “within the subunits separately (within case analysis), between the different subunits (between case analysis) or across all of the subunits (cross-case analysis)” (p. 550). Embedded case study design allowed for the investigation of the multiple ways youth construct their civic identity, as well as the multiple influences on those constructions.

For this study, I distinguished between layers of case boundaries (see Figure 1). One layer included two groups of students, each group from a separate seventh grade classroom taught by the same teacher. To understand the complex classroom context, all students in each classroom were included in the study, but most attention was focused on purposely-selected focal students. Therefore, another layer included 14 focal students who were embedded within each classroom. These focal students represented individual

subunits and were interviewed and more carefully observed within their classroom and school building.

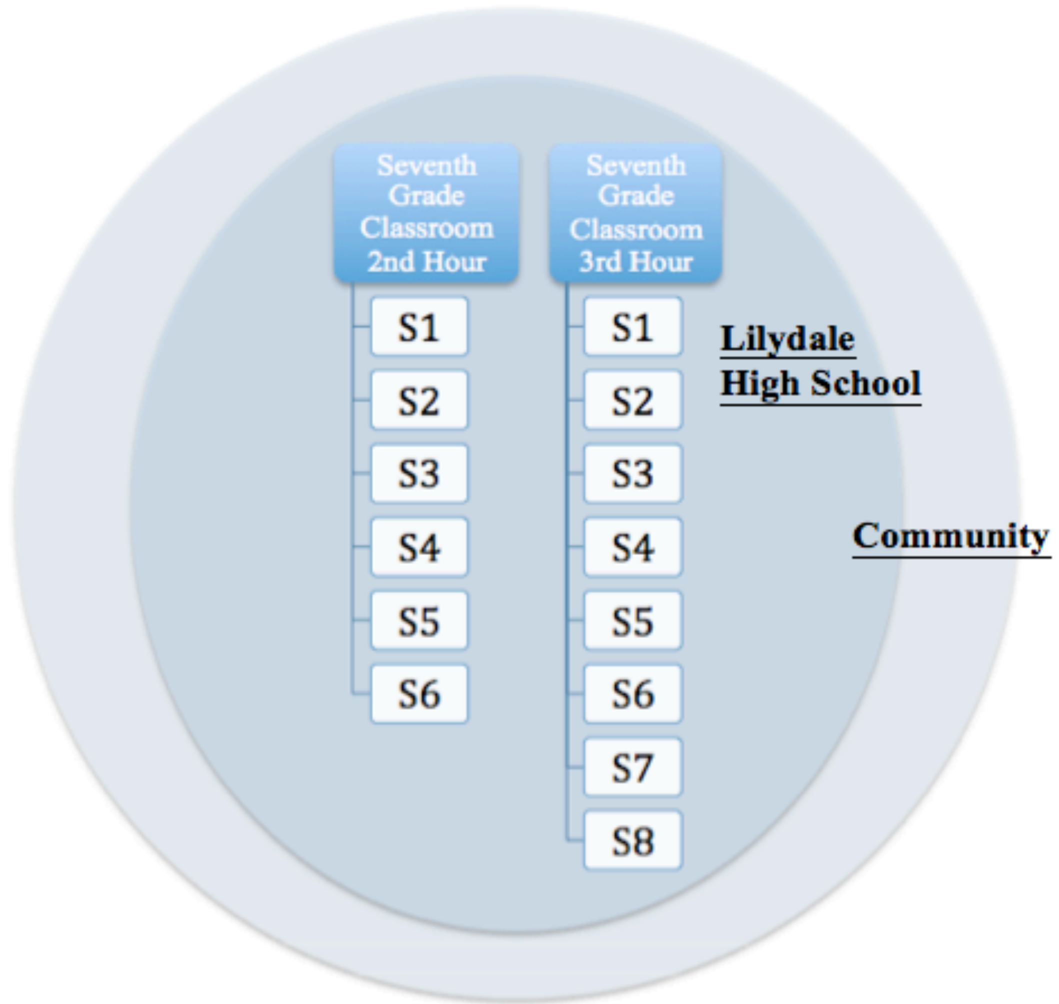

Figure 1. Diagram of Embedded Case Boundaries

Due to the multiple socialization influences on youth, I also recognized the multiple contexts, such as the school and rural community where students operate and construct their civic identity. Students come to the classroom with experiences and

opinions. Accordingly, I evaluated possible community, social, and other educational factors that influenced the classroom and students. For example, the majority of the Latino students reported they had strong connections to their community's Catholic church and participated in church-related activities such as food drives and holiday events. Their church served as a factor in determining their sense of being a good citizen within their community and framed how they conceptualized civic engagement. From the interviews, it was clear that youths' perceptions were influenced by social organizations and settings outside of school; nevertheless, the youth indicated that they primarily learned about citizenship in their Civics course. Hence, the embedded case study design was particularly relevant to examine students' experiences within multiple contexts, where the boundaries between the area of investigation and context are not clearly evident (Scholz & Tietje, 2003).

Setting

According to Stake (1995), the primary consideration when selecting a case should be "to maximize what we can learn" (p. 4). Due to the changing demographics across rural Minnesota (Nathan, 2006) and the shortage of scholarly research of youth living in small towns (Lay, 2012), to maximize what I could learn, it was appropriate to frame this study to meet the needs indicated by research. Accordingly, I utilized criterion sampling, which involves searching for information-rich cases that meet specific criteria defined by the researcher (Patton, 2002). I decided to select a school that met the following criteria: (1) located in a rural setting, (2) included a high percentage of first- and second-generation immigrant students, (3) had experienced a recent demographic

change due to immigration, and (4) had a relatively small population (my search included towns with a population of fewer than 5,000 people). This correlates with how Harde and Reeve (2003) describe rural schools—their characteristics include a town population of fewer than 5,000 people with a school district enrollment of fewer than 2,500 students.

I purposefully selected possible school sites by searching the U.S. Census Reports and the Minnesota's Department of Education online databases. I found nine schools that matched the criteria and learned that across Minnesota there are small towns that are becoming increasingly diversified due to immigration. Ultimately, I decided to examine a school that was located near the town in which I grew up. A high school in the town of Lilydale met all the above criteria. Furthermore, due to personal connections, I knew it was likely that I would be granted access for research purposes. One of the social studies teachers at the school worked as a media specialist in my former high school while I was a student. In addition, I had other personal connections to the community: the editor of the local newspaper is a family friend, several of my former high school peers live around the community, and a member of my immediate family had completed several construction projects in the area.

In February of 2013, I emailed Mr. Larsen, Mr. Berg, and Mr. Haley, the only social studies teachers at Lilydale High School, to explain this study. All three responded that they were willing to participate. Next, I sent an email to the school principal requesting approval. He agreed as long as the three social studies teachers approved. He also mentioned that I did not need to seek permission from anyone else or complete any forms. In March, I visited the school to meet with the principal and social studies

teachers. I observed each social studies teacher for two class periods and casually chatted with students. From these meetings and observations, I was confident that this site was appropriate for my study. Then in October 2013, I received approval from the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board to conduct my study. In October, the student participants were informed of the research activities involved in the study and alerted to the fact that I would select students for interviews, observe classes, and audiotape class sessions and interviews.

Lilydale is a small rural town in Minnesota roughly 200 miles from Minneapolis and St. Paul. Lilydale has a population of about 3,000 residents. The town was established in the 1860s as a British trading post. Once established, farmers settled the community, and the majority of people were of Christian, Norwegian, and/or German descent. But since the 1990s, the town has gained a more ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse population. Lilydale opened a meat-processing plant that has attracted individuals seeking jobs from multiple countries, including Bosnia, Somalia, Guatemala, and Mexico. In total, over 700 immigrants and refugees have arrived in Lilydale to live permanently, changing the face and demographics of the town.

Lilydale High School. The town of Lilydale has one public school system that includes an elementary school (preschool through sixth grade) and a high school (seventh to twelfth grades). The setting of this study was Lilydale High School. The high school is located in a traditional two-story brick building on the main street of Lilydale and is accessible to the community; this is the location where individuals come to vote, where community organizations meet, and where city meetings take place. Like other small

rural towns, it serves as a central gathering place or hub for several community events. At the high school, the administration, staff, and faculty are predominantly White, and the majority of individuals I spoke with were originally from Lilydale and nearby surrounding communities. There were two staff members who were not White, a Somali female born in Kenya who worked as an office aide, and a Chinese female born in Minneapolis who worked as a cultural liaison. The school has a population of 500 students. Of those students, roughly 40% are non-White students, most of whom are Latino/a. Other students are Vietnamese, Somali, Ethiopian, Bosnian, Russian, Croatian, and Chinese. In addition, according to the principal, 37% of the high school students are eligible for reduced or free lunch, and 12% are provided special education services.

The classroom. Initially, I planned to observe and interview students from multiple grades to gain a broad understanding of students' experiences and perceptions. Ultimately, to narrow my focus, I selected the grade/discipline in which topics related to citizenship would most likely be a major focus. Table 1 lists the social studies subjects taught at Lilydale High School, and at what grade level they are taught.

Table 1

List of Social Studies Subjects by Grade Level

Grade Level	Discipline	Teacher
7th Grade	Civics	Mr. Larsen
8th Grade	World Geography	Mr. Haley
9th Grade	Social Studies	Mr. Berg
10th Grade	American History	Mr. Berg
11th Grade	World History	Mr. Larsen
12th Grade	Geography and Economics	Mr. Haley

From discussions with the three social studies teachers, it was decided that the most appropriate option was to conduct this study in Mr. Larsen's seventh grade Civics classroom. The class covered topics such as democracy, citizenship, civic engagement, diversity, United States nation building, the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the history of early America. Mr. Larsen explained that during Civics students would discuss civic ideals and practices and would engage in classroom conversations about citizenship-related topics. I believed listening to these discussions would broaden my understanding of students' civic identity development. Further, it would assist when interviewing the selected students because I could pose questions concerning citizenship-related topics they discussed in class. From observations and interviews, I captured the students' learning experiences and immediate responses and reflections.

Mr. Larsen. Mr. Larsen teaches seventh grade Civics. Since 1992, he has been a teacher and coach at Lilydale High School. Mr. Larsen and his wife have raised two boys in the community; the youngest is currently an eleventh grade student at the high school, the oldest is a freshman at a Minnesota higher education institution. Both boys played sports, were highly involved in school activities, and had Mr. Larsen as a teacher and coach. Mr. Larsen is a Christian, White male in his upper 40s. He was born and raised in a community about 50 miles from Lilydale. He earned his teacher's license at a nearby college and received a Master's Degree (partially online) from a college in St. Paul, MN. He is the head coach of the varsity football and basketball teams and also leads student council. He is engaged in school and community activities, heads fundraising initiatives,

and is proud of the diversity present at Lilydale High School. When asked about the school, Mr. Larsen said:

> One of our school's greatest assets is the diversity that we embrace. Our students gain life skills that cannot be taught in a classroom because of their opportunities to interact and become friends with people of different backgrounds and cultures. (D. Larsen, personal communication, November 5, 2013)

Mr. Larsen embraces having a diverse classroom and integrates students' backgrounds into his lectures. His teaching includes lectures, dynamic storytelling, PowerPoints with cartoon images (most often of Calvin and Hobbes), student note-taking, videos, and worksheets. His curriculum closely follows the sequence of chapters in the textbook *Civics: Government and Economics in Action* (Davis, Fernlund, & Woll, 2009). A typically day includes: (1) a short introduction of content and activities for the day, (2) viewing of *CNN Student News* followed by a short teacher-led discussion, (3) lecture or video in which students take notes, (4) worksheet or occasional student group activity, and (5) brief conclusion. Mr. Larsen carries light humor into his teaching, often discusses basketball, and tells stories to motivate his students to succeed in their academic and social pursuits outside of the classroom. For example, he frequently would cite motivational statements from Stephen Covey's book, *The 7 Steps of Highly Effective People.*

Each day at Lilydale, I observed Mr. Larsen's second (8:50 – 9:45) and third hour (9:50-10:45) Civics classes. The students sat in rows of assigned seats, and a few students sat at larger tables near the back of the room. Mr. Larsen's desk was in the front of the

room. The room felt crowded and had somewhat of a unorganized, messy feel; there are several shelves with textbooks and curriculum materials, a large statue of Abraham Lincoln, inspirational posters on the walls, multiple maps, and two large white boards on the walls that were typically covered with historical dates and social studies terms. Routinely, Mr. Larsen was somewhat disorganized and would often start class five minutes after the bell; during those five minutes, students would be casually chatting, playing games on their smartphones, or reading silently.

Participants

Participant selection for this study was designed to provide the greatest depth of understanding of how students construct their civic identity at the individual, classroom, school, and community level. I purposefully selected students from the two classrooms. Second hour had 22 students, of which 10 (45%) were from minority backgrounds. Third hour had 24 students, of which 9 (38%) were minorities (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Classroom Demographics (n = 46)**

Second Hour Civics	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Asian	1	1	2
African	1	0	1
Western European	6	6	12
Latino	2	4	6
American Indian	0	1	1
2nd Hour Total	**10**	**12**	**22**

Third Hour Civics	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Asian	0	0	
African	1	0	1
Western European	9	6	15
Latino	5	1	6
Bosnian	2	0	2
3rd Hour Total	**17**	**7**	**24**
Total (Second and Third)	**27**	**19**	**46**

**Based on student reported data.*

Participant selection was based on (1) having an array of cultural backgrounds represented, (2) obtaining a balance of males and females, and (3) students' willingness to participate in this study. In November of 2013, I distributed a questionnaire (see Appendix A) to students that included items that addressed demographics (age, gender, language spoken at home, religion, country of birth, parents' country of birth), availability, and willingness to participate. I did not want to make any assumptions about students' backgrounds, thus I asked students to describe their own cultural backgrounds rather then select from a predetermined list. This granted students an opportunity to provide more information in their own words about their background. For example, on the questionnaire Kayla wrote, "I am Jewish. My family originally immigrated from England and Germany. My Stepmom is Romanian, we sometimes speak Romanian in our house." I also asked, *What does citizenship mean to you?* to assess students' current understandings of citizenship. From the questionnaires, informal conversations with students, classroom observations, and conversations with Mr. Larsen, I purposefully

selected 14 students—six students from second hour and eight students from third hour. I chose to select students from two seventh grade Civics classrooms to obtain a diverse array of perspectives and to consider how classroom climate may be associated with civic identity (see Table 3).

Table 3

Focal Students (n = 14)

Name	**Hour**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Background**	**Country of Birth**	**Parents' Country of Birth**	**Languages**	**Frequency of English Spoken at Home**
Amina	3rd	Female	12	Bosnian	USA	Dad: Bosnian Mom: Bosnian	Bosnian and English	Most of the time
Hana	3rd	Female	12	Bosnian	USA	Dad: Bosnia Mom: Bosnia	Bosnian and English	Most of the time
Omar	2nd	Male	13	Mexican, Guatemalan	USA	Dad: Guatemala Mom: Mexico	English and Spanish	Most of the time
Gabby	3rd	Female	12	Mexican	USA	Dad: Mexico Mom: Mexico	Spanish and English	Sometimes
Martina	3rd	Female	12	Mexican	USA	Dad: Mexico Mom: Mexico	Spanish and English	Most of the time
Rosa	3rd	Female	12	Mexican	USA	Dad: Mexico Mom: Mexico	Spanish and English	Sometimes
Mia	2nd	Female	13	Mexican	USA	Dad: Mexico Mom: Mexico	English (some Spanish)	Most of the time
Kelli	3rd	Female	13	Mexican and White	USA	Dad: USA Mom: USA	English and Spanish	Most of the time
Muna	3rd	Female	11	Somali	Kenya	Dad: Somalia Mom: Somalia	Somali and English	Sometimes

Name	Hour	Gender	Age	Background	Country of Birth	Parents' Country of Birth	Languages	Frequency of English Spoken at Home
Thao	2nd	Male	14	Vietnamese	Vietnam	Dad: Vietnam Mom: Vietnam	Vietnamese and English	Sometimes
Travis	2nd	Male	13	White	USA	Dad: USA Mom: USA	English	Always
Hunter	2nd	Male	13	White	USA	Dad: USA Mom: USA	English	Always
Ashley	3rd	Female	13	White	USA	Dad: USA Mom: USA	English	Always
Riley	2nd	Female	12	White, Jewish	USA	Dad: USA Stepmom: Romania	English and (some Romanian)	Most of the time

Data Collection

For this qualitative study, interviews were the primary source of data, and observations and documents were secondary sources. I conducted semi-structured interviews with the 14 focal students three times from October 2013 to March 2014. During this time, I observed both Civics classes for 31 days. During classroom observations I took field notes. I also analyzed documents such as worksheets, tests, student work, and other classroom documents and reviewed the textbook. These multiple sources of data were useful for confirming themes and increasing the validity of the research findings (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

Interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews with all 14 focal students. The semi-structured interviews served as starting points for conversations with the students.

Semi-structured interviews provided the flexibility for probing and asking students to reflect on their ideas. In addition, informal (or casual) conversations occurred in school hallways, the social studies classroom, and the lunchroom (Patton, 2002). These conversations typically focused on daily events, social activities, civic learning experiences, and clarification of comments stated in class. These conversations were included in the written field notes. The informal conversations occurred naturally, whereas the semi-structured interviews were scheduled during times most convenient for students.

Each of the fourteen focal students was interviewed three times. I invited students to participate in the interviews either individually or in pairs. I did this to ease the focal students' stress; I believed that interviewing in pairs might create a more comfortable and non-threatening environment for the youth. Further, pairs of students would potentially encourage more conversation and clarification of difficult topics (Krueger & Casey, 2000). However, I also acknowledged that some students might feel more comfortable sharing personal information without another peer present. Thus, I offered the choice. Of the 14 focal students, four students (Sara, Fardowsa, Tommy, and Miguel) initially chose to be interviewed individually; however, two additional students (Jaden and Maria), due to logistical and personal reasons, chose individual interviews for the second and third time. The pairs were selected through informal conversations concerning their personal preferences. When possible, students of similar cultural backgrounds were paired. Students were also given the option of doing the interview in Spanish or English.

All three formal interviews focused on civic identity, each with a different emphasis. The first interview (Appendix B) gathered information about the students' educational and community experiences. The second interview (Appendix C) focused on a major citizenship-related topic they learned about in school. For this, the most relevant topic was the Constitution. Students were asked to reflect on their thoughts and understandings of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and if learning these topics changed how they felt about being American. The third interview (Appendix D) focused on being American, experiencing transnationalism, and defining global and national citizenship. The interview questions in this study were based on similar past projects (Flanagan, 2013; Jahromi, 2011; Simmons, 2013) that explored how students understood and experienced citizenship, civic identity, civic learning experiences, the American Dream, and American ideals and values. In addition, similar to past studies (Barton & McCully, 2010; Epstein, 1998, 2009), I utilized writing activities and pictures as prompts. I hoped these activities would probe students to think more deeply about citizenship and being a citizen. For example, during the second interview students were given the following directions: *Please take a few moments to write down a few words or pictures that display what you learned about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.* This gave students an opportunity to recall any information. I also used pictures to prompt discussion of American citizenship. For the second interview, students were given 25 cards, each with a different symbol (e.g., bald eagle, statue of liberty, fireworks, school building, person working, and big house) that might be associated with being American. I

asked students to reflect on the symbols and to select five symbols that were personally most important.

All formal interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Interviews lasted 20 to 45 minutes. They were scheduled when they were most convenient for the interviewee and least likely to interfere with academic activities. Thus, interviews occurred during lunch, study hall, and after school. All interviews were held in the main office of the school. There were two rooms, a small office and a large conference room, that were typically unused, and so, these were the locations where the interviews took place.

Observations. Prior to selecting focal students and conducting formal interviews, I began classroom observations to meet students, become familiar with the classroom environment, and examine how students interacted with others and experienced learning Civics. In addition, I wanted students to get used to my presence and to establish their sense of comfort with me. During and after observations, I composed field notes on my daily experiences; I wrote about the content, activities, and interactions within the classroom and diagrammed seating charts and the physical space (Merriam, 1998). I noted the focal students' comments, contributions, body language, and their reactions to the content. I also separated the field notes into two sections: descriptive observations of people, events, and social interactions, and speculative-personal reflections (Fetterman, 1998). Throughout the observations, I would add any personal thoughts that reflected themes related to the focus of this study. In addition, to evaluate citizenship-related topics, I utilized a classroom observation protocol (Appendix E) to guide my analysis of

the classroom. The classroom sessions I observed were audio recorded to capture key quotations and conversations among the students and the teacher.

My role within the classroom would be defined as an *observer as participant* (Gold, 1958). I participated in the class activities when appropriate, I worked with small groups, shared information about current events, and assisted students with class activities. My intention was to be available to the teacher and students when needed, but to do little to impact the daily classroom activities. This role allowed the opportunity to "observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity" (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 380) while trying to not impact the usual group activities or become completely "absorbed in the activity" (Merriam, 1998, p. 103). Although I participated in several class activities, my primary role in the classroom and throughout the school was to collect data. The majority of the time in the classroom I sat at a student desk and recorded notes. The teachers, staff, and students were aware of my observation and research activities, and I was soon recognized as the university person always with a notebook.

I believe my presence in the classroom allowed me to foster rapport with students. The students appeared to feel comfortable talking to me during the informal conversations and the formal interviews. Furthermore, during the classroom observations, I typically sat in a desk in the back of the room. I did this because I wanted to distinguish myself from the teacher, I did not want to appear to students that I was grading or assessing them, rather I wanted to appear as an adult that was simply curious about their lives. Students would often talk to me about their day, what they did during the

weekends, and ask how I was. Furthermore, several times Mr. Larsen addressed his classroom of students to discuss the importance of my research study and my role at the University of Minnesota; I believe his respect influenced the students' respect and encouraged student participation.

Document review. I gathered copies of most materials (e.g., worksheets, readings, and quizzes) distributed to students during the class. I made copies of the focal students' schoolwork they completed for Civics class. I also referred to their schoolwork during the interviews to elicit discussion on classroom topics related to citizenship and identity. In addition, Mr. Larsen gave me copies of all students' quizzes and exams to share data concerning student knowledge and understanding of Civics topics. I also reviewed the course textbook to examine how American government, citizenship, diversity, and democracy are represented. In addition, to learn more about the context of the school and community, I surveyed the school website, past and present school publications, and relevant community newspaper articles.

Researcher Subjectivity

We carry our biases and perceptions into each new experience. My study will be influenced by my pre-established beliefs; therefore, it is important to reveal my own subjectivities. I am a White, straight, highly educated female who owns a home in Minneapolis. I am from a rural area, nevertheless, I believe my positionality differs from the lives of the participants. First, the individuals I write about in the three findings chapters are from minority backgrounds and have experiences that I, as an outsider who is White, do not fully comprehend. Next, my highly-education elite status set me apart

from others living in the rural community of Lilydale. In 2011, according to city data reports, educational attainment is lower than the Minnesota average. Fewer people have any college experience and there are no individuals with doctorate degrees living in Lilydale. Third, I tend to be liberally minded; in contrast, the majority of people in the community are more conservative voters. In sum, these differences presented challenges as I conducted this study, however, I do feel that growing up in a rural town presented opportunities to capture an insider view.

I am originally from rural Minnesota and was raised in a small town not far from Lilydale. However, my town was not culturally or ethnically diverse. Most everyone at the school identified as White and Christian. I moved to my town as an eleven-year-old with my "eccentric" family. My family was not Christian, my stepdad had long hair and wore bracelets, and we owned an organic farm and health food store—all unusual occurrences in rural Minnesota. Despite being labeled the "weird family," I enjoyed living in this town, and I cherish my friends and memories, although I never quite felt like I fit in. Being different in a small town is challenging and my experience of being an outsider influenced how I engaged this study. Because of my own experiences, prior to beginning this study, I was concerned that these new students might feel marginalized at school and within the community. However, I was also optimistic because the arrival of students from diverse groups might foster new opportunities for all students to develop tolerance, acceptance of others, and an expanded worldview.

My upbringing in rural America partially shaped how I perceive the world and how I view myself as a citizen. I was impacted by the rural context and by interactions

with other community members. From these experiences, I recognize that my worldview and identity differs from individuals from urban and suburban areas; I realize the positive and negative effects of growing up in this context. Stemming from personal reflection is a curiosity about how other individuals from a diverse array of backgrounds and experiences are socialized in similar environments. More specifically, I hoped to learn how a rural context shapes a sense of social belonging, cultural commitments, and national allegiances.

Data Analysis

In an embedded case study design, the analysis of all data begins at the single case level for each sub-unit. The data were first analyzed within each case and at each level (student, classroom) rather than compiling data across all units of analysis (Yin, 2009). After each interview, data were analyzed for each focal student (n = 14). Reviewing data after each interview gave me the opportunity to reflect on the data and create appropriate strategies for collecting new data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Thus, I began the first round of analysis during data collection.

I created a "start list" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of codes prior to data analysis that reflected the predetermined theoretical framework and research questions for this study. After each interview, I implemented the coding process by reading the interview transcripts and looking for the different ways in which each student mentioned civic identity, being American, and citizenship. I searched for similarities, differences, patterns, themes, discrepant evidence, and general categories of responses, and reviewed field notes and documents for any needed clarification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña,

2014). Throughout the coding process, I added new codes (e.g., intercultural relationships and experiences, socioeconomic differences, negative comments toward others' culture) to ensure that the participants' words and thoughts were accurately reflected in the codes. For example, when reading the interview transcripts, I would highlight in yellow any comments that referenced a particular code, then in the margin I would write the code. In the margins I would also italicize my short written reflections.

After all data were collected, I again reviewed data for each individual student to reaffirm codes. This was then followed by a cross-case comparison across all students. These analyses were followed by an investigation of relationships between all levels to reflect the embedded nature of the cases (Yin, 2009). I continued to constantly compare (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) the initial codes with the new codes I developed, and added and extended codes as themes became more apparent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I also compared the written reflections across all interviews and from these comparisons I created additional codes.

