

ABSTRACT

BAKER, ALISON MARY. Severity of Conditions, Collective Identity, Psychological Sense of Community, Civic Attitudes, and Sociopolitical Development Among Youth in El Salvador. (Under the direction of Dr. Craig C. Brookins and Dr. Rupert Nacoste.)

Fledgling democracies such as El Salvador rely on citizen participation, especially among youth, to secure a stable societal future. Given El Salvador's violent past stemming from political polarization, democratic participation is still a relatively fragile process. Although recent research has focused on international comparisons of civic participation and attitudes among adolescents, countries in Central America have not been included. Most current research examines civic behaviors but does not take into account the environmental context in which they are embedded. This mixed-method study had three specific aims: (a) to apply Brown and Barnes-Nacoste's (1993) theory of severity of conditions by describing the context of the study sample using municipal-level indicators, (b) to develop a measure of sociopolitical development using photovoice, and (c) to extend severity of conditions by examining different levels of environmental deprivation based on economic, social, and educational conditions. The qualitative component of the study utilized a photovoice technique to explore sociopolitical development among two groups of Salvadoran adolescents (ages 11–13 and 16–19 years). The quantitative component of the study examined the connection between environmental severity of conditions and a number of other variables, including collective identity, psychological sense of community, civic attitudes, and sociopolitical development. These data were collected via a survey administered to approximately 682 Salvadoran *bachillerato* (high school) students aged 15–22 years from three departments (states) and were linked to municipal-level census data. Results for the first aim of the study reveal that adolescents from rural areas live in

municipalities with high levels of severity of conditions in respect to deprivation (i.e., poverty and basic needs) and structural opportunities (i.e., school attendance, idle youth), whereas adolescents from the mixed school (varying levels of income and coastal, rural, and urban) live in areas with moderate levels of severity. Adolescents from the urban school live in municipalities with extremely low levels of deprivation and structural opportunity and do not have high levels of deficit compared to the other two groups. Analysis from the photovoice findings reveals that adolescents are very involved in their communities and have developed certain beliefs and ideas that represent sociopolitical development. A measure of sociopolitical development was tested with the study sample and subjected to a factor analysis consisting of seven components of sociopolitical development: sociopolitical awareness, the global belief in a just world, equality, social responsibility, action-oriented change, community efficacy, and self-efficacy (in solving problems). Factorial analyses of variance were performed to examine estimated mean group differences in severity of conditions (using school type) and collective identity, psychological sense of community, sociopolitical development, and civic skills, while controlling for family poverty, sex, and age. Findings reveal that adolescents living in severe and moderately severe conditions have stronger socioeconomic and geographical collective identities and perceive higher levels of support, activity, and friendship in their communities in comparison to those from the least severe conditions group. Adolescents from the moderate conditions group, however, perceived their communities to be much less safe and reported the presence of gangs significantly more than did the high-severity and least severe conditions groups. Adolescents from the severe conditions group saw themselves as more likely to participate in future civic activities, yet both the moderate and severe conditions groups had lower levels of democratic

knowledge. Although adolescents from moderate and severe conditions appear to be more inclined to participate in democratic activities and processes, likely a result of a positive community environment, they face barriers such as gangs, violence, and poverty. Initiatives and programs aimed at improving basic conditions, increasing school attendance, and decreasing delinquency among young people would likely improve group conditions as a whole.

Severity of Conditions, Collective Identity, Psychological Sense of Community,
Civic Attitudes, and Sociopolitical Development Among Youth in El Salvador

by
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Dedication

Hay verdades que solo desde el sufrimiento o desde
la atalaya crítica de las situaciones límite es posible descubrir.

—Ignacio Martín-Baró, psicólogo de El Salvador

Esta investigación está dedicada a aquellos que conocen el sufrimiento.

Biography

Alison Baker was born in Calgary, Alberta in Canada before moving to Australia, where she spent the majority of her childhood, living with her mother, father, and older brother. At the age of eight, she returned to Calgary, where she lived until she completed high school. Alison went to the University of Memphis on a soccer and track scholarship to obtain her undergraduate degree in Psychology and Sociology, before continuing on to North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina to pursue a PhD in Psychology in the Public Interest. In 2008, Alison completed a Master of Science degree as a part of the doctoral program at North Carolina State, her thesis was entitled, “Neighborhood Factors and their Influence on Adolescent Females’ Perceptions of STD, HIV/AIDS, Pregnancy Risk, and Perceptions of Pregnancy as a Life Event.” In July 2009, Alison moved to El Salvador to begin her dissertation field work, living in a community on the coast for close to two years. Her research interests include Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) methods, poverty, adolescent health disparities, political conflicts and natural disasters’ effects on community mental health, sociopolitical development, and Liberation Psychology.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Democratic societies rely on active citizenry to ensure that the political process is fair and just. Furthermore, in democratic nations, the public keeps the government accountable by partaking in the decision-making process in a variety of ways (Putnam, 1995). Young people are extremely important in maintaining a stable democracy and participate in political processes that have the potential to greatly improve their lives (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). However, despite the widely known importance of participation and knowledge about citizenship activities, in many countries, young people are not engaged in these processes (C. A. Flanagan & Faison, 2001). Furthermore, less is known about the ways in which adolescents identify with larger groups (geographical community and collective identity) within society and if this is connected to civic attitudes. Research regarding collective identity postulates that individuals who feel a strong sense of membership to a specific group in society often participate in civic activities that have the potential to enhance collective conditions (Brewer, 2001; Brown, 1993; Polletta, 2001). In addition, recent research has seen a shift in attention to contextual influences on the lives of adolescents; therefore examining psychological sense of community will serve to explore the role the immediate geographical environment plays in relation to a more abstract measure of identity (collective) and attitudes toward civic and political concepts.

Salvadoran youth have reason to be wary about political processes because for close to 10 years, their country was in a violent civil war involving highly polarized political groups that divided the country (USAID, 2004). The civil war led to a breakdown in social and economic conditions that progressively worsened the living conditions of many people.

Since the signing of the peace accords in 1992, many social and economic indicators have shown improvement, for example, total poverty has dropped from close to 60% in 1993 to below 50% in the last 5 years (DIGESTYIC, 2007; UNDP, 2009). Other indicators that have seen major declines since 1990 include the infant mortality rate, which has dropped from 93 deaths (per 1,000 live births) to 68 deaths, and the mortality rate of children (per 1,000) under 5, which has seen a 25% decrease.

Despite the progression of these social indicators, the health and well-being of many Salvadorans are still compromised. According to the *Human Development Report*, 19% of people in El Salvador live below the international poverty line of earning one American dollar per day, and 40% live with less than two American dollars per day (UNDP, 2010). In comparison to other developing nations, El Salvador ranks 35th out of 108 developing countries on the Human Poverty Index, which measures severe deprivation in health, education, and sanitation and access to water (UNDP, 2010). However, other factors that are often excluded from international measures of well-being but that are particularly important are crime, violence, and victimization. El Salvador is no exception; this country has been ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous countries in the world because of the high proportion of violent crime per capita. In 2009, as reported by the Overseas Security Advisory Council of the United States and the Salvadoran National Police, there was an average of nine murders and three carjackings per day (OSAC, 2009). The murder rate per capita averaged 55.3 murders per 100,000 people in 2008 (compared to 9 per 100,000 in New York City), making violent crime, often gang and drug related, a major issue for people living in El Salvador. For youth, crime is a major concern, as El Salvador has the second highest homicide rate among youth in the Americas (Eberwine, 2003). In addition, this small

country has the second highest teen pregnancy rate among the American nations, reflecting a lack of opportunity and premature entrance into adulthood via parenthood or gang membership (A Springer, Parcel, Baulmer, & Ross, 2006). The effects of such social problems act as major obstacles for youth, limiting options, stifling motivation, and providing poor role models. Many Salvadoran youth living in impoverished areas have turned to gangs to compensate for the lack of opportunity and assistance provided by their communities and government institutions (Hume, 2007). Therefore, in examining the severity of conditions for adolescents, it is necessary to take into account the violent history and current crime problems that influence psychological and political processes. As shown, these social, economic, and educational indicators reveal a need for young people to engage in the democratic political processes in their country to contribute to possible solutions to some of the serious societal issues they face, especially those that disproportionately affect youth.

The recent elections in El Salvador have shifted political power from the right-wing government that had maintained governance for 20 years to the leftist party, which is interested in reform of current policies and is governing under the principle of “priority for the poor.” Arguably, El Salvador has most recently experienced, and continues to experience, a dramatic social movement that provides a context in which the connection between social action and political change is extremely salient. It is a vital time for opportunities that will enhance participation and for engagement in activities that will promote critical reflection and community change (C. Flanagan et al., 1998; Jennings, Parra- Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006; Kahne & Sporte, 2008). Civic participation and related skills, such as knowledge about democracy, trust in societal institutions, and attitudes about

future participation in political processes, are especially important for adolescents living in so-called transitional democracies, in which the process of decision making is becoming more equitable and inclusive (Bowes, Chalmers, & Taylor, 1998). This dramatic political change provides a unique window of opportunity to examine young peoples' civic attitudes and skills, while examining other potentially important variables such as collective identity and sense of community, all of which may be influenced by the severity of conditions of the environment.

This research extends the literature on collective identity by focusing on adolescents who are in the process of defining themselves in the current Salvadoran context of a transitional democracy. In addition, this research extends the severity of conditions theory proposed by Brown and Barnes-Nacoste (1993) as it examines the importance of collective identity among a diverse sample of adolescents from a range of social and economic conditions. Examining collective identity in such different environments speaks to the opportunity structure available to young people and places importance on individuals embedded within a significant sociohistorical context in El Salvador.

This research will address four general questions: (a) How severe are the conditions for Salvadoran adolescents living in different parts of the country? (b) To what extent do Salvadoran adolescents of different age groups (i.e., younger vs. older adolescents) demonstrate critical understanding of their social worlds with respect to Watts and Abdul-Adil's (1997) construction of sociopolitical development? (c) To what extent does the severity of conditions in which adolescents live affect their psychological sense of community and collective identity? (d) In what ways do severity of conditions, collective

identity, and civic attitudes relate to aspects of sociopolitical development for Salvadoran youth?

Specific Aims

Specific Aim 1: Apply severity of conditions theory. This study's first aim was to describe the populations of adolescents from different areas of El Salvador using the severity of conditions theory as a theoretical foundation. There is not much research examining Salvadoran adolescents or their environments. Previous studies do not provide adequate references for measuring specific social and economic factors, and applying other international measures may also prove fruitless in capturing this population's conditions. Therefore this study created an index of variables at both the municipal level (using census data) and the community level that are specific to the context of El Salvador. This research has provided more information about adolescents living in rural, urban, and mixed (a combination of urban, rural, and coastal) areas, capturing differences that may exist between geographical populations.

Specific Aim 2: Explore sociopolitical development and create a measure. One aim of this research was to create a measure that considers Watts and Abdul-Adil's (1997) construction of sociopolitical development among young people and develops it. Sociopolitical development was explored using a method known as photovoice, established by Wang and Burris (1994), with two groups of Salvadoran adolescents living in communities with moderate to high levels of poverty. One group consisted of preadolescents and adolescents aged 11–14 years, and the other group consisted of older teens ranging in age from 16 to 19 years. Qualitative data from this method were analyzed using Watts and Abdul-Adil's (1997) conceptualization of sociopolitical development as a guide (i.e., a

deductive approach), while also using an inductive approach to include additional concepts emerging from the data. Several of Watts and Abdul-Adil's concepts were confirmed, and a few others emerged from the data; from these, a measure was drafted that consisted of both items from existing scales and newly created items.

Specific Aim 3: Examine the relationships between severity of conditions, collective identity and psychological sense of community, civic skills, and sociopolitical development. The relationship between severity of conditions and collective identity and psychological closeness with the community will provide important information about how context influences psychological processes that shape identity and potentially motivate political participation. These psychological concepts may also contribute to civic and sociopolitical development, which, as previously mentioned, holds special importance in creating and maintaining a stable democratic society.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions and hypotheses for the study follow.

R1: To what extent does the severity of conditions in which adolescents live influence collective identity and psychological sense of community?

H1.1: *Adolescents with more severe environmental conditions are expected to have higher levels of collective identification and psychological sense of community with their chosen social categories and communities.*

R2: To what extent do different levels in the severity of conditions, collective identity, and psychological sense of community predict civic attitudes and skills?

H2.1: *Adolescents experiencing the moderate and severe conditions are expected to have attitudes and perceptions that indicate a propensity for political participation; however, trust in government institutions is anticipated to be relatively low.*

H2.2: *Adolescents with higher levels of collective identity and sense of community are expected to have attitudes and perceptions that indicate a propensity for political participation.*

R3: To what extent does sociopolitical development differ according to severity of conditions, collective identity, and psychological sense of community?

H3.1: *Adolescents living in moderately severe and severe conditions are hypothesized to have a higher level sociopolitical development when compared to adolescents living in the least severe conditions.*

H3.2: *Adolescents with higher levels of collective identity and psychological sense of community are hypothesized to have a higher level of sociopolitical development.*

R4: Does sociopolitical development mediate the relationship between severity of conditions, collective identity, sense of community and civic skills and attitudes?

H4.1: *Sociopolitical development will mediate the relationship between severity of conditions, collective identity, PSOC, and civic skills and attitudes in that those adolescents living in more severe conditions and with higher levels of collective identity and PSOC will have higher levels of sociopolitical*

development and in turn yield attitudes favoring political participation and civic activity, than the least severity condition.

Research Framework: Ecological Model

The framework that is best suited for this research is based on the *ecological model* developed by Bronfenbrenner (1989). This framework takes into account the multiple levels of influence on the individual and groups and the complex, interdependent systems that influence each other.

The ecological model consists of the micro-, meso-, and macrosystems, all of which influence the development of young people. The *microsystem* takes into account the family, peers, community, and school as socializing agents. The *mesosystem* is the interaction of socializing agents with each other (i.e., schools with community) to influence the life of the individual. The *macrosystem* includes the societal-level institutions and bodies that influence the other systems and the development of young people such as media, government, policies, culture, and ideology. The ecological model serves as a theoretical guide for this research by emphasizing the importance of contextual influences, specifically, how adolescents perceive and relate to larger societal institutions such as democracy (ideology), government, and their communities. In addition, the municipal-level data used in this study allow for associations to be made about how deprivation and the opportunity structure influence adolescents' political development. This research examines Salvadoran adolescents' civic knowledge and development, with the assumption that such societal systems and institutions contribute to the development of young people.

Sociohistorical Context of El Salvador

For the past several decades, the sociopolitical environment in El Salvador has been dominated by violence and civil strife. This political polarization divided the country, and in the 1980s, a civil war erupted that would last 12 years and leave over 70,000 dead and another one-fifth of the population displaced. On the Right, there was the conservative and wealthy Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party, governing the country with increasing amounts of violence backed by the Salvadoran national military. The ARENA party leader, and also the leader of the country at the time, was Roberto D'Aubuisson Arrieta, who was suspected of commanding mass assassinations carried out by U.S.-trained military death squads in an attempt to cleanse the country of leftist revolutionaries and their civilian supporters.

On the Left was the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which advocated revolutionary change and Marxist principles. The FMLN gathered support from rural poor and urban revolutionaries, specifically *campesinos* (peasants), university students, professors, and Roman Catholic priests. The violence was widespread during the civil war, and the majority of citizens were fearful of participation in civic and political activities, including church-related community activities, demonstrations, and even voting. Elections just before the civil war in 1977 were known to be fraudulent, and when people protested, some 50 civilians were shot in an open-fire rampage by military officials. Similarly, the next two elections were plagued with violence as they occurred in the context of the civil war. Abuse against everyday civilians believed to be supporting the FMLN was rampant and went unpunished, resulting in thousands of so-called disappearances of family and community members. After the peace accords were signed in 1992, ARENA maintained power for four

consecutive terms, equaling 20 years of leadership. Although the elections in the recent decades have not been devoid of politically motivated violence, considerable steps have been made toward making the country a free, democratic nation (Montgomery, Martín-Baró, & Cardenal, 1995; Wood, 2003).

In the most recent election, in March 2009, the FMLN was elected into power with just over half the popular vote. This signified a dramatic shift in the country's political processes and slowed the extensive violence that had more recently surrounded political participation in the region. This historical context sheds light on the current circumstances El Salvador faces and calls for a focus of research to examine the individual and community processes that underlie democratic civic activities as a means for change.

El Salvador is slowly progressing toward becoming a stable democratic society as people increase their participation in civic activities and regain faith in the political process. However, El Salvador is still struggling with poverty, especially with vulnerable populations, women, children, and those living in rural areas. Studies attempting to understand more about environmental contexts and their connection with identity and political development in El Salvador are few; one such study, by Gómez (1999), focused on churches as a vehicle for reestablishing collective identity and civic participation in one department (state) in El Salvador. The severity of conditions theory can be applied to El Salvador in a similar manner as was done by Brown and Barnes-Nacoste (1993), but with a different set of conditions and a different population.

Current national demographics in El Salvador reveal that at least 30% of the population is living in poverty (DIGESTYC, 2007). As shown in Figure 1, poverty has decreased since the signing of the peace accords in 1992; however, since 2003, poverty and

extreme poverty levels have remained relatively stable in El Salvador. In 2003, poverty levels were higher in rural areas than in urban areas (see Figure 2), and more recent data show that rural areas (12% at extreme poverty and 23% at relative poverty) have significantly higher poverty levels compared to urban areas (7.9% at extreme poverty and 19.6% at relative poverty).

As seen in Figure 3, at the department level, the lowest percentage of poverty is found in San Salvador (24%), a highly urban area where the country's capital is located. La Libertad has the second lowest level of poverty (28%), and Morazan, a stronghold for the FMLN during the civil war, has one of the highest levels of poverty in the country (50%). This research sampled schools from municipalities in La Libertad, Morazan, and San Salvador to compare differences of conditions that mirror the national trends of poverty and deprivation, which are disproportionately affecting rural parts of the country.

In sum, the demographic indicators show that relative to international standards of living, El Salvador is in need of development to improve people's social, economic, and health outcomes. Specific demographic information and severity of conditions indicators for the population in this study have added depth to existing data on Salvadoran adolescents' living conditions, while revealing important aspects of development such as young people's perceptions of their community environments.

Chapter 2: Background Research and Theoretical Foundations

Theory on Severity of Conditions

Brown and Barnes-Nacoste's (1993) *severity of conditions* theory is relevant to adolescents' civic engagement. According to the theory, members of groups that live under identifiable severe social, economic, and political conditions develop a psychological sense of closeness and responsibility toward each other. Following that theory, Brown and Barnes-Nacoste argued that compared to younger African Americans, older African Americans would have been socialized under severe social conditions that included racism and discrimination and thus should have higher levels of psychological closeness to other blacks. As a consequence, compared to younger African Americans, older African Americans would have been more likely to vote in the 1980 presidential election. And indeed, these researchers found that older African Americans who lived through the civil rights era and lived in the Deep South were more likely than other African American generational and geographical groups to have a strong sense of racial collective group identity. That sense of group closeness was significantly related to higher rates of voting.

Severity of conditions includes social, economic, and political conditions that affect peoples' ability to access "decision-making concerning values and rules that control the future" (Apfelbaum, as cited in Brown & Barnes-Nacoste, 1993, p. 189). Such conditions, whether economic, political, social, or a combination of the three, are hypothesized to influence subordinated group members' solidarity and perceptions about their group status (Brown & Barnes-Nacoste, 1993). No other research to date has explicitly tested the hypothesis proposed by Brown and Barnes-Nacoste (1993); however, their findings present

compelling evidence that political behavior is influenced by the severity of social, economic, and political conditions.

Brown and Barnes-Nacoste's (1993) research on the severity of conditions theory shows that psychological closeness to a group may mediate individuals' civic engagement such as voting. This research implies that severe social, political, and economic environmental conditions are likely to create differences in group closeness and a sense of societal responsibility that is linked to civic attitudes and engagement. Such engagement in political processes is one way in which citizens of democratic societies can feel a sense of influence that may change the current conditions of their group. In that context, this study investigated this theory with Salvadoran youth living in different conditions to establish the relationship of such conditions to civic attitudes and skills.

Adolescence is a period of development that is crucial to solidifying identity and gaining a more complex understanding of the social world (Erikson, 1968); however, this process differs greatly among adolescents from different parts of the world and living in differing environmental conditions. This research examines the severity of conditions in which Salvadoran adolescents live, which are the social, educational, economic, and political conditions that affect peoples' ability to access "decision-making concerning values and rules that control the future" (Apfelbaum, as cited in Brown & Barnes-Nacoste, 1993, p. 219). This construct reaches beyond simple poverty measures to examine the ways in which society excludes certain groups and maintains social stratification based on a group membership identity (i.e., race, class, gender). One of the main aims of this research study was to provide a clear framework in which to study adolescents in El Salvador. Therefore, in accordance with severity of conditions, the study used an index of indicators specific to El

Salvador and young people, including relevant educational measures at the municipal level, in addition to youth economic conditions, to provide a clear picture of the opportunity structure currently available. These municipal-level variables provided contextual profiles of the areas in which the schools and participants were situated.

Theory on Psychological Sense of Community

The social and physical environment in the community has an important impact on the development of adolescents as it is a key socializing agent (Chipuer et al., 1999). Freire (1974) stated that it is both the “sense of community, [and] participation in the solutions of common problems” (p. 22) that form the foundation of an open, democratic society. Thus much of adolescents’ knowledge and understanding and their sociopolitical awareness are transferred to them in the community environment. This study explores the role of the community in shaping adolescents’ civic and political perceptions. The *psychological sense of community* (PSOC) is a concept that has generally been overlooked within the adolescent population; this study seeks to fill gaps in the existing research by examining this variable with a unique population and in relation to the other variables of interest.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined PSOC as “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (p. 11). PSOC is a multidimensional concept that examines perceptions of community members’ relationships with each other. McMillan and Chavis defined four elements of PSOC: *membership*, *influence*, *fulfillment of needs*, and *shared emotional connection*. Membership satisfies the sense of belonging community members have and also provides emotional safety and acceptance. Influence points to the bidirectional relationship any one individual has with the

community as they are able to influence each other. Fulfillment of needs highlights the interdependence community members have on each other regarding survival, values, and expectations of reciprocity. Finally, shared emotional connection is the core sense of community because it emphasizes people's shared history and their emotional relationships to their group processes of success and hardship.