Limitations

This study has five primary limitations. First, I investigated one school in rural Minnesota. The experiences of youth depend on the context in which they live. In similar rural schools their experiences differ, thus, the findings are likely not generalizable. Second, the time available to analyze students' experiences was five months. I was unable to measure longitudinal effects. It would be worthwhile to examine how youth construct their civic identity over a longer duration of time. Third, although I am proficient in Spanish, I am unable to speak the native languages of some of the focal

students (i.e., Somali, Bosnian, and Vietnamese). The interviews with these students were in English, as all students were fluent; however, speaking their native language might have fostered a greater level of trust and increased the depth of our conversations. Fourth, I interviewed only seventh grade students. Their ideas concerning citizenship-related topics are not as developed and defined as students of older grades. During the interviews, a few students voiced short, quick answers; thus, I asked numerous follow-up questions to elicit more complex responses. Fifth, the classroom I selected did not present the fruitful amount of data I had hoped to gather. During the observation period, Mr. Larsen's instruction was predominately lecture-based. The students completed textbook-generated worksheets and texts. I had hoped to gather data from student-centered activities and discussions to capture students' current and changing opinions toward Civics-related topics.

Despite these limitations, I believe my insider status of being raised in a neighboring town that students had visited helped establish trust with the teachers and students. In turn, the participants viewed me as someone they could confide in and share their ideas, stories, thoughts, and opinions. I also believed the interviews were appropriately scheduled. Spending time in the classroom and establishing relationships with students prior to the first interview allowed for a more comfortable interview setting. Because students had frequent informal discussions with me, they appeared more at ease and more eager to share personal details about their lives. In addition, spacing the three interviews throughout the data collection period was beneficial because I had the opportunity to discuss with students how their ideas about Civics topics changed upon

learning new information. Furthermore, Mr. Larsen spoke very highly of me to his students; his respect motivated students to treat me similarly. His assistance was extremely helpful in recruiting student participation, locating space to conduct interviews, and introducing me to other teachers and students.

Chapter Layout

In this dissertation I primarily focus on six of the minority focal students. The first findings chapter (Chapter Four) includes a description of Amina and Hana, two Bosnian youth who are first cousins. Their experiences and backgrounds are very similar, and thus their experiences are written in a joint narrative format; however, I do indicate their differences when relevant. Because Amina and Hana were interviewed together, their comments and reflections are interwoven. Chapter Five presents a different format. There are similarities between Omar, Mia, and Gabby, the three Latino students, but there are also important distinctions. Thus, I interviewed each student individually. Although I asked the same open-ended questions, each interviewee was unique. To capture the uniqueness of each student, I felt I needed to write a section within Chapter Five dedicated to each student. At the conclusion of the Chapter Five I compare their experiences. In the third findings chapter, Chapter Six, I write about one student, Thao, an immigrant youth from Vietnam. He was the only student in the two classrooms who was Vietnamese. Because his experiences and background differed from the other students, it did not feel appropriate to group him with other students. However, I felt that his narrative was important to discuss because his experience represents a norm in rural Minnesota schools where there are only a few students of a single minority group. In

sum, I believe these three chapters exemplify a variety of student experiences at Lilydale High School, a school located in rural Minnesota.

Chapter Four: Being American, Being Bosnian

Mr. Larsen: Okay, if you are White, please stand up.

Amina: Am I White? (*Whispers to Mr. Larsen.)*

Mr. Larsen: Where are you from again?

Amina: Bosnia.

Mr. Larsen: Yes, you are White.

(*Amina stands up, then upon seeing this, Hana stands up.*)

Amina and Hana are second-generation Bosnian female immigrants. Amina asked Mr. Larsen, her seventh grade Civics teacher, if she was White during a class activity. Mr. Larsen had directed students to stand up if they were White; his intent was for students to see the percentage of students standing versus sitting to demonstrate the abundance of cultural diversity present in the classroom. However, Amina and Hana expressed uncertainty about how to be categorized; they did not feel confident in standing up because they were unsure if being Bosnian was simultaneous with being White. How Amina and Hana position themselves as White and as Bosnian factor into how they construct their civic identity, feel American, and define their national and cultural allegiances.

Civic identity is the sense of how an individual perceives to be a citizen and political actor within a social or national context. It defines how individuals feel a sense of allegiance and solidarity to a political or cultural community. Thus, examining how Amina and Hana experience being Bosnian, being White, being American, and conceptualize citizenship and democratic life offers an understanding of how transnational youth (including second-generation youth) construct their civic identity.

This chapter illustrates how two female second-generation Bosnian immigrants remember the Bosnian War, experience civic education, define their identity, and conceptualize transnational citizenship.

In qualitative research what the researcher decides to write partially depends on personal experiences, preferences, and the interactions and relationships formed with the participants (Mosselson, 2010). Amina and Hana appeared to be open and honest during the interviews; they gave thoughtful responses, and told personal stories, stories I believe they did not tell many people. During class, Amina would regularly share information about her day, while Hana was more hesitant, but both girls would often cast smiles in my direction. I must admit that Amina and Hana were two of my favorite students. I believe we established a strong bond of respect and trust. In addition, the motivation to select these girls as focal students was sparked from my past experiences living in Hungary and traveling throughout Eastern Europe and the Balkan Peninsula. When I was in Bosnia, I was instructed to only walk on designated paths to avoid still active landmines. There was also notable evidence of the war visible in destroyed buildings and written graffiti messages of war on concrete walls. My interest in Bosnia and its history, in part, influenced the probing questions I asked during the interviews. The relationships I established with both girls, my experiences traveling in the Balkan Peninsula, and my eagerness to study the Balkan region compelled the writing of this chapter.

Background

The country of Bosnia and Herzegovina (commonly called Bosnia) is located on the Balkan Peninsula in Southeastern Europe. It is mostly landlocked albeit a small strip

of land (12 miles) situated along the Adriatic Sea. It is bordered by Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Its capital and largest city is Sarajevo (for complete cultural history of Balkan Peninsula see Kaplan, 1993). After the Second World War Bosnia became part of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a communist republic under the rule of Marshall Tito. To appease nationalistic sentiments, the Republic was divided into six divisions: Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia (Kaplan, 1993). During the early 1990s, the fall of communism and the unraveling of Yugoslavia allowed ethnic and cultural tensions, primarily among Bosnians, Serbs, and Croatians to surface. The question of how to establish national borders was problematic. In 1992, Bosnia claimed official independence as a sovereign state, however multiple ethnic groups lived in Bosnia, including Serbs. The Bosnian Serbs, supported by neighboring Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia, wanted to unite all ethnic Serbs to create a Serbian-controlled territory. Serbs thus responded to Bosnian independence with armed resistance, which led to the Bosnian War, a complex, bloody conflict among multiple ethnic groups.

The Bosnian War extended from 1992 through 1995. The War was intensified by Serbian nationalism and ethnic conflicts among the Serbian, Muslim, and Croatian populations within the region. More than 100,000 people lost their lives (death toll varies by source), and about two million Bosnians were displaced from their homes (Coughlan & Owens-Manley, 2006). Many people who were displaced migrated to Western Europe and the United States. Even more catastrophic, the Serbian expansionism included ethnic cleansing or genocide of Bosnian Muslims living within Bosnia. Serbs perpetrated

unlawful confinement, mass murder, mass rape, and torture primarily against Bosnian Muslims and other minority groups. The Bosnian War caused the destruction of Sarajevo and multiple Bosnian cities and towns. It officially came to an end in 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. At the war's end, many displaced Bosnians resided in refugee camps or fled Bosnia because they were unable to return to their homes.

During and after the war, individuals who had never anticipated leaving their home country of Bosnia were pushed out by Serbs fighting to create a Serbian-only region. Many who fled had family and friends who had been killed, had fought as soldiers, or were "harassed, molested, raped, and imprisoned during the war" (Franz, 2005, p. 13). The Bosnians became refugees; their lives were dramatically altered because they depended on other countries for resettlement options (Coughlan & Owens-Manley, 2006). During and after the War, 1.2 million Bosnians emigrated out of Bosnia (Valenta & Ramet, 2011). The majority of Bosnians settled in European countries (e.g., Slovenia, Croatia, Germany, Austria, and Sweden), but many migrated to the United States.

The first wave of Bosnians migrated to the United States during the mid-1900s. It is estimated that between 1991 and 2007, 120,000 Bosnian migrated to the United States (Franz, 2005; U.S. Census, 2010). However, the exact number of Bosnian immigrants in the United States is difficult to estimate due to changing national European borders. Prior to 1992, before Bosnia became an independent state, immigrants from Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, and Slovenia were categorized as Yugoslavian. In addition, due to their similar ethno-linguistic backgrounds, immigrants

from this region were occasionally labeled Slavs. But after the separation of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslavian identity was replaced with more distinct national labels (Mosselson, 2010).

For the majority of Bosnians, settling in the United States was predominately a positive experience (Coughlan, 2011); 72 percent of refugees described their lives as "very good" or "excellent" (Coughlan & Owens-Manley, 2006). Coughlan (2011) interviewed 100 families living in a Bosnian community in New York. From qualitative interview data, he reported that Bosnians were quickly able to find employment upon arrival, even with limited English proficiency, primarily because employers perceived Bosnians to have an excellent work ethic. Ramet and Valenta (2011) believe a smooth resettlement occurred because employers and community members held sympathy toward Bosnians, as they were "victims of unjust aggression" (p. 322). Hence, Bosnian adults were employed, eventually bought inexpensive houses, and promptly became self-sufficient (Coughlan, 2011).

Despite positive experiences, Bosnian migration and resettlement has also presented challenges. For example, many Bosnians experienced grief, loss, and mourning as a result of the war (Miskovic, 2011). Some Bosnians felt socially isolated living in a new land with a new language; they also felt the sorrow of being displaced from their former home and community (Miller et al., 2002). Resettlement experiences varied between Bosnian groups. It was more difficult for older Bosnians, who lacked English proficiency and had lost money because of the war, to regain their former professional or leadership status (Coughlan, 2011). In contrast, the younger Bosnians harvested more

opportunistic feelings; they were eager to start new projects and work toward academic and social goals (Miller et al., 2002). Women also adapted to their new lives in the United States more smoothly than the men who had traditionally served as the primary breadwinners (Franz, 2005). In addition, migration and resettlement experiences were easier for the wealthier, educated urban population than the less-educated, rural population (Coughlan, 2011). In sum, although resettlement experiences were generally positive, the Bosnian refugees' adjustment to the United States varied by gender, age, education level, and social class.

More than 2,000 Bosnian refugees moved to Minnesota; many settled in Fargo-Moorhead and other communities across Minnesota (Minneapolis Foundation, 2004). In the mid-1990s, an employee of Lilydale's meat processing plant who had followed the news of the Bosnian War persuaded the company to sponsor families of Bosnian refugees. The plant agreed and sponsored two families. With the promise of work and being united with other Bosnians, additional Bosnians soon arrived; many who were supported by community organizations that supplied food, clothing, and furniture and organized apartment living spaces. The majority of Lilydale's Bosnians were Muslim and from the Roma ethnic population who had resided in refugee camps prior to migrating to the United States. A Bosnian individual living in Lilydale explained that there were whole villages in Bosnia that were Roma villages. When villages were diverse, they were kept segregated; for example, one side of town would be Roma and another side of town would be Croatian or Serbian.

In the United States, the children of immigrants are the largest growing population; 20% of youth are children of immigrants (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Although Bosnians are part of the growing population, there are few studies that explore Bosnian youths' adaptation and educational experiences (Miskovic, 2011). There are even fewer studies that examine the experiences of second-generation Bosnian youth, and fewer yet that examine Bosnian youth in rural communities.

Bosnians in Lilydale

Throughout the community, due to the color of their skin, the presence of Bosnians is less noticeable that the presence of the Latino or Somali. There are no Bosnian specialty grocery stores, restaurants, or public gathering areas. It is not customary for Bosnian Muslim women to cover their heads and follow other typical Islamic standards of dress, and as a result, their religious heritage is usually not outwardly apparent. In addition, Bosnians are of European descent. Therefore, unlike other immigrant groups, their ethnic heritage is often hidden under their White appearance.

At Lilydale High School, Bosnians constitute a smaller minority group in comparison to the Latino student population. Because Bosnians are often labeled as White, Caucasian, or of European descent, the exact number of Bosnians enrolled at Lilydale High School is unknown. According to the Lilydale's high school principal, the majority of Bosnian youth are second-generation youth born of immigrant parents. Mr. Larsen and the administrators estimate there are fewer than 45 enrolled Bosnian students. In the seventh grade, there are four Bosnian students, two females and two males.

Participating Students

For this study I interviewed two second-generation Bosnian female students, Amina and Hana. I also observed their classroom interactions, reviewed their schoolwork, and held several informal conversations with them throughout the school day. Initially, Amina was very excited to participate in the study and would routinely ask when we should schedule interviews. Hana was more hesitant; at first, she stated she was not interested. Eventually, due to Amina's persuasions, and, upon gaining more information about the study, she agreed to participate.

Amina. Amina is a cheerful, bubbly thirteen-year-old with many friends. During free time in class, she would move from one group to the next, chatting with other students, displaying her wide smile. During Mr. Larsen's lectures, she would often braid the long blond hair of a female friend. Amina is rather fidgety, would sit half out of her desk during Mr. Larsen's lectures, and would bounce out of her desk when possible. She never spoke out to the large group, but would frequently go to Mr. Larsen's desk in the front of the room and ask him questions about homework assignments and worksheets during class work time. She is a thoughtful young woman who reported that she spends most evenings at home studying. She struggles with schoolwork and explained that it takes her twice as long because her "English is not that good." Amina has a Bosnian accent when speaking English and sometimes has difficulty with English words.

She recently moved from a small apartment to a house where she lives with her Grandmother, parents, older sister, sister's husband, and one little sister. In her household

she is a hard worker and regularly completes chores. During the first interview, she explained:

> I help my family. I help my sister when she needs help. I help my family because my Mom works a lot because we have to pay for our house, and it costs a lot of money and I have to be by her side. And my Dad and my brother-in-law because they are trying to work really hard, so I am trying to help them…Now I am living in a house, now I have to learn how to wash laundry. Do dishes, take care of my nephew when my sister needs to do something. I need to start cleaning up around my house.

She would like to join sports and after school activities, but she explained, "I can't do it because I am the only child in my house that can do some things like cleaning."

Hana. The first time I noticed Hana she had just playfully punched the chest of a seventh grade boy. Hana frequently flirts with her male classmates, wistfully swings her long brown hair over her shoulder, and wears bright, carefully selected outfits. Hana is serious, passionate, and bold. She practices Taekwondo once a week and is determined to earn her black belt. She also plays flute in the junior high band and is a member of the school basketball team during the winter. During the first interview, I had asked Hana to write a short paragraph to begin a conversation about her identity and background. The prompt was: *How would you describe your identity or who you are as a person? Think about your ethnicity, race, religion, and culture.* The response portrays her kind heart and determination:

> I love hanging out with my friends, and I enjoy sports. I hope people consider me as a kind person. I try to be as grateful as possible because my parents started from nothing. I am athletic and I am Bosnian. I have an older sister that was just five when she immigrated with my parent to the U.S.A.

During class she is more preoccupied with writing notes and chatting with friends than listening to Mr. Larsen. Her primary friends are a group of Latina students; she sits with them each day at lunch, and they chat about boys, clothes, and movies. In comparison to other Bosnian families in Lilydale, Hana's family has more money. While the majority of the Bosnian families are housed in small, crowded apartments, Hana's family bought a house almost immediately upon arrival in Lilydale. Hana has one older sister who has become a medical doctor. Hana is very proficient in English and has a less noticeable Bosnian accent than Amina.

Amina and Hana are cousins, their immediate families are quite close, and together they celebrate many holidays and attend social events. Their parents and the majority of their extended family members work at the meat processing plant. The girls' families are Muslim, and they occasionally attend Lilydale's only mosque. The mosque, centrally located in Lilydale, is comprised of a small room attached to the halal grocery store. Bosnians infrequently attend the mosque where the majority of members are Somali. However, despite only occasionally attending the mosque, the girls practice Muslim holidays and traditions, but mostly within their own homes. When asked what is important to their daily lives, both girls expressed the importance of being Muslim. Amina explained, "When we have a holiday that all Muslims celebrate, we go to each

other's houses and sit down and talk and eat a special cake." Despite only occasionally attending the mosque, both girls reported that going to the mosque and celebrating Muslim holidays such as Ramadan with other Bosnian Muslims are important aspects of their lives.

Amina and Hana were both in third hour Civics. Although they are cousins, they rarely speak to each other in class. During work time, when students could select student groups, Hana would typically join with the same group of Latina students while Amina would join a culturally diverse group of females who were White, Latina, or Somali. However, they do look after one another. For instance, one time when Hana was absent, Amina took an extra worksheet and shared her lecture notes.

Amina's and Hana's parents moved to the United States in the early 1990s and have returned to Bosnia to visit family members. However, neither Amina nor Hana has traveled to Bosnia. Both girls stay connected with family members living in Bosnia via Facebook and Skype. They also have had some family members visit. For instance, Amina's Grandmother traveled to Minnesota and promptly declared her dislike of the United States and her eagerness to return home to Bosnia. For the first time, Amina (in June 2014) and Hana (in July 2014) will likely visit Bosnia. Since there are future opportunities to visit Bosnia, Amina and Hana have imagined what Bosnia is like. In both their households, memories of Bosnia are frequently shared, and the conversation of permanently returning to Bosnia has been ongoing among their family members.

Memories of Bosnia

Amina and Hana have yet to step foot in Bosnia, however, their ethnic homeland is remembered through their families' stories and practice of Bosnian traditions. Amina and Hana have taken part in the collective memory that is shared among the small group of Bosnians in the Lilydale community. Collective memory is a "form of memory that transcends individuals and is shared by a group" (Wertsch & Roediger, 2008, p. 318). It encompasses the acts of remembering the important people, places, and events that are often passed from one generation to the next (Wertsch, 2002). For example, the stories of the Bosnian War told to Amina and Hana represent cultural remembering among the Bosnians in Lilydale.

Cultural remembering is evident in how Amina and Hana have internalized their parents' memories and stories of the Bosnian War. During the three interviews, they frequently reflected upon the War as if they had first-hand personal experience. For example, during the first interview when I asked for reasons why their parents moved to Lilydale, they discussed the War.

Hana: We came here because of the Bosnian War.

Amina: And they needed a job, so they worked at the plant. And they liked the raises, so they kept on working there for like 15 years.

Jessamay: So when your family moved here, was Lilydale the first place that they lived in the United States?

Hana/Amina: Yeah. (*In unison.*)

Jessamay: They came right here to Lilydale?

Amina: They did not have much money because of the war.

Here, Hana's use of "we" signifies that she and her family arrived in Lilydale because of the war. She had not yet been born, but she seems to indicate that she also feels that she migrated. Although this is the only use of "we" in this passage, other times throughout the interview "we" was used to describe past events the girls did not directly experience. The above passage also describes an element of hardship and the loss of money due to the war. Later in the interview these hardships were further discussed as if Amina and Hana had direct experience.

Jessamay: Do your parents talk about the war?

Amina: Sometimes.

Hana: My mom tells stories about it.

Amina: Like how they had us stay quiet and we barely had food and water. My sister got a kidney infection because she was carrying water for our family and yeah. It was hard and tough.

During this passage, Amina utilizes the word "us," which like "we" seems to signify that the event was directly experienced. The story is unclear, it is uncertain how the kidney infection occurred, but the hardships (fear, lack of food, illness) are remembered.

Hardships and memories of the war transcended into other aspects of Amina and Hana's life. For example, during the second interview, they discussed the experiences of fasting for the Muslim holiday of Ramadan.

Amina: Was it hard?

Hana: Kind of. I felt weird.

Amina: Just imagine how people in the wars, how they felt.

Hana had fasted for two days; Amina had not yet attempted to fast, yet she made a connection between war and fasting. Her experience fasting triggered memories of the Bosnian War and how her family had limited amounts of food.

An additional example of cultural remembering occurred during the third interview when discussing freedom. I asked, “What experiences have you, your family, your friends had with freedom?”

Amina: That they are able to have a job, for my parents, they have jobs.

Hana: In Bosnia, the war, my Daddy got fired from his job because of the war. Because they were not Serbian or Croatian, so being able to come here and work and not be criticized by your religion or your nationality is important to them.

Amina: My Dad was a soldier, they had a little bit of money, so that is why we came to America. So they can feed my sister. Because my Mom, she only made a little bit of food every single day.

Later in the conversation, Amina again discussed limited food and money. She explained that when her Mom asked for help from an uncle living outside of Sarajevo, “He couldn't even send any money to my Mom or to my family. He had money, he had a house, but did not send any money so my Mom could feed her family.” Through their parents’ narratives, Amina and Hana remembered the loss of their family homes, belongings, and money; these memories seem to regularly influence their thinking.

Furthermore, during our discussion of freedom, Amina and Hana reflected on the limited freedoms in Bosnia during the war. Amina explained that her family fled to the tunnel located in Sarajevo. In April of 1992, Serbs began attacking Bosnia's capital city. Croatians, who also wanted control of Sarajevo, later attacked the city. Thus, ethnic Bosnians were trapped with limited food. The tunnel was constructed as a supply route into Sarajevo. In came supplies such as food, fuel, newspapers and weapons. Moreover, the tunnel served as an escape route, as many people left Sarajevo, including Amina's family. Amina has only heard the story once of how her Mom and sister traversed through the crowded, dark, dirt tunnel out of Sarajevo, but she frequently thinks of their journey, their hardships, and their limited freedoms during the war.

Although Amina and Hana have not stepped foot in Bosnia, the girls hold memories of Bosnia; specifically, they carry memories of violence, loss, and sadness. These stories of war, part of the collective memory of Lilydale's Bosnians, have penetrated several of Amina's and Hana's images of Bosnia. Even as second-generation immigrants, the Bosnian War is something internalized, something that is frequently on Amina's and Hana's minds. It is evident that through listening to their parents' recollections, they feel they have experienced Bosnian events.

School Experiences

Amina occasionally earns As, but she reports that she has to study a lot to get good grades. Hana mostly earns Bs and is less studious than Amina. The majority of time they both appear attentive in class. They listen, complete assignments, and follow along with the class activities. However, they are more passive than active learners. Typically

both girls would sit quietly during the class discussions and rarely ask questions, share their insights, or contribute information. They also appeared somewhat disinterested; I did not witness either appear really engaged in any topic. Despite their disinterest, Amina and Hana seemed to respect Mr. Larsen. They believe that he treats all students equally, offers help when needed, and expects students to treat one another with respect. They also explained that Mr. Larsen offers valuable life lessons.

Jessamay: What is your favorite thing that you learned so far in Civics class?

Hana: I don't know if this is something we learned, but he [Mr. Larsen], he at the beginning of the year was a really good motivation. He had us talk about bullying and all that stuff.

Amina: Yeah, the same thing.

Jessamay: So you had a bullying lesson in Civics?

Hana: Like be happy, and don't let anyone bring you down.

They seemed more engaged in Mr. Larsen's life skills lessons that concern bullying, fostering tolerance, and academic goals than in the Civics-specific content.

Jessamay: Has there been anything in Civics class that has been really interesting or like really meaningful to you?

Hana: We have been doing like the same thing for the past two months. I don't know it feels like that. We have just been on that, and we hear about that like every year.

Amina: Like can we learn something new?

Hana: It is already stuff that we kind of know. Like we are learning some new things, some things we have already learned.

Jessamay: And is there any time that you feel kind of disengaged or not excited?

Amina: Yeah.

Hana: Sometimes when he starts talking about things that he has already gone through.

Amina: Oh, it is so boring.

Amina and Hana are attentive in class, but are disinterested in the subject matter and do not care for the method of instruction, which is typically lecture. Later during the interview, Hana stated, “Every year in social studies class we always talk about the same things, so some of these things were not even new to us. Every teacher explains it over and over again.” However, Amina and Hana explained that they liked the Civics class, but they enjoyed the social aspects more than the content. They had ample time to socialize with friends, and they were also allowed to choose their own groups during work time. They also enjoyed when they did group projects and activities, although this infrequently occurred. In sum, Hana and Amina were bored or disinterested with the content and disliked lectures, but they liked Mr. Larsen and enjoyed the social aspects of the class.

Part of the reason they disliked Civic content was due to the absence of Bosnian history and culture in the curriculum. During interview three, we discussed the topic of Civics content. Hana reflected on her sister’s experience:

> My sister says that during History, and like Civics, they always talk about like these wars that, the Revolutionary War, but they never really talk about what happened in Bosnia. It is not very known, but it really does mean a lot to some people.

For Amina and Hana, learning about the Bosnian War has only occurred outside of school, almost exclusively from their family members. Neither girl reported learning anything about Bosnia during their formal education. Their history or cultural narratives were never part of the school's official knowledge, that is, the common knowledge of the dominant, privileged social class that is represented in the narratives and themes evident in textbooks, curriculum, and standards (Apple, 2000).

Although the content in Civics emphasized government and politics, much of the class content was related to U.S. History. Amina and Hana felt that their cultural history and narratives were not part of the curriculum. This signifies a disjuncture (Rubin, 2007) between history learned in school and history learned at home, which may partially explain Amina and Hana's disinterest in Civics. School and family are two groups that most immediately and directly impact socialization (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1988), however, at times there are disconnects or dissimilarities between the two contexts. In a related study, Seixas (1993) examined six high school students' construction of historical knowledge through family and social factors at a large, multicultural school. In his study he examined the "disjunctions between school and family as sources of historical knowledge" (p. 302). Seixas explained:

> In a multicultural school population, with students whose families do not share a common historical experience, these disjunctions at best render school history less meaningful, and at worst pose an impediment to students' construction of any meaningful frame of historical reference. (p. 302)

Amina and Hana, like the students in Seixas' study feel a sense of disconnect from formal history learned at school. If Bosnian narratives were included in the curriculum, perhaps Amina and Hana would be more engaged and would find the content meaningful. In turn, other students in their classroom would likely receive a broader version of history.

Although they do not feel included in the curriculum, Amina and Hana want to do well in Civics. This stems from their parents' high academic expectations.

> Hana: Like being Bosnian, our parents have kind of higher standards for us, because they didn't come here with a lot. So they always talk, when you grow up, you have to get a job or something.
>
> Amina: You have to get a job, you go to school. You have to get a future. We support our family. And never let them down.

Amina and Hana are grateful to receive an education. Amina frequently compared Bosnian and U.S. education. She explained, "In Bosnia, if you are poor, you don't go to school. And that is why I really am proud of my parents because they came here so I could get an education." She realized her parents' hardships and sacrifices made it possible for her to attend school in the United States. Hana also appreciates education "because in my life I want to be successful and America gives us the opportunity to have a good education and extend our education." Amina and Hana's American dream

incorporates educational aspirations; they believe their parents made their future success possible.