However, much of the empirical research supporting the original PSOC theory has focused on adults in the United States, making it less applicable to adolescents. Chipuer et al. (1999) created a PSOC model that is more specific to adolescents, using previous conceptions of PSOC among adults as a foundation for their model. Empirical research by these authors showed that PSOC was not as relevant with adolescents due to differences in the importance of some aspects of community. As a result, they conducted semistructured interviews with 87 adolescents in eastern Canada to clarify differences between adult and teenage psychological perceptions of the community. Their research found that adolescents value different aspects of their community in comparison to adults. For example, influence in the community was not something that was characterized as important by teenagers; however, peer relationships in the community were important. Further research conducted by Chipuer and Pretty (2000) in urban and rural areas in Canada and Australia (approximate ages were 12–18 years) revealed that adolescents place emphasis on four areas of community life: support, safety, activity, and friendships. *Support* examines the extent to which adolescents perceive support from other people living in their neighborhood, including helping behaviors. *Safety* proved to be important among adolescents, revealing that adolescents' sense of safety and their perceptions of delinquent behavior are central to their sense of community. *Activity* included the types of things adolescents have to do in their

communities in their free time, specifically, the extent to which the community has activities for young people. Last, *friendships* were also found to have significance in adolescents' PSOC, that is, whether the community has peers to whom the individuals feel close. These dimensions of PSOC for adolescents are important because researchers can examine how they change over the course of adolescence and how they may be linked to other outcomes. One drawback to this model of PSOC is that it was developed out of research on a specific population of adolescents in Canada, and it is possible that there are other aspects of community that may be important in different parts of the world.

PSOC is important to this research for several reasons. First, PSOC has only been examined among adolescents in select parts of the world, namely, in North America and Australia. Examining this variable among Salvadoran adolescents, a unique population, will extend the current literature about adolescents' relationships with their communities in different regions of the world. Second, in the proposed study, severity of conditions is measured using census-level data that provide a more objective perspective of community conditions, whereas PSOC will reveal a subjective perspective of adolescents' communities. Third, in relation to civic attitudes and sociopolitical development, PSOC allows for a closer look at adolescents' relationships with their communities, which are often the places where identity and political socialization occur. Given that little research examines PSOC, this study will explore the role that adolescents' psychological relationship with their community plays in the larger context of environmental conditions and civic identity development.

Theory on Collective Identity

Collective identity is a central theory in this research as it is the identification with a larger social group from which adolescents derive much of their understanding about society

and their social world (Pugh & Hart, 1999). The severity of conditions theory contends that sociohistorical context is inextricably tied to group identity, meaning that it is those shared experiences of conditions that yield collective identification among individuals. In contrast to much of the research on collective identity, which has primarily focused on categorization based on gender, race or ethnicity, or minority group membership, this research focuses more on categorizations more applicable to the Salvadoran population. It is expected that socioeconomic grouping and the classification of the area in which adolescents live (i.e., rural, urban, coastal) will be more salient as categories of their collective identities. Environmental conditions vary greatly in these regions in terms of geographical location, type of work, poverty levels, and access to services. Thus collective identity theory serves as a foundation for this research as it provides a potential link between the social context and the other variables to be examined in the study.

Collective identity has been conceptualized in many ways, however, Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) incorporated several researchers' definitions and summarized that collective identity is shared with a group of others who have (or are believed to have) certain characteristics in common. These characteristics include "a place in the social world" (Simon & Klandersman, 2001, p. 321), commonalities based on ascribed characteristics (gender or ethnicity) or achieved characteristics (e.g., occupation or political affiliation; (Deaux, 1996). In addition, Ashmore et al. (2004) outlined that the shared position one holds does not require "direct contact or interchange" (p. 81) with members of the shared category and thus implies psychological dimensions. These researchers also stated that collective identity must be a subjective identification or acknowledgment by the

person who is evaluating identity (Deaux, 1996). Polletta and Jasper (2001) claimed that collective identity is the

individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice or institution. It is a perception of shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity. (p. 285)

Collective identity involves many different elements, ranging from basic categorizations of self to behavioral involvement. It is widely accepted in identity research that group members vary on many different dimensions of collective identification. Ashmore et al. (2004) have thoroughly assessed the social and collective identity literature and have provided dimensions of collective identity, allowing researchers to tailor specific dimensions based on context and sample. For this research, the dimensions that were used were importance and self-categorization.

Self-categorization is the identification of oneself, or the categorizing self in terms of a particular social grouping (Deaux, 1996). This is the most basic and central element of collective identity because individuals must establish a category that is meaningful for them and their sense of self. Developmental literature largely states that social categories are understood as a function of social and cognitive development and that a good point of reference is the Piagetian principle of conservation (approximately 10 years of age). Ashmore et al.'s (2004) recommendation for the measurement of self-categorization is based on other researchers' experiences with the construct, for example, the use of open-ended questions that allow for construction of categories, whereby participants choose their own collective identity (Phinney, 1992). Given the lack of available research on Salvadoran social categories of identity, this study used ethnographic observation and field notes to

establish relevant categories. This will allow for construction of initial social categories based on adolescents' activities, beliefs, symbols, and other important aspects of identity. As Ashmore et al. (2004) recommended, the study participants' self-categorizations were based on observation, and as a result, the two categories that were chosen represent collective identities that are most salient among Salvadorans: area type (rural, urban, coastal) and socioeconomic status (low, middle, and high income). Two separate categories allow for more flexibility of identities, rather than assuming that categories are fixed by objective presumptions about each group (i.e., that rural areas are all low income). Incorporated into the dimension of self-categorization is the subjective assessment of the self as a prototypical member of the social categories chosen and how important collective identities are to the overall sense of self.

Theory on Civic Attitudes and Skills

Civic participation is especially important for adolescents living in so-called transitional democracies, where the process of decision making is becoming more equitable and inclusive (Bowes, et al., 1998). El Salvador is a transitional democracy that recently elected a leftist party, supported primarily by the poor majority. This dramatic change in political power demonstrates the effectiveness of democratic processes such as political organizing and voting as ways to influence change and possibly improve social conditions.

Given the tumultuous history of El Salvador's political climate, it is not surprising that there is limited research regarding adolescents' attitudes, skills, participation in civic activities, or sociopolitical development. During the time of the civil war, affiliation with specific political groups and ideologies was extremely dangerous and, in many cases, fatal. Even so, Gómez (1999) has conducted research that examines the role of religious

participation as a catalyst for renewed civic behavior, commitment, and solidarity in post-civil war El Salvador. This research examined the most vulnerable populations such as youth (aged approximately 15–20 years), women, and repatriated refugees—populations living in rural areas, which are also more likely to be high in poverty or extreme poverty. Findings from qualitative data reveal that youth in war-torn rural areas are disconnected from society and community life because work, recreational, and educational opportunities are extremely limited. In addition, the abundance of gangs, or *maras*, formed after the civil war has been associated with the breakdown of family life because of the mass forced migration, disappearances, and murders that occurred over the course of 12 years of civil war. Gómez attributed the deep sense of mistrust and civic uncertainty Salvadoran youth have in the larger political system to the gang problem and a lack of available opportunities as a result of years of civil war. Qualitative information from interviews and surveys revealed that youth in rural El Salvador do not believe that the political parties represent the needs and ideas of the common person. In addition, Gómez concluded that young people “lack the democratic collective memory or even vision of a democratic utopia toward which they can strive through political participation” (p. 59), something she argues is salient in more established, stable democracies. However, Gómez concluded that much of the sense of community has been resurrected in war-torn communities because of high religious participation.

Gómez’s (1999) findings are limited to one department, and the study sample is drawn from three local churches that are very close geographically, making the findings more difficult to generalize to Salvadoran youth living in other parts of the country. Although her findings point to the fact that youth are highly mistrustful of political processes and the government, it is likely that there is much more diversity among this population than is

indicated in Gómez's research. Furthermore, Gómez's research was conducted over 10 years ago and less than a decade after the civil war; future research should investigate changes in youth attitudes toward political participation, especially in the context of the recent social-political movement. This study examines diverse groups of adolescents and their sense of community and collective identity as they relate to civic attitudes and sociopolitical development. More specifically, it examines the severity of conditions theory among youth to determine the extent to which adolescents perceive political and civic participation to be a vehicle for changing their group's conditions.

One of the most relevant studies conducted recently was the National Institute of Democracy's benchmark survey with just over 1,000 Salvadorans that used a representative sample from diverse socioeconomic and age groups. The primary researcher, Nevitte (2009), conducted a subanalysis with a young adult group (aged 18–25 years) on a number of topic areas, including democratic procedural norms, trust in societal institutions, democratic values, and participation. Data were collected shortly after the 2009 election of Mauricio Funes. The survey was supplemented with qualitative data from focus groups that explored issues that had emerged in the survey but were unresolved (i.e., barriers to participation). In an analysis of democratic values, Nevitte found that two-thirds of young adults believe that democracy is an unstable political system, and just under half believe that democracies are unable to maintain order. Public confidence in political institutions revealed that Salvadorans as a whole have high levels of trust in the media and the president but low levels of trust in government institutions such as congress and political parties (8% and 11% had a lot of or total trust, respectively). In the areas of civic and political participation, Salvadorans were willing to ask for government help to solve a community problem (64%); however, few

people (14%) had actually done so in the past. As a whole, when compared to the same data from the benchmark survey in Nicaragua, Salvadorans were much less comfortable with participating in workplace strikes or demonstrations or supporting a public protest. The young adult category did show some differences when compared to older adults, which also provided some contrasting information to young people in other parts of the world. When asked about interest in politics, 62% of those aged 18–25 years said that they had political interest, compared to only 48% of the sample aged 26 years and older. Young adults also reported higher levels of membership with a political party (38% with a strong connection), and more people of this age group indicated that they were politically active (17%) as compared to the older age group (13%). Surprisingly, the younger age group was also more cynical and had lower levels of interpersonal trust. There were also differences in education and gender. Those individuals with higher levels of education reported being more interested and trusting of government institutions and more politically active than those with less education. As a whole, Salvadoran women had less democratic knowledge and were less politically active than men. Follow-up focus groups with women explored barriers to participation and pointed to a number of societal issues as reasons for the inequality. Many women felt that the culture of machismo was the reason why women had a harder time being involved in politics. Other women felt that there were safety issues in that political activities and membership could bring about violence. Finally, women also noted that many women were not involved because they did not have time because of having to work, raise children, and maintain the household. The benchmark survey also found that 71% of young adults aged 18–25 years had voted in the previous presidential election. Follow-up focus groups revealed that many more young people expressed interest in the elections and had wanted to

vote, but a number of issues prevented them from doing so. The primary reason for not voting had to do with the lack of proper identification (identification cards are issued at 18 years, but both parents must be in attendance to obtain one) or not having a birth certificate to be able to get the appropriate identification.

Civic participation and related attitudes have been studied at an international level by Flanagan et al. (1998), who examined adolescents in seven countries that were categorized as either stable democracies, such as the United States and Australia, or transitional democracies, such as the Czech Republic or Hungary. These researchers examined correlates of civic participation such as voluntary work, school climate, and family values, paying close attention to differences by country and gender. In the majority of the countries studied, girls volunteered more often than boys. In stable democracies, students rated their school climate as one which promoted voicing their opinions, even if it challenged teachers' perspectives. These findings reveal that countries that are stable democracies tend also to reflect democratic processes in institutions that are influential in the lives of adolescents such as schools and volunteer organizations.

Torney-Purta (2002) also studied adolescents of different European nations with regard to schools' role in the development of civic engagement and attitudes. This research revealed that adolescents who form close connections with their school and community are likely to care about issues pertaining to these institutions and are therefore more likely to contribute to addressing such issues. Positive collective identification with the school is promoted by participation in youth programs, which provide opportunities "to design, plan, and implement community service initiatives" and which have been shown to be a protective factor for low-income Latino youth in the United States (Bloomberg, Ganey, Alba, Quintero,

& Alvarez Alcantara, 2003, p. 37). However, Torney-Purta, Barber, and Wilkenfeld (2006) concluded that the school setting also serves as a *community of practice*, in which students are able to develop participatory skills such as political discussion and decision making. Similarly, in addition to schools as potential catalysts for increasing civic participation, community-based programs can also provide adolescents with climates that are linked to higher levels of civic commitment and increased prosocial behavior (C. A. Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007).

Adolescents living in low-resource areas are marginalized not only by their poverty status but also by their social status within the community. Therefore adolescents do not usually have the opportunity to have their voices heard by the larger community or those in power. Participation in community-based programs and formal schooling can provide adolescents with social climates that are then linked to higher levels of civic commitment. Therefore this study examines the extent to which varying social conditions influence adolescents' sense of cohesion with those who are similar to them and how that identification with the group influences civic attitudes and skills.

Salvadoran youth are an understudied population in the psychology literature. The majority of the current research examines the entire Latino population in the United States and does not differentiate between individuals' nationality, with the exception of Mexican youth. This focus on Latino youth in the United States concentrates on differences between racial and ethnic groups or differences based on immigration experiences. Developmental research examining Salvadoran youth in the context of their culture and country is limited, and the majority of this research centers on gang involvement and transnational migration patterns (Hume, 2007; Moser & Van Bronkhorst, 1999). However, Springer and colleagues

(2006; 2006) have examined risk behaviors and social support among rural and urban youth living in El Salvador. They found that adolescent girls who perceive lower levels of parental social support are more likely to engage in risk behaviors such as substance abuse and sexual intercourse. In addition, they found that girls with lower perceived school social cohesion are more likely to binge drink and use drugs. For male adolescents, it was found that low perceived parental social support is likely to predict suicide ideation, binge drinking, and drug use, whereas low perceived social school climate is predictive of physical fighting. These findings are significant because they reveal examples of protective factors, something which is clearly important as Salvadoran youth face many other challenges. Similarly, among youth in the United States, parental support as measured by style (i.e., a warm parenting style) and encouragement has been shown to be important in adolescent participation in community and civic activities (Fletcher, Glen, Elder, & Mekos, 2000). Parental involvement, such as discussion of different topics with adolescents, has been shown to be predictive of participation in community and civic activities, albeit parental influence declined after the 8th grade (Smith, 1999). These cross-cultural findings reveal the importance of environmental conditions as they relate to civic participation, more specifically, the importance of family as an institution of socialization in democratic processes.

This study extends current literature by defining severity of local living conditions and civic skills among adolescents in El Salvador. In addition, this research also examines the possible connections between collective identity and psychological closeness with the community and civic skills. Such connections are important because they allow social

scientists to understand the role of community and larger group identification as factors in the development of political identity in transitional democracies.

Sociopolitical Development

Previous research has focused mainly on youth civic participation in terms of behavioral outcomes, such as recent participation in school or community activities, without considering critical thinking processes related to such involvement. One important link missing between collective identity and civic or political behavior as a means of social change is examining the psychological component underlying such civic participation or attitudes. Watts and colleagues (1997; 1999; 2003; 2006) have created a theoretical construct called *sociopolitical development*, which is defined as the advancement of “knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social systems” (p. 185). Thus their five-dimensional theory (illustrated in Appendix A) focuses on the progression of critical consciousness and social action, specifically, on understanding the ways in which sociopolitical factors influence multiple levels of societal inequality and how this understanding can be transformed into group and individual action for social change (Watts, Griffith, & Abdul-Adil, 1999)

Adolescents, who are in the process of constructing their identities, are bound to be affected by the social conditions in which they live. Civic and political identities are shaped by family, friends, and other social institutions such as schools and communities. It is through engagement with the larger community that adolescents develop the understanding of democratic or nondemocratic processes and form opinions. Civic and political identity development is of special importance in democratic societies, which rely on citizens to guide the political process through participation and involvement.

As previously discussed, Watts and Abdul-Adil (1997) have explored this construct with African American male adolescents in the United States and found evidence of the development of sociopolitical awareness, using rap videos and film as a method of raising levels of critical consciousness. In another study, Watts and Guessous (2006) tested their hypothesized model in which both societal action and commitment were outcomes of sociopolitical development. Their study involved African-American and white youth in their first two years of high school (grades 9 and 10) from the Atlanta area, in which factors such as social competence, sense of agency, and intellectual development (i.e. cultural worldview and social analysis) were assessed in relation to societal involvement (i.e. commitment). Findings reveal that individuals who believed the world to be unjust also had higher levels of commitment to societal involvement. Factors such as perceived leaderships competence and experience of agency also predicted commitment in societal processes. Watts and Guessous (2006) conclude that there is a need to develop certain psychosocial elements among such as social analysis (i.e. their proxy measure for critical consciousness) and sense of agency in order to engage young people in the types of civic activities. These researchers used several separate constructs to examine sociopolitical development, however, one limitation is that it was a cross-sectional study and did not examine these constructs over time.

Given this advancement in the empirical testing of sociopolitical development, it is plausible that a similar methodology that promotes both dialogue and critical thinking in a group setting can be used with adolescents from other cultures. Qualitative methods that use participatory action research serve to reduce the power dynamics between adult researchers and young people, creating an environment in which adolescents can actively explore their social world.

Photovoice

Photovoice is a process that seeks to use photography to enhance the critical consciousness of participants by enabling them with cameras and participating with them in group discussions, with the intention of capturing reality as they perceive it. Similarly, photovoice, which occurs most often with small groups of community members, has also been repeatedly shown to be successful in connecting adolescents to a greater understanding of their social worlds (Necheles et al., 2004; Rudkin & Davis, 2007; Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004; Streng et al., 2004; Vaughn, Rojas-Guyler, & Howell, 2008; Wilson et al., 2007). This study used the qualitative methodology of photovoice to explore sociopolitical development among Salvadoran youth and inform the development of a quantitative measure. The purpose of using this method was to provide an in-depth, nuanced understanding about Salvadoran youths' awareness and gauge the extent to which Watts and Abdul-Adil's (1997) constructs of sociopolitical development emerge.

Three main aims specified by Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001) for photovoice are to (a) "record and reflect their community's assets and concerns," (b) "discuss issues of importance to the community in large and small groups to promote critical dialogue and produce shared knowledge," and (c) "reach policy makers" (p. 560). The theoretical background for photovoice draws from empowerment education, feminist theory, and community documentary photography (C. Wang & Burris, 1994). In Freire's (1990) book entitled *Education for a critical consciousness* he proposes the use of education as tool for developing critical consciousness, whereby the individual is the expert in his or her own reality. Traditional teacher-student relationships are avoided because they lack full student participation; instead, a problem-posing approach is used to stimulate discussion. As noted

by Wang and Burris (1994), Freire's (1970; 1990) theories were practically applied with disenfranchised illiterate populations in Brazil, where he favored the use of photography and contextual cues to increase literacy skills.

The second theoretical underpinning of photovoice is feminist theory (Wang & Burris, 1994). Traditional research often excluded women not only as subjects but also as researchers. Therefore feminist theory focuses on intersections of power, representation, and oppression of women and their experiences, with a renewed focus on "a feminist research method," as set forth by Rhoda Linton (1989, p. 273; for more on method, see Linton, as cited in Wang & Burris, 1994). Feminist theory informs photovoice because it places the focus on empowerment and the reversal of power so that women and other oppressed members of society are able to influence their lives in ways they could not before.

The third and final theoretical foundation is *community documentary photography* (Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). The basic principle behind this idea is that people should have the right to document their own lives and their communities with images and stories that accurately represent them. Photographers such as Spence (1995) and Ewald (1985) have worked with community members to help them use cameras to explore issues of social justice and prominent issues in their lives. This type of photography mirrors some elements of ethnographic research because it favors photographers emerging themselves in communities to understand cultural contexts and the daily lives of community members. Photovoice extends this type of documentary photography because pictures are taken only by participants, and the methodology follows strict ethical guidelines and uses scientific rigor than typical documentary photography. More specifically, photovoice follows the standards of ownership of research (photographs, dialogue, use of information)

outlined by community-based participatory research methods, which allows participants to play a greater role in various stages of the research process (Israel et al., 2003; Lopez, Eng, Robinson, & Wang, 2005).

Youth participation in photovoice projects has been gaining momentum since shortly after Wang (2006) and her colleagues created the methodology and practice (Wang & Burris, 1994). In the United States, several projects have shown the effectiveness of photovoice as a medium for social change and community action (Necheles, et al., 2004; Strack, et al., 2004; Streng, et al., 2004; Vaughn, et al., 2008; C. C. Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001; Wilson, et al., 2007).

Conceptual Model

For the present study, the conceptual model (see Figure 4) illustrates the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. It is predicted that severity of conditions will be related with collective identity in such a way that adolescents living in severe environmental conditions will have higher collective identification and feel more strongly connected to a larger social group. A second link examined is the relationship between severity of conditions and PSOC, specifically, how adolescents perceive and relate to their geographical communities. This relationship is important because it may reveal links between multiple levels (community and group) of influence on adolescents' identity development.

Once the relationships between severity of conditions and these two variables are established, they will be examined in relation to civic attitudes and skills. It is hypothesized that adolescents living in severe conditions, with higher levels of collective identity and PSOC, will also have civic skills and attitudes that are more oriented toward positive political

participation. As shown in the conceptual model, it is predicted that sociopolitical development will predict civic attitudes and skills. Sociopolitical development is the critical understanding of the social world and the awareness adolescents have about the ways in which social forces in society influence the lives of the people that live there. Therefore it is predicted that higher levels of sociopolitical development will be related to more advanced civic attitudes and skills, following the logic that those who have a higher awareness of social and political forces will better understand societal processes that facilitate change.

Chapter 3: Methods

Current empirical literature on adolescents living in Central America is almost nonexistent; therefore this study provides a foundation for future research that links context and the development of young people. The following sections outline the phases of research followed to explore severity of conditions and adolescents' identity, sense of community, and political development more generally.

Phase 1: Population Description Using Severity of Conditions Theory

The first major aim of this study was to provide a thorough description of the population using indicators at the municipal level from the Salvadoran Census of 2004. This study established a set of indicators relevant to this age group that could then be used to describe the conditions of the municipalities of adolescents in the survey sample. Municipal indicators were linked to adolescents' survey data through individual identification numbers so that contexts could be assessed. Tables 1 and 2 show a complete list of municipal-level indicators considered relevant for this research and categorized by school type (i.e., urban, rural, or mixed). The results of these cross-tab analyses did in fact reflect the conditions of Salvadoran society, revealing that adolescents attending rural schools lived in the most severe conditions, those attending mixed schools lived in moderate conditions, and adolescents attending urban schools lived in the least severe conditions. Bivariate relationships were also examined with the primary outcome variables (see Table 3).

Phase 2: Using Photovoice to Inform the Development of a Sociopolitical Consciousness Measure

One of the major aims of the current study was to develop a measure for sociopolitical development by exploring one or more of the five dimensions outlined by Watts and Abdul-Adil (1997). Photovoice is a qualitative participatory research method that fits with the theoretical underpinnings of sociopolitical development, such as critical consciousness, allowing for the examination of adolescents' realities as they perceive them. Although not typically used as a method to inform the development of quantitative measures, photovoice is much more engaging and suitable for exploring aspects of political, moral, and social concepts.

For the purpose of exploring concepts related to sociopolitical development, photovoice was altered slightly. The photovoice methodology aims at creating awareness in the community about the issues adolescents deem important, and this value was maintained for this project. In addition, the researcher also carried out the methodological steps outlined by Wang and Burris (1996) for the benefit of the young people involved. However, the photovoice process was slightly shorter than most projects using this method (three discussion sessions rather than six). The elements of photovoice most essential to exploring constructs of sociopolitical development are the photo-assignment discussion sessions, in which adolescents analyze photos they have taken. Discussion of issues in the community and the lives of adolescents provide insight into how adolescents view their social world and understand concepts such as inequality, poverty, and responsibility for social issues. The photovoice project completed for this research had a participant-driven focus, in which adolescents chose photo-topics that were of interest to them and relevant to their daily lives.

Participants. Approximately 9–12 adolescents ranging in age from 11 to 18 years participated in the photovoice project in a rural-coastal region of El Salvador. These groups were intended to be a snapshot sample of the larger group that would participate in the survey research in schools. Photovoice participants were from the moderately severe conditions group, as defined by the municipal-level indicators, and were recruited as a convenience sample based on community location.

Procedure. The photovoice procedure for this research was guided by Wang and Burris (1994), who have outlined specific steps for conducting research using this method. Steps were taken to ensure that the recruitment, planning, and processes of the photovoice project respected local values and norms. The principal investigator enlisted the help of a young adult from the local community to be a research assistant, who liaised with the parents, facilitated focus groups, and assisted with translation and appropriateness of project documents. Adolescents were recruited from a rural-coastal community to participate in the photovoice process by first discussing the project with their parents. Parental permission was obtained for each child or adolescent to attend an informational session to explain the project in more detail. The introductory meeting was held with adolescents interested in participating in the 3-month project. Participants gave verbal assent that they understood what the project involved, and written parental consent was also sought for full participation shortly thereafter. The participants were divided into groups by age: 11- to 14-year-olds in one group and 17- to 19-year-olds in the other group, with 5 and 4 participants, respectively. Participants were placed in different groups because of anticipated differences in cognitive development in areas such as critical thinking, abstract thinking, and perspective taking. Participants in both groups were informed about photo-assignments, consent forms for

people appearing in their photos, and how to use the camera. The photovoice assignment discussion groups were facilitated by the researcher and the local research assistant. A total of three photovoice assignments and discussion sessions were held over the course of a 3-month period. Adolescents collectively decided on photo-topics for each photo-assignment, choosing issues in the community that were relevant to their lives, which resulted in different photo-assignments for the younger and older groups. The younger group chose pollution in the community, general problems in the community, and “a message to adults about their lives” as their topics for photo-assignment. The group of older adolescents chose tourism, poverty, and their lives as adolescents in the community as their photo-assignments.

Adolescents took a total of 10 photos for each assignment and selected 3 photos each to be placed in a larger group of photos that consisted of each participant’s top 3.

Adolescents examined all the photos and selected three for discussion. All discussions were recorded using a digital voice recorder. The lead researcher took notes and assisted the research assistant in the facilitation of the discussion sessions, which followed the SHOWeD technique [developed by Wallerstein & Bernstein (1988) and adapted by Wang and Burris (1994) for photovoice] that uses structured questions to guide the analysis of the photos (i.e. **W**hat do you **S**ee here? **W**hat is really **H**appening here? **H**ow does this relate to **O**ur lives? **W**hy does this situation, concern, or strength exist? **W**hat can we **D**o to improve the situation, or to enhance these strengths?)

Challenges to the photovoice process were focused mainly on cameras and film developing. At first, film cameras were used to facilitate a low-cost project; however, developing costs were extremely high, and after the first assignment, participants were provided with digital cameras, which they shared with partners from their age groups.

Photos were taken separately by the participants; however, each participant had several days with the camera and then passed it over to his or her partner. Given the restricted budget of the project, it was not realistic to provide each participant with his or her own camera. Participants in the project lived in the community and had frequent contact with project facilitators, so logistics and access to the participants were not issues; however, attrition was a problem, given that the groups were small to start with. The younger group lost one participant and the older group lost two participants because they did not want to continue the project or were working a lot, making it difficult to take pictures and attend meetings. Last, with the younger group, it was at times difficult to facilitate quality discussion because they tended to talk over each other during the discussion sessions; however, over the 2-month period, the participants improved.

Informing the development of a sociopolitical development measure with Salvadoran adolescents. Data were transcribed by a native Spanish speaker from El Salvador for accuracy and were analyzed by the principal investigator in consultation with the research assistant. Data were organized into general domains that were subject specific (i.e., government or health) and then were divided into topics, and then into smaller points, often with several quotations to accompany each topic. Given that the data were being used both to confirm and explore the sociopolitical development constructs proposed by Watts and colleagues, special attention was placed on domains and topics that were specifically related to adolescents' understanding of how government, community, and other institutions affect their lives. Data were analyzed using Watts and colleagues (1997; 2003) theory about the concepts that make up sociopolitical development: social justice, critical consciousness, oppression, sociopolitical awareness, and social action. Thus the primary method of data

analysis was deductive in nature; however, inductive analysis was also important as it allowed for the emergence of new concepts that informed the development of a measure. From the photovoice data of younger and older Salvadoran adolescents, five main constructs emerged (see Table 4): (a) sociopolitical awareness; (b) opportunity, equality, and justice; (c) societal responsibility; (d) methods of change and action; and (e) efficacy. Each construct is examined in more detail in the following paragraphs.

The first construct, *sociopolitical awareness*, is the knowledge adolescents have regarding local and national social and political issues. Data showed that adolescents were aware of issues and events at the community, local (government), national, and global levels. Several items from Moely et al.'s (2002) civic measure of political awareness were added that distinguish between community and local government (municipality) as those emerged as distinctly different entities in the data.

The second construct included perceptions about *opportunity, equality, and justice*. These three concepts emerged mainly among the older group, showing the extent to which they understood inequality based on ethnic, economic, gender, and social differences. In addition, oppression emerged in the discussion of equality; however, alone, it was not a major concept. Last, justice emerged from the data as an important topic in relation to equality. Items were included from Lipkus's (1991) measure of *global belief in a just world*. Items on related scales (Rubin & Peplau, 1975) have been used in other research to operationalize critical consciousness, measuring the extent to which inequality is unjust and people get what they deserve.

The third construct, *societal responsibility*, emerged as a separate theme from Watts and Abdul-Adil's (1997) conception of sociopolitical development. Societal responsibility

comprises perceptions about the causes of poverty and the extent to which government and social institutions are responsible for helping impoverished people. This concept emerged specifically from discussions about poverty and the lives of adolescents with the older group. Economic disparity serves as the primary source of stratification in El Salvador, and thus adolescents discussed at length the responsibility of government (national and municipal) and community in eradicating poverty. This is a distinct construct of sociopolitical development for both younger and older adolescents in El Salvador because poverty is salient and extremely visible.

The fourth construct, *methods of change and action*, examines the perceptions adolescents have about ways to achieve change or solve societal problems. Discussions showed that adolescents identified several methods of achieving change: organizing community campaigns, government programs and policies, and changing attitudes and social norms. This construct emerged with both the younger and older groups and was part of the conversation in almost every photo-discussion.

Efficacy emerged as a fifth construct that revealed perceptions about the capacity to solve problems and the effectiveness of achieving societal change at the individual and community levels. Watts and colleagues (1997; 1999; 2006) have related individual and collective efficacy to empowerment at various levels. Adolescents in both age groups had relatively high levels of self and community efficacy but lower levels of efficacy for government institutions.

A complete explanation of the development of the quantitative measure is presented in chapter 4. In addition, based on the constructs developed with the qualitative and quantitative findings, the measure created is a reflection of adolescents' sociopolitical

consciousness rather than sociopolitical development. This measure captures a snapshot of the psychosocial values adolescents have and is therefore not able to measure the process of development in which sociopolitical concepts are formed. For this reason, the measure will be referred to as *sociopolitical consciousness* rather than *sociopolitical development*.

Phase 3: Examining Severity of Conditions, Collective Identity, Civic Attitudes, and Sociopolitical Consciousness

The third and final phase of the study examined adolescents' environmental conditions and their relationships with collective identity, sense of community, civic attitudes, and sociopolitical development. This phase of the research examined sociopolitical development as a possible mediator between severity of conditions, collective identity, PSOC, and civic attitudes.

Recruitment strategy. Adolescents for this study were recruited by contacting the directors of target schools by mail. Directors were provided information about the possibility of participating in a survey and were informed of the purpose of the study and any necessary commitments. During the recruitment phase, the principal investigator worked with a local research partner who had experience with the Ministry of Education and with a language extension program that serves different parts of the country. The principal investigator and local research partner then visited each school and met with its director to discuss details of participation, including confidentiality, parental permission, and dissemination of results, and to review the questionnaire.

Participants. Table 5 summarizes key demographic characteristics of the study sample by school type. This study used a sample ($n = 681$) of Salvadoran youths aged 14–22 years ($M = 16.9$, $SD = 1.5$) attending high school (*bachillerato*) in three different parts of the

country. The sample was 53% male and 47% female, and the vast majority were born in El Salvador (94%) and spoke Spanish at home (97%). The participants were from different parts of El Salvador: two schools sampled were in a remote region of the country that was categorized as rural (based on both census and sample data) and accounted for 32.4% of the overall sample. Students were also drawn from a large, private high school in the capital city of San Salvador that was categorized as urban and represented 36.1% of the overall sample. The third category included two schools that were within several kilometers of the coast, an urban port town, and rural areas in the surrounding mountains. This last group composed 31.5% of the total sample. To appropriately reflect Salvadoran inequities by area type, it is appropriate to examine the demographic characteristics of each group based on region (i.e., urban, rural, mixed). As expected, the sample in this study reflects the realities of Salvadoran society, in which rural regions have more severe conditions and urban regions tend to have less deprivation. The students from the mixed region tended to have moderate conditions in relation to the other groups.

Municipality data were obtained from the 2007 Census and the 2004 report on poverty at the local level by Fondo de Inversión Social para el Desarrollo Local and were linked with students based on school and reported municipality.

Severity of conditions. Tables 1 and 2 details the severity of conditions variables that were taken into consideration. The municipal-level variables from the 2004 Census report the economic, educational, and social conditions in the areas in which adolescents live and attend school. Indicators were chosen based on their relevance to the lives of young people; thus variables such as the percentage of idle youth in a municipality (i.e., the percentage of young people aged 16–18 years who are not studying, working, or looking for

work), the youth unemployment rate (i.e., the percentage of young adults aged 19–25 years who are unemployed), and several deprivation indicators (i.e., percentage of poverty, percentage of homes without electricity) were chosen. These variables also provided information about the current and future opportunity structure available to adolescents on the doorstep of adulthood. Given the large number of municipalities, data from these variables were classified into three equal groups using the visual binning technique of SPSS, which transforms the variables into low, moderate, or high categories based on the original raw scores from each municipality. Initially, 14 indicators were examined, as follows.

Correlational analyses (see chapter 4 for complete findings) revealed that although certain variables were extremely highly correlated (i.e., percentage of poverty, percentage of homes without electricity), not all indicators from the two sets of indicators were. These analyses led to the division of the indicators into two separate constructs, (a) deprivation indicators and (b) opportunity structure, which were later used to create profiles that described the conditions of each group in the sample.

Deprivation indicators consisted of seven items that measured basic living conditions and poverty at the municipal level: (a) percentage of poverty in each municipality, (b) percentage of homes without electricity, (c) percentage of homes with an earthen floor, (d) percentage of homes without a toilet, (e) percentage of homes without plumbing, (f) percentage of homes with overcrowding, and (g) average monthly income per capita (in USD). Opportunity structure consisted of seven items that measured educational and economic factors at the municipality level: (a) percentage of young people aged 16–18 years who do not attend school; (b) percentage of young people aged 16–18 years who do not attend school for economic reasons; (c) percentage of young people aged 16–18 years with

primary school incomplete; (d) percentage of young people aged 16–18 years who do not study, work, and are not looking for a job; (e) unemployment rate of young adults aged 19–25 years; (f) average year of schooling for young adults aged 19–25 years; and (g) percentage of young adults aged 19–25 years with a monthly wage less than that for rural occupations.

Primary Study Variables

See Table 6 for a summary of variables.

Psychological sense of community. PSOC was measured using Chipuer et al.'s (1999) Youth Neighborhood Inventory, which has subscales measuring four constructs: Support, Safety, Activity, and Friendships. Items are measured using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 4 (*very true*). The Support subscale examined the extent to which adolescents felt their community was helpful, worked together, and supported one another (i.e., “I feel okay asking for help from my neighbors,” “people support each other in my neighborhood”). The Safety subscale measured perceptions about violence, drug dealers, gangs, and fights (i.e., “there are gangs in my neighborhood,” “there are bad kids in my neighborhood”). The Activity subscale measured the extent to which there are activities and places for young people in the community (i.e., “there is a place for kids my age to hang out in my neighborhood,” “in my neighborhood, there are things to get involved in”). The Friendship subscale measured adolescents’ perceptions about their friends in the neighborhood and whether their friends lived close to them. Composite scores were created for each subscale; Support and Safety each ranged from 6 to 24 (each had six items), and Activity and Friendship each ranged from 4 to 16 (each had four items). For all the subscales, higher scores indicated a more positive perception of the concept. Cronbach’s

alpha reliability scores for the subscales of this measure were acceptable (Support, $\alpha = .86$; Safety, $\alpha = .75$; Activity, $\alpha = .70$; Friendship, $\alpha = .66$).

Collective identity. Collective identity was measured using items recommended by Ashmore et al. (2004) in the areas of self-categorization and importance. The Self-Categorization subscale involved adolescents choosing from two different identity groups: (a) geographical identity (i.e., urban, rural, coastal) and (b) socioeconomic identity (i.e., low, middle, high income). Self-categorization was measured using the item, “According to the group you have chosen above, would you say that you are a typical member of your social group?” Answers were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Group identity was measured using two items that were combined to make a composite score. These items measured the extent to which the group identity was important: “Based on the group you chose above, how important would you say this group is to who you are (your identity)?” and “In general, how important is this group to your ‘sense of self’ and your ‘self-image’?” Items for these scales were measured on 4-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*not important*) to 4 (*very important*). These items were then combined to create an importance composite score that ranged from 4 to 8, with higher scores indicating a higher degree of importance of group identity. The reliability for the geographical identity was acceptable ($\alpha = .77$), as was socioeconomic identity importance ($\alpha = .80$).

Civic skills and attitudes. Civic attitudes and knowledge includes several areas: democratic knowledge, attitudes about future participation in civic activities, trust in societal institutions, and perceptions about the government. Items were taken from Torney-Purta et al.’s (2006) questionnaire, which was used in over 20 countries as part of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Education Study to

examine adolescents' civic attitudes and participation. Subscales taken from Torney-Purta et al. show acceptable levels of reliability: Trust in Government-Related Institutions ($\alpha = .79$), Attitudes Towards Nation (perceptions of the government; $\alpha = .71$), and Expected Participation in Political Activities ($\alpha = .75$). Six multiple-choice questions from the IEA Civic Education Study questionnaire were also used to examine democratic knowledge. This study measured the following concepts.

The Trust in Societal Institutions subscale consisted of 13 items that measured the extent to which adolescents' trusted different societal institutions such as the justice system, the news on the television, the national government, and the people who live in the country. Respondents rated their trust using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*). These items were combined to create a composite score that ranged from 13 to 49, with higher scores indicating higher levels of trust in societal institutions as a whole ($M = 29.15$, $SD = 6.83$). This scale was shown to be reliable ($\alpha = .86$).

Future civic and/or political participation was measured by providing a list of eight political activities and asking adolescents how likely it was that they would participate in each activity. Example items in the subscale included the following: "vote in national elections," "participate in a nonviolent (peaceful) protest," and "write letters to the newspaper about social or political concerns." These items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*I will certainly not do this*) to 4 (*I will certainly do this*). These items were combined to create a composite score of future civic and/or political participation ranging from 8 to 32, with higher scores indicating a willingness to participate in more political and/or civic activities ($M = 19.79$, $SD = 4.12$). The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .72$).

The Perceptions of the Government (i.e., attitudes toward nation) subscale consisted of six items that measured adolescents' perceptions about the Salvadoran government, with items such as "the government (people in the government) cares/care a lot about what all of us think about the new laws" and "Our government is good at solving problems." These items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A composite score for perceptions of the government was created, with scores ranging from 6 to 27, with higher scores indicating more positive perceptions. Adolescents in the sample had moderately positive attitudes toward the government ($M = 15.37$, $SD = 4.23$). Reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .60$).

Democratic knowledge was measured using six multiple-choice questions taken from Torney-Purta et al.'s (2006) IEA Civic Education Study adolescent questionnaire. Questions in this subscale measured knowledge about democratic processes—"In democratic society having many organizations for people to join is important because this provides . . ."—and included questions about democratic rights and election processes. A composite score ranging from 0 to 6 was based on the number of questions students answered correctly.

Sociopolitical consciousness. Sociopolitical consciousness was measured using seven subscales derived from the qualitative findings and a factor analysis (see chapter 4 for the development of the measure). Constructs included the following.

The Sociopolitical Awareness subscale consisted of six items measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and measuring adolescents' perceptions of their ability to understand political issues and events in local, national, and global contexts. Example items include the following: "I am able to understand most political issues easily" and "I am aware of the events in my local area (municipality)."

These items were combined to make a composite score that ranged from 6 to 30 ($M = 21.24$, $SD = 4.12$). Cronbach's alpha was acceptable for this measure ($\alpha = .80$).

The Global Belief in a Just World subscale consisted of eight items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). This scale used six items from Lipkus's (1991) measure of global belief in a just world and two other items: "In Salvadoran society there is not much oppression or inequality" and "In this society everyone has the same chance for success." A composite score was created for this scale ranging from 8 to 40 ($M = 22.62$, $SD = 6.02$). This measure had adequate reliability ($\alpha = .78$).

The Equality subscale consisted of five items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and measuring attitudes about equality and the rights of women, people of indigenous origin, and the poor. Items included the following: "People who are poor deserve the same rights as everyone else in society" and "Men and women are equal in most respects." A composite score was created with scores ranging from 6 to 25 ($M = 21.29$, $SD = 3.34$). This subscale had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .76$).

The Societal Responsibility subscale consisted of four items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and measuring the extent to which adolescents believed different structures in society are responsible for helping the poor such as "The federal (national) government is responsible for helping people who are poor" and "The community is responsible for helping people who are poor." A composite score was created ranging from 4 to 20 ($M = 13.46$, $SD = 6.02$). This subscale had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .82$).

The Action-Oriented Change subscale comprised five items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and measuring

adolescents' preference for action-oriented change. Example items included the following: "We need to make reform within the current system to change our communities" and "We need to participate in efforts such as demonstrations, protests, and community organizing in order to change society." A composite score was created ranging from 5 to 25 ($M = 17.49$, $SD = 3.59$), with good reliability ($\alpha = .71$).

The Community Efficacy subscale consisted of three items measured on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and measuring adolescents' perceptions about their own, the community's, and the local government's ability to solve local problems. Example items included the following: "My community is good at working together to solve problems we face" and "I can help organize solutions to problems my community faces." A composite score was created ranging from 3 to 15 ($M = 9.66$, $SD = 2.70$), with acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .69$).

The Self-Efficacy subscale consisted of three items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) and examining adolescents' perceptions of their ability to solve problems such as "When trying to understand the position of someone else, I put myself in their situation" and "I can think analytically when trying to solve problems." A composite score was created ranging from 3 to 15 ($M = 10.87$, $SD = 2.38$), with acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .63$).

Chapter 4: Results

Phase 1

Thirteen severity of conditions measures were linked to adolescents' survey data. Tables 1 and 2 show the municipal-level conditions by school type, revealing that the highest levels of poverty and deprivation are concentrated in rural areas.

Two sets of variables were defined, (a) deprivation variables and (b) structural opportunities variables, based on their face validity and correlational analysis. To examine which variables were unique, bivariate relationships revealed that many variables were extremely highly correlated (i.e., $r = .90$ or higher). First, deprivation items were compared to explore the extent to which indicators were associated (see Table 7). There were extremely high correlations between proportions of extreme poverty and poverty, $r = 1.00$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$, and between these variables and the proportion of homes without electricity, $r = .99$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$, and the proportion of homes with an earthen floor, $r = .99$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$. The condition of overcrowding was also very highly positively correlated with both poverty and extreme poverty conditions in a municipality, $r = 1.00$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$). The percentage of plumbing in a municipality was also very highly positively correlated with the percentage of homes without a toilet, $r = .59$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$, although not as highly correlated with income, $r = -.46$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$.

Pearson correlation analyses were repeated for the structural opportunities indicators to examine how highly correlated these variables were with each other. As shown in Table 8, analyses revealed strong positive correlations between the percentage of 16- to 18-year-olds with primary school incomplete and the percentage of 16- to 18-year-olds who did not attend

school, $r = .97$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$). Logically, the percentage of idle youth was also significantly correlated with the percentage of 16- to 18-year-olds not attending school, $r = .84$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$, and with the percentage of 16- to 18-year-olds with primary school incomplete, $r = .80$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$. There was also a significant positive correlation between the percentage of 19- to 25-year-olds with a less than a minimum rural wage and the proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds with primary incomplete, $r = .77$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$. Although the young adult (aged 19–25 years) unemployment rate was significantly correlated with a number of other indicators, the correlations were not as strong, suggesting that this indicator was examining a slightly different aspect of the opportunity structure.