Amina and Hana believe success in Civics is part of achieving academic success. Below is a conversation we had during the third interview:

> Jessamay: And was learning about the Constitution important to you?
>
> Amina: Yes.
>
> Jessamay: How come?
>
> Amina: Because you need to know to get a really good grade on your tests and everything else.
>
> Jessamay: Hana, what do you think?
>
> Hana: It is important for our education, but I don't think I really, really need to talk about this stuff when I grow up.
>
> Amina: That is what I say.
>
> Hana: For education, like to get a good job and stuff it is important.
>
> Jessamay: But to be just living your everyday, it is not as important to learn about it?
>
> Amina: It is important stuff to know, but I really don't think I am going to need it.

Here, the passage indicates that the Civics content is seen as knowledge to be obtained for school success rather than knowledge to be used in civic and political life. For Amina and Hana, civic knowledge is something that needs to be memorized in order to do well in high school and college, but the content is detached from everyday life.

Identity and Being American

At the start of this chapter I discussed an instance where Amina and Hana questioned their label of ethnic identity: Amina asked, "Am I White?" expressing uncertainty about how she should be categorized. It is important to note that Amina and Hana, like the other focal youth in this study, often equate White with being American and interchangeably used both labels. Hana explained, "People always think I am American." When I asked her to clarify, she explained that she meant either "many people think I am American" or "many people think I am White."

Amina, Hana, and other transnational Bosnians encounter a challenge. Because of their outer appearance, they are often perceived as White; however, they are also labeled as refugees or immigrants. Put another way, Miskovic (2011) describes Bosnians to be:

> An enigma: their racial, ethnic, and immigrant status requires multiple positionings and negotiations at once, as they are, according to the United States racial classification, considered white (thus benefiting from the white-dominated hegemonic discourse and unequal allocation of resources) and ethnic immigrant minority (which removes them from the white mainstream English-speaking cultural, economic and social "center"). (p. 233)

The multiple positionings for Bosnians add complexity for civic identity development. They appear White, but their cultural and ethnic ties and their immigration backgrounds marginalize them in terms of feeling like full citizens.

Immigrant groups and refugees are frequently grouped under a general umbrella label of "immigrants" (Mosselson, 2006); however, these groups have differing

trajectories. During the 1990s, the majority of Bosnians arrived as refugees to the United States (Valenta & Ramet, 2011). Like other refugee groups, Bosnians were pushed to leave their homes by force on short notice with the uncertain possibility of having future opportunity to return home. And similar to other refugees' experiences, several Bosnians found "themselves without citizenship, without nationality, and without a home" (Mosselson, 2006, p. 21). As Waters and LeBlanc (2005) contend, "Refugees are by definition, people who are 'imagined' to be nonmembers" (p. 129). In the imagined community of the United States, institutions such as schools define a 'we,' and in turn, define 'they' (Mosselson, 2009). And in the United States, 'they' often includes refugees and other minority groups (Mosselson, 2009; Waters & LeBlanc, 2005). Bosnian refugees may also encounter other challenges in feeling a sense of belonging by being Muslim in the United States. Nagel and Staeheli (2005) posit that although Arab-Americans, many of whom are Muslim, have assimilated into various political and economic sectors, they are sometimes thought of as "not American." Similarly, for Amina and Hana, being Muslim in the predominately Christian community of Lilydale likely creates a sense of marginalization. Racial and ethnic backgrounds, being categorized or defined as a refugee or immigrant, experiencing discrimination due to religious background, and being marginalized affect civic identity development and the sense of belonging in a host country. It is therefore important to examine how youth self-identify and experience marginalization because it reveals how they construct and negotiate their civic identity and experience being a citizen.

In our first interview, when I asked Amina and Hana to self-identify with any ethnic or cultural groups, they both stated they were American. Amina explained, "I was born here, and so was she [referring to Hana], so we are American." However, they also identified with being Bosnian. Later in the conversation, we discussed their identity in greater detail:

Jessamay: So you are American, but you call yourselves Bosnian?

Amina: Yeah.

Jessamay: For you, how important is it being Bosnian?

Amina: A lot.

Hana: It has changed me a lot. I could not imagine myself being like this, I don't know. Being able to be different. Because there are not a lot of Bosnians here, there are four in our grade. So, I don't know how to explain it. It is an important part of who I am.

It was evident that the girls felt both American and Bosnian, and both had a strong sense of what Hana labeled "Bosnian pride." In addition, Hana discussed fear of detaching from her Bosnian identity: "I just don't want to start going to college and forgetting about my culture, too. You get so involved in their life that they don't really pay attention to anything else." As seventh-graders, being Bosnian was very important; it was something they hoped would continue to be important throughout their lives.

For Amina and Hana, the sense of feeling Bosnian or feeling American shifted depending on the context. An example of this shift is reflected in the following passage:

Jessamay: Are there particular ways in which you feel American?

Amina:	When I am talking English.
Hana:	Like in schools they give us Christmas break and we don't celebrate Christmas.
Amina:	So it just feels like a free big break for us.
Jessamay:	Do you feel Bosnian or American when you are at home?
Hana:	I feel Bosnian.
Amina:	Yeah.
Jessamay:	How about at school, do feel Bosnian, or American?
Hana:	American.
Amina:	American.

Amina explained that when at school she only spoke English, but at home she often spoke Bosnian. Her use of language was associated with her sense of identity. For Amina and Hana, at home they felt Bosnian, but at school they felt American. In addition, Hana felt un-American during Christian holidays and the school break, likely because these events were not part of her traditions.

Amina and Hana are second-generation immigrants. They have not visited Bosnia, yet have a strong sense of Bosnian identity; they also cling to an American identity. They feel both Bosnian and American and would most likely self-identify with being Bosnian American, which represents a middle position between their country of heritage and country of birth. Thus, they continue to negotiate their Bosnian and American identities and participate in transnational activities.

Transnational Citizenship

Transnational citizenship defines how individuals negotiate and adapt their identities in recognition of multiple national and international stages and how they carry their cultural identities, experiences, and ways of knowing to their new locations. Furthermore, it is "associated with processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together, in multiple ways, their country of origin and their country of settlement" (Valenta & Ramet, 2011, p. 15). The concept of transnational citizenship fosters exploration of how transnational youth encounter challenges attempting to maintain their cultural and ethnic identities while at the same time defining new identities that reflect their local experience and host culture. Moreover, it is not just being Bosnian or American; it is about embracing and balancing both identities. And it includes the sense of affiliation or belonging to a nation despite physical absence (Fitzgerald, 2004b).

For the third interview, we discussed transnational citizenship. I asked Amina and Hana to reflect on aspects of transnational citizenship.

Jessamay: Can someone actually be or feel like they are a citizen of two or more countries? What do you think?

Amina: Yeah.

Hana: I think they can feel. I don't know about legally, like my Mom, she wanted to become an American citizen, and I don't know if that gives up her rights to be a Bosnian citizen.

Amina: My mom does not want to be an American citizen. She just has a green card so she doesn't lose her Bosnian citizen[ship] because then they would have to take it.

Jessamay: So she wants to keep her Bosnian citizenship?

Amina: Yeah. 'Cause we never know, maybe we are going to move over there.

Jessamay: Would you think you would like to do that?

Amina: No.

Hana: I would want to.

Hana's Mother obtained U.S. citizenship, while Amina's Mother wants to maintain Bosnian citizenship to keep open the possibility of returning to her homeland. Amina believes it is possible for her family to decide to move back to Bosnia at any point, although she would personally prefer remaining in the United States. Their families have regularly entertained the possibility of returning to Bosnia. Their futures are uncertain in terms of migrating to Bosnia or staying in the United States. As Hana and Amina see it, the possibility seems to rest on their parents' decisions. Thus, similar to other refugees, they "continue to live in a state of limbo, being caught between their wish to return" and their wish to stay (Al-Ali, Black, & Koser, 2001a, p. 582).

Hana strongly desires to move home to Bosnia. As she explained, she wants to move to be a "part of something," although part of what was not specifically defined. When I asked, she explained that she misses family members and wants to join a swim team. She added, "I wish I could move over there. I would really like living over there."

In contrast, Amina prefers to stay in the United States. When I asked why, she first replied, “Because there are no good potato chips over there.” Later she explained that she wanted to stay because here she has friends, there are malls with clothes, and that the U.S. schools are easier. Schools in Bosnia, she explained, are hard because “like every week you have a test.” Amina and Hana hold differing preferences, but both girls agree that they feel a sense of belonging to Bosnia and the United States despite not holding legal citizenship in both countries.

Amina’s and Hana’s sense of belonging to both Bosnia and the United States is connected to their participation in social, cultural, and economical transnational activities. Innovations in travel and communications make it possible, affordable, and efficient for refugees and immigrants to maintain linkages with their homelands; for some, this creates possibilities to physically travel and return. Coughlan (2011) interviewed 55 Bosnian families and reported that the majority (33 of 55) had visited their homeland. In addition, he found that the Bosnian families frequently communicated with relatives and friends in Bosnia via Skype, Facebook, and other Internet and social forms of communication. Hence, new technologies promote transnational connections between places.

Nevertheless, transnationalism, feeling a sense of belonging to multiple countries, and encountering uncertainty about future possibilities present obstacles.

Jessamay: Are there any challenges to when you feel like you belong to two different countries?

Amina: Yes.

Jessamay: Like what?

Amina: Like my parents want to live in Bosnia, and I want to live in America. And I don't know where to choose. But it is so hard.

Jessamay: Hana, what do you think? Are there challenges?

Hana: Well, it depends on whether you are going to go back there or not. Some people like they become citizens of America but then they want to go back and it gets really complicated.

Amina: My Dad wants to go to Bosnia so he can help the poor people because when we go to Bosnia my Brother-In-Law is trying to go on this television show that helps poor people and this girl gets food, what she needs, so he can pay everything to her.

Amina wants her family to stay together, however, her family members hold differing opinions on where to live. Similarly, Hana believes that once Bosnians become American citizens, it is difficult to move back to Bosnia. For both Amina and Hana the legal requirements for citizenship present a barrier to relocation; they do not consider the option of dual citizenship that may allow movement between the two nation-states. They also believe the geographical distance between Bosnia and the United States and the expensive flight costs limits movement between the countries. Despite physical absence, Amina and Hana feel attachment to Bosnia, and as second-generation immigrants, they have retained a strong Bosnian cultural identity.

Researchers who examine transnational ties among second-generation youth suggest that some children of immigrants do retain connections to their parents' homeland (Coughlan, 2011; Levitt, 2001; Levitt &Waters, 2002). However, experiences

with transnationalism tend to vary within a specific ethnic group (Coughlan, 2011). For example, Lie (2004) reports that transnational parents' difficult memories of war and post-war trauma have discouraged some families from returning to Bosnia, thus, transnational connections are diffused. However, if transnationalism is indeed diffused for parents, the question remains how their children foster transnational connections.

Conclusion

Amina and Hana shared insights on their identity and experience living and attending school in Lilydale. Several factors have influenced their civic identity development. For example, their outward White appearance frequently covered their cultural and ethnic backgrounds. They appeared White and American, but they also felt Bosnian and desired to make Bosnian backgrounds visible. By appearing White, Amina and Hana are often granted the luxuries of being White, but their immigrant and refugee labels seem to present moments of marginalization. Second, Amina and Hana self-identify as American citizens. However, they do not see themselves as active citizens and seemed to be detached from U.S. political and civic life. Furthermore, they see Civics content as simply knowledge to be learned rather than used. This is an important factor because civic identity involves being a citizen and participating in the society where one lives. If Amina and Hana feel detached and continue not to be civically engaged, they may not encounter opportunities to feel fully connected or attached to the United States. Nevertheless, both Amina and Hana do feel a sense of belonging to the United States and Bosnia. Furthermore, as second-generation youth, they have maintained transnational connections to Bosnia. Both frequently entertain the possibility of returning to Bosnia,

while Hana strongly desires to return permanently. To conclude, Amina's and Hana's experiences demonstrate that "transnationalism is itself a dynamic process" (Al-Ali, Black, & Koser, 2001b, p. 633) that responds to context and changes with experience. Within these transnational spaces, Amina and Hana have been developing their civic identity as they are continually negotiating their allegiance between two nation-states. Their experiences differ from Omar, Mia, and Gabby—the three Latino students I discuss in the following chapter—but their experiences present similarities as well. Both sets of students participate in transnational activities and are currently developing allegiance and a sense of belonging between two nation-states.

Chapter Five: Being Latino and American

Background

The Hispanic population has grown from 14.6 million people in 1980 to nearly 52 million as of 2011 and is still on the rise (Pew Research Center, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Hispanics account for 16.9 percent (53 million people) of the U.S. population; they represent the largest immigrant group, with 46 percent of immigrants (18.9 million) reporting Hispanic or Latino origins (Migration Policy, 2014). Hispanics represent the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population. However, the majority of Hispanics are not immigrants; they are U.S. born. Of the 53 million people in the 2010 Census who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, 36 percent (18.9 million) were immigrants (Migration Policy, 2014). In addition, of all Hispanics and Latinos, individuals of Mexican descent represent the largest portion of the population (Pew Research Center, 2012). Mexican immigrants primarily live in the Western and Southwestern United States, and the majority of immigrants reside in California or Texas (Migration Policy, 2014).

The Minnesota Hispanic population is on the rise. For example, since the 1990 Census, the state's Hispanic population has tripled, increasing from about 54,000 to more than 175,000 people in 2004 (Minneapolis Foundation, 2010). Hispanics represent 4.9 percent (238,000 people) of the state population or 0.5 percent of the total Hispanic population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014; Pew Research Center, 2012). However, the majority of Minnesota Hispanics (60%) are native-born U.S. citizens (Migration Policy, 2014). Mexicans represent the largest immigrant group in Minnesota,

with 16.6 percent (64,536 people) of the total immigrant population Mexican-born (Migration Policy Institute, 2012).

The U.S. Census Bureau employs the term *Hispanic* to refer to individuals of Spanish speaking descent who have direct ancestry from a Spanish-speaking country such as Spain. Quite frequently, *Latino* and *Hispanic* are used interchangeably; however, for this dissertation, I use the term *Latino*, which refers to geographic areas of Latin America. The term *Latino* includes people of multiple races from the Caribbean (e.g., Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic), South America (e.g., Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador), and Central America (e.g., El Salvador, Mexico). When possible I utilize more specific labels such as Mexican American or Guatemalan American. I base this decision on two factors. First, Pew researchers in a 2012 report concluded that the majority of Latinos and Hispanics (51%) state they most often identify themselves by their family's country of origin and therefore prefer terms such as Mexican American or Puerto Rican American. In contrast, 24 percent say they prefer a pan-ethnic label such as Hispanic or Latino. Second, although the Pew researchers indicate there is no clear preference between the use of *Hispanic* or *Latino*, I utilize *Latino* because it is the term preferred by my focal students and the term more often used by teachers and community members. When possible, I utilize the country of origin to identify students' backgrounds because students seemed to favor these terms throughout explanations of their backgrounds, identity, and cultures. When discussing a specific student, I recognize his or her country of origin; for example, I use Mexican American rather than Latino. Students from Guatemala, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and other Latin American countries have differing backgrounds and

trajectories that should be distinguished rather than grouped as a cohesive whole. I still use the term *Latino* to refer to students as a group, primarily because the group may include individuals from multiple Latin American countries. It is also worthwhile to note that the Pew researchers (2012) indicated that 21 percent of participants refrained from Latino, Hispanic, or country of origin labels; they most often call themselves Americans. I recognize that these terms are fluid: The various terms used for self-identification of ethnicity changes are dependent upon personal and family preference, acculturation, and length of U.S. residency (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Latino Presence in Lilydale

Community. As of the 2010 census, there were 2,464 people living in Lilydale, with Latinos constituting 31.5 percent of the population. Latinos first moved to the Lilydale area to fulfill job opportunities at the local meat processing plant. As Lilydale's Latino population increased, a notable Latino presence was established. For example, a popular Mexican restaurant owned by immigrants is located on Main Street, and across the street there is a small Mexican specialty grocery. At the primary grocery store in town, where most locals shop, there are two aisles dedicated to Latino items. In addition, two blocks from Lilydale High School is a large Latino Catholic church that offers sermons in Spanish. There are a few Mexican flags around the town, adorning houses and one at the city park. In the town center, the Spanish language is occasionally heard, but it is most likely to be heard when walking through the trailer park that is located alongside the meat processing plant because this is where many Latino families reside.

High school. Latinos constitute the largest minority at Lilydale High School. The school has a population of 500 students; roughly 30-35 percent are Latino first-, second-, or third- generation students. While walking the hallways and sitting in classrooms, students speaking Spanish are frequently heard. During lunch, groups of Latino students sit together and converse in Spanish. The school hallways display a handful of posters that have inspiring Spanish phrases, along with English translations. The school website has some select information in Spanish (e.g., enrollment instructions, school newsletters) for parents. Furthermore, Spanish and English are the two languages formally taught at the school. There are Spanish classes for native and non-native speakers. The class for native Spanish speakers aims to help students further develop Spanish reading and writing skills. The class for non-native students introduces Spanish vocabulary, conversation skills, and cultural topics. In sum, the Spanish language is visually and audibly present throughout the school.

Participants

For this study I interviewed six Latino students. I also observed their classroom interactions, reviewed their schoolwork, and talked with several students throughout the school day. I selected three of the six Latino students to discuss in this chapter: Omar, Mia, and Gabby. These three students were eager to participate in this study and were willing to discuss Civics-related topics. During the interview, they shared their unique stories and experiences of living in Lilydale, being Latino/a, and negotiating their American and Latino identities. I chose these three students because they exemplify the wide array of experiences across the Latino students I interviewed. Put another way, I

wanted to display the multiple ways students experienced being Latino or American at Lilydale High School. However, throughout these stories there are similarities in how students construct civic identity, define being American, and experience transnationalism.

Omar. Omar is a tall, lanky thirteen-year-old male with glasses who was born at a hospital 30 miles from Lilydale. His biological parents are of Mexican descent, his adoptive father is Guatemalan, and his mother is Mexican. Omar's biological father was deported and is believed to be living in Mexico. On Halloween, when Omar was four years old, he was waiting for his father to pick him up at school, but his father did not show up. Later that day, Omar discovered that his father was deported; at the time Omar was unaware of the significance of deportation. Three years after his father's deportation, his mother, who has several children and was suffering from physical and mental illness, asked a friend to adopt Omar, her only son. Thus, at age seven, Omar changed families. He still communicates with his biological mother and explains that he helps her when he can, but he states that she is not doing well. Presently, his biological mother works at the McDonalds in Lilydale and lives with Omar's three biological sisters. Omar's adoptive parents work at the meat processing plant. Omar lives in town with his adoptive parents and an older sister; his adoptive brother recently moved and attends a Minnesota university.

Omar is a bright student, maintains a B average, and regularly socializes with peers. Omar speaks English most of the time, he knows "some Spanish," but explains he doesn't "know some of those complicated, difficult words." Omar is engaged in civic and social activities. This past September he ran for student council, and, although he was

defeated, he hopes to run again in the future. He is also interested in helping with school fundraising activities that help those in need. During the time of the interviews, he was involved in a school activity collecting change to raise funds for building a school in a developing country. Omar also participates in church service activities such as raising money for those in need or assisting with church dinners. Sometimes he bakes a pie or brownies to bring to a church fundraising event. Omar also holds career aspirations and goals. For example, when he turns 14, like his adoptive sister, he plans to work at the town grocery store. After graduation, he wants to join the Marines and then attend college.

Mia. Mia is a thirteen-year-old female born in southern California. Mia was one of the first students I met at Lilydale and she became one of my primary informants, likely because her assigned seat in second hour Civics was located near the back of the room, close to the desk where I often sat. I frequently questioned her on items such as homework assignments, classroom and school procedures, names of other students, and school events; this information was very helpful. We also frequently chatted about her weekend plans and other social events. Mia is petite with dark brown hair and brown eyes. She is timid, soft spoken, and would speak with her hand in front of her mouth, appearing hesitant about what she was saying. She was shy around her teacher and most classmates and would only regularly chat with three other girls in the classroom.

In 2012, Mia moved from California to Lilydale to live with her older brother, sister-in-law, and their baby. Since she is a recent arrival, Mia still considered herself a new student at Lilydale School. Her brother and his wife work at the meat processing

plant. Mia's mother lives in Mexico, her other three siblings live in California, and it is unknown where her father lives. Mia has not seen her mother in over four years and has never met her father, but believes he resides in Mexico. Mia left to visit family in California and Mexico for three weeks during March of 2014, so she was able to reconnect with family, but she missed several days of school. She expressed anxiety about traveling to Mexico because it would be her first time in another country and she doesn't speak or understand Spanish; she only speaks English.

Gabby. Gabby is twelve-years-old and was born in California. She has attended school in both Mexico and the United States. She rotates living in Mexico with her father and in the United States with her mother. She currently resides with her mother and the extended family in a trailer home located near the meat processing plant, where the majority of people living are Mexicans and Guatemalans. Her mother works the night shift at the plant and consequently sleeps during the day; thus Mia spends more evenings after school with her grandfather, aunt, and cousins. This year is her first year at Lilydale High School; however, she believes she will move again, likely back to Mexico or California. She says she is "used to moving" and will continue to move back and forth between her two parents until she graduates from high school.

When Gabby arrived at Lilydale High School, she instantly became the popular girl among the Latinas. However, she was swept into negative peer social relationships and consequently has had several tense moments with other girls as she both feeds into and falls victim to gossip. She is tall, has long, dark carefully styled hair, and brown eyes. She speaks both English and Spanish fluently and frequently changes the language-in-use

depending on context. She intentionally speaks Spanish in the classroom when she is disclosing private information or opinions about other students, the teacher, or schoolwork. But most often during the school day she speaks English. Gabby is not involved in any school activities; she explains that she needs to go home each day to do schoolwork, which takes a lot of time. Most of the time she is an A student in Civics, but occasionally she does not complete an assignment or does poorly on a test or quiz. She is a skilled artist, a trait noticed and admired by her peers as she is often recruited for projects that involve drawing.

Omar, Mia, and Gabby live within the city of Lilydale. Mia and Gabby live in the trailer park, and Omar lives in a small house across the street from the city pool. Mia and Omar were in second hour Civics, while Gabby was in third hour. The three have unique personalities. Of the three students, Omar was the most engaged in Civics and seemed to be very interested in learning about social studies topics. He was also the most interested in following current events and politics, although he was "not always interested." Gabby does the best academically and earns As on most of the Civics tests and assignments. Of the three students, Gabby is the most popular, social, and dramatic. Mia earns Bs and Cs, and in comparison with Omar and Gabby, struggles the most academically. Mia is also timid, quiet during class, and seems to have only a few friends. Nevertheless, Mia carries a positive demeanor, smiles often, and laughs at Mr. Larsen's jokes. Omar is the most involved in school and community activities, as neither Mia nor Gabby reported any current or past participation in activities. Gabby is the only one who has lived in Mexico. Gabby and Mia were born in California. All three have family living in Mexico and are

children of non-traditional families as their parents are separated. It is also likely that their fathers all reside in Mexico, but for Mia and Omar this is speculation; due to lack of communication with their biological fathers it remains unconfirmed.

Findings

Omar, Mia, and Gabby had similar and contrasting experiences conceptualizing and negotiating their civic identity. In the following three sections, findings are presented concerning how each of the three youth conceptualizes and negotiate his or her civic identity. For each student I focus on his or her individual narratives to capture the uniqueness of each student; thus I focus on different aspects of their experiences. I attempt to capture the personality and experiences of all three student, the challenges they faced, their experiences, and the students' reflections related to civic identity. I discuss their civic education experiences, how they identify with being American and Latino, and how they experience transnationalism and transnational citizenship. My intent is to offer insights on how second-generation Latino youth develop citizenship and define being citizens.

Omar – "I just want others to know that I am not really bad, that I can be good."

In the above quotation, Omar explains that he wants others to see his potential. He wants to prove that he is a good person who is willing help. Omar has encountered some difficult challenges during his thirteen years of life. At age four Omar's father was deported, and at age seven Omar was given up for adoption. He has lived in multiple houses in rural Minnesota and has changed schools three times. In addition, Omar has memories of being teased at the first school he attended.

Omar:	When I was four or five, I was the only Mexican in Lincoln [neighboring town of Lilydale].
Jessamay:	Oh really?
Omar:	I went there and on the first day everyone was pushing me around and telling me to get out of the school.

Omar claims that since moving to Lilydale seven years ago, he has not been teased. He explained, "I feel definitely more welcomed here" and "They [students at Lilydale] are the most nice [sic] people that I have ever met." Yet remembering being teased about his cultural background at a young age likely impacts his feelings of acceptance and belonging to his school and community. Further, these experiences influence civic identity development, as civic identity is grounded in youths' everyday lives through experiences in schools and communities.

Nevertheless, his difficult life experiences have prompted Omar to prove to others that he "can be good." Specifically, Omar strives to convince others to see that he is a good student and that he is a kind, helpful person. He also aims to assist his biological mother:

> Yeah, I see her [biological mother] sometimes. I check on her to see if she is okay. Or if she needs me to get anything for her, to see if I can be a helpful son because I have about six sisters, biological sisters, and I am the only son, so I try to be a helpful son.

Omar's desire to help his biological mother, who gave him up for adoption, and his longing to be "good" in general are associated with how Omar constructs his civic

identity. This is made evident by Omar's increased civic engagement in school and church activities and his eagerness to join the Marine Corps to show others that he is a good citizen. He states, "I want to join the Marines to serve and help this country more." However, longing to prove to others that he can be good is just one factor that shapes his political and civic engagement; his adoptive parents are also influencers. Omar explains, "Well, when I was younger, I didn't really help a lot. And my [adoptive] parents they told me that I should start helping more." Thus, Omar took their advice and became more involved in community activities. At present, because of this encouragement, Omar regularly assists the Catholic Church's efforts in fundraising dinners and special events.

Omar carries his kindness and motivation to be good to Lilydale High School by being very sociable and generous. At Lilydale, Omar appears to be accepted by his peers. In class he would talk to multiple students and would consistently find eager partners for schoolwork. The few days Omar had candy, he would share it with nearby classmates. During social time in Mr. Larsen's classroom, Omar often was grouped with three to six boys who were typically trading Pokémon cards, discussing video games, or taking turns playing a game on a smart phone. Omar would also be the first one to arrive to Mr. Larsen's classroom to maximize his time to socialize with other early arrivers between bells. During class, he usually would sit by his best friend, Thao, a young male from Vietnam (discussed in Chapter Six). Thao and Omar would often do assignments together and assist each other when needed. The relationships with his peers and his willingness to share were factors that contributed to his kind and thoughtful persona.