Subsequently, the two sets of indicators (i.e., deprivation and structural opportunities) were then compared to examine the extent to which these municipal-level indicators related to each other. The results of these correlation analyses can be seen in Table 9, revealing that although some indicators were not extremely highly correlated (i.e., overcrowding and poverty, with percentage of 19- to 25-year-olds with less than a minimum rural wage, $r = .15$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$), the majority of indicators had at least a moderate relationship (i.e., $r = .30$ – $.50$). The strongest relationships were between the percentage of homes without a toilet or plumbing and the percentage of 16- to 18-year-olds with primary incomplete, $r = .97$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$). The same connection was found between the plumbing and no toilet indicators and the percentage of 16- to 18-year-olds not attending school, $r = .98$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$. There was a significant and strong negative correlation between overcrowding and income in that as levels of overcrowding increased, income decreased, $r = .85$, $n = 661$, $p < .01$.

School profiles: Municipal-level severity of conditions and aggregate group-level data. To further describe the severity of conditions of the study population, it is useful to

examine the profiles of the municipalities in relation to the schools that are situated in those areas (see Tables 1 and 2). On the basis of these comparisons of basic living conditions and the level of deprivation between school types, it becomes clear that the adolescents from the rural schools live in municipalities with the highest levels of poverty (all the participants live in municipalities with 46.6% poverty or higher), overcrowding (all participants live in municipalities where 65.8% or more live with overcrowding), and earthen floors (all live in municipalities where 67.0% of the people have an earthen floor). The mixed schools, on the other hand, have more moderate conditions with regard to these deprivation variables, although there are relatively higher percentages of homes without toilets or plumbing in the municipalities where the participants live (i.e., 52% of the study sample living in municipalities where at least one-fourth or more of the homes do not have toilets). The participants in the sample from the urban school have extremely low deprivation in the municipalities in which they live. The structural opportunities indicators do not follow the same pattern as the deprivation variables in that the participants from the mixed school tend to experience increased severity of conditions on certain indicators. For example, all the participants who attended the mixed schools lived in areas that had moderate or high percentages of young people not attending school (i.e., 31% or more in any given municipality). In addition, adolescents from the mixed school group lived in municipalities characterized by high levels of idle youth (i.e., 26% or higher) and low levels of educational attainment for young people (less than 10th grade). Participants from the rural schools also had relatively severe conditions in terms of structural opportunities, including living in municipalities with low educational attainment for young adults and experiencing high levels of youth unemployment. However, for levels of idle youth and the percentage of young

adults with a very low wage, adolescents from the rural group did not rate as severely as adolescents from the mixed group. Conversely, the urban participants lived in municipalities with high levels of educational attainment (i.e., 100% of the population has Grade 10 or higher) and extremely low levels of idle youth.

In sum, these analyses show that school types experience different degrees of severity of conditions; however, their conditions are qualitatively different in that deprivation is not a simple, one-dimensional construct. For example, the schools from the area that is mixed (by geographical region and income) have high severity of conditions with regard to the opportunity structure. This group lives in areas that have high levels of young adult unemployment, young adults getting a low wage, and low levels of education and youth school attendance. Although this group does not live with the same severity of conditions in terms of basic needs deprivation as the rural group, they do live in areas that have high numbers of homes without plumbing or toilets, which contributes to the risk of disease and health problems. The adolescents from the rural schools face a different set of severe conditions, specifically, the municipalities in which they live have high levels of poverty, overcrowding, earthen floors, and homes without electricity and low income per capita. Yet adolescents in these municipalities do not have particularly high percentages of idle youth and fall into the moderate category on a few of the other indicators in the structural opportunities index. Notwithstanding, adolescents living in the rural municipalities have high proportions of young people not attending or completing school, which could be because they need to work to help their families. Generally, this group comes from areas that are low in social capital and characterized by low levels of education and very low incomes per capita.

Finally, those students from the urban schools live in municipalities that have low levels of severity with regard to their basic needs and the opportunity structure. The municipalities in which they live have high educational attainment and attendance and income per capita and low levels of poverty and overcrowding, and the vast majority of homes have the basic fixtures.

Family severity of conditions. Four variables included in the survey asked adolescents about the conditions in their homes. These items matched some of the deprivation indicators recorded at the municipal level; however, these variables provide a description of the immediate conditions in which individuals and their families live, while also providing group-level data. When family and group-level data are compared to municipal-level indicators, a complex set of contextual factors arises. Again, students living in the rural area lived in families that were relatively high in poverty, based on the reports of their basic needs. More specifically, 56% of adolescents from the rural area had at least two or more of the deprivation indicators (i.e., live in a home with an earthen floor, no plumbing, no toilet in the home, and no electricity), and another 24% lived in homes with at least one of these factors. Three percent of the adolescents from the rural area lived without electricity, water, or toilets and had earthen floors. In comparison to the municipality-level indicators, the families from the rural group are quite representative. However, two factors outside of the deprivation indicators reveal that the study sample is slightly more privileged than others in their municipality: (a) they already have a higher education than almost the entire population of their municipalities and (b) their families can afford to pay school fees (approximately \$60 per year) to send the children to school and pay for supplies.

Phase 2

Development of a sociopolitical consciousness measure using photovoice: A summary of photovoice results. The photo-assignments for the younger group were pollution in the community, problems in the community, and messages to adults. In the first discussion regarding pollution in the community, the young adolescents discussed their photos and identified many areas of concern: garbage and toxins in the community river, sitting water in street gutters, littering in the community, and issues around the beach area (as shown in Figures 5 and 6).

The adolescents perceived these problems to be caused by numerous things including a lack of garbage cans around the community, the social norm of littering, ill-built gutters, and the throwing of waste into the river by businesses in the community. The adolescents felt that this type of pollution was having an effect on their lives and the community in general. For example, they feared that the garbage and sitting water would create negative perceptions about their community as being dirty, which would result in less tourists and foreigners coming to the area, something the community's economy rests on, "Because people see this mess (garbage etc.) they are going to think that this beach is dirty. Let's not go there, let's go here because it's cleaner...more than anyone else the foreigners because they like clean places."

Adolescents identified several solutions to this issue in the community, one of which was to turn to the local government, "Look, the people from the municipality should come by and see and the people who are polluting....they will give you a fine and you have to clean it up...They do this once a year, but this year they haven't come." Adolescents also believed that they could be part of the solution by organizing a community beach cleanup, "

We should have a clean-up of the whole community, we should have a clean-up campaign. And go clean the rivers...”

The second photo-discussion centered on pictures the young adolescents took regarding problems in the community. Many took more pictures of pollution; however, some took pictures of other issues such as the drunk people on the beach or in the community (see Figure 7). Problems caused by tourists from the city were a major problem identified by the youth. Many times, they encountered people passed out after a night of drinking on the beach during the weekends in the early morning. They felt these people were a threat and also that they interfered with kids’ ability to play on the beach. In addition, they felt that intoxicated individuals contributed to the pollution problem because they always left empty beer bottles and broken glass on the beach and around the community. The teens also noted that this was not just a problem where they lived but that in other countries, there were people who got drunk and caused problems. Furthermore, adolescents did not believe that the local government paid attention to problems in the community and that they wouldn’t listen to young people such as themselves.

The last photo-assignment was more complex: messages to adults. The purpose of this topic was to think about things they wanted to tell important adults in their lives (such as their parents) or in the community in general. Their pictures were mainly of items that held symbolic meaning for them: a soccer ball, surfboards, a backpack, and a dog were chosen for discussion (see Figures 8–11). The backpack is an item that allows kids to carry many important things to school and represents the idea that going to school is extremely important for their futures. The adolescents identified education as the main way to help them support themselves, something they wanted adults to know:

My message is the same [as what the other participant said], it is good to use backpacks for everything, the colors [of this pack] are bright because I think that it is something good that is going to help, because if you didn't study, you would not be able to read or write, . . . and you can't be a professional like a lawyer or something like that, a psychologist, these [backpacks] are important in life because without them we will not have work later.

The adolescents also identified the soccer ball and surfboard as the most important activity-related objects for themselves and other kids in the community. They noted that sports are not only a source of entertainment and fun but are also good for your health and prevent you from getting involved with drugs, gangs, and/or drinking alcohol. They wanted to tell adults with these photos that sports were really important to them and that if the community would provide more equipment and create sports competitions for young people, it would serve to motivate more kids to focus on athletics. The participants also identified sports as something that could also be a career if one were to practice really hard and were motivated, for example, being a professional surfer. The last photo discussed was about the importance of animals, specifically, dogs, in the community. The youth identified dogs as being companions as well as protectors of the house from criminals coming from other communities. They stated that although they felt safe in their community, many tourists visiting and oftentimes they felt that people from the capital city posed a threat to their safety.

Older adolescents decided each photo-assignment and discussed tourism in the community, poverty in the community, and the lives of adolescents. Tourism was the first topic the adolescents discussed, and they addressed both the positive and negative aspects of being a place of tourism. Their pictures included the beach with waves, a restaurant opened by foreigners, and a picture of signs outside a hostel. Although adolescents realized that tourism brought people and more income into the community, sometimes they felt that it was

also a negative thing because more people brought more garbage, and the community was not always big enough to handle the large numbers of people who came on holidays. They suggested that the Ministry of Tourism should make signs to go to other beaches and to encourage people to go to other areas of interest: waterfalls, volcanoes, and the mountains. In addition, the adolescents discussed foreigners buying property and making businesses and what the consequences were for the community, something that is discussed in detail in at least one other topic below.

The second topic concerned poverty in the community, and the adolescents had very strong feelings about this subject. The pictures discussed (see Figures 12–15) were of a family that was very poor, children from another very poor family, and some children in the street that were from the poorer area of the community. One teen stated that he felt a strong connection with these families because his family was very poor when he was younger. The adolescents identified several reasons (presented in the subsequent topics) why poverty existed in their community. They felt that the federal government should help people by way of creating programs or projects for communities, in addition to subsidizing things like uniforms or school supplies for families that were poor. The teens also felt that the local government had a great responsibility to help but that the local government office was only interested in the tourism aspect of the community, not the areas of need. Teens also identified themselves as agents of assistance; they stated that they could help get the community interested in fixing the houses of poor families and perhaps donating materials and resources to help them.

The last session discussed the lives of adolescents, with the idea that if they were going to show others (such as adults) what their lives were like, these were the things that

would be important. The photos discussed were of a young boy in front of a house and two images of sports activities at school. The first image of the young boy was a representation of the future and the participant who took this picture stated that it was important because these children symbolize hope so we need to take care in raising young children. He noted that family was extremely important and that someday this child would probably take care of his parents. Both participants in this discussion noted that they had many other younger people in their lives for whom they needed to model the right things. They identified protective factors such as good parents (role models) and the importance of school and sports in keeping young kids out of gangs and away from drugs and alcohol (Figure 16). Figures 17 and 18 are both of adolescents playing sports (soccer and basketball) at school. Both teens felt that sports were an important part of adolescents' lives because they were a positive influence. One teen said, "[Sports] are good because they help motivate you to play, entertainment for you and your friends, it is good if you play soccer a lot because it keeps you away from drugs and a bad path." Adolescents said that they wanted people to know how important sports are and that the community of adults around them needs to provide more opportunities for young people to play. For example, the adolescents noted that recently, the local government sold the soccer field in the community, a place where many youth had gone every day to play soccer in their free time. The teens identified this as a very negative thing for the local government to do because it took away space for them to practice sports and play. In addition, they said that although the community had tried to fight the decision, money was more important than keeping spaces for children.

Using photovoice to create constructs and items for the measure of sociopolitical consciousness. The data were analyzed by domain and topic; however, sociopolitical

development was the guiding theory in the analysis. Information and thought processes were examined if they fit into the concepts of critical consciousness and oppression, social responsibility, sociopolitical awareness (community and societal level), action or solutions, and efficacy regarding issues in the community or larger society (refer to Table 4 for sources in which items were drawn from).

Sociopolitical awareness. The younger participants were very aware of problems and issues in their community and were very straightforward in their identification of such barriers. Their thinking was multidimensional in the sense that they could easily identify how problems affected them at the individual level but also the effects on the larger community. For example, pollution was seen as affecting themselves and their families (i.e., sitting water can lead to sickness) and the community (tourists' negative perceptions may economically hurt the community). The younger adolescents were aware of the political entities (i.e the alcaldía) and things that go on outside of the community in the municipality. For example, this group was aware of events in surrounding communities, "In [another community] during the last Saturday lots of the kids went to the beach and cleaned all the plastic," while also understanding areas of the country that experience violence, "Here yes (I feel safe), because this community doesn't have gangs, it is united, no thieves, only if they come from San Salvador."

Both the older and younger adolescents knew about events in the community (such as selling the local soccer field) and were aware of local government played:

Participant 1: [The community needs] more things like sport or like [soccer] tournaments, not to sell the soccer fields.

Participant 2: This affects young people.

Facilitator 1: The [community] soccer field was sold, there isn't a field here anymore...my brother and I were the last generation to play there."

Facilitator 2: Soccer is really important and having a place close by to play is important, but now it is gone?

Participant 1: Because it was the community's field, it is bad because nobody did anything [to stop it from being sold].

Facilitator 1: Some tried, but it was worth too much money.

Participant 1: Oh yeah, those on the bottom yes, but nobody in the alcaldía tried.

Some parts of this discussion also lent itself to other concepts such as oppression and inequality that emerged and are discussed in the following section.

It was less clear if the younger adolescents were aware of national events as they did not specifically talk about them in their discussions, however, they were aware of events in the local community. Older adolescents demonstrated some knowledge about recent government policy (subsidizing school uniforms was something that had recently occurred) and that the federal government did not have enough social programs to assist people. As a result of these discussions the items for this construct of the measure reflect the differences between *community* and local government (the alcaldía). The community is a smaller geographical area in which people live, whereas the local government and municipality is a larger areas that is governed by a structured elected official and his/her office. Several items were drawn from Moley et al (2002) concept of 'political awareness' and a few items were added so that the measure reflected the distinction between *community* and local area/municipality (i.e. "I am aware of the events in my local area (municipality)" and, "I understand the issues facing the community"). One item from the IEA Civic Study questionnaire section on "The Political System" (Tourney-Purta et al, 2002) was used to tap into adolescents' perceptions of their ability to understand political issues. A total of six items drawn from existing measures allowed for the construct "Sociopolitical Awareness" to measure adolescents' understanding of both political and social issues/events. Based on the photovoice findings, political and social aspects of the community were quite often

intertwined rather than mutually exclusive and for this reason this construct incorporated items from both concepts.

Opportunity, equality, and justice. Critical consciousness and oppression were concepts that guided the analysis of the photo-discussions. Both emerged with primarily the older group and from the second session onward. In discussing the topic of tourism in the community the older teens primarily focused solely on economic gains that benefited the community and some individuals (i.e. business owners) more than others. When probed to think more critically about some of the negative effects of tourism, the adolescents noted several things that demonstrated an understanding of how social forces affect their lives. For example, they noted that more tourists also brought more foreign ownership and investment, which was funneling money to outside sources, not back into the community. They also noted that places owned by foreigners tended to be more expensive, more exclusive, and less respectful of local norms. The teens had mixed feelings toward the influence foreigners have on their community's culture. A 17-year-old girl noted that "because the majority of the owners of the restaurants and hotels were Salvadoran they do not lose their culture because they have many years being there." In contrast, one 17-year-old male participant thought that because the area was growing little by little, culture was going to be lost because as businesses and people become more economically advantaged, they change. Both reactions reveal that older adolescents are analyzing the economic and social forces brought by tourism.

In the second session, the teens were highly critical of the local and federal governments in their efforts to combat poverty on both community and societal levels. One teen stated,

The *alcaldía* [local government] is not worried [about the poverty] but people say, “Yes we need help but they [local government] do not come here.” And in reality we have to tell them and talk with them about the poverty [in the community] although we may be embarrassed, we have to talk with them and tell them our concerns.

Adolescents’ reactions to poverty revealed their understanding of inequality, in addition to understanding difficulties some people in the community faced. When asked how they felt about a photo (see photo #) and the poverty it represented participants responded:

Participant 1: I feel that it is bad because like I said of [Name of Municipality], the *alcaldía* doesn’t see this problem. They see the problems they have and nothing more. They don’t come and see how this family lives, the state of their house and their things.

Participant 2: Yes, it is really difficult to see these people that don’t have anything to eat, it is hard for them to buy things, their shoes and their clothes, but they don’t have work and it is difficult to take care of the children they have because in the majority of cases, the poor families have a lot of children and it is even harder to maintain the family. And for the people that have sufficient means and enough money, they don’t pay attention [to poor families] because they live in their world, the world of money. For this reason, it is difficult to see the poor families.

This thinking process is evidence that the older teens understood and were aware of the community’s issue of poverty and that although it may be difficult to ask for help, the local government needed to be made aware that families in its area of responsibility were suffering. When questioned about the causes of poverty in the community and society, the adolescents thought there were many factors, one being broken families, in which alcoholism or infidelity leaves one parent (usually the mother) taking care of several children. The teens also acknowledged poverty as a cycle and that the lack of an opportunity for good education made it so that poor children did not think about their future and would end up getting married early and having children prematurely.

Although there was evidence that the older adolescents understood that people, namely, the economically marginalized, were oppressed, they did not explicitly state this. It was also evident during the discussions that adolescents’ language demonstrated an

understanding of oppression , for example adolescent saying the people in the community are “below” those in the local government and another participant saying that wealthy people live in their own “world of money” and cannot relate to those in poverty. In one discussion with the older group, after talking about the local government helping the community, participants were asked if they thought the local government would listen if they went to talk with them about the problems in the community. The general response was that the local government might listen but would not give them the answer or help they wanted. When asked if it was because they were young people, one participant said, “Maybe because we are young or maybe because we are not on the same level as them, so to speak, or because only the people with more, how do I say...people that have things, they only like to help those people.” Participants went on to say that helping people with basics such as paying the electricity bill or adjusting the price of food for poor families was something the local government could do to alleviate poverty.

Participants spoke about issues related to justice in the context of balancing the distribution of wealth by giving poor people in the community free education and by subsidizing basic needs.

Items for this construct were taken from Moely et al.’s (2002) constructs measuring social justice attitudes to examine adolescents’ perceptions of justice (i.e. It is important that equal opportunity be available to all people). Several items were taken from the IEA instrument to measure perceptions about equality for different groups, including those who are poor, women, and people of indigenous origin. To measure adolescents’ understanding of the opportunity, justice, and equality as it more generally represented their world view and critical consciousness, six items were included from the seven-item Global Belief in a Just

World Scale (Lipkus, 1991) and an original item was created to supplement this scale and incorporate local context (i.e. In Salvadoran society there is not much oppression or inequality). The Global Belief in a Just World Scale was also used in Watts and Guessous's (2006) work as a proxy measure for social analysis, which adds credibility to the use of these items in the current study. Based on the Photovoice discussions, poverty was an issue that was very visible to adolescents, two items were included from Moley's (2002) CASQ measure that examined adolescents attitudes towards the poor (i.e "People are poor because they choose to be poor").

Societal responsibility. In terms of societal responsibility, older adolescents felt that the government was the only institution that could really change the pervasiveness of poverty in the country. Both the younger and older groups revealed much information about societal responsibility, especially at the community and local government levels.

In the older group, much of the discussion that yielded information about societal responsibility centered around poverty but also around adolescents' lives. When asked what can be done to stop poverty, one participant said,

It is difficult with poverty, you can't. For me it would be to have a good government. This is the only weapon, to have a good government is a very powerful weapon, one with a lot of money. . . . For me the only thing that can stop poverty is the government. . . . In other countries the government helps people, for example in Germany they help single mothers.

Younger adolescents also identified that the local government (and police) were at least partly responsible for helping solve problems related to pollution and garbage in the community. One participant said, "Look, the people from the local government [municipality] should come and see people who have garbage and waste . . . and give them a fine so they have to clean it." The adolescents were quick to state that the local government

needed to play a role in finding solutions and that the police could help them enforce rules by issuing fines. They noted that garbage cans should be placed throughout the community so that people can throw trash in them. In addition, the adolescents included themselves and the community as responsible for being a part of the solution to the pollution problem, stating that they should get together with the other kids in the community and organize a beach- or community-cleaning campaign.

The items used to measure societal responsibility in the quantitative measure were original items. The items created reflected the photovoice data as they asked adolescents about their perceptions of government or community entities and how responsible these institutions are for helping poor members of society.

Methods of change and action. Methods of change and action refer to the ways in which adolescents perceive change and action as taking place to solve issues in society and the community. This concept emerged in both the younger and older adolescent groups.

Both the older and younger groups addressed ways in which community issues could be solved. The younger group included various levels in their identification of ways to change something that was negatively affecting the community. As previously mentioned, the younger group identified the local government, the police, the community, and themselves as having roles in changing the pollution problem in the community. Their willingness to participate and take action as young people in their community was significant; they thought that organizing a campaign was the best way to get people involved and thinking about the issue of garbage.

The older group also identified ways to improve aspects of community life, specifically, by going to the local government and communicating problems, but also that the

community needed to take action together. In the same vein, older adolescents saw themselves as part of the solution by taking action, one participant suggesting that a group of older adolescents should have a party for the poorer kids in the community and donate items they may need.

Items for this concept were drawn primarily from Moley's (2002) CASQ measure, but reflected the methods of change adolescents had spoken about in the photovoice discussions. For example, both groups tended to favor action types of methods so items such as, "We need to make reforms within the current system to change our communities," and "In order to improve social problems we need to completely reconstruct society." However, other items were included that represented other methods of change such as letting problems solve themselves in time and the need to change people's attitudes. Including a variety of methods of change allowed for the possibility there were other perspectives different than just those represented in the photovoice findings.

Efficacy. The younger group demonstrated relatively high levels of self- and collective (community level) efficacy in solving the pollution issue and other issues that faced the community; however, in terms of efficacy of the local government to solve problems in the community, they were not as confident. During the discussion, when the younger teens were asked if they thought the local government would help with the issues in the community, they answered doubtfully. This brought up several interesting points: One teen noted that if we were to bring the pictures from the project to the office of the local government representative, perhaps we could show them. However, the other teens thought that the representative would not listen because they were young people and that perhaps if they went with adults, there would be more possibility of being heard. Another teen thought

that many politicians drank a lot and were really only concerned with people paying taxes, not with the well-being of the community.

Adolescents in this group had mixed feelings about the efficacy of the federal and local governments, specifically, about their ability to change poverty. Although one participant said that the government was the most powerful weapon, she also stated that she felt that the government could only do projects in certain areas to help alleviate poverty in many parts of the country. She also felt that talking to the local government may be effective in that they will listen, but she was doubtful that their final response would be favorable in terms of helping people in poverty. On the other hand, another participant said that he had confidence in the recently elected national government and president and that some departments (not his) were taking steps toward change.

Older adolescents had revealed relatively high levels of self- and community efficacy in solving issues or helping in the community. This was apparent in the discussions on poverty and adolescents' lives but was less salient in the tourism conversation. Teens saw themselves as capable of talking with the government or the local community comité or taking action themselves by organizing things in the community.

Three items from Moely and colleagues (2002) CASQ instrument were used to examine individuals' perceptions of their ability to solve problems. In addition, several items measured the confidence adolescents had in community and local government's efficacy in solving problems (i.e. "I am confident my local government listens to and understands people in the area," and "My community is good at working together to solve problems we face (such as pollution, crime, etc).") These items reflected adolescents' conversations about how local government and community institutions were regarding concerns in the area.

Quantitative measure. To examine the quantitative measure of sociopolitical development, the 39 items consisting of five proposed constructs were subjected to principal components analysis (PCA) using SPSS version 17. Prior to performing the PCA, the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of .3 or above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was .84, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant. An initial PCA revealed that the items loaded onto nine components, however, several items were removed and the analysis rerun to force a seven factor loading (see Table 10). Eigenvalues higher than 1.0 were maintained, and the seven components made up 54.70% of the variance, with Component 1 accounting for 17.58%, Component 2 for 10.43%, Component 3 for 7.06%, Component 4 for 5.92%, Component 5 for 5.14%, Component 6 for 4.62%, Component 7 for 3.96% of the overall variance. Reliability checks were subsequently run on each set of items together to examine their strengths as subscales of sociopolitical consciousness.

The seven components. Component 1 was consistent with the proposed construct from the qualitative findings measuring sociopolitical awareness. This component consisted of six items that asked adolescents how aware they perceived themselves to be regarding current national and local events, including issues in their communities. This component remained under the name "sociopolitical awareness" and proved to have good reliability ($\alpha = .81$).

Component 2 was categorized previously as opportunity, inequality, and justice based on the themes from the qualitative data; however, the factor analysis revealed a distinct construct that involved all the items from the Global Belief in a Just World subscale (Lipkus, 1991) and one other item that also loaded on the same component: "In Salvadoran society

there is not much oppression or inequality.” This item was added to the original Global Belief in a Just World subscale, revealing that these items were in fact measuring the extent to which adolescents believed society was just and equal and the system of rewards fair. This component maintained the name “global belief in a just world” and had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .78$). Although Items 20 and 21 were initially thought to have been included in this construct, they loaded on Component 9.

Component 3 comprised four items that were initially intended to measure societal responsibility. This construct asked who was responsible for helping poor people such as the federal government, the local government, or the community. All these items remained together and proved to have good reliability ($\alpha = .82$). This factor was named “societal responsibility.”

Component 4 comprised five items that loaded together, proving to be a separate construct from their initial placement under the opportunity, equality, and justice theme. These items measured the extent to which adolescents believed that all people deserve the same rights (i.e., “Poor people deserve the same rights as everyone else”) and whether they perceived people to be equal (i.e., “Men and women are the same in most aspects”). Given the strong loading on this component, “equality” became the label for this variable, which proved to be a reliable measure ($\alpha = .76$).

Component 5 consisted of five items that were initially intended to measure methods of change. Item 28 was also intended to measure methods of change; however, it did not load with the other items, which appeared to be measuring active types of change (i.e., reform, reconstruction of society) rather than taking no action at all. Thus Item 28 was not

included in the final variable, which was labeled “action-oriented change.” Reliability for this subscale was acceptable ($\alpha = .71$).

Component 6 consisted of three items that examined the extent to which adolescents perceived themselves and their communities to be able to solve problems or issues in the community. These items (in combination with Items 34–36) were intended to measure efficacy; however, the factor analysis revealed that efficacy regarding the community was a different construct altogether, and this component was labeled “community efficacy.” Reliability of this subscale was acceptable ($\alpha = .69$).

Component 7 included three items that were originally intended to measure overall efficacy; however, distinct constructs emerged, and these items were labeled “self-efficacy” as they were measuring individuals’ ability to solve problems and think analytically and empathetically. This construct had an acceptable Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = .68$).

There were several items that were not used in the final construction of seven variables measuring sociopolitical development. Items 20 and 21 loaded on the eighth component and appeared to be measuring victim blaming (the extent to which someone blames the poor for their fate). However, the reliability score for these two items together was unacceptable ($\alpha = .54$), and this notion of victim blaming had not emerged as a theme from the qualitative findings. Finally, Items 22 and 23 were not included in any of the major constructs because they did not appear to be measuring one specific concept.

Phase 3

The primary aim of this phase of the research was to understand the role of context, specifically, the severity of conditions in which adolescents, with their collective identities,

perceptions about their communities, constructs of sociopolitical consciousness, and civic attitudes and skills.

Assessing collective identities: Socioeconomic. Socioeconomic identity differed slightly in terms of self-categorization: Adolescents from the rural area categorized themselves mainly as low income (58%) and middle income (40%), and adolescents from the mixed area categorized themselves similarly as low income (37%) and middle income (61%). Adolescents from the urban areas rated themselves as middle income (48%) and high income (52%). Adolescents generally saw themselves as typical members of their socioeconomic identity group, with adolescents from the rural area feeling this more strongly (69%) than the other two groups (mixed group 58%; urban group 53%) (see Appendix E for graphic).

Assessing collective identities: Geographical. Adolescents from this study sample were consistent in that they categorized themselves as belonging to the group that matched the area type. For example, 83% of the participants at the rural school saw themselves as belonging to the rural collective identity. The participants at the urban school identified themselves as urban (97%) in their collective identity group. Finally, the mixed group was a true combination of adolescents who identified themselves as rural (45%), urban (13%), and coastal (42%). The majority of adolescents also saw themselves as typical members of the group with which they identified, with the majority of mixed and rural adolescents (92% and 85%, respectively) feeling this way. Adolescents from the urban school also rated themselves as typical (75%); however, a large percentage chose the neutral answer (22%). Finally, the majority of adolescents said that they would be willing to help their geographical group, with adolescents from the rural group agreeing (73%) the most in comparison to the

urban (68%) and the mixed (64%) groups. Table 11 provides a summary of collective identity constructs and items. (see Appendix E for graphic).

Research Questions

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 is addressed in the following and is repeated here for ease.

R1: To what extent does the severity of conditions in which adolescents live influence collective identity and psychological sense of community?

H1.1: *Adolescents with more severe environmental conditions are expected to have higher levels of collective identification and psychological sense of community with their chosen social categories and communities.*

A univariate general linear model (GLM) that consisted of a multifactorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare estimated means was conducted to examine the relationship of severity of conditions (based on school type) and PSOC, while controlling for family poverty and sex. Separate analyses were run for each PSOC subscale, and it was found that school type was a significant predictor for all four constructs (see Table 12 for a summary of these results).

Psychological sense of community: Support. The model included school type, family poverty, sex, and age as covariates, in relation to adolescents' perceptions of community support, $F(6, 619) = 9.86, p = .000$, accounting for 8.7% of the variance. When controlling for sex and family poverty, school type was a significant predictor of community support, $F(2, 619) = 21.94, p = .000$. Age, which was included as a covariate, was also a significant predictor of perceptions of community support among adolescents, with younger adolescents aged 14 and 15 years reporting higher levels of community support. There were

also significant estimated mean differences among school types, with the rural school ($M = 16.92, SE = .36$) and the mixed school ($M = 16.95, SE = .38$) rating their communities as more supportive than the urban school ($M = 13.48, SE = .46$). On the basis of these findings, the hypothesis that adolescents in more severe conditions have higher levels of PSOC, specifically, support in their community, is accurate.

Psychological sense of community: Safety. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, and family poverty was found to be significant for adolescents' perceptions of safety in the community $F(6, 617) = 20.37, p = .000$, accounting for 16.5% of the overall variance. School type was a significant predictor of perceptions of safety after controlling for sex and family poverty $F(2, 617) = 39.90, p = .000$. Sex was also found to be a unique predictor of perceptions of safety in the community $F(1, 617) = 7.74, p = .006$. Estimated marginal means comparisons reveal that adolescents all three schools had significantly different perceptions of safety in their communities. Adolescents in the urban school had significantly higher perceptions of safety in the community ($M = 20.82, SE = .39$) than both the rural ($M = 19.60, SE = .31$) and mixed schools ($M = 16.86, SE = .32$). There was also a significant difference between the adolescents at the mixed school with the rural and urban group as they perceived their community as less safe. These findings are inconsistent with the hypothesis that severity of conditions is associated with a higher sense of community for this particular construct, both moderate and severe conditions groups perceive their communities as much less safe.

Psychological sense of community: Activity. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type) and activity in the community was found to be significant, $F(6, 621) = 17.25, p = .000$, accounting for 14.3% of the total variance. More specifically, school

type was found to be a significant predictor after controlling for sex and family poverty, $F(2, 621) = 35.96, p = .000$, in the neighborhood. In addition, age was found to be an important predictor of the perceptions of activity in the community, $F(1, 621) = 14.97, p = .000$, with younger adolescents rating higher levels of activity. A comparison of estimated marginal means revealed that adolescents in the rural and mixed areas ($M = 11.84, SE = .26$ and $M = 11.62, SE = .27$, respectively) perceived higher levels of community activity for young people than did adolescents in the urban area ($M = 8.30, SE = .33$). This confirms the hypothesis that adolescents in moderate and severe conditions have a higher sense of community with regard to activities for young people in their respective communities.

Psychological sense of community: Friendships. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type) was found to be significant for adolescents' perceptions of friendship in the community, $F(6, 617) = 25.99, p = .000$, accounting for 20.2% of the variance. School type was a significant predictor of friendship in the community after controlling for family poverty and sex, $F(2, 617) = 46.57, p = .000$. Family poverty did not prove to be a significant predictor in the model, $F(2, 617) = 3.45, p = .68$. On examination of the estimated marginal means, it was revealed that those adolescents in the rural and mixed schools rated friendships significantly higher ($M = 13.80, SE = .23$ and $M = 12.54, SE = .25$, respectively) than did those from the urban school ($M = 10.02, SE = .30$). These results are also consistent with the hypothesis that adolescents living in more severe conditions have a higher sense of community with regard to friendships in their communities.

Collective identity: Geographical. The model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age was significant for collective geographical identity, $F(6, 618) = 9.22, p = .000$, and accounted for 8.2% of the total variance. School

type was a significant predictor of geographical identity, $F(2, 618) = 8.81, p = .000$, after controlling for sex, family poverty, and age. In addition, sex was also shown to be a unique predictor of the importance of geographical identity when all other factors were held constant, $F(2, 618) = 18.03, p = .000$. Estimated marginal means revealed that all three groups differed significantly regarding the importance of geographical collective identity. Adolescents from the urban school rated geographical identity as less important ($M = 6.18, SE = .17$) than did those participants from the mixed school ($M = 6.38, SE = .14$) and the rural school ($M = 7.06, SE = .13$). The hypothesis was partially supported in that both the high and moderately severe conditions groups had higher levels of geographical collective identity importance; however, post hoc analysis revealed that the rural group rated the importance of this identity significantly higher than the moderately severe conditions group. Finally, an additional t test confirmed that girls rated geographical identity ($M = 6.83, SE = .11$) as significantly more important than did boys ($M = 6.25, SE = .10$).

Collective identity: Socioeconomic. The model examining severity of conditions, sex, family poverty, and age was significant in association with the importance of socioeconomic collective identity, $F(6, 624) = 4.75, p = .000$, accounting for 4.4% of the total variance. Both school type, $F(2, 624) = 7.11, p = .001$, and sex, $F(1, 624) = 4.92, p = .027$, were significant predictors of the importance of collective identity. A comparison of estimated marginal means revealed that those students at the urban school rated their socioeconomic identity as least important (48% identified themselves as middle class, 52% as high income; $M = 5.46, SE = .19$). The mixed-school students rated their socioeconomic identity as slightly less important (37% identified themselves as low income, 61% as middle income; $M = 6.08, SE = .16$) than those from the rural school (58% identified themselves as

low income, 40% as middle income; $M = 6.41$, $SE = .15$). Pairwise comparisons revealed that adolescents from the mixed and rural schools rated their socioeconomic collective identities to be significantly more important than those in the urban school, which supports the hypothesis that moderate and high levels of severity are associated with a higher sense of collective identity. Additionally, girls rated the importance of socioeconomic identity as significantly more important ($M = 6.16$, $SE = .13$) than did boys ($M = 5.81$, $SE = .12$).

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 is addressed in the following and is repeated here for ease.

R2: To what extent do different levels in the severity of conditions, collective identity, and psychological sense of community predict civic attitudes and skills?

H2.1.: *Adolescents experiencing the moderate and severe conditions are expected to have attitudes and perceptions that indicate a propensity for political participation; however, trust in government institutions is anticipated to be relatively low.*

Univariate GLMs were used to perform a factorial ANOVA analysis that examined the extent to which severity of conditions significantly predicted civic attitudes and skills, after controlling for sex and family poverty.

Perceptions of the government (attitudes toward the nation). The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, and family poverty was significant, $F(6, 622) = 7.84$, $p = .000$, accounting for 7.0% of the total variance. Among these variables, school type was the only significant predictor of perceptions of the government, $F(2, 622) = 9.16$, $p = .000$, when controlling for both family poverty and sex. A comparison of means

showed that adolescents from the rural school had the most positive perceptions of the government ($M = 16.84$, $SE = .31$), with the mixed school only slightly (not significantly) lower ($M = 15.94$, $SE = .34$). Adolescents at the urban school differed significantly ($M = 14.23$, $SE = .41$) in comparison to the adolescents at the rural and mixed schools. The results of these analyses support the hypothesis that adolescents living in the moderate and severe conditions areas are more likely to have positive perceptions of the government.

Future participation. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, and family poverty was significant, $F(6, 601) = 4.78$, $p = .000$, accounting for a total of 4.6% of the variance. School type was a significant predictor for future participation in civic activities, $F(2, 601) = 8.43$, $p = .000$. A comparison of the estimated marginal means showed that adolescents at the urban school perceived themselves as less likely to participate in future civic activities ($M = 18.84$, $SE = .40$) compared to adolescents from the mixed ($M = 19.66$, $SE = .34$) and rural schools ($M = 21.02$, $SE = .32$). However, pairwise comparisons revealed that the adolescents from the urban and mixed groups did not differ significantly from each other in their perceptions about future participation in civic activities, whereas both these groups differed from adolescents in the rural group, who saw themselves as significantly more likely to participate in the future.

Trust in societal institutions. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, and family poverty with age as a covariate was significant, $F(6, 565) = 3.57$, $p = .002$. However, none of these variables was a significant predictor of trust in societal institutions. Alternate models revealed that school type and family poverty were both significant predictors of trust in societal institutions when they were entered independently (controlling for sex), suggesting that these two factors share a significant

amount of variance in relation to trust in societal institutions. However, there were still significant differences between groups based on a comparison of means. Post hoc analysis revealed that adolescents from the urban school had significantly higher levels of trust in societal institutions ($M = 29.50, SE = .70$) than adolescents from the rural school ($M = 29.18, SE = .41$) and the mixed school ($M = 27.73, SE = .70$). These findings partially support the hypothesis because school type was not a strong predictor of trust in the initial model. However, there were significant differences between groups that showed that moderate and severe conditions groups had significantly less trust in societal institutions than the least severe group.

Democratic knowledge. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, and family poverty with age as a covariate was significant, $F(6, 595) = 15.31, p = .000$. School type was a significant predictor of democratic knowledge, after holding all other variables constant, $F(2, 595) = 9.87, p = .000$. A comparison of means and a post hoc analysis revealed that adolescents from the urban school ($M = 4.36, SE = .15$) had significantly higher knowledge about democracies in comparison to adolescents from the mixed ($M = 3.66, SE = .12$) and rural schools ($M = 3.56, SE = .11$). There were no significant differences between adolescents' democratic knowledge at the mixed and rural schools. These findings do not support the hypothesis that moderate and severe conditions groups would have lower scores of democratic knowledge than those adolescents at the urban school.

H2.2 Adolescents with higher levels of collective identity and sense of community are expected to have attitudes and perceptions that indicate a propensity for political participation.

Collective identity, psychological sense of community, and civic skills and attitudes.

Socioeconomic identity (importance) was a significant predictor of democratic knowledge $F(1, 559) = 16.82, p = .000$, and trust in societal institutions, $F(1, 538) = 5.35, p = .021$.

Adolescents with higher socioeconomic identity importance had lower scores on democratic knowledge ($M = 3.70, SE = .11$) compared to those adolescents with lower socioeconomic identity importance ($M = 4.27, SE = .11$). However, adolescents' trust in societal institutions was higher for those adolescents who felt that socioeconomic identity was really important ($M = 29.07, SE = .50$) versus those adolescents who did not see it as important ($M = 27.57, SE = .53$). Finally, geographical identity importance was a significant predictor of future participation in civic activities, $F(1, 567) = 5.95, p = .015$. Those adolescents with higher geographical identity importance had rated themselves as more likely to participate in the future ($M = 20.05, SE = .24$) compared to adolescents who thought it was less important ($M = 18.99, SE = .37$).

Psychological sense of community and civic skills and attitudes. Models that included the PSOC subscales, family poverty, school type, sex, and age were examined with each of the civic skills and attitudes constructs. Community support was found to be a strong predictor of perceptions of the government, $F(1, 551) = 11.76, p = .001$, future participation, $F(1, 535) = 6.75, p = .010$, and trust in societal institutions, $F(1, 507) = 20.88, p = .000$, when all other factors were held constant. Adolescents with higher community support had more positive perceptions of the government ($M = 15.66, SE = .41$) than those with lower community support ($M = 14.22, SE = .43$), and the same differences were observed for future participation ($M = 19.67, SE = .42$ and $M = 18.59, SE = .43$, respectively). In addition,

adolescents with higher levels of perceived community support also had higher levels of trust in societal institutions ($M = 29.17, SE = .68$) compared to those adolescents with less perceived support ($M = 26.02, SE = .72$). Finally, community activity was also a predictor of democratic knowledge, $F(1, 525) = 5.43, p = .020$. Adolescents with low perceptions of activities in the community had higher democratic knowledge ($M = 4.10, SE = .16$) than those with perceptions that there were high numbers of activities in the community ($M = 3.74, SE = .16$).

Research Question 3. Research Question 3 is addressed in the following and is repeated here for ease.

R3: To what extent does sociopolitical development differ according to severity of conditions, collective identity, and psychological sense of community?

H3.1: *Adolescents living in moderately severe and severe conditions are hypothesized to have a higher level sociopolitical development when compared to adolescents living in the least severe conditions.*

Sociopolitical consciousness. To examine the extent to which the constructs of sociopolitical consciousness differ based on severity of conditions, a series of univariate GLMs was conducted to explore associations and estimated means.

Sociopolitical awareness. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age as a covariate was significant, $F(6, 591) = 7.61, p = .000$, accounting for 7.2% of the total variance. School type was a significant predictor of sociopolitical awareness when controlling for sex and family poverty, $F(2, 591) = 9.58, p = .000$. Estimated marginal means revealed that adolescents from the urban school perceived themselves as being significantly more socially and politically aware ($M = 22.47, SE = .44$)

than adolescents from the mixed school ($M = 20.85$, $SE = .37$) or the rural school ($M = 19.85$, $SE = .35$). Post hoc tests revealed that although there were between-group differences for the urban school with the rural and mixed schools, adolescents from the rural and mixed schools did not significantly differ in how sociopolitically aware they perceived themselves to be. These analyses do not support the hypothesis that it is in fact the urban group, which is living in the least severe conditions, that saw themselves as more sociopolitically aware.

Global belief in a just world. The model that included severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age as a covariate was significant, $F(6, 588) = 7.61$, $p = .000$, accounting for 6.9% of the variance. School type was found to be a significant predictor of global belief in a just world when sex and family poverty were held constant, $F(2, 588) = 15.05$, $p = .000$. Further analysis revealed that there were significant differences in mean scores between adolescents from the mixed and rural schools and those adolescents at the urban school. Adolescents from the mixed school had the highest belief in a just world ($M = 24.17$, $SE = .50$), and adolescents from the rural school had similar (not significantly different) scores ($M = 23.40$, $SE = .47$). Adolescents from the urban group differed significantly from both other groups in that they did not believe as strongly in a just world ($M = 20.26$, $SE = .50$).

Equality. The model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age with attitudes toward equality was significant, $F(6, 608) = 2.69$, $p = .001$, accounting for 2.6% of the variance. School type was a significant predictor for attitudes about equality, $F(2, 608) = 7.36$, $p = .000$. A comparison of the estimated marginal means revealed that there were differences between groups, specifically, that adolescents from the mixed schools had significantly stronger attitudes regarding equality in society ($M = 22.21$,

$SE = .27$) than students from the urban ($M = 21.15, SE = .33$) and rural schools ($M = 20.83, SE = .25$). These findings partially support the hypothesis that moderately severe conditions generate attitudes favoring equality but severe conditions do not.

Societal responsibility. The model that examined severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age with societal responsibility was not significant, $F(6, 617) = 1.52, p = .170$. Main effects in the model were observed; however, sex was the only factor that significantly predicted societal responsibility, $F(6, 617) = 4.70, p = .03$. A t test revealed that there were not significant differences in mean scores for boys and girls in the study sample, $F(1, 648) = 2.84, p = .092$ ($M = 14.13, SE = .20$ and $M = 14.63, SE = .19$, respectively).

Action-oriented change. The overall model examining the effect of severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age on action-oriented change was not significant, $F(6, 620) = 1.92, p = .08$. However, school type was still a significant predictor of action-oriented change, $F(2, 620) = 4.41, p = .01$. A comparison of means revealed that adolescents from the urban school ($M = 17.20, SE = .36$) and adolescents from the rural school ($M = 17.23, SE = .27$) favored an action-oriented approach less than adolescents from the mixed school. Adolescents from the mixed school differed significantly ($M = 18.26, SE = .27$), favoring an action-oriented method of social change, in comparison to the adolescents from the urban and rural schools. The results of these analyses only partially support the hypothesis that adolescents from moderate and severe conditions have higher levels of sociopolitical consciousness, in this case, if they favor active methods of social change. The moderately severe conditions group was significantly higher than the least severe conditions

group; however, the high-severity group did not significantly differ from the other two groups.