Omar also showed respect toward Mr. Larsen. Omar explained that Civics was his favorite subject, and my observations indicated he was typically engaged during class. During the interviews, Omar expressed interest in several Civics-related topics such as the presidents, American government, and democracy. Omar explained that he has "learned a lot" from Mr. Larsen. During our informal conversations he was typically excited to share newly learned Civics-related facts. Thus, his respect for Mr. Larsen was paired with his interest in Civics.

During Mr. Larsen's Civics class, Omar also found several topics meaningful, such as being a citizen and citizenship, concepts that he has reflected upon throughout the semester.

Omar: Being a citizen. And what it means to be a citizen. Because when I thought of citizen, I thought it was if you were an immigrant, how you need the green card, and you need to work hard for a while to get to be a citizen of the U.S.

Jessamay: So your idea about what a citizen is has changed?

Omar: Yeah. At first I thought it seemed a little hard. It was a little more confusing for me. After Mr. Larsen taught me I became more used to it the idea and like learning more. It was getting less complicated.

Currently, Omar defines a citizen as "being part of the country and being more open to more jobs. Instead of trying to work little jobs [with small salaries] and to get more bigger jobs [with high salaries]." His definition has expanded from obtaining U.S.

citizenship to receiving the economic benefits that are possible with U.S. citizenship. This definition of citizen likely derived from Mr. Larsen's discussions of the challenges individuals encounter living in other countries, the economic opportunities available for U.S. citizens, and how knowing two languages can mean higher salaries in the United States. Omar, who is an attentive listener, seems to have internalized segments of Mr. Larsen's lectures, thus integrating Mr. Larsen's comments into his conceptualization of the term citizen. Moreover, his interest in Civics and respect for Mr. Larsen seem to have influenced him to reflect upon and form ideas on Civics-related topics.

During Civics class, Omar was engaged, took notes, and appeared to be interested in the content. Other than the occasional side conversation with a friend, most of the time Omar was alert, sitting upright in his desk with a pencil in hand. Despite his readiness, he avoided opportunities to address the classroom of students as a large group. For example, I did not witness Omar ask a question or make a comment. He would answer some basic recall questions that were posed to the entire class, but he would only answer when he was certain of the answer, not wanting to risk making a mistake. Furthermore, Omar was an agreeable, non-confrontational student. When I asked if he had ever disagreed with anything that Mr. Larsen had said, Omar replied:

> No, because usually the things he tells me are usually new to me. They are more kind of advanced for me. I just listen, mostly, and there might be something I disagree with, but I never do [say anything].

Omar remains silent during class, preferring to listen. When he does not understand a new topic, he is hesitant to ask clarifying questions. It seems that Omar does not want his

classmates or Mr. Larsen to perceive him as unknowledgeable, nor does he want to be noticed. He prefers to remain a passive learner who blends into the classroom setting rather than an active participant.

During the interviews we also discussed identities and cultural backgrounds. I asked him how he would self-identify:

> I don't really think like that [to self-identify]. I know I am Mexican American, but I still think that I am a person, still trying to be a friend with people and teachers. But, I guess you can say that I call myself Mexican American.

Omar pushes away from labels, but throughout the interviews agreed that he considers himself Mexican American. When identifying his family members, he describes his biological mother as “half-Mexican and half-American because her Mom was American.” On the other hand, his biological father “is not an American anymore because he was deported back to Mexico.” Since Omar has lived most of his life with his adoptive parents, I felt it necessary to ask about their backgrounds.

> Omar: Their cultural background is mostly Mexican. They are probably the full Mexican.
>
> Jessamay: Do they speak English?
>
> Omar: They speak English, too. My [adoptive] Dad speaks English. He kind of has a little accent with it. But my [adoptive] Mom, she speaks English too, perfect English.

Up until the second interview, Omar believed his adoptive father was Mexican; however, at some point, he realized that his adoptive father was actually Guatemalan. Prior to this,

Omar had thought that Guatemala and Mexico constituted the same country, and since his father spoke Spanish, he identified him as Mexican. At some point during his seventh grade year, he does not recall exactly when, Omar realized that Guatemala was indeed a different country. Soon after he made reference to feeling Guatemalan or being Guatemalan American, but maintained that Mexicans and Guatemalans are similar. Omar explained:

> I think it [being Mexican and being Guatemalan] is the same because it seems like they are speaking the same language. My [adoptive] Dad tells me that basically it is the same language kind of. But sometimes it is how you pronounce it in Spanish. In Guatemala it may be a little bit different. But basically it means the same thing.

After realizing his adoptive dad was Guatemalan, most of time Omar continued to identify as Mexican American, but occasionally Omar would state he was Guatemalan. Omar adopted a Guatemalan identity alongside his Mexican identity; these changes demonstrate that Omar is continuously self-constructing, transforming, and adapting his identity.

Omar's sense of feeling Mexican or American or occasionally Guatemalan appears to vary within social context and experience. For instance, Omar described how language and sports define him as more American.

> Jessamay: And are the particular ways in which you feel more American, or feel more Mexican American?

Omar: I think I am feeling more American now. Well, my parents, they helped me out with Spanish, like trying to speak Spanish. But they sometimes maybe go a little too deep, or into long big words in Spanish, and I have to ask, "What, what are you saying? What do you mean?" I might ask them and they might tell me.

Jessamay: So do you feel more American now because you don't know as many Spanish words?

Omar: Yeah. I kind of seem more American, too.

Jessamay: Any other reason why you feel more American besides language?

Omar: Well, I guess, because I am doing more sports that I seem more American, too. Like I am not really playing soccer as much, because of the snow, I can't play anymore. And sometimes, my friends may come to play, but I am doing more baseball and basketball.

First, Omar feels more American because he has difficulties with the Spanish language. His Spanish vocabulary is limited, and therefore, he feels like he has a harder time following some conversations. Second, Omar equates baseball and basketball with being American and soccer with being Mexican. Thus, playing American sports more frequently has provided him with a greater sense of feeling American. However, Omar's participation in soccer represents a cultural activity that locates a sense of feeling Mexican within the community space. Omar explained that soccer games typically include a majority of minority students; thus, it seems it is a game where these youth feel

a greater connection of their cultural and ethnic identities. For Omar, it is a place other than his own home where he feels more Mexican.

Omar also feels a greater sense of being American because of his own behaviors and actions.

> Well, I kind of feel like I am more secure, too. I am more open to different people, especially to the teachers. I used to never really talk to teachers. Sometimes I wouldn't really even look to the teachers. Like in the elementary school, because sometimes they would just look at me and look away, but now they actually stare at me, so I talk more. I kind of feel like I belong more.

Omar explained his personal goal of wanting to talk to more people. He believes that talking more with different people has boosted his confidence and has allowed others to see that he is a nice person. It seems that through these relationships, Omar has developed a greater sense of belonging to the Lilydale community.

The extent to which Omar feels American, Mexican, and Guatemalan was reflected in our conversations concerning transnational citizenship. I asked: "Do you feel like you are a citizen of two or more different countries?" Omar replied "yes" and explained that he feels like a citizen of two or more countries due to his parents' personal descriptions and narratives.

> Omar: I guess it is the way, the way my parents describe things, and it is kind of the same thing for me.
>
> Jessamay: Meaning like how they describe things in Mexico and the United States?

Omar: Like how they describe things from where they are or where they are from. Or how some things happened to them and some things they said may have happened to me. So that may have a little bit of an effect on me.

Omar's [adoptive] parents would discuss their childhood stories, cultural events, traditions, and challenges they faced living in Mexico or Guatemala. Similar to Amina and Hana, the Bosnian students I discussed in the previous chapter, Omar is internalizing his parents' stories. Thus, because of his parents' narratives, it appears that Omar has indirectly experienced life in other countries and feels attached to Mexico and Guatemala because of these stories. For instance, he feels connected to Guatemala through his adoptive father's personal accounts. Omar explained:

> I think I hear more stories from Guatemala because my Dad likes to talk more about those stories to me. Sometimes I will just ask my Dad or my parents like is something going on or if there is something new over there or if they have different rules now. And they may tell me yeah, this has changed, or no this thing is still the same.

Omar's parents' conversations, memories, and continued interest in their homelands seem to have transferred to Omar. Although Omar has not traveled to Mexico, he feels a sense of belonging to Mexico, and, although Omar is not Guatemalan by blood, he feels a sense of belonging to Guatemala because of the narratives told by his adoptive father.

In summary, Omar is continually trying to prove to others that he is a good person. At points throughout his life, it seems that he has received negative messages

about being Mexican or being an immigrant. In turn, Omar appears to be resisting the negative discourses he has heard throughout his life by striving to be good. Omar's civic identity, in part, is constructed though his desire to be a good U.S. citizen by working hard, doing well academically, helping others, and planning to serve his country by joining the Marines. In addition, Omar's desire to work hard is reflective of him wanting to prove that he belongs in the rural community of Lilydale and that he is an active participant in school and community events.

Mia – "My American dream is to have my family together."

After the first conversation I had with Mia, I instantly knew I wanted to select her as a focal student. I found Mia to be kind, friendly, curious, and eager to help others when given the chance. She also discussed her academic aspirations; she was curious about college, but had little information as none of her family members had attended college. She wanted to be a nurse or maybe an elementary teacher, but she was not confident of her academic abilities. She also explained that there were too many things to know to be a nurse and she was unsure if she could learn them. Furthermore, she revealed that she struggles with school and has poor grades. Mia was often overlooked in class because she was quiet; it seemed her teachers assumed that she was working and understood the material. However, she was not receiving the instruction she needs to succeed academically. After careful consideration, I selected Mia as a focal student, and she proved to be an appropriate choice for this study.

In the four years since her mother returned to live in Mexico, Mia has resided with multiple family members. In California, she stayed with an aunt, then a cousin. At

the time of the interviews she lived with her brother. Her immediate family is separated, her extended family lives across the United States and Mexico, and her parents are divorced. This situation troubles Mia, and seems to cause her sadness; it also influences her disposition at school.

Jessamay: Does this [having a family that is separated] impact what you do at school?

Mia: Yeah. Or my attitude, sometimes.

Jessamay: Can you give an example?

Mia: Sometimes I am just quiet, and I don't know how to say.

Throughout the classroom observations, I frequently noted that Mia was quiet, soft-spoken, and appeared detached from the classroom context. Mia admitted she is sad that her family is separated; it seems her sadness has attributed to Mia's shyness and low self-esteem.

Throughout the classroom observations, I typically sat in the back of the room near Mia. The desks near the front were typically designated to the talkative and unruly students, which Mia was not. As other students were moved around the room, Mr. Larsen consistently assigned Mia to a desk in the back of the room. During class, she barely spoke, and when she did, it was to a select few females, always with a nervous tone. Likely because of her quiet demeanor, Mia never called out a question or response to add to a large group discussion. When Mr. Larsen would ask all students to take a guess on a trivia question, Mia would sit silently or would quietly say a response audible only to those nearby. Furthermore, I did not witness Mr. Larsen call on her, state her name, or

ask if she needed help. Mia was a student who did okay academically and never misbehaved; she easily blended into the classroom setting.

During class she would pay attention and stated that she found Civics to be interesting. Most of the time she would follow along and take notes. When doing worksheets, she would quietly work alone or with a partner, studiously completing the assignment. She especially enjoyed when they would do hands-on projects with small groups. For example, her favorite project involved creating a poster about slavery. She also expressed interest in learning about Martin Luther King, Jr. and racism, both topics that were discussed in January. At two different points during the interviews, she discussed Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. She stated that she was happy that she could be "friends with people of different races." Mia considered Martin Luther King, Jr. to be important "because he helped a lot of things I guess, he stopped racism with his dream. And racism because it is not as worse as it used to be back then, but people can still be racist." She was interested in Martin Luther King, Jr., but was dispassionate about other Civics-related topics, especially topics related to current events, government, and politics. When I asked why, she stated, "I just don't think that I really care." She was not able to personally connect to the topics discussed in Civics, thus she sat through class uninterested. It seems that her background and experiences of being Mexican and being American were not included in the Civics curriculum.

Throughout her seventh grade school year, Mia shifted and redefined how she self-identified. For the questionnaire, in an open-ended response she wrote, "I am Mexican." Later, during a class activity, I sat with Mia and a female White classmate

when they were discussing a topic related to identity, and Mia said, "I am American, I was born here." At the third interview, she stated that she would prefer to be labeled Mexican American, an identification that relates to both her parents' Mexican culture and her experiences living in America. Mia highly values being American and wanted to make clear that she indeed is an American citizen. She is well aware of the required legal documents to secure U.S. citizenship; she is aware because U.S. citizenship obtainment has been a struggle and part of the cause of her family's separation. At no point did Mia state her parents were deported, but I inferred this was the case.

During the third interview Mia and I further discussed her identity and being American. Mia explained she feels most American when she speaks English, her primary language. She stated, "My language is English, because I don't know Spanish. I do have an accent sometimes, but I really don't want to learn Spanish very much." At no point did I hear her speak any Spanish words. She has an accent, and she seems to recognize some aspects of the Spanish language, but not nearly enough to converse with others. However, she is in ESL classes because she also struggles with English language skills. Not knowing Spanish and not having confidence in English seems to affect her social life; she does not appear to have many friends. It seems that due to her inability to speak Spanish, she does not connect with the majority of the Latino students who speak Spanish.

Being separated from family, disconnected from the Spanish language, and not being fully proficient in English influences her experiences at Lilydale and how she negotiates her civic identity. The construction of civic identity is linked with cultural practices including language. Mia's avoidance of speaking Spanish throughout her life

reflects an attempt at assimilation or an attempt to blend into the majority White society by only speaking English. It seems Mia views speaking Spanish as a deterrent from developing a U.S. civic identity; thus she finds it important to speak English to feel like a U.S. citizen.

Mia believes holding U.S. citizenship is an important part of her identity. When I asked her to explain what it means to be a U.S. citizen, she said: "Being proud I guess. And I just think that people have more rights about what they want and stuff like that. There is more freedom in America than other countries." Later in our conversation she stated that she was happy many of her family members lived in the United States; she wanted them to continue to experience America's rights and freedoms. Moreover, she believed securing U.S. citizenship meant that her family could stay together.

Jessamay: And do you think there is anything special about being a U.S. citizen?

Mia: Yeah, like if you have a family, if you have all of your family in the U.S., it would be good because you know that they all are going to be okay and stuff like that. That would be important.

Mia believes there is a sense of security in U.S. citizenship. Furthermore, U.S. citizenship fulfills her American dream, which is to have her family together living in the United States.

The concept of the American dream is associated with an individual's pursuit of prosperity, desires, and success. Jahromi (2011) posits that the American dream is "an important part of identity, the ways that youth define and value the American dream and

believe that they can realize a form of it can be illustrative about how youth integrate American values as they form national identity" (p. 80). As identity, including civic identity, relates to hopes and aspirations, I posed questions for youth to reflect upon the American dream:

Jessamay: So what does the word American dream mean to you?

Mia: People who probably are not American citizens have an American dream.

Jessamay: Okay, so people who are not American citizens, but they want to be?

Mia: Yeah, they want to live the American dream.

Jessamay: And what is the American dream?

Mia: To be here [in the United States], and get jobs, and stuff like that.

For Mia, the American dream means obtaining U.S. citizenship and the benefits of citizenship such as having a job, a place to live, and an opportunity for education. It also represents having her family together, which for Mia, is the most important.

Despite her disappointment that her family lives apart, she is optimistic and believes her family members are doing okay.

Mia: I feel okay because, looking at my family and knowing that they have good jobs and a house and everything. And they are not living tough like in Mexico. Well only my Mom, but she has a job and everything.

Jessamay: So your family members in the United States have houses and jobs?

Mia: Yes, they do. All of my brothers do, I just have one sister and she is older. They are all okay. But most of us are separated, but I know we are all okay. We talk with each other with Skype and things like that.

Mia believes that all of her relatives living in the United States are achieving their American dreams. She assumes this because she is in frequent contact with her relatives. Communications technology allows Mia's family members to be bound together via Skype, frequent phone calls, and text messages. However, her American dream is incomplete. Despite technological connections, her remaining desire is to have her family, including her mother, all in one place. Mia's explained, "When I get older, I [will] try to fix my Mom's [citizenship] papers." In sum, for Mia, the American dream seems personally meaningful or inspiring. She is optimistic that the American dream is possible, that people may obtain U.S. citizenship and find jobs and homes. Mia believes her family is okay, but the longing for her family to be together is frequently on her mind, causing sadness and detachment from everyday life.

Mia feels both American and Mexican and holds a sense of belonging to both the United States and Mexico. Despite her physical absence from Mexico, Mia experiences transnationalism because she has formed attachments to two nation-states, imagining that she belongs to both. She claims a strong allegiance to Mexico even though at the time of the interviews, she had not yet traveled to Mexico. Her sense of belonging to Mexico

derives from taking part in celebrations, cultural events, and Mexican ways of life. In addition, having family members like her mother living in Mexico strengthens her bond with the country. Mia defines herself as being part of both countries, but also recognizes that not speaking Spanish may be a major challenge when she travels to Mexico. Mia came to this realization when she first discovered that she would be traveling to Mexico in Spring 2014, after the interviews. I believe this was one of the first moments that she wished she could speak Spanish fluently; she realized how difficult it might be to navigate around Mexico without Spanish language ability. Yet this was not a motivation for her to learn more of the language, and it appears that she will continue to avoid learning Spanish. At this point, I believe her low self-esteem and low confidence in her academic abilities are barriers for her to take on the challenge of learning a new language. Furthermore, it does not seem she has the support from her brother or any teachers to learn Spanish. This adult support may present the motivation and encouragement that she needs.

In conclusion, Mia's civic identity formation reflects a desire to physically unite her family and to assimilate into U.S. culture through abandoning her Spanish language. She clings to an American identity and U.S. legal citizenship because she believes it will secure freedoms and rights for her family members. Nevertheless, Mia wants to maintain a sense of connectedness to Mexico and the Mexican culture. She defines herself as Mexican American and participates in Mexican cultural activities. However, as she negotiates her Mexican and American identities, there is a sense that she is detached from both. She does not participate in American civic and political activities, and she remains

quiet in the classroom. It also does not seem she feels connected to the Lilydale community or school; it appears she feels like an outsider. She also seems detached from Mexico, primarily because she does not speak Spanish.

Gabby – "I was born here. So that makes me a citizen."

Gabby was born in the United States at a Los Angeles hospital and proudly claims U.S. citizenship. However, she has lived the majority of her life in Mexico with her father. When she is not with her father, she lives in the United States with her mother, who has periodically moved back and forth between California and Minnesota. Thus, Gabby has shifted from parent to parent, from country to country, and through doing so, she identifies with feeling both Mexican and American. As she explained, "I feel like I belong here [in the United States] because I was born here. And I feel like I belong to Mexico because I have spent half of my life there." So despite being born in the United States, she has a strong connection to Mexico; and although she has lived most of her life in Mexico, she maintains a strong sense of being American. Similar to Omar and Mia, Gabby is a second-generation U.S. immigrant; however, in contrast, of the three students, Gabby has maintained the strongest link to her Mexican culture. Her experiences living in Mexico appear to have strengthened her connection to Mexican culture and language and the sense of feeling Mexican. These factors contribute to her civic identity construction of being both U.S. American and Mexican as she maintains allegiance to the United States and Mexico.

The sense of belonging to both countries appears evident in her explanation of her cultural background.

> My family is Mexican. On holidays, every holiday, like, we join a big family and make Mexican food, we live here [in the United States] and Mexico. My mom is Mexican, too, and Dad, too. I have a little sister; she was born here. My Mom speaks English and Spanish, but my Dad doesn't, my dad just speaks Spanish. And I speak both languages.

In addition, her favorite holiday is Thanksgiving, a U.S. holiday that she would also celebrate while living in Mexico. This illustrates that her U.S. allegiance is also present when she is in Mexico and that her dual nationalities influence her regardless of residence. In the above quotation, Gabby also makes reference to language, which she reports is an important aspect of her identity because it directs her sense of feeling Mexican and U.S. American.

Gabby asserted her cultural identity through speaking both Spanish and English language throughout school spaces. Often during Civics class she would speak Spanish with her Latino friends, and then she would shift easily to English to speak with the non-Spanish speakers. She would also use Spanish strategically when she wanted her words not heard by all. For example, when I initially asked about scheduling an interview, she turned to a Spanish-speaking friend and asked for advice to get information about my presence at the school assuming that I could not understand her words. She also complained in Spanish with other students during Civics class about taking notes and doing homework, knowing that Mr. Larsen would not be able to understand her comments. At times, Gabby would also blend both languages. During our interviews, she

would respond with some Spanish words interwoven into her primarily English responses.

For Gabby, language also seems to be a source of establishing trust. At first, she was more hesitant than the other focal students to meet with me. During the first month of observations, it was common for most focal students to say hello and chat with me about their day; however, despite her willingness to participate in this study, Gabby avoided my conversations and would infrequently make eye contact. It was not until she realized I spoke Spanish that she would speak with me during class, although she still spoke with hesitancy. I also did not see her voluntarily speak to Mr. Larsen. But in his classroom, she would often speak with classmates, both in Spanish and English. She reported that Civics was her favorite class because it was where she felt most comfortable. She did not appear to feel comfortable talking to Mr. Larsen, but she liked having the social time that Mr. Larsen offered on an almost daily basis. Nevertheless, Gabby demonstrated wariness around non-Spanish speaking adults and also possibly White adults. I do not know her comfort level around Spanish speaking Latino adults because there are none working at Lilydale High School. Since language may be a source of establishing trust, I believe it important that when interviewing young students it is best to use their native language when possible.

The use of language also dictated when Gabby felt Mexican or American. This was referenced during the first interview when we discussed identity.

Jessamay: Are there particular ways in which you feel American?

Gabby: American? Like when we are here [at school] I feel like I am not a Mexican because I am speaking English and not Spanish. It is kind of weird, but I am used to it, speaking English.

Jessamay: So you feel American when you speak English?

Gabby: Yeah.

Jessamay: Do you feel more American when you are at school or when you are at home?

Gabby: At home I feel Mexican.

Although Gabby speaks Spanish at school, she feels that it is a place where she speaks English, likely because it is the language of instruction and the language she uses to communicate with students and teachers the majority of the time. At home, Gabby feels Mexican "because we always talk Spanish, and we like listen to music in Spanish." Later in the interview, I asked whether she felt more Mexican or American when she was walking around Lilydale. She explained that when she walks around with friends and family members that she feels "kind of the half because when we speak Spanish, we put some words in English." Thus for Gabby, feeling American or feeling Mexican primarily is influenced by the language-in-use.

Gabby feels comfortable using the Spanish language in public places, but contends that English is often the preferred language and the language that she is expected to speak at school. This led to a conversation concerning her comfort level at school and within the community of Lilydale. I began the conversation by asking about

her general thoughts about Lilydale. We discussed this topic during the first interview, where I interviewed her with another Latina student, Kelli.

Jessamay: So from all these places you have lived, what makes Lilydale unique?

Kelli: The people. The culture.

Gabby: Yeah, because they are like [pauses] they are fascinated.

Jessamay: They are fascinated?

Gabby: Because we are Mexicans, a bunch, well, all over Lilydale. Because the White people like our food.

Kelli: Yeah.

Gabby: It is all good. I like it, too. So we are cool being friends with them.

Jessamay: Because White people like your food?

Gabby: Yeah.

Food is an easily definable part of culture. In Mr. Larsen's classroom, discourse around Mexican food frequently occurred. For example, after Thanksgiving, Mr. Larsen asked several questions about the holiday: "How many of you had Mexican food?" He followed the conversation with, "I am jealous, I wish I could have burritos and enchiladas for Thanksgiving!" Mr. Larsen talked about Mexican food during other discussions and also commented on his excitement about having such a large Latino population. He once mentioned, "In Lilydale we have a strong Mexican heritage and a love for Mexican stuff." However, the only "stuff" specifically concerned food. More often, Mr. Larsen and the students discussed Latino food, cultural holidays, language, and music. They did

not discuss the deeper elements of various Latino cultures, such as social interactions, nonverbal communication styles, concepts of relationships, and personal values and morals. Mr. Larsen's and the non-Latino students' limited understandings of Latino cultural elements may contribute to Latino youths' sense of detachment from Lilydale High School and community.

Gabby reported that she feels accepted at Lilydale High School, although during the interviews and classroom observations there were some indications that she may not feel fully accepted. For example, she expressed reluctance in participating in large group discussions during Civics class. I noted her infrequent comments during the classroom observations, and thus during the first interview I asked:

Jessamay: Do you feel comfortable saying something during Civics class?

Gabby: Usually not say anything. Just sit back and relax and listen to what they say.

To probe more, I soon followed with:

Gabby: In Civics class, do you ever feel like you are encouraged to voice your own opinion?

Gabby: No, I don't think so.

Kelli: Because if you try to talk, some people make fun of you and what you will say.

Gabby: Sometimes when we want to say something, they don't listen to us, they don't listen.

Who “some people” and “they” are was unconfirmed. I was uncertain if Gabby and Kelli were referring to a specific group of students or to the whole class in general. Yet Gabby’s comment that she prefers to “sit back and listen,” combined with her concerns about being teased or not heard, is unsettling. It indicates that Gabby feels her comments are not welcomed and that she does feel she is not invited to participate.

During classroom observations, I also noted the stark contrast in the number of comments and questions made by the White students versus the minority students. Overwhelmingly it was the White students who would answer Mr. Larsen’s questions and voice their own opinions. Moreover, it was most common that White males would pose questions or make substantive comments during large group discussions. Schools are a primary factor in constructing civic identity, thus minorities’ infrequent participation in the Civics classroom is troublesome. If students are not participating in their Civics classroom, they are not practicing the skills necessary for active civic and political engagement.

The family is second to school as a source of civic identity development and political socialization (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba, 1997; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002). Gabby reported that within her family she feels accepted, nurtured, and respected; in turn, she has gained confidence and created future goals like attending college and finding a good job. She also enjoys spending time with her immediate and extended family, which she does most days after school and during weekends. While she is at home, her grandfather has taught her about citizenship and Civics-related topics.