Community efficacy. The model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age as a covariate and their effect on community efficacy was significant, $F(6, 619) = 14.51, p = .000$, accounting for 12.3% of the total variance. School type was a significant predictor of community efficacy, $F(2, 619) = 21.00, p = .000$. A comparison of means revealed that adolescents from the rural ($M = 10.52, SE = .19$) and mixed schools ($M = 10.24, SE = .21$) perceived their communities as more effective than adolescents from the urban school ($M = 8.52, SE = .27$). These findings support the hypothesis that the moderate and severe conditions groups would have higher levels of sociopolitical consciousness, specifically, community efficacy, in comparison to the least severe conditions group.

Self-efficacy. The overall model examining severity of conditions (school type), sex, family poverty, and age as a covariate and the influence on self-efficacy was significant, $F(6, 616) = 4.93, p = .000$, accounting for 4.6% of the variance. School type was found to be a significant predictor of self-efficacy, $F(2, 616) = 3.43, p = .033$. A comparison of means revealed that there were significant differences between adolescents from the urban school and those from the rural and mixed schools. Adolescents from the urban school had significantly higher perceptions of self-efficacy ($M = 11.21, SE = .23$) than adolescents from the rural ($M = 10.58, SE = .18$) and mixed schools ($M = 10.49, SE = .19$). These findings do not support the hypothesis that moderate and severe conditions groups have higher levels of sociopolitical consciousness with regard to their self-efficacy.

H3.2: *Adolescents with higher levels of collective identity and psychological sense of community are hypothesized to have a higher level of sociopolitical development.*

Univariate GLM factorial ANOVA models were conducted with both collective identity constructs (socioeconomic identity importance, geographic identity importance) and PSOC constructs (support, safety, activity, friendship) with each of the (seven) sociopolitical consciousness constructs. In each model, school type, family poverty, sex, and age were held constant to examine unique relationships between collective identity or PSOC and sociopolitical consciousness. A total of 14 models were conducted; however, only 5 models showed significant relationships. Neither socioeconomic nor geographical collective identity (importance) predicted sociopolitical awareness, equality, societal responsibility, community efficacy, self-efficacy, or action-oriented change. However, socioeconomic identity did predict the (global) belief in a just world.

Socioeconomic collective identity (importance) and the global belief in a just world.

The overall model was significant, $F = (8, 560) = 7.66, p = .000$, accounting for 9.9% of the variance, with both school type and socioeconomic identity (importance) revealing significant associations. With all variables held constant, socioeconomic collective identity was significantly associated with the belief in a just world, $F = (1, 560) = 9.44, p = .002$. Means comparisons confirmed the hypothesis that adolescents with a higher sense of collective identity also have a stronger belief that the world is a fair and just place ($M = 22.81, SE = .42$) compared to those adolescents with lower levels of collective identity ($M = 21.10, SE = .45$). However, given that the other six models examining the relationship

between collective identity and sociopolitical consciousness were not significant, the hypothesis is only partially supported.

Psychological sense of community constructs and sociopolitical consciousness.

Each model included the four PSOC constructs and kept school type, sex, family poverty, and age constant. As previously mentioned, not all the models testing this hypothesis were significant; in fact, only three models revealed a significant relationship. PSOC did not predict societal responsibility, action-oriented change attitudes, self-efficacy, or the belief in a just world; however, significant associations were found with sociopolitical awareness, attitudes about equality, and perceptions of community efficacy.

Community support was significantly associated with sociopolitical awareness when all other variables were held constant, $F = (1, 529) = 7.00, p = .008$. A means comparison revealed that adolescents with high levels of perceived support in the community also rated themselves as more sociopolitically aware ($M = 21.33, SE = .43$) compared to those adolescents with low perceived community support ($M = 20.14, SE = .45$). These findings support the hypothesis that adolescents with a positive sense of community, in this case, support, also have higher levels of sociopolitical consciousness (awareness). This finding also supports the hypothesis with high levels of sense of community being linked with sociopolitical awareness.

Community safety was significantly associated with equality, after controlling for sex, family poverty, school type, and age, $F = (1, 537) = 5.54, p = .019$. Adolescents with strong perceptions of safety in their communities also had perceptions that favored equality ($M = 21.36, SE = .23$) compared to adolescents with a low sense of safety in their communities ($M = 20.21, SE = .48$).

The final significant model revealed that community support, $F = (1, 546) = 11.36, p = .001$, friendships, $F = (1, 546) = 6.79, p = .009$, and activity, $F = (1, 546) = 5.48, p = .020$, in the community were significantly associated with the sociopolitical construct of community efficacy. Adolescents with higher levels of community support perceived their communities as effective ($M = 9.56, SE = .24$) compared to those adolescents with low perceptions of community support ($M = 8.72, SE = .45$). Adolescents who rated their communities as high on the Friendships subscale also saw their communities as more effective ($M = 9.52, SE = .21$) compared with adolescents who rated their communities low in friendships ($M = 8.76, SE = .31$). Finally, those adolescents who rated their communities as high in activity also perceived their communities to be more effective ($M = 9.44, SE = .24$) compared to adolescents with low scores on community friendship ($M = 8.84, SE = .26$).

R4: Does sociopolitical development mediate the relationship between severity of conditions, collective identity, sense of community and civic skills and attitudes?

H4.1: *Sociopolitical development will mediate the relationship between severity of conditions, collective identity, PSOC, and civic skills and attitudes in that those adolescents living in more severe conditions and with higher levels of collective identity and PSOC will have higher levels of sociopolitical development and in turn yield attitudes favoring political participation and civic activity, than the least severity condition.*

This final research question remains unanswerable due to the unanticipated complexity of the sociopolitical consciousness measure. Given that this construct has seven subscales, it is beyond the scope of this project to test such a model. Although preliminary examination of the model and the results of the previous research questions would suggest that some of the

subscales serve as a mediator, the relationship would have to be examined separately for each group (i.e. urban, rural, mixed).

Chapter 5: Discussion

The main goal of this research was to use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the degree to which severity of conditions theory may be related to the psychosocial constructs of sociopolitical consciousness collective identity, PSOC, and civic skills and attitudes across samples of adolescents in El Salvador. This research contributes to a growing literature examining factors in adolescents' political socialization by providing information about multiple levels of influence such as the conditions of the community and the larger geographical area where they live. Accordingly, the first aim of this study was to describe the severity of conditions under which adolescents in El Salvador live across several geographic regions. Second, although sociopolitical development has been identified as a psychosocial construct that could be useful for understanding and intervening with adolescents living in severe conditions, it had yet to be developed into a viable measure. The creation of a sociopolitical development measure was thus a secondary aim of this study. Finally, a third aim of this research was to understand the role of context, specifically, severity of conditions, in relation to adolescents' collective identities, sense of community, sociopolitical consciousness, and civic skills and attitudes. This third aim contributes to the existing civic engagement literature by providing information about a population that has not been explored, while taking into account the importance of collective group and community processes. Thus the discussion that follows is organized to address these specific aims.

Specific Aim 1: Describing the Population

The first aim of this research was to describe the conditions in which adolescents in the study sample live. Municipal-level census data were compiled and examined by school

type to better understand the extent of severity for each group. Many of these indicators were extremely highly correlated, and two different types of conditions emerged: (a) deprivation (of basic needs) and (b) opportunity structure. Comparisons of the indicators by school type showed that adolescents attending the rural school lived in municipalities characterized by high levels of basic needs deprivation (i.e., having an earthen floor, high levels of overcrowding) and moderate to high severity levels in structural opportunities indicators (i.e., young adult unemployment, school attendance). Adolescents from the mixed school, which included rural, urban, and coastal populations, lived in municipalities with moderate deprivation but relatively high scores on opportunity structure indicators. The implications of these findings support the notion that adolescents from different geographical areas may face different barriers to development and the task of becoming engaged citizens. Adolescents in rural areas are geographically isolated and experience hardships, such as the struggle to meet basic needs, and lack social capital in their social networks from which to draw. Adolescents from the mixed area also experience moderate levels of deprivation but may be faced with a lack of structural opportunities. Given that adolescents attending the mixed school live in municipalities that have low school attendance and educational attainment among youth, they may have a harder time staying in school because of social problems such as the gangs and violence that provide alternate pathways to achieving material gain. Adolescents from the urban school do not face nearly as many barriers because their municipalities tend to be low in deprivation and high in structural opportunities.

Specific Aim 2: Creating a Sociopolitical Development Measure

Sociopolitical development is a psychological process described as the “evolving critical understanding of the political, economic, cultural, and other systemic forces that

shape society and one's status within it, and the associated process of growth in relevant knowledge, analytical skills, and emotional faculties" (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003, p. 185). Current research examining sociopolitical development among adolescents, especially those in international settings, is almost nonexistent. Despite the growing body of knowledge examining civic and political activities among international youth, little is known about the psychological processes that may relate to civic engagement. This research used photovoice to explore adolescents' relationships with the community, specifically, the extent to which they identified and understood social issues and the sociopolitical context in which they lived.

The qualitative data revealed that adolescents of both age groups are aware of community issues such as pollution, poverty, and the role of the government in improving people's living conditions. An in-depth analysis revealed that adolescents in this community were politically aware from the ages of 12 or 13 years. Adolescents' understanding of their own marginalization because of their age can be observed in this qualitative data. Adolescents from both groups believed that the local government needs to know about issues in the community and that the elected leader of the municipality can be approached to discuss such issues. However, they only thought they would be taken seriously if they were to bring along adults from their area. This example illustrates that adolescents appear to understand the local political system but feel that their age status is a barrier to having their voices legitimately considered. Though awareness of social and political issues is important, adolescents may feel disempowered because adults in positions of power may not take them seriously. The implications of this finding would suggest that there needs to be more

opportunities for adolescents to safely have their voices heard such as a youth committee that can inform local leaders about important issues.

The themes that emerged from the photovoice data were then translated into a measure that was examined and tested among youth in three different areas. This process allowed for the final measure to be applied and tested with a larger population of Salvadoran adolescents. The main concepts of sociopolitical development remained quite consistent in their transition from qualitative themes to a quantitative measure.

One particularly interesting finding involved the global belief in a just world, which Watts and Guessous (2006) have used to measure levels of critical consciousness. Adolescents from the moderately severe and severe conditions groups had a higher belief in a just world in comparison to adolescents from the least severe conditions group. Contrary to Watts and Guessous's findings that those who believed the world is unjust were more committed to societal involvement, this study found that adolescents who believe in a just world also saw themselves as more likely to participate in future political activities. Although this finding is surprising, given the inequalities and issues of safety present in these Salvadoran communities, adolescents from the mixed school (i.e., moderately severe conditions) also endorse action-oriented methods of change and future participation. Thus it is likely that they believe participation in political activities, specifically, those aimed at changing policy and restructuring society, could lead to improved conditions. Though this is significant, the power and influence of the community cannot be overlooked with both the severe and moderately severe conditions groups. Adolescents from these conditions reported high levels of support, activity, and friendship and perceived high community efficacy. These communities appear to be providing adolescents with opportunities for engagement

and helping to create more positive perceptions about future engagement in political activities. Moreover, that adolescents from the least severe conditions group believe that the world is unjust is also supported by previous research from the United States (Flanagan & Tucker, 1999) that found that adolescents from privileged communities were more likely to feel that the system is flawed, although not for them. They noted that it is the poor and working-class youth who are cognizant that hard work is the only way to get ahead, and although this was not explicitly examined, it is probable that Salvadoran adolescents in severe and moderately severe conditions rely on the ideal of hard work (in school especially) as a key component of upward social mobility.

Another interesting finding that emerged from the sociopolitical development data was the idea that was initially called “methods of change” and then evolved into “action-oriented change.” The items in the measure did not load onto the same component, specifically, the one item stating that problems will solve themselves if given time. This item was dropped from the subscale, and the remaining variables all related social change to reforming or restructuring society. Though this construct captures adolescents’ beliefs about societal change, in hindsight, it would have been helpful to include items examining adolescents’ specific roles in community change, as done by Watts and Guessous (2006). Adolescents participating in the photovoice project expressed interest in youth-led community organizing, specifically, in change activities that could help those less advantaged or the community as a whole. One result of the photovoice project was that the younger adolescents, who had talked at great length about pollution and garbage around the community, organized several beach clean-ups and invited tourists and adults in the community to participate. This area of sociopolitical development should be included in

future research endeavors as it appears that adolescents recognizing issues in the community and then working together to solve them shows capacity and is likely to lead to continued commitment toward community and societal change. Adolescents who have experience in youth-led projects are more likely to build a sense of agency (Lewis-Charp et al., 2006) and a sense of civic commitment (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). The survey data reveal that adolescents from the urban area are not nearly as engaged in their communities and feel less supported, perceive fewer activities, and have fewer friendships than adolescents from the other two areas. It is likely that the adolescents in the least severe conditions group are more engaged with their school communities as opposed to their geographical communities. Nonetheless, community-based programs could be one way to increase this group's motivation to participate in future political activities.

Watts and Guessous's (2006) research tested a model of sociopolitical development that called for an interdisciplinary approach to understanding adolescents' political development and socialization. They also claimed that research needs to focus on the idea that "the qualities young people need to develop and improve themselves are related to the qualities they need to develop and improve their society; these two domains of development are synergistic" (p. 72). This research seeks to further the knowledge that we have about individual-level aspects of moral awareness and social analysis to understand the role the immediate environment has in the development of these constructs. The creation of a sociopolitical measure brings us one step closer to understanding the relationship between adolescents' conditions and how they may shape the attitudes and beliefs adolescents have about the social world. With that said, future research needs to focus on the community as a place where such attitudes are influenced. For example, Kahne and Sporte (2008) found that

students in their study were more likely to express higher levels of commitment to civic participation when they saw their neighbors dealing with community problems and had a sense that their neighborhood supported young people. As noted by Flanagan (2004), “developmental research points to the key role that respect plays in the likelihood that adolescents will feel an emotional bond to their communities and buy into the system” (p. 737), suggesting that future research exploring civic activities should continue to evaluate adolescents’ relationships with their communities as they can foster a strong sense of commitment. The findings of this study would support the notion that adolescents’ communities are the most likely places where sociopolitical constructs are cultivated.

Specific Aim 3: Severity of Conditions, Collective Identity, Psychological Sense of Community, Sociopolitical Development, and Civic Skills and Attitudes

The final aim of this research was to explore severity of conditions in relation to collective identities, PSOC, sociopolitical development, and civic skills and attitudes. For this phase, survey data were collected from five schools in three distinctly different areas of El Salvador to reflect the realities of this society.

Consistent with the severity of conditions theory (Brown & Barnes-Nacoste, 1993), Salvadoran adolescents from both moderate and severe conditions felt that their collective identities were very important. The study sample self-categorized consistently with the area type in which the students lived (i.e., geographical, rural, or coastal); however, the results were slightly less clear for the socioeconomic identity group. Across the groups, a sizable percentage of adolescents identified as middle income, despite living in conditions that were characterized as very high or very low in absolute poverty at the family and/or municipal level. Explanations for this finding can relate to the theory of social identity theory (Tajfel,

1972; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which postulates that group identity and a sense of “we” is an integral part of individuals’ sense of who they are, giving their behavior a distinct meaning and creating a positively valued social identity. People go through the process of categorizing themselves by engaging in social comparisons with those around them (Hogg, 1988). In this study, it can be theorized that socioeconomic group identity is formed partially by in-group comparisons, whereby adolescents living in areas that are high in absolute deprivation (i.e., the rural group) see themselves as better off in comparison to others in their community. Similarly, in the urban group, one that really does not have any absolute deprivation, almost half of the group identified as middle income, revealing that they could be comparing themselves to their higher income peers. An alternate explanation is that rural and mixed adolescents self-categorize as middle income because there is a stigma attached to being poor or from a low-income group; however, this would not adequately explain why urban adolescents place themselves in a lower income group (middle income) rather than in the high-income group.

Yet social identity theory claims that though in-group comparisons are important in self-categorization, individuals also draw from multiple characteristics of those around them, including others’ attitudes, beliefs, values, behavioral norms, types and speech, and geographical communities (Stets & Burke, 2000). These assertions ring particularly true for this sample as the groups, based on the severity of their conditions, were quite homogenous in terms of their demographic characteristics (parents’ educational levels, family poverty indicators) and beliefs and attitudes (identities, communities, and the social world). Finally, generally speaking, the adolescents from this sample rated themselves as typical members of each of their social identity groups and consistently said that they would be willing to help

others in their social group. The severity of conditions theory is further legitimized by the moderate conditions group because the adolescents in this group were from multiple geographical (i.e., rural, coastal, and urban) and socioeconomic groups, but identity importance remained salient. These findings are consistent with Brown and Barnes-Nacoste's (1993) findings that group identity is stronger among individuals experiencing severe conditions by extending this notion to include multiple social identities and not just racial or ethnic identity.

Severity of Conditions and Psychological Sense of Community

Previous research has not examined the extent to which differing social conditions influence Salvadoran adolescents' PSOC. This research focused on the use of Chipuer and Pretty and colleagues (1999a; 1999b) Neighborhood Youth Inventory subscales to measure adolescents' feelings about support, safety, activities, and friendships in their geographical communities. Including a sense of community provides a more detailed picture of the relationships adolescents have with their communities rather than simply relying on objective measures of neighborhood quality.

Adolescents in the moderate and severe living conditions groups viewed their communities as more supportive, having more activities for young people, and offering more opportunity to forge close friendships compared to those adolescents living in the least severe conditions. These findings reveal that while adolescents' absolute or objective deprivation is high based on municipal-level indicators and family poverty data, they do not necessarily see their communities as deprived; in fact, quite the opposite is true. However, adolescents in the moderately severe conditions group rated their communities as much less safe than those from the least severe and most severe conditions. One insight into this finding is that just

over 40% of adolescents in the moderate conditions group reported the presence of gangs in their neighborhood, compared to 6% and 10% percent from the severe and least severe conditions groups, respectively. The gang problem has been of growing concern since the end of the civil war, and gangs have grown exponentially in the last decade. In the recently published democratic survey conducted by the National Democratic Institute, Salvadorans rated the most urgent issues in the country as unemployment/poverty, the economy, and gangs/violence/drugs (Nevitte, 2009). In the moderately severe conditions group (i.e., mixed school), adolescents perceived high levels of violence and gang activity, which may explain why, on the municipal level, there are higher percentages of idle youth and lower school attendance compared to the other two groups. As previously mentioned, it appears that deprivation has taken on two distinct forms in this research: absolute deprivation, in terms of a lack of basic needs (i.e., not having plumbing, electricity, or a material floor), which was common to the rural group, and deprivation in structural opportunities (i.e., barriers caused by violence and lack of safe conditions). Although the rural group may experience high levels of absolute deprivation and, subsequently, a lack of structural opportunities, they may not live with the same levels of fear and do not have to constantly confront opportunities to engage in alternate pathways of success (i.e., joining gangs to survive).

This study reveals that severity of conditions and adolescents' collective identity and feelings about the community matter in terms of predicting civic skills and attitudes. Adolescents in the moderate and severe conditions group had significantly more positive perceptions of the government than adolescents from the least severe group. Not surprisingly, this could again be tied in with the larger context. The rural group was based in an area that has been considered highly political and supportive of the left-wing government, which was

voted in during the last election. However, the mixed group was not situated in an area that has such a historical context and yet still perceived the government as trying to listen to people and fix society's larger issues. The least severe conditions group was less positive about the government, and though the researchers' engagement with this group provides anecdotal information that this group has historically supported the right-wing government (not currently in power), Nevitte's (2009) findings from the benchmark survey did not find significant differences between education and income level with regard to political party support.

Severity of conditions also influenced adolescents' perceptions about future participation in civic activities, confirming the hypothesis that those adolescents in severe conditions, with high levels of absolute deprivation, saw themselves as much more likely to participate in future activities such as voting, writing letters to government, and participating in nonviolent protests. The moderate group did not confirm the hypothesis, revealing that they did not see themselves participating in such activities to the same extent as the severe conditions group. Democratic knowledge was different based on the severity of adolescents' living conditions, with those experiencing the least severity having significantly more knowledge than those in the moderate and severe conditions group. On a broader scale, these findings are not inconsistent with Nevitte's (2009) results from the benchmark survey: Young people (aged 18–25 years) were more interested in politics and more politically active than those aged 25 years and older.

Collective identity also had a significant impact on some aspects of civic skills. Geographical identity was particularly important for predicting participation in future activities. Adolescents who felt that their geographical identity was important also viewed

participation in civic activities in the future as highly likely. In addition, adolescents who rated their socioeconomic identity as important also had higher levels of trust in societal intuitions but scored significantly lower on democratic knowledge. The strong link between high socioeconomic identity and trust is surprising considering that severity of conditions was not a significant predictor of trust in societal institutions. This suggests that the sense of closeness and importance shared between in-group members of similar socioeconomic identity may affect how group members form trust for larger societal structures. Socioeconomic identity also predicted democratic knowledge, revealing that those individuals placing importance on their socioeconomic collective identity had less democratic knowledge than those who did not.

Although collective identity was a relatively important factor in understanding civic skills and attitudes, adolescents' (psychological) sense of community, especially the perceived level of support in their communities, proved to be particularly important. Community support predicted government perceptions, future participation in civic activities, and trust in societal institutions. Adolescents reporting high levels of support in their communities also reported higher levels of trust in societal institutions, were more likely to anticipate participation in future civic activities, and perceived the government more positively than adolescents who did not rate their communities as supportive. These findings suggest that though severity of conditions is significant, adolescents' subjective perceptions, particularly if they feel their community is supportive, may reveal some important aspects of adolescents' political development. Though there is plenty of research examining deprivation and negative outcomes, such as low self- and group esteem (Walker, 1999) and crime (Chester, 1976; Hsieh & Pugh, 1993; Kawachi, Kennedy, & Wilkinson, 1999; Stiles,

Liu, & Kaplan, 2000), these findings suggest that how an individual *experiences* his or her community is often a better predictor of political engagement and attitudes about societal structures.