> He always talks about the Constitution and government stuff because he always watches the news. He is always talking about the news and the Constitution, and says: 'You guys have to be this and you have the rights to do this.' He always tells us this.

Gabby's grandfather also encourages her to watch the news. Thus, multiple times per week Gabby will watch Univision, a Spanish language broadcast television network. Although Gabby is more interested in spending time with her grandfather and less interested in watching news on Univision, she explained that she prefers Univision news over English speaking stations: "I kind of don't get what they [English speaking news stations] talk about; they say a bunch of words that I don't understand." When watching news with her Grandfather, he helps with any new vocabulary and assists her with any complex topics. In turn, through watching the news, Gabby feels more knowledgeable of current events and political affairs. In sum, Gabby's strong family relationships and encouragement paired with watching the news with her Grandfather have offered opportunities for her civic identity development.

Gabby feels allegiance to both Mexico and the United States. But she wants to continue living in the United States to pursue academic opportunities. She said that she wants to stay in the United States "because I can finish school here. And go to college." She also stated that she is looking forward to returning to Mexico to see her father and his extended family and that she believes that she will spend her eighth grade school year at a Spanish speaking high school outside of Mexico City. Gabby will likely move back and forth between the two countries until her later high school years, when she will begin

applying to colleges and plans to permanently reside in the United States. Thus, Gabby will continue to experience transnationalism while she experiences being part of both Mexico and the United States. She will continue to negotiate her Mexican and American civic identity with more experience living within and between both nation-states.

Conclusion

Despite their U.S. citizenship and sense of allegiance to U.S. society, Omar, Mia, and Gabby all feel a sense of belonging to Mexico (and in part, for Omar, a sense of belonging to Guatemala) and participate in multiple transnational networks. All three communicate with relatives across borders, although to varying degrees. Gabby communicates the most: She frequently Skypes and emails friends and relatives living in Mexico. Omar communicates the least: He only occasionally communicates with relatives in Mexico, but hears his adoptive parents discuss several relatives living in Guatemala. In addition, Gabby's physical presence in Mexico and Mia's anticipated 2014 visit have also opened transnational networks and have intensified their sense of belonging. At the time of the interviews, Omar had yet to travel to Mexico, but he maintains a sense of attachment to Mexico. This may partially depend on Omar's presumed belief that his biological father lives in Mexico, and at age eighteen, Omar plans to visit to locate his father. For Omar, a possible concrete experience traveling to Mexico in the future may solidify a greater sense of belonging. Thus, Omar's sense of connection to Mexico may also stem from the desire to feel a greater connection to his biological father.

The focal students I have discussed thus far (Omar, Gabby, and Mia, the Latino youth; and Amina and Hana, the Bosnian youth) exhibit similarities in the civic identity development. First, their language-in-use is associated with their civic identity. How they assert that language defines whether they feel Mexican (or Guatemalan) or American or Bosnian. For Omar, Mia, and Gabby, speaking Spanish more frequently is associated with feeling Mexican (or Guatemalan) more frequently. Gabby's experiences in Mexico likely encouraged her bilingualism. She explains that when speaking Spanish, she feels the most Mexican. In contrast, Mia speaks very little Spanish, and thus her civic identity may include a greater sense of feeling American. Omar understands more English than Spanish; he explained that he is "feeling more American now" and that speaking English is associated with feeling American. Similarly, Amina and Hana feel most American when speaking English; their sense of identity is also associated with language.

Language is not the only cultural factor associated with feeling American or Mexican (or Guatemalan) or Bosnian. The students' sense of belonging was determined by other cultural factors practiced in their daily life, such as music, food, sports, and cultural norms. For example, Omar felt more American playing baseball and more Mexican playing soccer; Gabby felt more Mexican listening to Latino music. Amina and Hana felt more Bosnian celebrating Bosnian holidays and communicating with their relatives living in Bosnia. Context also matters. Omar, Mia, and Gabby agreed that they felt more American at school and more Mexican in their homes. Amina and Hana also felt more Bosnian in their homes.

As second-generation immigrants the students identify with the United States and with their parents' native country and express dual national identifications in their daily lives. Thus, they feel like transnational citizens because they are living within and between two cultures and two countries. It is their emotional sense of belonging and sense of attachment rather than their physical locale that determines the allegiance that frames their civic identity. In addition, their civic identity is associated with their lived experiences and with contextual factors including language, culture, social setting, and family expectations.

Further, how Omar, Gabby, Mia, Hana, and Amina self-identify with their chosen cultural and national identities is part of how they come to terms with their transnational belonging. For each student, his or her civic identity is not positioned between either Mexico or the United States or Bosnian or the United States, but between both locations. Their civic identities are continuously being negotiated and constructed depending on space, language-in-use, and experience. For the focal students, solely identifying with one identity, by itself, does not fully capture the entirety of who they are and what they experience and believe. Furthermore, transnational identities coexist simultaneously, but may become activated in different settings that are distinct and unique (Zou, 2002). Thus, depending on context, they may feel more Mexican or more Bosnian or more American, but they still feel two cultures simultaneously. How they self-identify with their chosen identities is part of how these youth come to terms with their transnational belonging.

Chapter Six: "I Am Vietnamese."

This chapter is about Thao, a fourteen-year-old Vietnamese immigrant who has lived in the United States for three years. In this chapter, I highlight Thao's experiences migrating to and residing in Lilydale. I discuss how Thao experiences being Vietnamese and being American and how he negotiates transnational space because he feels connected to both Vietnam and the United States. To offer insight on his civic identity development, I also describe how Thao comes to terms with citizenship, democratic life, and the American dream. Thao embodies a complex civic identity. He appears detached from Vietnam and American civic life and culture. Yet he succeeds academically, socializes with students from multiple groups, and participates in organized groups such as wrestling.

In part, I chose to write about Thao due to my personal experiences living in rural Minnesota. I found it likely that small rural high schools typically have only a few students of a single minority background. For example, during my high school experience, there was one Black family. Thus, each child was the single Black student at his or her grade level. Although Lilydale is diverse, the majority of the time Thao is the only Vietnamese and Asian student in the classroom. His experiences parallel the experiences of students in other Minnesota small rural towns where students are a "minority of one." I wanted to examine the experiences of a student in this situation, as it seems to be more of a norm in small town Minnesota. I also chose to write about Thao because technically he is a 1.5-generation immigrant. At 11 years of age, he arrived in the United States, where he will continue to be educated and socialized in the United States.

However, at this point, Thao has spent more time being educated and socialized in Vietnam. Thus, he continues to live in transition, still settling into American culture and negotiating his American and Vietnamese identities.

After selecting Thao as a focal student, data collection and analysis presented limitations. First, Thao gave short, quick responses during interviews. To gain more understanding, I probed and asked multiple questions, but his responses remained short. Hence, throughout this chapter the quotations from Thao are short. Second, he was the only Vietnamese student I interviewed. In contrast, I interviewed two Bosnian students and six Latino students, making it possible to compare and contrast the experiences across each minority group. I believe interviews with multiple students of a single group allowed for a greater understanding of civic identity development. Because Thao was the only Vietnamese student in this study, it was more difficult to contextualize his experiences being Vietnamese within the community and school. Despite these limitations, I believe this chapter presents a description that aids in the greater understanding of immigrant youth residing in rural Minnesota.

Background

The Vietnam War and its effects dramatically altered the lives of many Vietnamese people because it resulted in multiple deaths and forced resettlement. Vietnamese asylum seekers and refugees began to arrive to the United States in 1975 and onward following the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War. The Vietnamese primarily arrived in three waves. The first wave occurred during the mid-1970s where 130,000 Vietnamese were evacuated by air and sea (Campi, 2005). Most of these first

refugees were well-educated, highly skilled professionals whose children excelled academically (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1991). The second wave lasted from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. In comparison to the first wave, these refugees arrived in greater numbers to the United States, but many lacked education, job skills, and monetary support (Zhou, 2001). These refugees fled Vietnam by land and sea; those who fled by sea were referred to as *boat people* because they left in small, crowded fishing boats. Many of the first Vietnamese arrivals to the United States felt resentment and discrimination from Americans, in part perpetuated by the turmoil and emotion associated with the Vietnam War (Campi, 2005). The third wave occurred during the 1990s as part of a humanitarian agreement between the United States and the Vietnamese governments; this agreement allowed Vietnamese ex-service men and their families to migrate to the United States. More recently, additional Vietnamese migrants have been sponsored by government organizations to support family reunification (Migration Policy Institute, 2010; Zhou, 2001).

Between 1975 and 1994, exiled Vietnamese individuals living in the United States were not allowed to "legally travel to, invest in, or send large sums or remittances to Vietnam" because the United States labeled Vietnam an 'enemy nation'" (Espiritu & Tran, p. 369). Thus, it was not possible for Vietnamese immigrants in the United States to return to their native country. Second-generation Vietnamese Americans were therefore unable to visit their parents' homeland. Since 1994, movement of people and goods between the United States and Vietnam has been allowed; many Vietnamese Americans have been able to physically connect with family members and see the land of their

origin. In addition, Espiritu and Tran articulate, “Vietnam remained out of reach for most Vietnamese Americans, particularly the second-generation, who had very little, if any, direct experience with their parents’ homeland” (p.369). Since 1994, movement of people and goods between the United States and Vietnam has been allowed; in turn, separated families may physically connect and possibilities of future return to Vietnam exist and may be imagined.

During the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the U.S. Vietnamese population grew faster than other immigrant groups, but has since grown slower than the overall immigrant population in the United States (Migration Policy Institute, 2010). The Vietnamese population continues to increase due to the births of second-generation Vietnamese children. The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau data reports the U.S. Vietnamese population increased from 125,000 in 1975 to 1,555,374 in 2010. The majority of Vietnamese presently live in California and Texas, but large populations also reside in Washington, Virginia, Massachusetts, Florida, and Pennsylvania (U. S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The majority of Vietnamese have settled in the Western and Southern regions of the United States. Vietnamese have also migrated to Minnesota, but in smaller numbers. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 27,086 Vietnamese live in Minnesota, of which the majority live in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and surrounding suburbs. Although fewer settled in rural areas, Vietnamese refugees did find their way to Lilydale to work at the meat processing plant. During the 1980s, Lilydale’s local churches sponsored Vietnamese and East Asian refugees. Church members assisted the new arrivals with settling into their homes, enrolling their children in school, buying groceries, and adjusting to

everyday life. The meat processing plant hired and trained the new workers. In Lilydale, neither the Vietnamese nor the Asian population as a whole has grown to large numbers. As of 2010, 59 Vietnamese individuals (2.4% of the population) were living in Lilydale. In comparison, in 2010, 79 people (3.2% of the population) living in Lilydale were labeled as Asian; thus, Vietnamese people represented the largest portion of Lilydale's Asian population. At Lilydale High School, total Asian enrollment includes 15 individuals (3% of the school population). However, because the school does not distinguish between Asian groups, there is no confirmation of the exact number of individuals who identify as Vietnamese. Nevertheless, I predict the number of Vietnamese at the high school mirrors Lilydale's general population, where the majority of the Asian population identifies as Vietnamese.

Educational experiences. Researchers have identified Vietnamese students as high-achieving and academically successful students (Caplan et al., 1991; Kim, 2002; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Similar to other Asian American groups, Vietnamese students are frequently depicted as *model minorities*. The model minority stereotype groups all Asians and highlights their academic achievements (Ngo & Lee, 2007). It declares that, "Asian Americans are successful in school because they work hard and come from cultures that believe in the value of education" (Lee, 1994, p. 413). Researchers have been critical of this overly simplified stereotype, however, "the model minority stereotype is still thriving" (Ngo, 2006, p. 51). Despite the critique, the stereotype holds some validity. Multiple scholars have concluded that Asian Americans earn higher grade point averages, score higher on mathematical standardized tests, and have higher college

enrollment rates than other immigrant and refugee groups (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Vietnamese students are often included under the Asian model minority label and are categorized as quiet, polite, and hardworking students; they "are well known as an ethnic group for their academic achievements and success" (Robbins, 2004, p. 68). Caplan et al. (1991) and Zhou and Bankston (1998) contend that Vietnamese students' academic successes can be primarily attributed to cultural values associated with a strong work ethic, a sense of the importance of education, Buddhist and Confucian traditional values, and cooperative family solidarity. As a whole, Vietnamese students have performed better academically than other immigrant and refugee groups. For example, Ima and Rumbaut (1995) compared groups of immigrant and refugee youth attending schools in California. They found that Vietnamese students achieved the highest GPAs and accounted for the largest percentage of students classified as "gifted and talented" in comparison to other groups of immigrant youth from Asia and Latin America.

Despite Vietnamese students' academic achievements, it is an oversimplification to categorize all Asians under the model minority stereotype or to assume all Vietnamese students as academically successful. First, there are differences between the experiences of ethnic groups categorized as Asian Americans (Lee, 1994; Ngo & Lee, 2007). For example, researchers have concluded that Vietnamese students frequently do better academically than Southeast Asian students identified as Laotian, Cambodian, and Hmong (Caplan et al. 1991; Kim, 2002).

Second, researchers also have examined differences within Asian immigrant groups (e.g., Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Lee, 2001; Zhou & Bankson, 1998). For instance, Vietnamese students' experiences and academic success rates vary. According to Zhou and Bankson (1998) the most successful Vietnamese students are those who follow family and cultural values rather than succumbing to "over-Americanization" (p. 151). In contrast to the assumption that cultural assimilation is required for success in the United States, Zhou and Bankson posit that identifying as Vietnamese is not a barrier to academic success. But it is an oversimplification to argue that traditional Asian family cultural values are the primary factor contributing to academic achievement. For example, in a study of Cambodian youth, Chhuon, Hudley, Brenner, and Macias (2010) found there are other contributing factors that support students' academic success, including the level of academic achievement of older siblings, perceived teacher encouragement, and "sense of institutional opportunities" (p. 50). Students' experiences with education, racism, and the community may also factor into their academic successes, achievements, and opportunities (Ngo & Lee, 2007). In their mixed-methods study, Espiritu and Tran (2002) found that two-thirds of their Vietnamese second-generation young adult participants (ages of 18 and 25) attending a Southern California college had experienced racial discrimination at some point in their lives. The young adults who were interviewed "complained that 'Americans' often assumed that they did not speak English, made fun of their Vietnamese names, or teased them when they spoke Vietnamese" (p. 379). Similarly, Long (1996) asserted that some Vietnamese youth are alienated from school and feel marginalized from U.S. culture. In some cases, the alienation and

marginalization may be associated with Vietnamese youth involvement in gangs, criminal activity, and juvenile delinquency (Espiritu & Tran, 2002; Long, 1996; Zhou & Bankson, 1998).

In summary, although the model minority stereotype holds some truth, it is inaccurate to categorize all Asian students as model minorities. It is inaccurate to state that culture is the sole factor in achievement (Lee, 2001). Multiple factors, including racism, student teacher relationships, time in the United States, and socioeconomic status, influence students' academic success and identity. Furthermore, culture is fluid and dynamic and "has changed and adapted in response to external conditions" (Lee, 2001, p. 525). Hence, an array of factors must be considered to examine immigrants' experience and success within the United States.

Participant: Thao

For this study, I interviewed one Vietnamese immigrant, Thao. I also observed his classroom interactions, reviewed his schoolwork, and held informal conversations with him throughout the school day. Thao was the last student to turn in the permission slip that allowed him to be part of this study. He stated his parents agreed he could participate and that he was interested, but he kept on leaving it at home, and to help him remember, I presented him with at least four copies of the permission slip. Although it was challenging to obtain the permission slip, it was easy to schedule the three interviews with Thao, as most days he was available during his study hall and after school. For each session, I interviewed him individually. During the first interview, he appeared very nervous; when I asked why, he explained he did not feel comfortable meeting in the main

office. At that point, we decided that we should meet in a small room located near the library. During the second and third interviews, he appeared less anxious: He chatted more easily and seemed more at ease when responding to the questions. However, he was not as talkative as the other focal students and often gave short, quick replies. In response, I used more probes with the interview questions to learn about his experiences. Thao speaks in a soft tone and with a slight accent; during the interviews, I occasionally had to ask him to repeat a comment or response.

Thao is a fourteen-year-old, first generation immigrant who has lived in the United States for three years. He moved with his mother and four siblings to Lilydale directly from Vietnam, where they joined his father, who had previously moved to Lilydale seven years ago. Thao's parents and his siblings live together in a house within walking distance of the school. Both of his parents work at the meat processing plant. Prior to arriving in the United States, his English was limited: "I only knew some English words." Now, he speaks English fluently. Thao's parents do not speak English, so he speaks Vietnamese at home unless he is having a conversation with his English-speaking siblings.

Each day at school, Thao was attired in a zipped-up hoodie and basketball shoes, always appearing ready to play soccer or run around with friends. He explained that sleeping and sports are his favorite activities. During second hour Civics class, he would typically be engaged in a conversation with a group of male friends. He was the only person of Asian background in the classroom, something he did notice. He explained, "I am used to being the only one [Vietnamese student in class]." Thao is involved in

wrestling and is absent a few Fridays to attend wresting tournaments. During his freshman year, he hopes to join the ninth grade soccer team. He would love to play soccer during his eighth grade year, but the school only offers the sport in grades 9-12.

Thao's experiences contrast with the majority of other Vietnamese immigrants and refugees residing in the United States. First, he lives in a rural community, whereas the majority of Vietnamese immigrants are situated in urban areas. He also resides in a rural community that has a small Asian population. Typically, Vietnamese live in more established Vietnamese communities and neighborhoods (Migration Policy Institute, 2010). Second, the majority of Vietnamese arrived during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s; thus, most Vietnamese individuals his age are second-generation immigrants because they are children of these earlier immigrants. Consequently, Thao's experience is unique, for he is a recent Vietnamese immigrant residing in rural Minnesota.

Living in Lilydale

Thao has lived in Lilydale for three years. He do not recall exactly how he felt when he first arrived besides being tired, but he reported that he was eager to see his father. He was hesitant to leave Vietnam because he knew he would miss his friends and extended family. Upon arrival to Lilydale, he recalled feeling lonely. He explained, "We moved here, they don't know us. They [community members] ignore you a couple of days and some people start talking to you and then you get along." Thao did not feel instantly befriended by others living in Lilydale, likely due to a language barrier and possible cultural barriers. Thao recognized the language difference, "It [Lilydale] was kind of like a new place, we came here and we don't know how to speak English." Thao's

father was able to help the family adjust to their new lives because he had been living in Lilydale. In addition, a few other Vietnamese in the community made Thao and his family feel welcomed. However, there are still times when Thao and his family feel lonely, especially during the winter months. Thao explained, "Sometimes we get a little bit lonely because when it snows nobody comes outside and walks." During the winter months, Thao stated that most of the time his family stays inside, and they see fewer people.

Similar to the Bosnian population, the Vietnamese population is less established than the Latino and Somali populations, primarily because of the smaller number of Vietnamese people and the absence of Vietnamese-owned restaurants and businesses. Further, there is no central public gathering place for Vietnamese people or a place that regularly attracts Vietnamese people as a group. Rather, according to Thao, they socialize at each other's houses or sometimes meet in the public city park or nearby state park. In addition, the language barrier remains a factor. Thao's parents only speak Vietnamese, which causes a separation between them and Lilydale's English-speaking majority. Thao reports that his parents typically stay home, take care of their children, listen to Vietnamese news, and communicate with family living in Vietnam. When his father is not working day or evening shifts at the meat processing plant, his parents socialize with the few other Vietnamese adults in the community. When possible, Thao also socializes with friends outside of school; some of his friends are Vietnamese, but he has friends from multiple backgrounds. He explained, "I am friends with everybody." For the most part, Thao enjoys living in Lilydale but he wishes there was more to do. He reports that

his peers are kind, that Lilydale is a safe school, and that he likes his teachers. He also enjoys school, for it is the place where he most often socializes with friends.

"Mislabeled" Identity

Thao enjoys school and believes people in the community are "kind and respectful." However, Thao recognizes that his immigrant, minority, and Vietnamese identities are apparent to other students, which he reports sometimes makes him feel uncomfortable. He also is mislabeled as Chinese or called Asian, and his classmates assume that Thao holds knowledge of all Asian cultures. During the second interview, Thao explained, "Like every time in the room they talk about Asian or Chinese stuff, and my friend always [says] to me, 'What are they talking about?' And, I say, I don't know. I am not Chinese." Thao also resists the pan-Asian label, as *Asian* is a broad term that is used to categorize multiple groups of people. Thao's classmates frequently assign labels based on Thao's accent and his physical features. By having "an Asian appearance" his classmates see him as an expert in all things Asian.

Being visually noticed as Asian and Vietnamese plays into how he acts at school:

Jessamay: How about here at Lilydale? Does being Vietnamese impact how you act at school?

Thao: Kind of. Some people say my eyes look a little different from them.

Thus, for Thao, it seems that his visual differences are significant in how others view his identity; at most times, he perceives that his physical features do indeed factor into his

actions. In addition, being mislabeled as Asian or Chinese factors into his civic identity and how he defines himself as a citizen.

Jessamay: So do you feel like you are more of a U.S. citizen now, or more of a Vietnamese citizen?

Thao: More Vietnamese.

Jessamay: Do you feel like a U.S. citizen?

Thao: No.

When I asked for an explanation, Thao claimed he did not feel like a U.S. citizen because of how others have mislabeled him. By not being distinguished as Vietnamese, he feels deterred from claiming full U.S. citizenship and does not feel a complete sense of belonging to the United States. Thao wants to be labeled Vietnamese because he is proud of his family and heritage. But Thao feels hurt and distracted when others claim he is Chinese. Moreover, the Vietnamese and the Asian populations in Lilydale in general are small in comparison to other ethnic groups. As such, being labeled "the Asian student" may perpetuate a greater sense of feeling marginalized from his peers. Perhaps if Thao was correctly recognized as Vietnamese and as American, he would feel more comfortable and welcomed throughout the Lilydale community.

Throughout Civics class and in his encounters in the hallways, Thao is recognized as the Asian student or mislabeled as Chinese. His good friend, Omar, a Latino student whom I write about in Chapter Five, has also labeled him as Chinese. The mislabeling of Thao by other students is likely based on misunderstandings of the geography and cultures outside of the United States. The social studies curriculum for Lilydale students

does little to remedy students' misconceptions because the social studies curriculum's primary focus is on the United States.

Being Vietnamese and American

Thao moved to Lilydale as an eleven-year-old, and thus remembers his friends, family, and school in Vietnam. He recalls having to wear a school uniform and the strict teachers who would hit his hand when he behaved badly. The last three years, he has been experiencing life in the United States. He has made new friends, learned a new language, and has tried new activities, including wrestling. In addition, as a recently arrived immigrant, Thao is negotiating between both Vietnamese and American cultures.

Thao self-identifies as a Vietnamese American. At times, he also identifies as Vietnamese. When I asked if he would consider labeling himself solely as American, he replied, "I am Vietnamese" and seemed to push against the American label. Similarly, Espiritu and Tran (2002) found that Vietnamese young adults do not identify with the term *American*; they associated American with being White. The young adults in their study preferred being identified as Vietnamese or Vietnamese Americans. This mirrored Thao's experience. Thao preferred identifying himself as Vietnamese American because he has cultural knowledge of both countries, has lived in both places, and speaks Vietnamese and English. Throughout our conversations, it seems he clings more to a Vietnamese label over being categorized as Vietnamese American. He likely prefers the Vietnamese label because he has lived in Vietnam for the majority of his life and speaks Vietnamese with his family, the group to which he feels the greatest connection and inclusiveness.

Similar to the other focal students I discussed in Chapters Four and Five, Thao stated that feeling American or Vietnamese depends on context. This provides evidence that for these immigrant youth, the use of language dictates the sense of cultural and ethnic identity. For instance, during the first interview Thao and I discussed language and identity.

Jessamay: You feel more American at school? How come?

Thao: Because at home I don't speak English that much at home. And I come to school and hear and speak English, like right now, that's why.

On the other hand, Thao feels more Vietnamese at home, which for Thao, holds great importance because he believes Vietnamese is an important language and part of his background. Since he associates feeling Vietnamese with speaking Vietnamese, he believes not feeling Vietnamese would separate him from the skills needed to communicate with his parents; Thao explained, "If I am not Vietnamese, I can't speak with my Mom and Dad." In sum, for Thao, language is a primary factor in feeling American or Vietnamese.

During the third interview, I asked about identity in relation to sense of belonging, and in Thao's case, we discussed his sense of belonging to the United States and to Vietnam.

Jessamay: And to what extent do you feel like you belong to the United States society and culture?

Thao: I really don't know.

Jessamay: Do you feel like you belong here?

Thao: Sometimes.

Jessamay: Do you feel like you belong to Vietnam?

Thao: Yeah.

Jessamay: And why do you feel like you belong to Vietnam and only sometimes feel like you belong here in the United States?

Thao: Because I have been there for almost half my life, so I have a lot of memory there. And my teachers, and my friends, and the rest of family are there.

It will be interesting to ask this question in the future after Thao has lived longer in the United States.

Transnationalism

Unlike Omar, Mia, and Gabby, the Latino students, and Amina and Hana, the Bosnian students, Thao states he does not feel like he is a transnational citizen. Thao explains he has experience living within both cultures and speaking English and Vietnamese. But he struggles with feeling both Vietnamese and American simultaneously, particularly because he recognizes differences between Vietnamese and Americans. During the third interview, I asked:

Jessamay: Do you think you will feel like a citizen of two different places or feel like you belong to Vietnam and the United States?

Thao: No.

Jessamay: How come?

Thao: Because Vietnamese people act like Vietnamese, we don't do the same as U.S. people do.

Jessamay: So it is difficult to feel like a Vietnamese and a U.S. citizen?

Thao: Yeah.

Thao does not specifically define the cultural differences, but they are likely items that he has been grappling with his since arrival in Lilydale.

Despite his uncertainty of claiming a sense of belonging to both Vietnam and the United States, Thao and his family participate in transnational activities. They have family members who reside in Vietnam, communicate with relatives and friends in Vietnam, and they also plan to return to visit, possibly within the next year. Thao voiced hesitancy to return. When I asked if he was excited or looking forward to returning to Vietnam, he stated, "I don't think so because I don't know who to visit. All my friends have grown up and they go to high school and stuff already." Thao seems to conclude that the Vietnam of his youth may never be reclaimed and that if he returns, he will no longer have the friends that made him feel at home. Moreover, although Thao identifies with being Vietnamese and feels a sense a marginalization from U.S. citizenship, Thao plans to continue to live in the United States. He does not desire to return to Vietnam to live permanently. In summary, Thao participates in transnational activities, but does not define himself as a transnational citizen. Rather, he identifies with being Vietnamese and living in a country where he does not feel fully accepted. However, he participates in transnational activities that in part secure his Vietnam identity.

Learning to Be American

Throughout the classroom observations, I noticed Thao to be an attentive, bright student. He enjoyed Civics, primarily because he liked Mr. Larsen: He is “nice and funny, and he tells good jokes.” Thao frequently would call out answers during class and would eagerly participate in small group activities, especially when he was able to work with his friends, a group of boys from Latino and White backgrounds. Most of the time in the classroom, Thao appeared relaxed and comfortable, but this was not always the case. At times he felt confused and disengaged:

> Jessamay: Were there times that you felt really disengaged from what was happening in the classroom?
>
> Thao: Hmm hmm
>
> Jessamay: Yeah? Can you tell me about that?
>
> Thao: Sometimes when he [Mr. Larsen] talks about history and everyone in the class knows except me.
>
> Jessamay: And everyone knows except you?
>
> Thao: Like when the World War ends everyone know except me. I don't know.

Thao hears other students easily identify such things as historical events or state capitals, but he has minimal knowledge of these facts because the majority of his school years were in Vietnamese schools. He feels that Mr. Larsen and the other students assume that he knows U.S. historical information.

Although Thao does not feel as knowledgeable as other students, he is enjoying learning about the history of the United States. In particular, he likes hearing information about the presidents, specifically George Washington:

Jessamay: So it was interesting learning about the first president of the United States George Washington?

Thao: Yes.

Jessamay: What do you think about him?

Thao: The first picture that I saw of him he looked kind of calm, but I saw him go to war. His face looked creepy and stuff.

Thao had learned a "little bit" about George Washington, but it was not until he arrived to the United States that he saw a picture of the first U.S. president. He explained that in Vietnam, he learned the extensive history of Vietnam. The traditional U. S. curriculum is similarly focused on national history.

Nevertheless, Thao appears to be doing well in Civics. He maintains an A average on tests and assignments, he listens intently to lectures, and responds with correct answers at least once during most class periods. In addition, I observed two incidents when he corrected statements made by Mr. Larsen, showing his academic knowledge and attentiveness. First, he corrected a statement regarding the U.S. Electoral College. Mr. Larsen had inaccurately stated the number of votes for Georgia, and Thao quickly called out the correct number. Second, Thao pointed out that Mr. Larsen misspelled Philadelphia on the chalkboard. These instances also indicate that Thao has a sense of

comfort in the classroom and that he feels it acceptable to challenge statements made by a teacher.

Thao performs well in Civics, but he is not interested in all Civics-related topics. For example, he found topics such as the U.S. Constitution, the branches of government, and politics in general "boring." But he recognizes some topics as having importance in academic and college success.

Jessamay: How about the Bill of Rights? Was this topic important to you?

Thao: A little bit.

Jessamay: And why do you think it was a little bit important?

Thao: When I go to college, they may ask something about that so I need to know a little bit to answer.

Thao desires to do well in Civics, for preparation of future success. He considers Civics content knowledge to be obtained for academic success rather than knowledge to be used in civic and political life. For Thao, civic knowledge is something that needs to be memorized in order to do well in college. This contributes to Thao's civic identity development: Because he does not see knowledge learned in Civics as usable in everyday life, he is not internalizing the civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for active citizenship in the United States.

Thao also fosters disengagement and disinterest toward current events:

Jessamay: Do you watch the news?

Thao: No. I never watch the news.

Jessamay: So figuring out what is going on is not that exciting?

Thao: It is not that important to me.

Jessamay: How come?

Thao: Because government can do whatever they want, I don't care. Like if do you care what can you do? Just a little kid, you know.

Later in the conversation, I asked him if he would care about politics later in life as an adult. Thao was uncertain. He also mentioned that he might vote as an adult, but it depends on how he will feel as adult and how interested he is in current events.

Freedom and the American Dream

When asked about American ideals such as freedom and equality and about his feelings toward the American Dream, Thao appeared optimistic. Freedom was the reason for his arrival to the United States: "If freedom was not in the United States, I would never come here." As he explained, his Father selected the United States because of freedoms that are bestowed on all individuals. He also used the term *freedom* when discussing U.S. citizenship: "If you are a [U.S.] citizen, it means you have freedom to get your family from other country to come and live and usually if someone is not a citizen they can't get their family here together." For Thao and his family, freedoms in the United States allowed his father to achieve his American dream: "My dad all he wanted was to have my family together again, so he tried hard, he worked hard and he got us here now. So his dream is accomplished." Upon further reflection, Thao remained uncertain about his American dream, but he feels it has helped him attempt new activities and make new friends.

Conclusion

Thao was a thoughtful and eager participant in this study. He shared insights on his experiences migrating from Vietnam and living and attending school in Lilydale. It appears that Thao is still coming to terms with what it means to be Vietnamese and American, and what it means to be a transnational citizen. He feels reluctant to define himself as American; rather he self-identifies as Vietnamese or Vietnamese American. Since civic identity involves a sense of belonging to a nation and the idea that one has a place in that nation and society, it seems that Thao's civic identity is detached from the United States. However, it is also somewhat disjointed from Vietnam, as Thao holds no desire of permanent return. Thao does recognize that U.S. citizenship has given his family freedoms, particularly the freedom to reunite with his family, but his seventh-grade self does not appear to embrace the motivation or the internal efficacy for political and civic engagement. Furthermore, Thao sees Civics content as necessary knowledge for academic success rather than information to be used in everyday life.

In sum, it seems that Thao is still developing his civic identity. Perhaps more time in the United States will further increase his sense of belonging and desire to participate in U.S. civic and political life. On the other hand, he may feel a greater sense of marginalization due to the mislabeling of his identity by other students. Furthermore, his minority status in a rural town may significantly lessen his sense of full citizenship.

Chapter Seven: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how young people from differing cultural backgrounds (i.e., Bosnian, Latino, Somali, Vietnamese, White) living in the same rural town construct and negotiate their civic identity. I conducted interviews, classroom observations, and document analyses to address the research questions outlined in Chapter One. In this chapter, I respond to the research questions, and, in doing so, I return to the experiences of the six focal students: Hana and Amina (the Bosnian students), Omar, Gabby, and Mia (the Latino students), and Thao (the Vietnamese student). I also include the experiences of the other eight focal students to contextualize the experiences of living in the rural community. To address the research questions, I draw upon the conceptual frameworks that guide this study: the ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1988), transnationalism (Ong, 1999), and imagined communities (Anderson, 1983). To begin this chapter, I discuss select contextual factors outlined by Bronfenbrenner's model that stand out as influences on the civic identity development of the youth in the present study. Then, I describe the students' experiences and conceptualizations of transnationalism and transnational citizenship. To conclude, I summarize the focal students' constructions of their imagined communities. Throughout each section, I elaborate on commonalities and distinctions across the focal students.

Ecological Model and Civic Identity

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1988) ecological model offers a way to investigate the complexity of social context; he identifies a systematic structure to explain how an

individual develops and functions within and between systems such as the family, school, peer groups, organizations, community, local and national politics, media and technological influences, and institutions. Bronfenbrenner suggests that in order to comprehend the full scope of human social and political development, the entire ecological system in which growth occurs should be considered. For this study, due to limited time and resources, I did not examine all subsystems and factors included in the ecological system. For instance, it was not possible to examine what Bronfenbrenner labels the *Chronosystem*, a group of factors that represent the cumulative experiences people have over the course of their lifetime. Nevertheless, it was possible to investigate students' current experiences and to explore multiple other factors outlined in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, including the bi-directional influences within and between factors. For example, parent and family political involvement influence students' formal civic education as they bring their family experiences and backgrounds into the classroom; in turn, their classroom experiences influence family political engagement. In other words, youth development depends in part on the existence and nature of ties between the family and the school curriculum. Furthermore, the influence of a factor cannot be separated from the influence of other elements because the factors are tangled and intermixed within the complex context that compromises the lives of the youth.

The contextual factors I focus on include formal civic education, peer groups, and non-formal and informal civic education. Non-formal and informal civic education includes civic learning experiences facilitated within extracurricular activities, organizations, local community, and family. Non-formal and informal education are

typically distinct terms, but for the purpose of this study, I utilize informal education to define all education not formally taught in the classroom. I distinguish between formal civic education, which includes Civics classroom learning experiences, and informal civic education that includes social, community, and family civic and political learning experiences.

Formal civic education. Formal education is intentional instruction that is typically classroom-based and teacher-directed. Mr. Larsen's classroom like other Civics classrooms, represent formal education. Formal civic education is offered in the social studies subjects including Government, Civics, History, and Geography courses where citizenship is a common theme. Teachers of civic education hold a responsibility for the development of civic competency and civic responsibility. Formal civic education should provide a basic background of civic life, politics, democracy, and government and promote the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for meaningful engagement in a pluralistic democratic society.

The way that civic education is taught and the content that is used factor into students' civic identity development. Teachers of civic education courses usually embrace democratic priorities, purposes, and approaches. Through their curriculum and instruction, teachers promote differing types of citizenship and civic outcomes (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Mr. Larsen's instruction was primarily lecture based and textbook driven. His curriculum focused on important dates, events, people, and political processes. Mr. Larsen's aim was to teach young people the fundamental knowledge and values to be responsible citizens. His approach to teaching social studies, defined by Barr,

Barth, and Shermis (1977), may be characterized as *citizenship transmission*. Civic education teachers who follow this approach transmit knowledge to their students concerning the functions of government, the requirements needed to be law-abiding citizens, and how to engage in voting and conventional forms of political participation. In contrast, Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) present two other types of approaches: *Social studies as social science* and *reflective inquiry. Social studies as social science* encourages students to examine primary documents and analyze real world issues and to think like social science researchers. *Reflective inquiry* is based on students' interests and concerns; the curriculum promotes a reflective process to recognize and analyze a conflict or problem. Neither *social studies as social science* or *reflective inquiry* were clearly evident in Mr. Larsen's methods and instruction.

To further categorize Mr. Larsen's purposes and aims, Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) citizenship typology can also be applied. This typology distinguishes between *personally responsible*, *participatory*, and *justice-oriented* citizenship. Mr. Larsen's Civics curriculum and instruction emphasized *personally responsible* citizenship. He focused on citizenship dispositions such as having good character and being honest, responsible, knowledgeable, and law-abiding. Mr. Larsen reiterated these values and norms throughout the course and informed students of acceptable ways to act in the community. He instructed students to be aware of their individual rights and responsibilities and explained the roles of a citizen as a voter, volunteer, and respectful community member. Mr. Larsen believed it was his duty to guide his students in how to think and act with tolerance and to show respect toward individuals of differing cultural

groups. To a lesser degree, he also conveyed *participatory citizenship*, but the focus remained on being participatory adults, not participatory youth. He suggested ways students could be politically active in their communities as adults. For example, he mentioned to his students that as adults they could run for office or plan community events. Mr. Larsen did not convey *justice-orientated citizenship.* He did not guide students to critically examine social, political, and economic structures or to be engaged in acts to promote social justice.

As a result of Mr. Larsen's focus on *citizenship transmission* and *personally responsible citizenship,* students seemed to develop an awareness of their individual rights and responsibilities. During the interviews, students acknowledged the importance of freedoms, rights, and individual responsibilities such as voting and volunteering in the community. They also seemed to recognize honesty, integrity, and hard work as values that support good citizenship. In addition, the focal students reported that they became more knowledgeable of Civics-related content throughout the school year. They acquired more awareness regarding the history of U.S. nation building, government processes and institutions, and documents such as the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

Conversely, students learned little about participatory rights and collective and global responsibilities. They expressed minimal awareness of how to directly participate and engage in civic and political society. They also had limited knowledge of social justice issues or how to challenge structural and societal norms. As a result, it seems that

the majority of the focal youth acquired a civic identity that is more passive than active, more accepting than critical.

The students who reported they had participated in the community did so due to parent encouragement. For example, Omar's adoptive parents motivated him to volunteer at church events to support community members in need. Jaden and Ashley, two White female students, volunteered at a clothing drive because their parents signed them up. The focal students without parent encouragement did not participate. Thus, these focal students are not receiving support of how to be democratic participatory citizens from their parents or their civic education.

Mr. Larsen left out critical aspects in youth preparation for civic and political engagement. However, Mr. Larsen's instruction is reflective of the type of instruction observed in Civics classrooms across the United States. First, like Mr. Larsen's classroom, the majority of current civic education programs are aimed at *personally responsible citizenship* (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Second, in the majority of social studies classrooms, content is primarily textbook-based (Wade, 1993), lecture is the dominant mode of instruction (Reisman, 2012), and coverage as opposed to depth is the goal (Torney-Purta et al., 2001). Third, although Mr. Larsen believed he executed frequent discussion in his classroom, student-center discussion rarely occurred. Rather, Mr. Larsen utilized a call and response form of questioning in which students frequently answered closed-ended questions with "right" answers. Similarly, in their study of Civics classrooms, Niemi and Niemi (2007) stated: "Teachers controlled the ways in which questions and answers were asked and answered" (p. 55). Nystrand, Gamoran, and

Carbonaro (2001) also argue that although teachers claim they frequently use discussion, minimal discussion is actually present in classes. Thus, Mr. Larsen's instructional practices are reflected in other social studies classrooms.

In addition, Mr. Larsen's Civics classroom projected, although unintentionally, a "U.S. is best" theme. The primary topics taught throughout my observations (October to March) related to the U.S. nation-building narrative focused on democracy, freedom from tyrannical England, important documents such as the Bill of Rights, and the legacy of the Founder Fathers. In an informal conversation, Mr. Larsen explained that he intended to teach students that the United States has rights and freedoms that are unique and should be highly regarded. He also wanted his students to respect the United States and to be proud of U.S. citizenship. These are important topics that should be taught; however, most students interpreted their instruction to mean that the United States offers the greatest number of freedoms and, for some, that it is the *only* country that offers freedoms. As a result, the students seemed to be internalizing views that the United States is an exceptional nation-state.

For example, Ashley, a White female who earns As in all of her classes and identified social studies as her favorite subject, enjoys learning about other countries, but made statements during class that suggested a "U.S. is best" theme. During interview two, we discussed the United States in comparison to other countries.

Jessamay: Do you think our government is similar to any other governments in the world?

Ashley: Umm…I don't really know a lot of them besides like three, but from those three they seem very different.

Jessamay: And which three are those?

Ashley: I just know Russia, England, and I was thinking of one, Japan. Because in a lot of countries they don't give freedom to their people like in Korea.

As a seventh grader, she was not expected to have extensive knowledge of other countries. But she does know some information about the governments of other countries, and she is eager to learn more. However, she is developing the idea that the United States is exceptional. Ashley said, "[Our] freedoms [are] way more than everybody else. And our government is way different that everybody else's." She does not realize that countries including the United Kingdom, France, Japan, and Sweden are also nation-states that afford their citizens multiple rights and freedoms. She was not able to explain why they differ, but she was developing an idea that the democratic government of the United States is unlike the governments in other countries.

Ashley is a bright student who is interested in learning about other countries. She also plans to travel to assist people living in less developed nations. For instance, she plans to participate in mission trips "because my brother went to Kazakhstan last summer for missions. And I always wanted to do that." Her perceived role is to help others who are less fortunate. Ashley holds the idea that the United States is an exceptional place to live and that it is her duty or responsibility to help others living in other countries. She is

eager to travel, but she imagines a world where other countries do not offer as many rights and freedoms for their citizens as does the United States.

In another example, Muna, a Somali female born in Kenya, expressed negative sentiments toward other countries, including her heritage country of Somalia. She also holds false information about other countries. For example, she mentioned several misconceptions about the United Kingdom. She believes that modern day "England" remains solely under the rule of a monarch and is without someone who serves in a presidential-like position. She portrays England as a place with few freedoms and limited rights; however, she does acknowledge that England today "is a bit better." Her images of present day England reflect historical narratives that she has learned in Civics class, where England was portrayed as a tyrannical government that is selfishly controlling United States patriots. Muna has not yet fully distinguished between the historical England of the past and the England of the current era. Mr. Larsen did not offer students an illustration of present day England. If he did, this would have likely cleared up Muna's negative perception and also would have demonstrated that there are other nation-states that recognize the multiple rights and freedoms of its citizens. The instruction Muna and Ashley experienced built upon their conceptualization of the United States as one of the few countries that secures freedoms to its citizens.

In contrast, Thao, a Vietnamese youth, did not exhibit a "U.S. is best" attitude.

Jessamay: Is there anything special about being a US citizen?

Thao: No.

Jessamay: Nothing special?

Thao: Same as you being a Chinese citizen.

Jessamay: How about if someone said: Is there anything special about being a Vietnamese citizen?

Thao: No.

Jessamay: Just any place you are citizen they are all kind of the same no matter where you are?

Thao: Yes.

Thao has lived most of his life in Vietnam, and in Vietnam he attended school and lived with family members. He believes the only difference between living in Vietnam and the United States is that in the United States, his family may live together. However, Thao also recognizes freedoms available in the United States: “If freedom was not in the United States, I would never come here.” Thao recognizes the freedoms available in the United States, but he also acknowledges that people in other countries have freedoms. His experience living in another country and having family members living in Canada and throughout Europe likely have contributed to his understanding that there are multiple places that recognize the rights of their citizens. However, he does not realize the differing levels of freedoms and rights available; he did not seem to realize that some countries do have totalitarian regimes that restrict the liberties of their populace.

The other 11 focal students—both minority and White students—echoed a “U.S. is best” theme. They seemed to hold negative opinions toward multiple other countries and believe that the United States is one of the few countries that offers freedoms. It seems that students are constructing a civic identity that is framed by U.S. nationalism

and patriotism and are forming an allegiance to the United States rather than to a transnational, global, or international community. Their construction reflects a traditional understanding of citizenship as "bounded to, and limited by, the nation-state" (Myers & Zaman, 2009) rather than conceptualizing citizenship as flexible, transnational, and global (Mitchell & Parker, 2008; Ong, 1999).

After I conducted the formal observations, Mr. Larsen and I discussed the students' perceptions. He was surprised that students perceived the United States as a superior nation; this was not the message that he wished to convey. Mr. Larsen personally does not believe that the United States is the best or is the only nation that affords its citizens freedoms. He believed that he presented examples of nations that are similar to the United States, but admitted he could be more direct with his instruction. He also believed he presented examples of an "imperfect" United States. He described that throughout his lectures, he often spoke about the injustices present in U.S. history. For example, he discussed the unfair treatment of American Indians and elaborated upon past and present acts of racism. Nevertheless, the students retained the idea that the United States is a superior nation, a theme that was internalized by the majority of the focal students even though not all students accrued a strong sense of belonging to the United States.

The focus of the Mr. Larsen's curriculum remained on United States history and politics, and he projected a message that the students are solely U.S. citizens, rather than transnational or global citizens. Scholars argue that citizenship education should be redesigned to guide students to recognize globalization, migration, and their flexible civic

identity (Castles, 2004; Myers & Zaman, 2009). In Mr. Larsen's classroom, these forms of expanded civic education better prepare the students for citizenship roles and practices that extend beyond a single U.S. nationality and for political and civic engagement within multicultural, pluralistic democracies.

In Civics class, students gained an awareness of their rights and liberties and learned factual historical and political knowledge; however, there were aspects of citizenship preparation that received little, if any, attention. First, students encountered limited formal opportunities to discuss and analyze issues of race, cultural differences, social class, gender, and U.S. civic and political processes. For instance, Mr. Larsen did not offer opportunities for structured discussion of controversial public issues. The instruction consistently remained teacher-directed with minimal time for student investigation. Second, there was minimal support for active political and civic engagement within the school and community. Students were not encouraged to volunteer, organize social initiatives, or investigate social problems to improve their communities.

In addition, not all student voices were heard in the classroom. For example, multiple focal students, in particular the minority students, typically remained silent during formal classroom instruction. Omar, Mia, Amina, and Hana said they did not feel comfortable expressing their opinions; they also appeared reluctant to respond to Mr. Larsen's questions. Conover and Searing (2000) found that students in immigrant and urban communities are significantly less likely to engage in political discussions in school than are rural and suburban students. The present study provides evidence that

immigrants living in a rural, White majority community are also less likely to engage in political discussions than their White peers, a finding that suggests immigrants in any context are more likely to be silenced within a formal classroom.

Nevertheless, immigrant students reported that they felt comfortable in Mr. Larsen's classroom. Although Omar, Mia, Amina, and Hana avoided contributing to the classroom discussion, they enjoyed being in Mr. Larsen's classroom. For example, Omar identified the classroom as the place where he felt the most comfortable. This may depend on a number of reasons. Mr. Larsen did not force students to speak, and he only called on students who raised their hands. He also had a relaxed teaching demeanor. As a result, his students were given an abundant amount of free time to socialize with peers at the beginning of most class periods. Mr. Larsen also told jokes, short stories, and smiled and laughed with his students. His students were allowed to work with their friends during class work time. Another reason may be the small class size. There were 22 students in second hour and 24 students in third hour. The small class size may have offered students a sense of comfort. Moreover, the small school population in general seemed to foster opportunities for all students to know each other's names. Perhaps, in this small school setting, it is easier to create a greater sense of community than in schools with a larger school population.

To conclude, students felt comfortable in the classroom, but they were not receiving the tools and practice necessary for critical, participatory, and active citizenship. Furthermore, since Mr. Larsen utilized lecture-based instruction, students were not practicing the type of discussion that is vital for democracy (Dahlgren, 2006). In

addition, they did not encounter the opportunity to envision expanded forms of citizenship, including transnational or global citizenship. As a result, the students expressed allegiance to the United States rather than a supranational community.

Peer groups. Peer group relationships are also influential to youth political socialization. Peer relationships and experiences in school and community are particularly salient during adolescence, an important time of identity development and formation (Erikson, 1968). Throughout their everyday lives, youth encounter peers and form peer-to-peer relationships. The ways in which youth respond, respect, and communicate with each other influence attributes such as identity and sense of acceptance. It is within peer relationships that students can build and maintain trust and trustworthiness that lays the foundation for individuals' sense of belonging, feeling of cooperation, and willingness to participate in society (Flanagan, 2003). But peer relationships can also have negative results; it is within peer relationships that discrimination, racism, and social exclusion may be most directly felt or experienced.

The majority of students at Lilydale High School are White students, and the majority of White students are from families that are long-term residents who have lived in the community for multiple generations. For example, Travis and Hunter, two male White focal students, have grandparents who live in the community; they also have extended family members who live on farm plots that have been owned by their family for multiple generations. In contrast, the minority of students at the high school are first- and second-generation immigrants. How the long-term resident White students and the

new arriving minority students form relationships and respond to each other matters in building a sense of belonging to the school and greater community.

Lilydale High School has become increasingly diverse since the late 1990s. The majority of the seventh grade students I interviewed have encountered individuals from differing backgrounds since Kindergarten. The 14 focal students all clearly recognized that their school is diverse, and, in explaining their school during the interview sessions, they seemed to appreciate the multicultural student population. Specifically, the focal White students stated they like their diverse school and feel proud of their first- and second-generation peers. Lay (2012), in her quantitative study of small Iowan towns, discovered that the U.S.-born White adolescents adapt very well to their non-U.S. born counterparts, and that, over time, gaps diminish between the White and diverse populations in originally all-White towns with regard to tolerance, political knowledge, efficacy, and school participation. Similarly, the students at Lilydale voice respect and tolerance; they also show appreciation of diversity and realize that the multicultural population makes their community unique in comparison to their neighboring culturally homogeneous towns. However, the relationships among the students are not quite so simple, as the qualitative interview data suggest; in fact, they are far more complex. Although the students voiced appreciation of cultural diversity, the actions, participation levels, and classroom activities present unequal relationships between the White students and the new immigrant arrivals.

The White students in Lilydale exhibited varying levels of acceptance and tolerance toward the minority students. For instance, Ashley, a White student, voiced that

she felt uncomfortable when others were speaking a non-English language: “I feel really like weird when people talk Hispanic around me. I have no idea what they are saying.” Later in our conversation, she elaborated that when she heard Spanish in the classrooms, lunchroom, and the hallways, she felt uncomfortable because she thought they were talking about her friends. Ashley’s actions in the Civics classroom also showed levels of discomfort, but not explicitly. Mr. Larsen often allowed his students to work with friends. Ashley always worked with male and female White students rather than any of her minority peers. During observations of the Civics classroom, I also did not witness her having a substantive conversation with any minority student. In addition, during the interviews, Ashley indicated that her closest friends were White students. Thus, the data suggest that Ashley has maintained a separation from minority students, and although she is at a diverse school and portrays herself as tolerant and accepting, she is choosing to interact almost exclusively with White students.

Not all of the White students mirrored Ashley’s thoughts and actions. Riley, another White student, has developed a higher level of tolerance toward minority students, but has formed a sense of discomfort when in White homogeneous groups. This was made evident during the third interview when discussing diversity and social group settings:

Riley: For diversity, I don't know, I feel more comfortable with multicultural people than just…I don't know why.

Jessamay: So you feel more comfortable with people from different cultures than you?

Riley: Yeah.

Jessamay: Rather than with people who are White like you?

Riley: Yeah.

Jessamay: Why do you think that is?

Riley: Just the fact that I have grown up with it probably. It feels uncomfortable to be in room with just like Whites. I don't know.

Jessamay: Are you in a setting very often with people who are only White?

Riley: No, not really. Only when it is like, honestly like never. But there has been times. Like I am a part of Girl Scouts, and it is okay but not really. But there are only White girls. There is no different colored skin girls. It is a little bit weird, just because it is kind of like a segregation thing.

Riley's comfort with ethnically and culturally diverse settings is also reflected in her friend selection. For example, while I observed social settings at school, I noticed Riley socializing with minority student groups at lunch, in the seventh grade hallway, and during study time. Riley was one of the few students who befriended Mia, the quiet Latina student I discussed in Chapter Five. Later during our interview, Riley explained that she really did not know why she felt more comfortable in diverse student settings. I believe that her level of comfort with heterogeneous settings has been constructed by her experience (1) having a stepmother who is Romanian and speaks Romanian; (2) having a father who lived in Europe during his time in the army; (3) identifying as Jewish in a predominantly Christian community; and (4) being part of a family that is a lower social

class, which has placed her is several social situations similar to the majority of Lilydale's minorities. These experiences have set her apart from the majority of White students at Lilydale High School.