Adolescents in living moderate and severe conditions experience more support, activity, and friendships than adolescents in least severe conditions, and even when controlling for severity of conditions, adolescents with highly supportive communities are more motivated to participate in future civic activities. These findings are supported by Chipuer and colleagues' research examining sense of community and loneliness (Chipuer, 2001; Chipuer & Pretty, 1999; Chipuer et al., 1999). Young people with higher levels of activity, friendships, and safety experience less neighborhood loneliness and other types of loneliness (i.e., global). Supportive communities are places where children can build social skills and competencies through engagement with others. However, Chipuer (2001) warns that neighborhood safety is crucial to the healthy development of young people, and her findings reveal that low neighborhood safety could "threaten youths' ability to explore their environment as well as limit the accessibility of such environments to their peers" (p. 443). A lack of safety could marginalize and alienate youth living in communities where fights, gangs, and drug trafficking are prevalent.

Chipuer (2001) also stated that although society has increased the number of communities enclosed in large fences with security gates, she wonders, "to what extent does locking our children in and locking others out help create a sense of community and safety?" (p. 443). This research with Salvadoran adolescents can answer that question, although the response is not necessarily straightforward. The vast majority of upper-middle-class and high-income families in El Salvador live in gated communities that have security fences and

armed guards. Almost all the adolescents from the study sample in the least severe conditions group also lived in gated communities. However, adolescents from this group have a significantly lower sense of community; they feel less support, have fewer friendships, and participate in fewer activities than those adolescents living in the other two conditions who do not live in gated communities. With that said, one has to weigh the importance of sense of community and its related benefits with the barriers and difficulties presented in unsafe communities. While locking children and young people into a neighborhood does not foster a high sense of community, youth may actually get their sense of belonging in other places such as schools or religious institutions (e.g., Chipuer and other researchers have examined the psychological sense of school community).

Severity of conditions was also examined in relation to sociopolitical development to better understand how these constructs differ by condition. Societal responsibility was the only construct that was not significantly associated with severity of conditions. Political awareness, the global belief in a just world, attitudes about equality, action-oriented change methods, community efficacy, and self-efficacy were all predicted by the severity of conditions in which adolescents lived. These findings shed light on the importance of social context in adolescents' development of political and moral constructs. Interestingly, the sociopolitical development constructs that were individually focused, where adolescents gauged their own abilities (i.e., self-efficacy and sociopolitical awareness), were much higher among the least severe conditions group in the urban setting than among those adolescents from the moderate and highly severe conditions groups, who rated themselves as less politically aware and less effective at problem solving. Sociopolitical awareness found that

adolescents from the urban area perceived themselves as more aware of political and social issues in comparison to adolescents from the two other areas.

Much of the existing research on the social identities of disadvantaged groups would reveal that it is not uncommon for such individuals to have lower self-esteem and negative group identity (Katz, Joiner, & Kwon, 2002; Leary, 1990; Phinney, Cantu, & Kurtz, 1997). However, these findings are not replicated among Salvadoran youth; despite that the moderate and severe conditions groups rated themselves as being less politically aware and effective, they do have significantly higher perceptions regarding community efficacy. To trace this relationship back another step, the PSOC constructs of support, activity, and friendships also predict community efficacy. This reveals a specific model of the ways in which adolescents derive meaning about their group-level identities. Quite clearly, adolescents' communities and their perceptions are important in their sociopolitical development, and part of that is seeing the community and the people in their community as effective at solving problems.

Severity of conditions did influence several other aspects of sociopolitical development, and one trend that emerged was quite distinct. The moderate severity condition (adolescents from the mixed school) had significantly higher preferences for action-oriented change methods and equality and strong beliefs about the world as a just place. This is the same group that perceived their communities as less safe but also perceived them as supportive entities with high levels of activity and friendship. This group also values both geographical and socioeconomic identities and has positive perceptions of the government. The conclusions to be drawn about these relationships are definitely not linear or causal, but it appears that the community may act as a protective factor against the

negative impact of violence, gangs, and delinquent behavior. Despite these negative influences, adolescents in this group see their communities as positive places, which may influence the development of their sociopolitical beliefs. For example, adolescents in this group also have a higher propensity for action-oriented change methods and seeing social problems as needing societal or revolutionary change. This group of adolescents believes that the world is a just place and that people get what they deserve, but they have attitudes that value equality among women, indigenous people, and the poor.

Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations with this research, mainly related to generalizability and methodological issues. One main concern with this research is that it has limited applicability because adolescents were sampled from schools only. On the basis of the municipality indicators for the rural and mixed schools, it is clear that the adolescents in this sample, who are in their final years of secondary school, are privileged in comparison to other adolescents in their municipalities and perhaps their communities. Thus there is some sampling bias associated with obtaining survey data only through schools in that the findings are only applicable to adolescents who are able to attend school. Future research should explore political development with youth who are not able to afford to go to school and who are less engaged with societal institutions. Another limitation with this research involves the reliability of the sociopolitical development measure and sampling strategy. Previously, Watts and colleagues (1997; 2006) tested a model of sociopolitical development; however, they did not develop one measure specifically designated to examine this process. Instead they tested used a series of constructs thought to represent sociopolitical development since it is probably that one measure is oversimplified for such a complex process. However, Watts

and colleagues did not examine their model longitudinally, which makes it difficult to make conclusions about sociopolitical development as a process over time. This study has a similar flaw due to the cross-sectional sample of adolescents who took the survey, it is difficult to project how sociopolitical development may change into the late teens and early adulthood. Although the measure developed in this study did use photovoice, an appropriate measure for examining aspects of sociopolitical development, the quantitative tool may not capture the multidimensional and dynamic process that unfolds over a period of time. At best, the measure developed in this research captures only a snapshot of adolescents' political, social, and moral development, and for that reason is renamed as *sociopolitical consciousness*. Community-based participatory research that empowers youth over a period of time is a more appropriate way to engage youth and obtain further knowledge about sociopolitical development.

One of the main strengths in creating age-relevant indices that measure different aspects of adolescents' environments is that it allows researchers to move beyond individual- and family-level factors and assess the larger social context. This multilevel approach is especially relevant when understanding how adolescents' political identities develop as it takes into account the larger sociopolitical context that arises from specific conditions. However, there are also limitations to the use of such data. One main concern is that data collected for the last census are at least 6 years old. Although the last decade has shown consistency across a number of census indicators, these data are not as reliable as other types, which can present problems if they are employed in major analyses. In addition, many of the indicators were extremely highly correlated, making them unfit for statistical analysis such as regression. Several models were attempted using these indicators; however, high

multicollinearity prevented the models from revealing which indicators were uniquely significant. Future research should continue to include municipal- and block-level data as important factors in adolescent development, although in some countries, the precision and reliability of these data are questionable. Although these indicators provide useful comparisons and generate profiles that describe the larger environmental context, they were not fit for more than description and examining basic bivariate relationships.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Watts and Abdul-Adil's Theory of Sociopolitical Development

Stage of sociopolitical development	Definition	Key action
Acritical stage	Resource asymmetry is outside of awareness or the existing social order is thought to reflect real differences in abilities of group members. Perceptions of a “just world” as intact (Rubin & Peplau, 1975).	Challenging internalized oppression Critical thinking about intersections of race, gender, class, ethnicity, age
Adaptive stage	Asymmetry might be acknowledged, but the system maintaining it is seen as immutable. Predatory, antisocial, or accommodation strategies are used to sustain a positive sense of self and acquire social and material rewards.	Encourage critical thinking about socialization agents and psychic alienation Decision making and values clarification
Precritical stage	Complacency gives way to awareness of asymmetry and inequality. Questioning of adaptation is confronted.	Cognitive reframing
Critical stage	Desire to learn more about asymmetry, injustice, oppression, and liberation. Group members regard social change is best method to challenge unjust asymmetry.	Critical consciousness Moral reasoning

Appendix A (continued)

Stage of sociopolitical development	Definition	Key action
Liberation stage	The experience and awareness of oppression is salient. Liberation behavior (community involvement and in social action). Adaptive behaviors are abandoned.	Community activism for participation, solidarity, and liberation behavior

Appendix B: Study Questionnaire

STUDY OF SALVADORAN ADOLESCENTS

INVESTIGATOR: ALISON BAKER, M.S.
SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE

ID #			
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**NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY
PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH**

Principal Investigator: Alison Baker

Dear Student:

You are invited to participate in a research study to learn more about what Salvadoran adolescents' think about participating in neighborhood and civic activities and how they understand their social world. We believe this survey will produce valuable information that can be used to create programs for youth and improve schools, and communities.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can stop at any time during the survey if you are uncomfortable. The survey will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. By taking the survey and checking the box below, you will be giving your consent to include your responses in the final results.

This survey is anonymous, which means that each survey has an identification number on it that will be used to organize the information. **YOU DO PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY.** We will have no way of identifying who each survey belongs to. Your completed survey will be kept in strict confidence.

If you have any questions after the survey, please contact Alison Baker at ambaker2@ncsu.edu. If you need to speak in person, please talk to the director of your school. If you feel that your rights have been violated in any way, please contact the director of your school.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation!

Alison Baker

Consent To Participate

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

By checking the box below, you are giving your consent to participate.

Subject's Consent:

Date: _____

Personal Information/ Demographics

Please answer the following questions about yourself below, this information will not be shared with anyone and your identity will be unknown.

1. How old are you?

2. What is your sex?

Male

Female

3. In which country were you born?

4. What is the language you most often speak in your home?

5. In which municipality do you live?

6. What school do you attend?

7. Circle your grade below:

10	11	12
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8. What is the **highest year** of school completed by your **mother and father**?

	Mother	Father
Did not finish elementary school		
Completed elementary school		
Finished some high school		
Completed high school		
Some vocational/technical school after high school		
Some community college, college or university courses		
Completed a bachelor's degree at a college or university		
Post- University (master's, PhD, medical school, etc)		
	Not sure	Not Sure

9. Please answer the following questions about the place in which you live.

	Yes	No
Do you have electricity in your house?		
Is the floor of your house concrete, wood, or tile?		
Does the house you live in have plumbing?		
Does your home a toilet inside of it?		

Group Identity

Below are listed some social groups based on geographical location, if you were to choose one from this box, which do you feel you belong to? Please circle your choice.

Geographical Location

Urban (live in a city)
 Rural (live in farm area)
 Coastal (live on the coast/beach)

Below are questions/statements about the group identity you chose above, read carefully and circle the answer that best reflects your thoughts/feelings.

1. Based on the group you chose above, how important would you say this group is to who you are (your identity)?	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important
2. In general, how important is this group to your 'sense of self' and your 'self-image' ?	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3. According to the group/s you have chosen above, would you say that you are a typical member of your social group?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Based on the group you selected above, do you think that what happens to your group generally will have something to do with what happens in your life?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Do you think your fate is bound up with that of your social group?	1	2	3	4	5
6. If someone said something bad about your social group, would you feel almost as if they had said it about you?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Everybody in society, no matter where they live, should have equal opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It is the government's responsibility to help people in El Salvador who are in need.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The reason why some social groups have a lot and others have a little is because they work harder.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I would be willing to work to help people in my social group.	1	2	3	4	5

Below are listed some social groups based on socioeconomic status (economic class), if you were to choose one from this box, which do you feel you belong to?

Economic Status

Low-income

Middle –income

High-income

Below are questions/statements about the group identity you chose above, read carefully and circle the answer that best reflects your thoughts/feelings.

1. Based on the group you chose above, how important would you say this group is to who you are (your identity)?	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important
2. In general, this group is important to your 'sense of self' and your self- image	Not important 1	2	3	4	Very important
<hr/>					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Niether Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
3. According to the group/s your have chosen above, would you say that you are a typical member of your social group?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Based on the group you selected above, do you think that what happens to your group generally will have something to do with what happens in your life?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Do you think your fate is bound up with that of your social group?	1	2	3	4	5
6. If someone said something bad about your social group, would you feel almost as if they had said it about you?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Everybody in society, no matter where they live, should have equal opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It is the government's responsibility to help people in El Salvador who are in need.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The reason why some social groups have a lot and others have a little is because they work harder.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I would be willing to work to help people in my social group.	1	2	3	4	5

Community

The following questions are about neighbourhood or community in which you live.

	Not at all true			Completely true
1. Everybody is willing to help each other in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
2. People are there for each other in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
3. People support each other in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
4. People in my neighbourhood work together to get things done.	1	2	3	4
5. We look out for each other in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
6. I feel okay asking for help from my neighbours.	1	2	3	4
7. There are bad kids in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
8. There are gangs in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
9. The neighbours are suspicious of teenagers in my neighbourhood .	1	2	3	4
10. There are fights in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
	Not at all true			Completely true
11. There are drug dealers in my neighbourhood ..	1	2	3	4
12. People in my neighbourhood can be really mean .	1	2	3	4
13. There is a place for kids my age to hang out in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
14. There are things for kids my age to do in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
15. There is not much to do in my neighbourhood.	1	2	3	4
16. In my neighbourhood there are things to get involved in.	1	2	3	4
17. None of my friends live in my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4
18. My friends live close to my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4
19. When I want I can find someone to talk to in my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4
20. I like being with the other kids in my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4

Participation in Organizations

Below are some questions about organizations and groups that you may have participated in, please check the appropriate boxes to indicate your answer.

1. Have you ever participated in the following organizations?	No	Yes
a. A student council/student government (class or school parliament)		
b. A youth organization affiliated with a political party or union		
c. A group which prepares a school newspaper		
d. An environmental organization		
e. A U.N or UNESCO club		
f. A student exchange or school partnership program		
g. A human rights organization		
h. A group conducting (voluntary) activities to help the community		
i. A charity collecting money for a social cause		
j. Boy or Girl Scouts (Guides)		
k. A cultural association (organization)		
l. An art, music, or drama organization		
m. A sports organization or team		
n. An organization sponsored by a religious group		
o. A demonstration (or protest) for a cause/issue		
p. A community group or organization		
q. Participated in activities associated with human rights		

2. Think about all the organizations listed above. How often did you attend meetings or activities for any or all of these organizations?

a. Almost every day (4 or more days a week).....	
b. Several days (1 to 3 days a week).....	
c. A few times each month.....	
d. Never or almost never.....	

3. With which place were most of these activities associated?

a. In your community or neighborhood	
b. Your school	
c. Your church or place of worship	
d. Other (please list): _____	

4. Think about one or more of the activities you marked above and rate your experience based on the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a. I had real responsibilities.	1	2	3	4
b. I had challenging tasks.	1	2	3	4
c. I helped plan some parts of the project.	1	2	3	4
d. I made important decisions.	1	2	3	4

The next question is for participants who were 18 years or older at the time of last year's presidential election. If you were not eligible to vote skip this question and move on to the next section.

5. Did you vote in the last presidential election (2009) ?

Yes

No

Democracy

Please read the questions below and circle the *best* answer:

- Which of the following is an accurate statement about laws?
 - Laws forbid or require certain actions (behaviours)
 - Laws are made by the police.
 - Laws are valid only if all the citizen have voted to accept them.
 - Laws prevent criticism of the government.
- Which of the following is a political right? The right...
 - of pupils to learn about politics in school
 - of citizens to vote and stand for (run for) election
 - of adults to have a good job
 - of politicians to have a salary
- In democratic country (society) having many organizations for people to join is important because this provides
 - a group to defend members who are arrested.
 - many sources of taxes for the government
 - opportunities to express different points of view
 - a way for the government to tell people about new laws.
- In democratic countries what is the function of having more than one political party?
 - To represent different opinions (interests) in the national legislature (e.g. Parliament or congress)
 - To limit political corruption
 - To prevent political demonstrations
 - To encourage economic competition

5. In a democratic political system, which of the following ought to govern the country?
 - a. Moral or religious leaders
 - b. A small group of well-educated people
 - c. Popularly elect representatives
 - d. Experts on government and political affairs

6. Which of the following is most likely to cause a government to be called non-democratic?
 - a. People are prevented from criticising (not allowed to criticise) the government.
 - b. The political parties criticise each other often
 - c. People must pay very high taxes
 - d. Every citizen has the right to a job.

Trust in Societal Institutions

In this section we will name several institutions in El Salvador.

How much of the time can you trust each of the following institutions?

Consider each of these institutions and select the box in the column which shows how you feel you can trust them.

	Never	Only some of the time	Most of the time	Always
1. The President of El Salvador	1	2	3	4
2. The local government in your town or city	1	2	3	4
3. The local community council or committee	1	2	3	4
4. Courts and the Justice system	1	2	3	4
5. The police	1	2	3	4
6. News on television	1	2	3	4
7. News on the radio	1	2	3	4
8. News in the newspaper	1	2	3	4
9. Political parties	1	2	3	4
10. United Nations	1	2	3	4
11. Schools	1	2	3	4
12. National government (congress)	1	2	3	4
13. The people who live in this country	1	2	3	4

Government and Society

Below are some statements about the political system in El Salvador, circle the answer that best reflects your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The government (people in government) cares/care a lot about what all of us think about the new laws.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The government are doing what is best to find out what ordinary people want.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The powerful leaders in government care very little about the opinions of people.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The politicians quickly forget the needs of the voters who elected them.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When people organize to demand change, the leaders in the government listen.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Our government is good at solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5

Future Civic Participation

Listed below are several types of action that you as a young person could take during the next few years:

	I will certainly not do this	I will probably not do this	I will probably do this	I will certainly do this
What do you expect that you will do?				
1. Vote in national elections	1	2	3	4
2. Write letters to the newspaper about social or political concerns	1	2	3	4
3. Be a candidate for local or city office	1	2	3	4
4. Volunteer time to help benefit the poor or elderly people in the community	1	2	3	4
5. Collect money for a social cause	1	2	3	4
6. Collect signatures for a petition	1	2	3	4
7. Participate in a non-violent (peaceful) protest	1	2	3	4
8. Occupy public buildings as a form of protest	1	2	3	4

Society

Please give your opinion on the following statements about society.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Niether Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I am able to understand most political issues easily.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I am aware of current events.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I understand the issues facing this nation.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am knowledgeable of the issues facing the world.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am aware of the events in my local area (municipality).	1	2	3	4	5
6. I understand the issues facing community/neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5
7. In this society everyone has the same chance for success.	1	2	3	4	5
8. It is important that equal opportunity be available to all people.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Men and women are equal in most respects.	1	2	3	4	5
10. People who are poor deserve the same rights as everyone else in society.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Women deserve the same rights as everyone else in society.	1	2	3	4	5
12. People of indigenous origin deserve the same rights as everyone else in society.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Niether Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
13. In Salvadoran society there is not much oppression or inequality.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel that people's efforts are noticed and rewarded.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought it on themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I feel that people get what they deserve.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I basically feel that the world is a fair place.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Niether Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
20. I don't understand why some people are poor when there are so many opportunities available to them.	1	2	3	4	5
21. People are poor because they choose to be poor.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Many people are poor in El Salvador because the government does not provide support or programs to help people.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The historical events of this country have contributed to the social problems we experience today.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The federal (national) government is responsible for helping people who are poor.	1	2	3	4	5
25. The department (state) government is responsible for helping people who are poor.	1	2	3	4	5
26. The municipal government is responsible for helping people who are poor.	1	2	3	4	5
27. The community is responsible for helping people who are poor.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Niether Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
28. Most problems in society will solve themselves if they are given time.	1	2	3	4	5
29. In order for problems to be solved we need to change public policy.	1	2	3	4	5
30. We need to make reforms within the current system to change our communities.	1	2	3	4	5
31. We need to participate in efforts such as demonstrations, protests, and community organizing in order to change society.	1	2	3	4	5
32. We need to change people's attitudes in order to solve social problems.	1	2	3	4	5
33. In order to improve social problems we need to completely reconstruct society.	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Niether Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
34. I am able to solve most problems.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I can think analytically when trying to solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
36. When trying to understand the position of someone else, I put myself in their situation.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I can help organize solutions to problems my community faces.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I am confident that the local government listens to and understands people in the area.	1	2	3	4	5
39. My community is good at working together to solve problems we face (such as pollution, crime, ect)	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C: Example letter to Principal/School Director

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

DEAR [PRINCIPAL’S NAME]:

As previously discussed, I (Alison Baker) am interested in sampling students from _____ in my dissertation research. The research described below is being conducted to complete my doctoral degree in psychology.

This research is about Salvadoran adolescents and their environments and participation in community and civic activities, in addition to the ways in which they perceive their social world. More specifically, this study will examine adolescents and the living conditions (i.e. community variables such as poverty or unemployment) and the opportunities that are available to them.

The 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students are invited to participate in this research study. We believe this survey will produce valuable information that can be used to create programs for youth and improve schools, and communities.

The students will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire in the classroom. It will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. All participants will have to give consent to participate on the day of the survey, however, in order to protect their privacy, they will not be asked to give their name. In addition, passive consent forms will be sent home to parents and brought back by the students if their parents **do not** want them to participate in the survey.

This survey is anonymous. Each questionnaire is identified by a number only. Again, we will not ask for your students’ names and will have no way of identifying who each survey belongs to. The completed surveys will be kept in strict confidence.

If you agree to this research plan, please sign below.

Director

Date: _____

Principal investigator

Date: _____

Appendix D: Passive Parental Consent Form (English Version)

North Carolina State University
PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH
Principal Investigator: Alison Baker

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a graduate student at a university in the United States of America. I am currently teaching at a local secondary school in El Salvador. The research described below is being conducted to complete my doctoral degree in psychology.

Your son or daughter has been invited to participate in a research study to learn more about what Salvadoran adolescents' think about participating in neighborhood and civic activities and how they understand their social world. We believe this survey will produce valuable information that can be used to create programs for youth and improve schools, and communities.

Your son or daughter will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire in the classroom. It will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. All participants will have to give consent to participate on the day of the survey, however, in order to protect their privacy, they will not be asked to give their name.

This survey is anonymous. Each questionnaire is identified by a number only. Again, we will not ask for your child's name and will have no way of identifying who each survey belongs to. The completed surveys will be kept in strict confidence.

Your agreement to allow your child to participate in this study is completely voluntary. You or your child can withdraw at any time. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the director of your son or daughters school so that he/she can contact the researcher. Your decision about your child's participation in this study will have no effect on his/her grade. If you feel that your son/daughters rights have been violated in any way, please contact the director of your child's school.

If you keep this form and do not return the bottom section, you are giving consent for your son or daughter to take the survey at school.

If you **DO NOT** want your son/daughter to participate in this survey please remove the section below and have your child return it to their teacher.

Thank you for your cooperation and we look forward to your child's participation!

+++++

HAVE CHILD RETURN THIS SECTION TO HIS/HER TEACHER IF YOU DO NOT THEM TO TAKE THE SURVEY.