Ashley and Riley, both White students, constitute the complex landscape of Lilydale. Ashley prefers to socialize with White-homogeneous groups, while Riley feels more comfortable in groups where diversity is present. Although disparate cases, it appears that attending the diverse, multicultural high school in Lilydale does mean all students will be tolerant toward other students. Furthermore, for the students, the proximity of culture does not necessarily equate to securing intercultural appreciation, awareness, and competencies. Students may be sitting in desks near students of other backgrounds, but they may not gain knowledge of other cultural backgrounds or learn how to effectively communicate with their peers. It also appears that within Lilydale High School there are spaces that support homogeneous relationships. For example, Ashley has created close relationships with others with similar cultural and racial backgrounds, and not with her minority peers. She likely may traverse through Lilydale High School and not form meaningful relationships with her minority peers. To conclude, students may say they are tolerant and that they accept others; however, upon closer investigation, they may be—possibly unintentionally—not acting with tolerance and full acceptance.

Civic identity is shaped by positionality or one's specific position in any context as defined by gender, race, class, culture, and social class. Lilydale's immigrant and minority students are constructing their civic identity within a setting in which they are

minorities. Within this setting, they may feel marginalized and not included. The seventh grade minority youth focal students seemed to encounter peer-to-peer incidences that deterred them from full participation within their school. For example, during the first interview Martina and Kelli explained that during gym class, a group of White females were not fully including them in their basketball game. The three minority girls admitted they were not skilled basketball players and that the White girls played after-school basketball, but they wanted to be given a chance. In another example, Ema, Hana, Omar, Mia, Gabby, Martina, Muna, and Rosa all mentioned during interviews that they did not consistently feel comfortable speaking during large group discussions. From my observations, White students were more vocal during class discussion and activities. Thus, to a degree, because they did not feel comfortable speaking, the minority students have experienced marginalization in Civics class. The minority focal students at Lilydale High School seem to have encountered disparities due to power imbalances; as a consequence, they have engaged in fewer opportunities to develop their civic skills than their White peers.

There were also positive peer-to-peer interactions that fostered opportunities to enhance youths' civic identity development. For example, Hunter, a White focal student, reported that he has learned a lot about the cultural backgrounds of his peers. During the interviews, he expressed interest in learning another language and possibly traveling to Mexico, the home country of one his close friends. It appears that Hunter has developed awareness and tolerance of other cultures. Muna, a Somali female, voiced that she feels comfortable wearing traditional Muslim clothes at school around non-Muslim peers. She

believes it shows others that she is proud of being Muslim. This sense of pride seems to display a sense of confidence in her cultural identity, a confidence that factors into her civic identity development. In another example, Amina, a Bosnian female, has friends from multiple cultural groups. During interview two, she stated she believes her diverse friend group has made her feel "more American." In addition, she feels proud that her school is diverse and feels that it has assisted her academic achievements.

As seventh graders, the students belong to differing cultural and racial groups. Within and between these groups, students interact, practice, and prepare for engaging in a pluralistic democracy. They have the opportunity to hear the opinions of others, to voice their own opinions, and to strive to achieve common goals. On the other hand, some students maintain participation only in homogeneous groups. These students are at a disadvantage because they are not taking advantage of opportunities to practice intercultural skills and to communicate across difference; these are necessary skills for participation in a pluralistic democracy.

Informal education. Informal education occurs outside the classroom in extracurricular activities, community-based institutions, and social organizations. Informal education represents the lifelong learning process that happens inside and outside of schools. In schools, informal education transcends school norms and rules, student government, and the relationships formed within the school community. Outside of school, informal education occurs within community and social groups (e.g., family, religious, and community organizations). Informal education settings offer students opportunities that are associated with civic identity development (Youniss et al., 1997).

Within these spaces, if given the support and encouragement, young people might actively practice civic and political engagement. This is important because young people who are active civic and political participants—in or out of school—are more likely to be provided the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments that contribute to a strong civic identity than non-active participants (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Flanagan, 2003; Zeldin, 2002).

A primary source of informal civic education occurs in organized groups such as after-school and community activities. Youniss et al. (1997) claim youth participation in organized groups has two primary benefits: “It introduces youth to basic roles and processes required for adult civic education (pp. 623-624) and “it helps youth incorporate civic involvement into their identity during an opportune moment in its formative states” (p. 624). Through participation in organized groups, youth have opportunities to integrate civic character into their present and future civic identity.

The focal students in this study participated in organized groups at varying rates (see Table 4 below).

Table 4

Community and School Participation and Engagement

Name	**Gender**	**Background**	**Activities**	
			School	***Community***
Amina	Female	Bosnian	Volleyball	None
Hana	Female	Bosnian	Basketball	Taekwondo
Omar	Male	Mexican, Guatemalan	Attempted Student Council (Lost) School Fundraisers Track & Field Cross Country	Church Volunteer

Name	Gender	Background	Activities	
			School	***Community***
Gabby	Female	Mexican	None	None
Martina	Female	Mexican	None	None
Rosa	Female	Mexican	None	Youth Group Church Volunteer
Mia	Female	Mexican	None	None
Kelli	Female	Mexican and White	Basketball	None
Muna	Female	Somali	None	None
Thao	Male	Vietnamese	Wrestling	None
Travis	Male	White	Football Basketball Students Against Drugs	Boy Scouts Ducks Unlimited
Hunter	Male	White	Football Knowledge Bowl Baseball	Boy Scouts
Ashley	Female	White	Volleyball Basketball Track & Field Student Council	4-H Girl Scouts Youth Group Community Fundraising Events Dance League
Riley	Female	White, Jewish	Volleyball	Library Volunteer Non-profit Volunteer Girl Scouts

Ashley, a White female, was the most engaged. She participates in community activities such as 4-H, church youth group, and community fundraising events. In addition, she participates in school activities such as volleyball, basketball, track, and student council. During the first interview, when describing her participation in organized groups, she said, "I always feel busy." Later during the interview, she explained that her family believed athletics to be really important, thus encouraged her to join multiple sports. Furthermore, Ashley lives in an area outside of the town of Lilydale. Youth in rural areas living outside of town face barriers in participation in organized activities due

to transportation. Ashley overcame this challenge because her parents were willing and able to pick her up and drop her off for practices and games. Her parents were a strong source of support; they suggested to her that being involved in multiple activities would increase her chances of attending a good college. Her family members are also active in multiple activities; as such, being active is considered a norm for Ashley. Ashley's peers were also a source of support because they are highly involved in community and school activities. The other White students (Riley, Tanner, and Hunter) are not as active as Ashley, but they are more involved in school and community activities than their minority peers.

The most involved minority student is Omar, who participates in five organized groups. Other minority students reported less involvement, and Mia, Amina, Muna, and Gabby reported no involvement. Since these young people are not involved in organized groups, they are not encountering frequent opportunities to practice the skills necessary for active civic and political engagement. Their lack of participation may depend on a variety of factors. First, the focal students' family's socioeconomic standing may matter because being involved in school and community activities typically bears a financial cost. Second, being seventh graders, students rely on parents for transportation to and from activities. Transportation may be an obstacle to joining activities if parents or guardians are working long hours or if they do not have access to a car. Third, the focal students' experiences seem to suggest that young people may be more inclined to participate in school and community activities if they have receive family and peer support. The focal students of minority backgrounds (except Omar) are not receiving

encouragement to join activities. As consequence, these minority focal students have encountered fewer opportunities to gain civic knowledge and skills through participation in voluntary and social organization and groups. Finally, the students' willingness to engage in their communities may also depend on their sense of belonging to a particular community and their sense of acceptance from others. The minority youth may not feel as welcomed to join community and school organizations as their White peers. The paradox is that a primary benefit of engagement is a greater sense of belonging and stronger commitment and affiliation to the community (Flanagan & Faison, 2001).

Social capital. It is participation within community and school activities where young people can foster relationships that increase their social capital. Putnam (2000) defines social capital as the "connections among individuals and social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (p. 19). Social capital is created in relationships within and between/among family, school, religious, and other social institutions and organizations. Small rural towns are often places that "are renowned for their high levels of social capital" (Lay, 2012). People know each other, attend the same churches, and shop at the same grocery store. Living in a small town, it would be unusual to travel through the town center and not recognize someone or strike up a conversation. Furthermore, since individuals in small towns are more likely to participate in the same social networks, it can be assumed that they would be more inclined to support one another (Putnam, 2007).

Putman (2007) suggests that places such as small towns, with high levels of social capital, also have high levels of civic engagement. Lay (2012) agrees, and explains:

“People living in small communities are more engaged in local and national politics; they belong to and participate in civic organizations; and they are more trusting of their neighbors than are those in larger, more urban areas” (p. 68). It is through their participation in social networks and organizations that individuals can gain the civic knowledge and awareness necessary for civic engagement. When young people participate in these social networks, they potentially “have the opportunity to develop and practice communication, analysis, organization, and leadership skills relevant to civic and political participation” (Levinson, 2007, p. 5).

However, small towns in rural Minnesota are likely to be racially and ethnically homogenous. Hero (2003) and Putnam (2007) suggest that social capital may be higher in homogenous small towns than in small towns that are heterogeneous. Hero (2003) states that “social capital is inevitably easier to foster within homogeneous communities” (p. 120). Lilydale presents a unique case: Like other Minnesota small towns it could be assumed to have a high level of social capital, but it is also a small town with a racially and ethnically heterogeneous population, which may result in a lower level of social capital.

My analysis of the social capital of Lilydale is based solely on observation; to obtain a complete synthesis, more systematic measures would need to occur. For example, to measure social capital, Putnam (2000, 2001) uses a “social capital index” that measures community organizational life, engagement in public affairs, community volunteerism, informal sociability, and social trust. My judgment of the social capital level is incomplete, but I provide brief information to paint part of the picture of

Lilydale's complex social landscape. My intent is to show that cultural groups do not consistently interact, and thus it is likely that neither adults nor youth are part of heterogeneous social groups.

Lilydale, a heterogeneous small town, seems both inclusive and exclusive in terms of forming and inviting others in joining social groups. Walking around Lilydale, a visitor might conclude that culturally diverse groups do not intermix. For example, Somali immigrants socialize at the halal meat store and White individuals of European descent are more likely to socialize at the billiards hall and the coffee shop. In addition, cultural groups attend different religious services. The majority of the Latinos attend their Catholic church, the Somalis (and some Bosnians) attend their mosque, and the Whites attend one of the many Christian churches. These observations suggest social groups are more exclusive than inclusive.

On the other hand, there are areas of town where individuals from various backgrounds do meet and socialize. First, the high school and the elementary school are places that offer opportunities for connection; this is also where the majority families go to assist with their child's education. Second, the public library offers a space for community integration; it is a place where both White and minority groups visit and interact. At the library, there are community education classes, including English language and citizenship classes. There are also personal stories that provide a narrative of the past and present experiences of European, Asian, Latin American, and African immigration; these are displayed on the walls and in the entryway of the library. In addition, members of the community involved in church and non-profit organizations

have supported recent arrivals to Lilydale. However, despite social interaction across school, library, and community settings, the degree to which all members of Lilydale are civically and political engaged is unknown. More investigation is needed to measure levels of social capital. More specifically, because high social capital is associated with high levels of civic engagement, it would be important to investigate social capital among the immigrant and minority communities.

Immigrant youth in this study are situated as racial, cultural, and/or ethnic minorities as they construct their civic identity. Their civic identity development depends on how they experience their everyday lives and to what extent they feel included in community and school social networks. Engagement in school and community organization is an important aspect for the development of civic identity. It fosters opportunities for students to practice the leadership skills and social relationships necessary for active citizenship. The minority focal students were less likely to engage in community and social activities than their White peers. It also appears that White and minority adults and youth do not intermingle in the greater community of Lilydale. In turn, the minority youth may also have a lower level of social capital and internal civic efficacy.

Transnationalism and Civic Identity

Transnationalism defines the heightened interconnectivity between people living or experiencing more than one nation-state. As a concept it incorporates how young people form allegiance and a sense of belonging to a nation or group of nations. Transnational citizenship refers to the ideas of belonging, allegiance, and recognition to

two or more nation-states. Its primary purpose is "to acknowledge the symbolic ties reaching back to the countries of origin" (Faist, 2000, p. 219) in place of considering solely legal and formal connections. Civic identity is negotiated through these symbolic rather than legal ties to nation-states and is developed through experiences within and between places.

The first- and second-generation focal youth in this study discussed their transnational experiences, and, as seventh graders, they seem to be grappling with their identities between being American and maintaining connections to their parents' cultural homelands. Furthermore, their sense of transnational identity seems to adapt and alter with location and action. For example, Amina, a Bosnian female, feels more American at school and more Bosnian at home. Gabby, a Latina, feels more American when she speaks English and more Mexican when she speaks Spanish. Omar, a Latino, feels American when he plays baseball and Mexican when he plays soccer. Their identities reflect differing experiences within their social contexts. Thus, for the immigrant focal students, they each seem to have multiple – and occasionally contradictory – identities available to them (Norton, 2000).

The majority of the first- and second-generation immigrant focal students recognized they did not acquire the paperwork to be legal citizens of two different counties. However, they expressed a symbolic connection; they *felt* they belonged to two different countries. It is also important to note that not all the youth have traveled outside of the United States; thus, their sense of transnationalism and belonging to multiple nation-states is not contingent on physical presence in their cultural homelands. During

the third interview, seven of the ten focal immigrant students agreed they felt like they belonged to two different countries. They each discussed concerns or challenges and/or described their experiences living between two places. They explained:

Amina (Bosnian):	Yeah… Like my parents want to live in Bosnia, and I want to live in American. And I don't know where to choose. But it is so hard.
Hanna (Bosnian):	Yeah. I wish I could move over there [Bosnia]. I would really like living over there.
Mia (Latina):	I do feel like I belong to probably Mexico and here… It is good. It is fun.
Omar (Latino):	Yes. A little bit…I guess it is the way the way my parents describe things, and it is kind of the same thing for me.
Gabby (Latina):	Yeah. I was born here [in the United States], but I live in Mexico with my family
Martina (Latina):	I think that I belong to both places…But I think that I actually belong more here than over there [Mexico].

The students who felt a sense of belonging to both countries also mentioned they felt a sense of connection to their corresponding cultures. Rosa's (Latina) response varied slightly from the others. She felt she belonged to two different cultures, not two different countries.

Jessamay:	Do you ever feel like you belong to two or more countries?
Rosa:	No.

Jessamay:	You just feel like you are citizen of the United States?
Rosa:	Yeah.
Jessamay:	And how come you don't feel like you belong to Mexico?
Rosa:	Sometimes my brother is like you are not Mexican because you were not born in Mexico. And sometimes I don't feel like I am Mexican, sometimes I do. Well, I do feel Mexican, but sometimes I don't know.
Jessamay:	When do you feel like you are Mexican or feel like a Mexican American?
Rosa:	I feel Mexican like around my parents, just being with my family I feel Mexican. And being with them.
Jessamay:	So do you feel like you are part of two different cultures?
Rosa:	Yeah.
Jessamay:	Rather than two different countries?
Rosa:	Yeah.

Later in our conversation Rosa stated she wanted to feel part as if she is part of the Mexican culture, but at times, she did not feel like she was allowed because she was not born in Mexico, a reminder statement frequently echoed by her brother. However, she reported that she feels connected to Mexican culture and wants to feel attachment to the nation-state of Mexico. It seems that she holds a sense of transnationalism because she claims a Mexican and a Mexican American identity, but feels disconnected from the nation-state of Mexico because of her birthplace.

In total, seven of the ten focal immigrant student expressed a sense of belonging to two countries and/or a sense of belonging to two cultures. They are continuing to develop their identities living within and between two places and doing so in differing ways. For instance, Gabby feels she belongs to Mexico and the United States, and through practicing Mexican and American traditions and cultural practices, she feels connected to the cultures of both countries. Hana is debating which place she would like to live; she imagines that Bosnia, a place that she has not yet visited, may be her future home. Omar's connections to Mexico and Guatemala stem from his parents' repeated narratives and stories. Rosa feels Mexican, but she seems to be defining how and where she feels Mexican. She appears to be clinging to her Mexican identity, despite her brother's comments that she is not Mexican. These students hold multiple feelings associated with transnationalism and citizenship. Moreover, they are currently negotiating and conceptualizing their cultural, ethnic, and national identities.

In contrast, Thao (Vietnamese) and Muna (Somali) stated they did not feel a sense of belonging to two or more countries; thus they rejected the idea that they were transnational citizens. However, both Thao and Muna participated in transnational activities including corresponding with email and phone calls to relatives back home and imagining life in their heritage countries. Furthermore, they discussed the importance of being part of their parents' cultural backgrounds and they participated in cultural activities and events. Despite their claim of not belonging to two different nation-states, they described a sense of allegiance to two cultural backgrounds. For example, Muna simultaneously voiced pride in being American and being Somali. Thao explained that

due to cultural differences it was impossible to feel both American and Vietnamese. However, across the three interviews, he discussed being American and being Vietnamese. It seems that he has responded to both identities, but continues to formulate his national attachments and cultural identity. At one moment, he rejects feeling American while he simultaneously expresses a sense of detachment from Vietnam; the next moment, he claims he feels American due to his English language fluency and his belonging to American social networks, and he believes he is Vietnamese because of his use of the Vietnamese language and his connection with his family. It seems that Thao is living between Vietnam and the United States and is currently configuring his civic identity and sense of allegiance and belonging.

On the other hand, Kelli (Mexican/White), a third-generation immigrant, reported that she did not feel like a transnational citizen: "I never think like that." Kelli states she is Mexican and American and participates in Mexican cultural activities. She does not participate in transnational activities: She has no relatives in Mexico, she has no desire to travel to Mexico, she does not imagine life in Mexico, and her only known relative who speaks Spanish is her grandmother. Her father and siblings do not define themselves as Mexican. However, Kelli's friends who live near her in the trailer park are Mexican. It seems that she has framed her Mexican identity to associate with the Mexicans within her peer group. Kelli's sense of being Mexican is partly driven by her friends' Mexican identities. As a third-generation immigrant, Kelli's experience is far removed from her heritage culture, which may explain why she does not define herself as a transnational citizen.

For the immigrant focal students who participate in transnational activities and who may be characterized as transnational citizens, language played a primary role in negotiating their sense of belonging and in constructing their civic identity. The language they used was associated with their sense of feeling either American or feeling more of their family's cultural heritage. Gabby, Martina, and Rosa felt more American while they were at school because this was a place they primarily spoke English. In contrast, they felt Mexican at home with their families where they spoke Spanish. Other scholars recognize the association of language and identity. Valdés (2001) asserts that bilingual individuals' choice of a language depends on the sociocultural contexts in which they are part. Valdés also asserts that choice of language use depends on the strength of identification with and connection to the heritage culture. Put another way, if individuals have a strong connection to their families' culture and background, they are more likely to utilize the cultural heritage language. In turn, if individuals have a stronger connection to the United States, they may more frequently speak English. Furthermore, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) posit that the use of the English language has come to symbolize commitment to the United States, and as such, non-native born individuals and their families may view speaking English as a way to show allegiance with the United States. This seems to be the case with Mia, the soft-spoken Latina. She has had multiple opportunities to learn Spanish, but she chooses to speak only English. She seems to want to demonstrate that she is fully American by showing her monolingual English-speaking skills.

The focal students' experiences signal that the use of their heritage languages is associated with a sense of cultural belonging and also acts as a way to maintain and foster a connection to their background. For youth in this study, transnational citizenship was more readily available if youth utilized both English and their cultural heritage language. For example, Amina and Hana were able to imagine a return to Bosnia, in part because they spoke Bosnian. Speaking Bosnian also allowed them to communicate with their monolingual Bosnian-speaking relatives in the United States and in Bosnia. These conversations assisted in their feeling more Bosnian and remembering Bosnian cultural practices and traditions. Moreover, if they did not speak Bosnian, return to Bosnia would be more difficult, and they would have fewer opportunities to learn and experience cultural practices. Kanno (2000) and Rumbaut (2002) found that bilingualism is a significant predictor in preserving transnational connections. For instance, Kanno (2000, 2003) studied a Japanese adolescent who spent the majority of his life in the English-speaking countries of Australia and Canada. The adolescent stated he felt Japanese because he was fluent in the Japanese language. Like Amina and Hana, the Japanese youth held allegiance and a strong sense of belonging to Japan even though he had not physically visited Japan.

The majority of the immigrant youth exhibit allegiance and loyalty to two nation-states. However, it is important to note that loyalty to one's heritage country does not necessarily indicate less loyalty to the host country (Deaux, 2008). Moreover, research indicates that increased allegiance with the heritage culture and/or country reinforces allegiance to the host culture (Huo & Molina, 2006; Itzigsohn & Giorguli-Saucedo,

2005). For instance, Gabby, Rosa, Martina, and Omar exhibited a strong sense of Mexican pride and also expressed a strong sense of American pride. During the interviews, they all stated that feeling more Mexican, and speaking Spanish made them feel more American. The promotion of allegiance, loyalty, and pride of immigrant students' heritage culture might be accompanied by an increase in students' loyalty to the United States.

The majority of the first- and second-generation focal students have not severed ties with their cultural heritage countries. Rather, they have sustained connections to both their homeland and current country of residence. They have not replaced one identity for another; they balance both U.S. and homeland identities, and their experiences emphasize both *here* and *there*. It is evident that youth are living transnational lives, participating in transnational activities, and negotiating transnational citizenship.

In conclusion, this study indicates that attachment to homeland may be maintained in second-generation youth despite their not having physically visited the country of their cultural heritage. Rather, their transnational connection is fostered through imagining themselves in two places of belonging and claiming allegiance to two nation-states.

Imagined Community and Civic Identity

Anderson's (1983) concept of imagined communities is a conceptual framework to locate individuals to larger communal and social identities. In the present study, I examined how seventh grade youth conceptualized and socially constructed their single, multiple, and/or transnational imagined communities. I did not directly ask students to

define and explain their imagined community, but rather, their allegiances and beliefs became more evident throughout the three interviews. Students reflected on national, transnational, and international citizenship; they discussed patriotism, democracy, and individual rights, responsibilities, and freedoms; and they responded with their ideals when they described their conception of the American dream and discussed their future goals. From their responses, their sense of belonging to larger communal and social and political identities became more apparent.

There was a notable trend amongst all 14 focal students: Their imagined communities were framed through sovereign national borders rather than through regional transnational networks or an international or global community. During the interviews, students recognized the concept and reality of nationalism and limited state sovereignty. The students described citizenship in its legal and political sense or defined it by one's legal status or standing within a nation-state (Conover & Searing, 2002). This was made evident by student responses concerning the need for paperwork and legal documents to travel between nation-states. For example, students explained the need to take tests, to acquire jobs, to live for a specific amount of time, and to pay money in order to be a legal citizen of a specific country. This was learned in part through experience. Omar explained: "My parents told me it is a little bit of a struggle to get to the U.S. and become a citizen because they needed a card, papers, and maybe take the test to become a citizen." In addition, the immigrant focal students made it clear they were American citizens in the legal sense. Gabby voiced a legal definition of citizenship when she stated, "I'm American because I was born here." Amina stated she has legal U.S. citizenship

although her Mother does not. They have also heard about the challenges of national border crossing. Due to their legal perceptions of citizenship, the students' imagined communities have become defined through their perceptions of bounded and sovereign national borders.

Mr. Larsen's curriculum and instruction enforced the students' legal and national sense of citizenship. For instance, Mr. Larsen's instruction predominately emphasized patriotism and nationalism and remained U.S.-centric. While in Civics class, students did not encounter an international or global perspective of citizenship. They did not discuss rights, responsibilities, or freedoms in relation to the greater global community or to any transnational communities. As a consequence, the students were not formally given the opportunity to consider possibilities of extended forms of citizenship, including global, multicultural, and transnational citizenship.

The focal students denied and/or were unfamiliar with the concept of cosmopolitan, global, or world citizenship. During the interviews, the majority of students reflected on the concept of global citizenship with discourse such as "it could be a possibility," "challenging," and only available "for some people," and "more likely the people who were rich." For example, Thao said that for someone to feel like they are global citizens they would "need to learn five or more languages. That would be difficult." Ashley explained that she "does not have enough money to be a global citizen." Mia shared that being a global citizen meant that "you were a legal citizen of multiple countries" and that "you must get many passports." In discussing global citizenship, the students reflected upon the possibility, but believed the sense of

belonging to a global society was only available for a few elite, privileged individuals. They did not hold a sense of allegiance or attachment to a global society and they believed they would not feel connected to the global society in the future. In contrast, they spoke of allegiance solely to nation-state and culture.

During the interviews, students could not imagine allegiance to a global or international community. The students' conceptualizations contrast with Robertson's (1992) belief that the world itself has become an imagined community. Robertson suggests that a sense of belonging to an international community is characterized by global interconnectedness and individuals' developed post-national consciousness. Thus, globalization has made it inevitable that citizens will increasingly frame allegiance to a global society rather than to nation-states. But the seventh grade students did not imagine a global community; they maintained a sense of belonging to nation-states. Their imagined communities are sovereign, bounded nation-states, and defined by territorial political boundaries.

Some focal students imagined being part of or being attached to two or more nation-states. They recognized national political borders, but due to their cultural backgrounds they held a sense of belonging to more than one nation-state. The majority of students did not hold legal citizenship status to multiple countries, but they expressed a symbolic and psychological dimension of citizenship that involves issues of loyalty and social responsibility (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002). Amina and Hana, for instance, felt a sense of belonging to the imagined communities of Bosnia and the United States, and Gabby and Martina felt equally Mexican and American and held equal

attachment to Mexico and the United States. Burbules and Torres (2000) suggest that as nation-states become increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse, many citizens will no longer identify with one imagined community. Citizens will hold multiple allegiances to nation-states depending on their cultural backgrounds and migration experiences.

An additional component to imagined community includes individuals' level of participation in political and social activities. Ladson-Billings (2004) points out that minorities frequently are not full-participants in their imagined community. They may encounter a tenuous relationship with politics and society within their imagined community as a result of being framed as less-than-ideal citizens or outsiders. Hall (2004) explains, "Imagining the nation and defining the basis of national belonging involve a dual process of delineating boundaries of inclusion and of exclusion" (p. 117). In other words, members of an imagined community may have unequal levels of belonging and participation. In the imagined community of the United States, non-English speaking individuals may be marginalized in civic and political groups or individuals from low-income backgrounds may encounter fewer educational opportunities than their high-income peers.