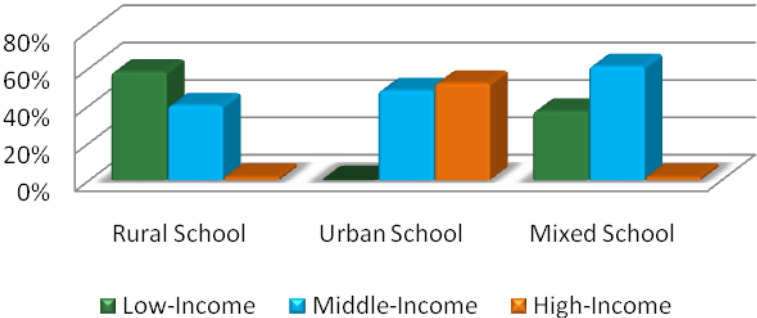
I have read and understand the above information and I, **DO NOT** want my son/daughter to participate in the survey described above.

Name of Student: _____

Parent or Guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Socioeconomic & Geographical Self-Identification by School Type

**Socioeconomic Identity
Which group do you most identify with?**



**Geographic Identity:
Which geographic group do you most identify with?**

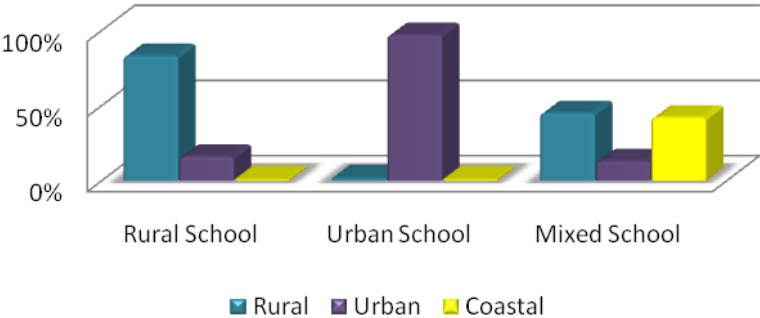


Table 1

Municipality-Level Severity of Conditions: Deprivation

	Total sample (%)	School type (%)		
		Rural	Urban	Mixed
Poverty				
Low (0%–6.0%)	34.5	0.0	99.0	0.0
Moderate (6.01%–41.0%)	32.5	0.0	0.8	100.0
High (>41.61%)	33.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage of homes without electricity				
Low (0%–0.9%)	33.1	0.0	95.2	0.0
Moderate (0.91%–59.0%)	33.9	0.0	4.9	100.0
High (>59.1%)	33.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage of homes with earthen floor				
Low (0%–5.30%)	33.1	0.0	95.2	0.0
Moderate (5.31%–67.0%)	33.9	0.0	4.8	100.0
High (>67.01%)	33.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Percentage of homes without available plumbing				
Low (0%–4.5%)	33.1	0.0	95.2	0.0
Moderate (4.51%–39.20%)	40.4	73.4	4.8	45.1
High (>67.01%)	26.5	26.6	0.0	54.9
Percentages of homes without a toilet				
Low (0%–1.80%)	33.1	0.0	95.2	0.0
Moderate (1.81%–23.5%)	41.3	73.4	4.8	47.9
High (>23.51%)	25.6	26.6	0.0	52.0

Table 1 (continued)

	Total sample (%)	School type (%)		
		Rural	Urban	Mixed
Percentage of homes with overcrowding				
Low (0%–19.80%)	34.5	0.0	99.1	0.0
Moderate (19.81%–65.80%)	32.5	0.0	0.9	100.0
High (>65.81%)	33.0	100.0	0.0	0.0
Average monthly income per capita (in USD)				
Low (<\$37.36)	35.9	100.0	0.0	8.9
Moderate (\$37.37–\$176.77)	57.9	0.0	82.1	91.0
High (>\$176.78)	6.2	0.0	17.8	0.0

Table 2

Municipality-Level Severity of Conditions: Structural Opportunities

	Total sample (%)	School type (%)		
		Rural	Urban	Mixed
Percentage of young people ages 16–18 who do not attend school				
Low (0%–31.94%)	34.6	0.0	99.6	0.0
Moderate (31.95%–57.25%)	39.7	75.2	0.4	46.0
High (>57.26%)	25.6	24.8	0.0	54.0
Percentage of young people aged 16–18 who do not attend school for economic reasons				
Low (0%–45.65%)	55.7	26.6	85.2	53.5
Moderate (45.66%–51.78%)	24.3	73.4	0.4	0.0
High (>51.79%)	20.0	0.0	14.3	46.5
Percentage of young people ages 16–18 with primary incomplete				
Low (0%–6.25%)	33.0	0.0	95.2	0.0
Moderate (6.26%–21.07%)	38.6	75.2	4.3	38.0
High (>21.08%)	28.3	24.8	0.4	62.0
Percentage of young people ages 16–18 who do not study or work and who are not looking for a job				
Low (0%–15.28%)	34.6	0.0	99.6	0.0
Moderate (15.29%–26.30%)	35.7	100.0	0.4	8.0
High (>26.31%)	29.6	0.0	0.0	92.0

Table 2 (continued)

	Total sample (%)	School type (%)		
		Rural	Urban	Mixed
Unemployment rate of young adults aged 19–25 years				
Low (0%–9.42%)	46.4	46.4	85.2	52.1
Moderate (9.43%–10.68%)	24.8	24.8	0.0	0.0
High (>10.69%)	28.7	28.7	14.8	47.9
Average year of schooling for young adults aged 19–25 years				
Low (0%–6.22%)	52.8	100.0	0.0	61.5
Moderate (6.23%–10.75%)	41.0	0.0	82.1	38.5
High (>10.76%)	6.2	0.0	17.8	0.0
Percentage of young adults aged 19–25 with a monthly wage less than that for rural occupations				
Low (0%–56.99%)	54.6	73.4	81.7	6.1
Moderate (57.00%–65.65%)	19.2	1.8	18.3	38.0
High (>65.66%)	26.2	24.8	0.0	55.9

Table 3

Bivariate Relationships Between Severity of Conditions Study Sample Demographics, Municipality Indicators and Collective Identity, Psychological Sense of Community, and Sociopolitical Development

	Collective identity		Psychological sense of community			
	SES	GEO	Support	Safety	Friendship	Activity
Individual level						
Age	.00	.11**	-.34	-.18**	.12**	-.01
Family Poverty Index	.03	.14**	.09	-.03	.24**	.15**
Mother education	-.09*	-.16**	-.21**	.26**	-.37**	-.27**
Father education	-.09*	-.14**	-.19**	.23**	-.38**	-.28**
Municipality-level deprivation						
Poverty	.15**	.22**	.21**	-.11**	.43**	.33**
Earth as floor	.15**	.22**	.21**	-.10*	.43**	.33**
Without plumbing	.12**	.15**	.28**	-.25**	.30**	.28**
Without toilet	.14**	.17**	.22**	-.27**	.29**	.28**
Without electricity	.15**	.22**	.21**	-.10*	.43**	.33**
Overcrowding	.15**	.22**	.21**	-.11**	.43**	.33**
Opportunity structure						

Table 3 (continued)

	Collective identity		Psychological sense of community				
	SES	GEO	Support	Safety	Friendship	Activity	
Not attending school (16–18 years)	.12**	.15**	.24**	–.27**	.31**	.29**	
Not attending school for economic reasons (16–18 years)	.08	.04	.14**	–.18**	.07	.19**	
Incomplete primary (16–18 years)	.12**	.16**	.24**	–.26**	.30**	.29**	
Idle youth (16–18 years)	.11**	.10**	.19**	–.37**	.28**	.25**	
Young adult unemployment (19–25 years)	.05	.07	.06**	.05	.17**	.10*	
	Sociopolitical development						
	SP awareness	GBJW	Equality	Societal responsibility	Action-oriented change	Community efficacy	Self-efficacy
Individual level							
Age	–.09*	.12**	.02	–.02	.00	.15**	–.10**
Family Poverty Index	–.17**	.06	.00	.05	.03	.20**	–.17**

Table 3 (continued)

	Sociopolitical development						
	SP awareness	GBJW	Equality	Societal responsibility	Action-oriented change	Community efficacy	Self-efficacy
Mother education	.23**	-.21**	-.06	-.13	-.71	-.31**	.16**
Father education	.20**	-.19**	-.09*	-.01	-.06	-.33**	.21**
Municipality-level deprivation							
Poverty	-.26**	.17**	-.01	.01	.02	.31**	-.18**
Earth as floor	-.26**	.17**	-.02	-.01	.00	.32**	-.18**
Without plumbing	-.20**	.21**	.07	-.01	.04	.27**	-.18**
Without toilet	-.21**	.20**	.05	-.01	.01	.27**	-.19**
Without electricity	-.26**	.17**	-.02	-.01	.00	.32**	-.18**
Overcrowding	-.26**	.17**	-.01	.01	.02	.31**	-.18**
Opportunity structure							
Not attending school (16– 18 years)	-.20**	.21**	.08*	.01	.06	.28**	-.18**
Not attending school for economic reasons (16–18 years)	-.02	.09**	.05	-.04	.07	.04	-.03

Table 3 (continued)

	Sociopolitical development						
	SP awareness	GBJW	Equality	Societal responsibility	Action-oriented change	Community efficacy	Self-efficacy
Incomplete primary (16–18 years)	-.21**	.20**	.06	-.01	.02	.28**	-.19**
Idle youth (16–18 years)	-.17**	.24**	.13**	.02	.10**	.27**	-.15**
Young adult unemployment (19–25 years)	-.13**	.10*	-.03	.06	.08*	.26**	-.07

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 4

Sociopolitical Development Measure Based on Photovoice Findings

Concept	Description	Watts and Abdul-Adil's (1997) concept of sociopolitical development	Includes some items from existing measures
Sociopolitical awareness	Awareness of global, national, local, community issues and events	Political and social awareness	Moely et al. (2002) civic attitudes and skills
Opportunities, equality, and justice	Awareness of social, economic, ethnic, and gender inequalities in opportunities and the perception of oppression/inequality oppression in society; belief in the world as a just place	Critical consciousness; social justice;	Lipkus (1991) global belief in a just world; Moely et al. (2002) civic attitudes and skills
Social responsibility	Perceptions about causes of poverty and the extent to which government and social institutions are responsible for helping impoverished people	N/A	N/A
Methods of change	Perceptions about the ways in which change should be achieved (if at all) in society; organizing community campaigns, government programs, and policies and changing attitudes and social norms	Civic engagement/action for social justice	“Good citizen” theory from Westheimer and Kahne, as cited in Watts and Flanagan (2007)

Table 4 (continued)

Concept	Description	Watts and Abdul-Adil's	Includes some items
		(1997) concept of sociopolitical development	from existing measures
Efficacy	Perceptions of the capacity to solve problems and the effectiveness at achieving social change at the individual, community, and local government levels	Individual and collective efficacy; empowerment	Moely et al. (2002) civic attitudes and skills

Table 5

Study Sample Demographics and Severity of Conditions Characteristics by School Type

	Total sample			School type (%)		
	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Rural	Urban	Mixed
Age		16.90	1.49			
Sex						
Male	53.0			34.4	33.9	31.7
Female	47.0			30.2	38.3	31.4
Grade		10.89	0.84			
10	41.4			40.5	36.0	23.3
11	28.8			43.8	30.9	25.3
12	29.8			10.4	41.3	48.3
Mother education (1–3)		1.75	0.90			
Elementary or less	55.6			91.8	0.0	85.8
Some high school to some vocational/technical/college	13.7			5.6	20.9	13.2
Bachelor’s degree or higher	30.7			2.6	79.1	1.0
Father education (1–3)		1.87	0.90			
Elementary or less	51.0			88.7	0.4	78.8
Some high school to some vocational/technical/college	11.3			7.3	8.6	18.5
Bachelor’s degree or higher	37.7			4.0	91.0	2.7
Individual Severity of Conditions Index (1–4)		1.64	0.83			
Percentage of homes without electricity	5.0			13.8	0.0	1.9
Percentage of homes with the earth as the floor	22.0			61.0	0.8	24.4
Percentage of homes without available plumbing	12.9			16.5	0.0	24.4
Percentages of homes without a toilet	31.2			66.3	0.8	34.1

Table 6

Variable Descriptions, Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations for Variables of Interest

Variable and constructs	Description	Range	α	M	SD
Collective identity					
Socioeconomic identity importance	A composite measure consisting of two items measuring identity importance	2–8	.80	5.97	1.96
Geographic identity importance	A composite measure consisting of two items measuring identity importance	2–8	.77	6.47	1.76
Psychological sense of community					
Support	A composite score of six items on a 4-point Likert scale measuring perceived support and helping behaviors in the neighborhood	6–24	.86	15.69	4.86
Safety	A composite score of six items on a 4-point Likert scale measuring perceptions of violence, gangs, and issues of safety in the neighborhood	6–24	.75	19.18	4.31
Friendship	A composite score of four items on a 4-point Likert scale measuring perceptions of friendships (proximity and intimacy) in the neighborhood	4–16	.66	12.04	3.31
Activity	A composite score of four items on a 4-point Likert scale measuring perceptions of activities for young people in the neighborhood	4–16	.70	10.40	3.61
Sociopolitical development					
Sociopolitical awareness	A composite score of six items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring perceptions of awareness of social and political issues	6–30	.80	21.24	4.55

Table 6 (continued)

Variable and constructs	Description	Range	α	M	SD
Global belief in a just world	A composite score of eight items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring the (global) belief in a just world, oppression and inequality	8–40	.78	22.62	6.01
Equality	A composite score of five items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring attitudes about the equality and rights of women, people of indigenous origin, and the poor	5–25	.76	21.29	3.34
Social responsibility	A composite score of four items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring perceptions about social responsibility for helping the poor (i.e., community, local government)	4–20	.82	13.46	3.46
Action-oriented change	A composite score of five items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring attitudes toward change that advocates changing policy, change through reform or revolution	5–25	.71	17.49	3.59
Community efficacy	A composite score of three items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring perceptions of “self-in-community” and general community efficacy	3–15	.69	9.66	2.70
Self-efficacy	A composite score of three items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring self-efficacy with regard to solving problems	3–15	.63	10.87	2.38

Table 6 (continued)

Variable and constructs	Description	Range	α	M	SD
Civic skills and attitudes					
Perceptions of the government	A composite score of six items on a 5-point Likert scale measuring attitudes toward the national government	6–27	.60	15.37	4.23
Participation in future civic activity	A composite score of eight items on a 4-point Likert scale about future participation in political activities	8–32	.72		
Trust in societal institutions	A composite score of 13 items measured on a 4-point Likert scale measuring trust in societal institutions	13–49	.86	29.15	6.83
Democratic knowledge	A composite score comprising the number of correct answers to six multiple-choice questions about democracy	1–6	–	3.88	1.52

Table 7

Correlations for Deprivation Severity of Conditions Variables at the Municipal Level

Municipal-level poverty variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Extreme poverty							
2. Poverty	1.00**						
3. Earth as the floor	.99**	.99**					
4. Homes without plumbing	.66**	.66**	.67**				
5. Homes without a toilet	.67**	.67**	.68**	.96**			
6. Homes without electricity	.99**	.99**	1.00**	.67**	.68**		
7. Overcrowding	1.00**	1.00**	.99**	.66**	.67**	.99**	
8. Monthly income per capita (average)	-.84**	-.84**	-.81**	-.42**	-.36**	-.81**	-.84**

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 8

*Correlations for Educational–Economic Severity of Conditions Variables at the Municipal**Level*

Municipality-level education/economic indicators	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Young people (16–18 years) who do not attend school						
2. Young people (16–18 years) who do not attend school for economic reasons	.41**					
3. Young people (16–18 years) with primary school incomplete	.97**	.38**				
4. Idle youth (16–18 years)	.84**	.35**	.80**			
5. Young adult unemployment (19–25 years)	.30**	–.12**	.26**	.36**		
6. Average education (19–24 years)	–.77**	–.29**	–.74**	–.53**	.02	
7. Young adult wage below minimum wage (for rural occupations)	.78**	.35**	.77**	.65**	.30**	–.25**

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 9

Bivariate Relationships for Severity of Conditions Variables at the Municipal Level

Municipal-level variables	Extreme poverty	Poverty	Earth as floor	Homes without plumbing	Homes without a toilet	Homes without electricity	Over-crowding	Monthly income per capita (average)
Young people (16–18 years) who do not attend school	.67**	.67**	.66**	.98**	.92**	.66**	.67**	-.45**
Young people (16–18 years) who do not attend school for economic reasons	.24**	.24**	.23**	.40**	.41**	.23**	.24**	.10*
Young people (16–18 years) with primary school incomplete	.64**	.64**	.65**	.98**	.97**	.65**	.64**	-.38**
Idle youth (16–18 years)	.52**	.52**	.51**	.82**	.78**	.51**	.52**	-.23**
Young adult unemployment (19–25 years)	.47**	.47**	.46**	.28**	.21**	.46**	.47**	-.26**
Young adult wage below minimum wage (for rural occupations)	.17**	.17**	.18**	.80**	.73**	.18**	.17**	.10*
Average education	-.80**	-.80**	-.76**	-.73**	-.73**	-.76**	-.80**	.80**

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Table 10

Pattern Matrix for Principle Components Analysis With Oblimin Rotation of a Seven Forced-Factor Solution of Sociopolitical Development Items

		Pattern coefficient components						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I am able to understand most political issues easily.	.631						
2	I am aware of current events.	.765						
3	I understand the issues facing this nation.	.759						
4	I am knowledgeable of the issues facing the world.	.613						
5	I am aware of the events in my local area (municipality).	.612					-.379	
6	I understand the issues facing the community/neighbourhood.	.683						
7	In this society everyone has the same chance for success		-.405				.347	
8	It is important that equal opportunity be available to all people.				-.465			
9	Men and women are equal in most respects.				-.548			
10	People who are poor deserve the same rights as everyone else in society.				-.840			
11	Women deserve the same rights as everyone else in society				-.842			
12	People of indigenous origin deserve the same rights as everyone else in society				-.819			
13	In Salvadoran society there is not much oppression or inequality		-.388					
14	I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.		.648					
15	I feel that people's effort are noticed and rewarded.		.667					

Table 10 (continued)

		Pattern coefficient components						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought it on themselves.		.709					
17	I feel that people get what they deserve.		.770					
18	I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.		.613					
19	I basically feel that the world is a fair place.		.491				-.307	
24	The federal (national) government is responsible for helping people who are poor.			.820				
25	The department (state) government is responsible for helping people who are poor.			.882				
26	The municipal government is responsible for helping people who are poor.			.827				
27	The community is responsible for helping people who are poor.			.654				
29	In order for problems to be solved we need to change public policy.					.686		
30	We need to make reforms within the current system to change our communities.					.782		
31	We need to participate in efforts such as demonstrations, protests, and community organizing in order to change society.					.659		
32	We need to change people's attitudes in order to solve social problems.					.474		
33	In order to improve social problems we need to completely reconstruct society.					.651		

Table 10 (continued)

		Pattern coefficient components						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34	I am able to solve most problems.							.653
35	I can think analytically when trying to solve problems.							.749
36	When trying to understand the position of someone else, I put myself in their situation.							.721
37	I can help organize solutions to problems my community faces.						-.618	.418
38	I am confident that the local government listens to and understand people in the area.						-.669	
39	My community is good at working together to solve problems we face (such as pollution, crime, ect).						-.708	

Note. Extraction method was principal component analysis; rotation method was oblimin with Kaiser normalization.

Table 11

Collective Identity Items by School Type

	School type (%)		
	Rural	Urban	Mixed
<i>Socioeconomic identity</i>			
Which group do you most identify with?			
Low income	58	0	37
Middle income	40	48	61
High income	2	52	2
Are you a typical member of your social group?			
Agree/strongly agree	68	53	58
Neutral	18	36	22
Disagree/strongly disagree	14	11	20
Would you be willing to help someone in your social group?			
Agree/strongly agree	83	69	89
Neutral	14	25	8
Disagree/strongly disagree	3	6	3
<i>Geographical identity</i>			
Which group do you most identify with?			
Low income	83	2	45
Middle income	16	97	13
High income	1	1	42
Are you a typical member of your social group?			
Agree/strongly agree	85	75	92
Neutral	12	22	5
Disagree/strongly disagree	3	3	3

Table 11 (continued)

	School type (%)		
	Rural	Urban	Mixed
Would you be willing to help someone in your social group?			
Agree/strongly agree	73	68	64
Neutral	21	25	24
Disagree/strongly disagree	6	7	11

Table 12

Estimated Means for the Effect of Severity of Conditions (Based on School Type) on Outcome Variables, Holding Age, Sex, and Family Poverty Constant

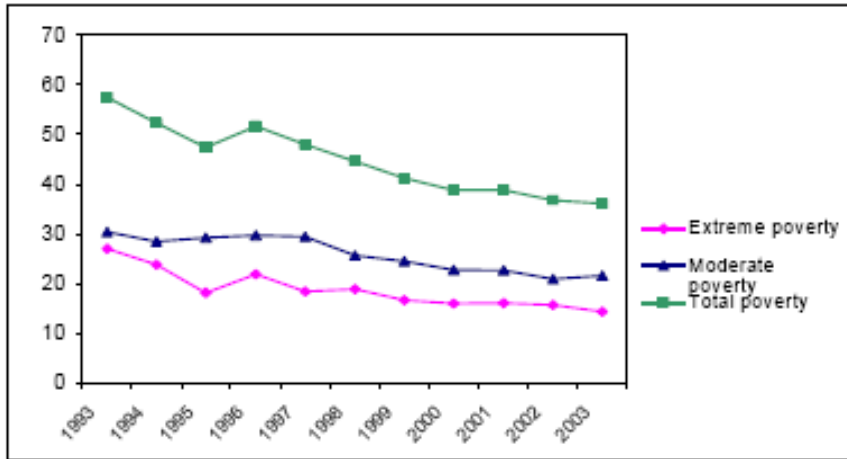
	Urban					Mixed					Rural				
	95% confidence interval					95% confidence interval					95% confidence interval				
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	Lower	Upper	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	Lower	Upper	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	Lower	Upper
	Collective identity														
SES identity importance**	237	5.46	.19	5.09	5.831	199	6.08	.16	5.77	6.38	195	6.41	.15	6.12	6.70
GEO identity importance***	238	6.18	.17	5.85	6.50	200	6.38	.14	6.11	6.65	187	7.60	.13	6.80	7.32
Psychological sense of community															
Support***	239	13.5	.46