Ladson-Billings's (2004) and Hall's (2004) statements parallel the present study. The first- and second-generation focal students are negotiating a sense of belonging to their imagined communities as cultural and racial minorities. They have encountered challenges to their full membership in the United States. First, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the minority focal students are less likely than their White-majority peers to participate in school and community activities. These activities are important because

they offer youth opportunities to practice civic engagement and leadership within their local social settings. Second, the majority of the minority focal students are from low-income families. Thus, they may not have as many opportunities to participate in civic and political activities. Their parents may not be able to afford extracurricular activities or be able to provide transportation. Further, many of the parents work long hours and evening shifts at the meat processing plant; they are less available to offer their children support and encouragement to participate in activities. Finally, some students discussed how they experienced moments of marginalization due to their cultural and ethnic backgrounds. For example, Omar was teased for being Mexican at a previous school, Mia has avoided learning Spanish to feel more American, and Thao has been mislabeled Chinese by his peers.

In sum, the focal students imagine a community bounded by national, sovereign borders rather than transnational or global communities. However, the immigrant focal students hold a sense of attachment to more than one nation-state. They feel a sense of belonging to two countries, and are currently negotiating their identity within and between the national borders. In addition, the minority youth have encountered marginalization due to their cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I referred to the conceptual framework that guides this study: the ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1988), transnationalism (Ong, 1999), and imagined communities (Anderson, 1983) to examine how youth construct and negotiate their civic identity. In the following chapter, I summarize the

overall findings, reflect upon my personal learning, and list recommendations for social studies educators and researchers.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

In this qualitative study, I investigated how seventh-grade youth from various cultural backgrounds (i.e., Bosnian, Latino, Somali, White) construct and negotiate their civic identity. I found that each student's livelihood within the rural town of Lilydale is unique as he or she embraces differing experiences with transnationalism, language, family backgrounds, and culture. First, the students' opportunities for civic engagement vary; the White majority students have more support and encouragement to participate in school and community activities than the minority students. Second, the students have unequal experiences in the Civics classroom. White, male students are most likely to participate in large group discussions and immigrant youth are more silenced. Furthermore, the curriculum and instruction of the Civics classroom enforces a nationalistic, U.S.-centric perspective and a White male dominant narrative rather than an inclusive international and multicultural perspective. This seems to marginalize immigrant and minority youth from feeling part of the curriculum because their cultural histories and backgrounds remain absent. Included, in Mr. Larsen's curriculum were simplistic aspects of culture; he discussed food and holidays rather than focusing upon deeper, complex dimensions of culture such as religion, values, perspectives, and communication styles.

In addition, some students like Ashley, a White female, indicated a sense of discomfort around minority and non-native English speaking peers particularly when they spoke a language other than English. However, for immigrant students, language use was an important factor in feeling American or feeling their heritage culture. First- and

second-generation youth negotiated their transnational identities through use of language. For instance, the students reported that school is the place where they feel most American because this is where they primarily speak English. But a teacher or administrator invitation to immigrant students to use their native languages at school may convey a greater sense of cultural acceptance. Then, with time, White students like Ashley may become more comfortable in settings where languages other than English are spoken.

Through applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, I examined how the community beyond the school influences youth civic identity development. The community of Lilydale appears to be accepting. Organizations such as the library, churches, and community non-profits have assisted new arrivals in adjusting to American life. Community church organizations and members have played a vital role in supporting immigrant families. They have sponsored immigrants, assisted with travel to Lilydale, and arranged for housing. Church members have also provided dinners and household goods to immigrants and their families. Immigrants represent a notable community presence, and their population is increasing. Within Lilydale there are immigrant-owned businesses, and throughout the year the community holds an annual cultural festival; this indicates that immigrants feel some sense of acceptance and belonging to the town and that native White residents try to welcome their new neighbors. However, to some degree the town remains socially and economically divided. During my field experience, I recorded minimal social interactions between cultural groups within the community. White Europeans would visit one restaurant while immigrant groups would dine at another cafe. Their home and work places differ as well. Immigrant and minority families

are more likely to live in the trailer park and be employed at the meat processing plant. In contrast, White families living in town typically reside in larger houses and hold higher paying jobs. These social and economic factors matter in terms of civic identity development, as they are associated with civic and political engagement and the sense of belonging and connection to the community. For example, if students do not witness their parents socializing with parents of a different cultural background they would be as inclined to do the same.

In summary, the first- and second-generation youth in this study have dual experiences in the community. They feel connected to and welcomed in their community, and immigrant groups have a notable presence throughout the community. But immigrant groups also remain socially and economically divided from their White majority neighbors. Hence, immigrant groups remain outsiders who are not granted their full social and cultural rights within the White majority community.

Personal Reflection

The primary goal of this study was to examine how youth from multiple backgrounds experience civic education and citizenship within a rural context. But it has prompted personal reflection on my upbringing in rural Minnesota. These opportunities for reflection occurred throughout the dissertation process—at the onset when I pursued this study, during data collection when I was reminded of the uniqueness of living in a rural community, and during analysis when I unintentionally and intentionally compared my upbringing with those of the youth I studied. As the researcher who created the research questions and analyzed the findings of this study, I believe it necessary to make

transparent some of my past experiences that reemerged while residing in Lilydale and conducting this study. These past experiences, in part, served as a filter in constructing my analysis of the students. Furthermore, my lived experiences as a youth growing up in rural Minnesota portray an essence of the realities of other White students living in homogeneous rural towns across Minnesota.

The town in which I was born and raised is similar to Lilydale in size and purpose. Both towns have fewer than 3,000 people, are farming communities, and were originally founded by individuals of German and Norwegian descent. However, my town has remained racially and culturally homogeneous while the town of Lilydale has experienced a demographic shift. I attended school with students who were primarily White, English Speaking, Christian, and of European heritage. In my grade, which had similar demographics to most grades, there were no Black students, there was one Korean student who had been adopted by White parents, and at differing times we had international exchange students from developed countries in Europe and South America. Thus, for me—and likely most of my peers—my White identity was not particularly salient, or put another way, my Whiteness was invisible. At no moment during my secondary school years did I think of the effects of being White or the privileges afforded based on skin color (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). I believe my experiences in a homogeneous school setting are similar to other White individuals growing up across rural Minnesota; it is likely they have had limited encounters with individuals from differing backgrounds. In contrast, a non-White student attending a school similar to mine might recognize, consider, resist, and/or defend his/her racial identity on a daily basis.

My high school (grades 7-12) included kind, well-intentioned students. It was a school where everyone knew each other's names. There was a great volunteer and community service program, most students participated in school activities, and there were few fights or acts of physical aggression. It was a place with a strong community where people would go out of their way to help others. However, my school was not a place that was considered "safe" for all students. I recall hearing racist remarks and seeing peers being teased for their differences. For instance, during my high school experience, I witnessed a male student routinely whisper insulting remarks to an international student from Mexico when she walked by his locker. In another situation, a male student informed multiple people he was gay, and soon after, he faced scrutiny and harassment. There were also negative comments toward Atheists and non-Christians. As a high school student, I covered my non-Christian family background by informing peers I attended a Christian Lutheran Church; I feared being ridiculed and feeling like I did not fit in. In sum, if someone was a minority, an immigrant, a non-Christian, or identified as LGBT, it was likely they did not feel included or fully welcomed at the school. However, if someone was White, straight, and Christian, they more likely felt fully part of the school and community. I do not want to portray my town or other small towns as unsafe places where ignorant, intolerant people reside. There are open-minded, welcoming people, but within the welcoming community, there are some acts of ignorance and intolerance.

Thus, my experiences in rural Minnesota sparked concern for how other students, in particular students of minority backgrounds, are socialized in similar settings. At

Lilydale High School, the minority youth reported they felt welcomed. However, from observing and interviewing multiple students it seemed that immigrant youth were still regarded as outsiders. They are not as civically and politically engaged as the White students, they do not consistently self-identify with feeling American, and their narratives and backgrounds are not included within the formal Civics curriculum.

However, it is complex: The immigrant and refugee populations of Lilydale have not solely inserted themselves into the existing community; rather they have transformed the town and in doing so have created transnational space. Within this space, immigrants have created businesses, introduced cultural traditions, and redefined their identities. They also have influenced the lives of the White majority students. The White students, those who have chosen to do so, have had opportunities to form relationships, develop tolerance, increase intercultural competences, and encounter differing perspectives. Thus, Lilydale represents a dynamic landscape, continuously changing, as the United States is continuously transforming as a result of migration and globalization.

Within these multicultural intersections, there is potential for research to foster new understandings. In addition, social studies teachers must be prepared to create educational environments that promote participation within a participatory, pluralistic democracy. In the next section, I outline recommendations for social studies researchers and educators.

Social Studies Researchers

The present study examines how a rural sociocultural context influences young people’s civic identity development. Future comparison studies should further examine

the multiple factors that shape young people's civic identities, national attachments, sense of feeling American, and political beliefs and how these beliefs are cultivated in context. These factors include (but are not limited to): family, religion, language, and cultural background; media and technological influences; and peer and social group relationships. Researchers should also examine multiple contexts, including rural, suburban, and urban environments, and how these contexts help and hinder civic identity development. People of rural America should not be stereotyped as patriotic and hardworking or simple minded and uneducated. Researchers should continue to investigate rural spaces, as they are complex and evolving, and the people in rural areas may adapt quickly to changing demographics. Lay (2012) believes the important aspect of conducting research in small towns is that "in many ways these communities are microcosms of American society" (p. 143). Lay explains that in urban and suburban areas "class stratification is rigid" (p. 143) and economically and socially divided. In comparison, people of small towns typically represent multiple social and economic groups, and some small towns have immigrant and minority groups. Thus, within these towns, people of multiple backgrounds interact. Lay explains that diverse small towns "represent a wide spectrum of U.S. society, and studying these communities allows us to project some of what we learn onto the large population" (p. 143). Furthermore, future researchers should study other country contexts to compare civic identity development across nations. This study examined seventh grade students. It would be also be worthwhile to examine students from other age groups and to follow the same students throughout their formal education. Moreover, it would be important to study the cumulative political and civic experiences individuals have over

the course of their lifetime and how an individual's identity, opinions, and perceptions change with experience. This study demonstrates that the political socialization of youth is a complex process, but it is an important evolving process that must be dissected, for it offers insight of how future citizens are prepared for living and participating in a democracy.

Social Studies Educators

Schools and classrooms are places where young people from multiple cultural, racial, and ethnic groups may learn to interact, discuss, and collaborate with others—important skills for active citizenship. Within their classrooms, teachers have a pivotal role to play. Teachers need to offer opportunities for their students to increase awareness and develop a sense of civic efficacy in influencing their social and political environments. For example, teachers should provide opportunities for students to engage in educational practices such as deliberation, seminars, perspective-taking, and critical thinking, likely to foster informed and participatory youth (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003; Parker & Hess, 2001). This also includes teachers and administrators providing opportunities for students to engage and participate within their local communities. Activities such as service learning and volunteering may assist students in feeling more connected to their communities and allow students to connect knowledge and practice; students learn Civics content in the classroom while simultaneously engaging in civic and political endeavors. Through practicing these democratic activities at a young age, youth may learn how to act democratically as adults. Second, social studies teachers should routinely integrate discussions of issues related to race, culture, gender, and diversity that

reflect students' lives and experiences. Social studies subjects provide a natural curricular fit for these issues (e.g., histories of social movements, cultural geography, public issues, judicial decisions). These discussions would allow students to grapple with everyday challenges, understand difference, and confront current prejudice, discrimination, and racism. It would also assist students in preparing for their democratic lives outside of school.

Third, teachers and administrators should encourage and support native-language use within their classroom and schools. This study provides additional evidence of the strong connection between language and identity. The non-native English-speaking students reported that language-in-use dictated whether they felt American. They also reported that schools were places where they felt American. Thus, if their native language was accepted in schools, they might associate their native-language use with feeling American. In turn, if White, monolingual students routinely heard multiple languages, they might be more inclined to learn a second language. This is important because knowing other languages is often seen as cultural capital (Trueba, 2002) in today's interdependent global economy. Finally, teachers should recognize their students' complex, evolving transnational and cultural identities. In doing so, teachers may be more likely to include students' backgrounds and experiences into the curriculum, making the content more relevant for their students. Furthermore, teachers should exhibit a willingness to understand and appreciate their students' multiple cultural perspectives, customs, and traditions.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is evident that civic identity is "not given but must be constructed" (Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997, p. 630). Moreover, individuals' conceptions and civic identities are not fixed; they are complex, flexible, and multiple (Mitchell & Parker, 2008; Myers, & Zaman, 2009; Ong, 1999). Civic identity formation is a dynamic, evolving process dependent on shifting beliefs, attachments, and experiences within social and cultural context. The seventh grade focal students in this study have developed aspects of their civic identity, but with time and experience, their civic identity will continue to evolve. Social studies curriculum and instruction and community engagement matters because it influences civic identity and prepares youth for democratic citizenship. The first- and second-generation immigrant youth in this study have had minimal civic engagement opportunities. I hope they will encounter future opportunities and sources of support to civically and politically engage within their school and community. I also hope that this study will offer social studies educators and researchers insights into how all students can be prepared for active civic engagement.

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Appendix A: Student Questionnaire

Thank you very much for your participation in my study. I feel so thankful for your help and ideas. I know I will learn much from you. Please answer the following questions:

Name ________________________

1. What is your current age? ____________

2. Are you male or female? ☐ male ☐ female

3. Which languages do you speak? ____________________________

4. How often do you speak English at home?

   ☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Most of the time ☐Always

5. Please describe your cultural background: (For Example you may say you are Somali, Bosnian, Mexican, Christian, Muslim, etc.)

6. 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)

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. What does citizenship mean to you? How would you define 'being a citizen'? *Write at least two sentences.*

Now, I need your feedback about scheduling our upcoming interviews. Interviews can permit us to discover someone else's perspective and experience. I am interested to learn more about your individual civic and educational experiences. Be assured that all of your interview responses would be confidential.

If you would like to be interviewed, please complete the following:

You may be interviewed individually or with another seventh grade student. *Please circle your preference:*

I want to be interviewed: Individually   In groups of two

I want to meet with you at times that work best for you. Please select your preference of when I can meet with you. Circle the number of your choice. You may select more than one option.

Choice #1 – Meet before school starts for the day, at 7:00 a.m. prior to first hour.

Choice #2 – Meet at the end of the school day, meet at 4:00 pm.

Choice #3 – Meet during Power Hour, from 3:25 – 3:55. If this is your preference, please list your Power Hour teacher and room number: ____________

Choice #4 – Meet during 6th hour Study Hall. If this is your preference, please list your teacher and room number: _____________

Choice #5 – Meet on a Monday (non-school day) at McDonalds. I can meet with you anytime and will buy you some food. If this option works, please state which time works best for you on Mondays: _________________

Choice #6 – I have other ideas about when and where I can meet (write in):

Appendix B: Interview Protocol Time 1 (Educational and Community Experience)

First of all, I want to thank you for your participation in this project. I look forward to meeting with you three times this school year to do interviews. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the interview questions. I am interested in your experiences and ideas – and that makes you the expert. Before beginning, I want to make sure you understand (1) that you don't have to answer questions you would rather skip (you can just say, "I'd rather pass on this one" or something like that); and (2) the responses you give will remain confidential. 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. Do you have any questions before I begin?

Warm-up: Take a few minutes to get acquainted

1. How is the school year going?
2. What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Civics Class Experiences

3. How is Civics class going?
    a. Is what you are learning in this class what you expected?
    b. Is there anything you learned in Civics class that was meaningful to you?
    c. Were there any activities in Civics class that you enjoyed?
    d. Were there any activities you disliked?

4. I have a few more questions about your civics class (Questions a - e from Flanagan, 2013).
    a. Can students disagree with the civics teacher as long as they are respectful?
    b. Are students encouraged to voice their opinions, even if they are different from what most people think?
    c. Does the teacher expect students to respect one another?
    d. Does the teacher give all students a fair, equal chance?
    e. Does the teacher treat students as individuals and not as members of groups?

School and Community Involvement

5. What school activities and community activities are you involved in (student council, leadership positions, cultural organizations, sports teams, etc.)?
    a. <u>If yes</u>: How often do you participate in these activities?
    b. Which activities are most important to you?
    c. What do you like about these activities?

d. If none: Why do you think you are not involved in any activities or organizations?

School Culture

6. I am new to this school and would like to learn more about it. On this paper (give youth paper and pen) can you draw a rough sketch of your school? It does not need to be a perfect drawing. You may include things like the lunchroom, your locker, and your classrooms.
7. Since I don't know much about this school, can you describe your school to me?
    a. What is it like attending this school?
    b. What are the students like that attend this school?
    c. Sometimes before or after school, or between classes students meet with friends. Which areas of the school do you meet with other students? (Refer to drawing)
    d. Is it easy to make friends at this school? Why or why not?
8. Which areas of the school do you like the most? (Refer to drawing)
    a. Where do you feel most comfortable?
    b. Which areas, if any, do you avoid?
    c. Do you think this is a safe school? Why or why not?

Community Experiences

9. Now I am going to ask you about your town. I have visited this town several times, but I would like to learn more about what it is like to live here.
    a. Can you describe what it is like living here? What is it like for you? For your friends? For your family?
    b. Do people trust each other in this town?
    c. If someone has a problem, can they find someone to help him or her out?
    d. When someone moves here, are people nice to him or her or to their family?
    e. Do most people feel safe here? (Questions c – e from Flanagan, 2013)
    f. How long have you lived here?
        i. Have you lived other places?
            1. If relevant: How often do you visit these other places?
        ii. Where were you born? How do you feel about where you were born?
        iii. Do you have family in this town or do they live in other places?

Connections to Citizenship and Identity

10. I want to learn more about your background. Could you list a few words on this paper that you would use to describe your family's background? Like words that describe your family's history, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, or language?

[Give the student a pen and paper with the question written on it.] Please read the question and complete the list.

a. Can you tell me a bit about what you wrote down?
   i. What are some things on this list that are really important to you?
   ii. Does your background [refer to specific items on list] influence how you think and act?
   iii. Are there things that you want other people like other kids at school or teachers to know about your background?

Identity

11. Do you identify with any groups or do you feel that you are a member of any groups? (Question 11 adapted from Jahromi, 2011)
    a. How do you describe yourself? —as an American or a ______-American or as _______(Latino, Somali, Bosnian, etc.)?
    b. How important is being __________ (name group) to who you are?
       i. How important is it to your goals for the future?

American Identity

12. What does it mean to you to be American? What does it mean to you to be _________ (cultural groups stated by youth)? (Question 12 adapted from Simmons, 2013)
    a. Are there particular ways in which you feel American? Or you feel ____________ (youth cultural group)?
    b. To what extent do you feel like you belong to United States society and culture?

Conclusion

13. Is there anything else you want to say about what is important to you? Is there anything you would like to add about your identity and background?
    a. Is there anything that I forgot to ask?
    b. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for participating. I learned a lot from you today! I look forward to meeting with you again.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol Time 2 (Learning Experience)

Thanks again for your participation in this project. Like the first interview, I will ask you questions. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the interview questions. I am interested in your experiences and ideas – and that makes you the expert. Before proceeding I want to make sure you understand (1) that you don't have to answer questions you would rather skip (you can just say, "I'd rather pass on this one" or something like that); and (2) the responses you give will remain confidential. I will be audiotaping 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. Do you have any questions before I begin?

Warm-Up: Take a few minutes to welcome youth

1. How is school going?
2. What have you been doing recently? *(Build upon conversation questions 1-3 asked during Interview One)*

Civics Class Experiences

3. How is Civics class going?

Focal Topic

4. As you know I have been observing your Civics class. This past unit you learned about _______________ (selected focal topic). Please take a few moments to write down a few words or pictures that display what you learned about the topic (give youth a piece of paper and pencil).
5. What were some of the key items you learned? (Refer to list)
6. Was this topic important to you? Why or why not?
    a. After learning about this topic, did your beliefs toward American government change at all?
        i. Did this topic change how you feel about being American?
        ii. If relevant: Did this topic change how you feel about being ____ (cultural group; see Interview 1, Q. 10 and Q. 11 responses).
7. Generally speaking, did you enjoy learning about this topic? Why or why not?
8. Are you interested in learning about government and politics?
    a. If yes, what interests you?
    b. If no, any particular reason? (Question 8 adapted from Jahromi, 2011)

Civics Class (Questions 9-11 adapted from Simmons, 2013)

9. So far this year, what are most important things you have learned in civics class? [*Give youth list of items covered thus far in their civics class*.] Please rank the top

5 items that are the most important to you (*1= most important*). Then we will talk about your list.

10. What items in Civics class were particularly important or meaningful to you? Why? (*Discuss list and ranking order for several items*)
    a. What are the least important items you have learned in civics class?
11. Did any of these items change your thinking about what it means to be American? Why?

Classroom Engagement

12. Were there times that you felt particularly engaged in the civic classroom? Explain.
    b. Why was a particular activity meaningful to you? (*Discuss as many activities as the students share*)
    c. Were there times that you felt particularly disengaged from what was going on in the government classroom? Explain.
13. Did the teacher do anything to help you learn?
    a. Did the students do anything to help you learn?
    b. During the unit, what could the teacher and students have done to help you learn more?

Connections to Citizenship

14. In your civics class, what have you learned about being a citizen or citizenship?
15. What does being a US citizen mean to you? What does citizenship mean to you?
16. Is there anything special about being a US citizen?
    a. If yes, what would you say is special about it?
    b. If no, why is not special? (Questions 14-16 adapted from Jahromi, 2011)
17. Have any things/events occurred inside or outside of school that has impacted the way you think about your citizenship and being a citizen? Explain. (Question adapted from Simmons, 2013)
18. To recap, we have talked about citizenship (*review student's thoughts about citizenship*). You also have talked about being ____________ (cultural group; see Interview 1, Q.10 and Q.11 responses). Would you say there is a connection between these things? If so, can you tell me more about it?

Conclusion

19. Is there anything else you want to say about what is important to you? Is there anything that I forgot to ask?
    a. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix D: Interview Protocol Time 3 (Citizenship and Transnationalism)

Thanks again for your participation in this project. Like the last interview, I will ask you questions. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. I am interested in your experiences and ideas – and that makes you the expert. Before proceeding I want to make sure you understand (1) that you don't have to answer questions you would rather skip (you can just say, "I'd rather pass on this one" or something like that); and (2) the responses you give will remain confidential. I will be audiotaping 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. Do you have any questions before I begin?

Warm-up

1. How are you? (Build upon warm-up conversations from Interview 1 and 2)
   a. How is school?
   b. What are you doing for fun?

2. How is Civics class going?
   a. Is there anything you learned in Civics class that was meaningful to you?
   b. Did the teacher or other students do anything to help you learn?
   c. Were there any activities in Civics class that you enjoyed?
   d. Were there any activities you disliked?

Citizenship

3. Today we are going to focus on citizenship. Please write a few words or draw some pictures that define or represent citizenship for you. (*Give paper and pen to youth)*
   a. Interesting! Why did you choose these words and pictures?
   b. Why are these personally important to you?

4. How have you learned about citizenship? (Questions 3 and 4 adapted from Simmons, 2013)
   a. What did you learn about citizenship?
   b. What kind of things have you learned about being a citizen?
   c. What classroom or school experiences impacted the way that you think about citizenship?
   d. From whom have you learned about citizenship?
   e. What does your teacher do that helps shape your ideas about citizenship?
   f. How have you learned about citizenship outside of school? What citizenship-related lessons have you learned outside of school?

Global and Transnational Citizenship

5. Can someone be a citizen of more than one country? Why or why not?
    i. If yes, what is this like?
        1) What are the benefits of being a citizen of more than one country?
        2) What are the challenges?
        3) Do you know someone who is a citizen of more than one country? Tell me about this person. (If youth is, focus on their experience)
    ii. If no, please explain why not.
6. Some people say that people can be global citizens. What do you think it means to be a global citizen?
    a. How does one become a global citizen?
        i. What do they need to do?
        ii. How does one learn how to become a global citizen?
        iii. What characteristics should they have?
    b. Do you think you are a global citizen? Why or why not?

American Symbols

7. Now I will show you 14-18 different symbols and pictures. [Symbols include: American flag, apple pie, diverse youth, school building, eagle, large house with picket fence, men working construction, men wearing suits, Bill of Rights, church, cowboy riding horse, people voting, dollar sign, Coca Cola Logo, baseball field, corn field, Barack Obama, George Washington, Mount Rushmore, Statue of Liberty, the word freedom]
    a. What do you think about these symbols?
    b. Are any of these images important to you? Why?
    c. Are any of these symbols not important to you? Why?

American Dream, Freedom, and Equality

8. What do the words “American dream” mean to you? (Question 8-11 adapted from Jahromi, 2011)
    a. Is the idea of the American dream related to your goals in life? If so, how?
    b. Do you believe in the American Dream? What makes you say that?
    c. Does the idea of American dream inspire you in any way? If so, how?
    d. What experiences have you and your family had with the American Dream?
9. American has been called the “land of the free.” What does freedom mean to you?
    a. What experiences have you, your family, and friends had with freedom?
    b. Is freedom important to you? Why or why not?

10. Many people say all people are considered equal. What does equality mean to you?
    a. What experiences have you, your family, and friends had with equality?
    b. Is equality important to you? Why or why not?
11. We have talked about the American Dream, freedom, and equality. You also have talked about being ____________ (cultural group; see Interview 1, Q. 10 and Q.11 responses). Would you say there is a connection between these things? If so, can you tell me more about it?

Conclusion

12. Is there anything else you want to add to our conversation? Is there anything that I forgot to ask?
13. Do you have any questions for me? Thank you for participating in all three interviews. I have enjoyed learning about you!

Appendix E: Classroom Observation Guide

Date	
Teacher	
Grade/Class Period	
Topic(s) Discussed	

1. Describe the topic for the class session. What are students learning about in class today?

2. What instructional/pedagogical methods are used?

3. What do students *do* during the class (e.g. discussion with other student, move around room)?

4. Which students appear to be engaged? (draw diagram of the classroom space)

5. How do students respond to the topics and class activities?

6. To what extent was the topic of today's class session connected to citizenship? Explain:

7. How does the topic connect to students' cultural backgrounds?

8. Additional Observations: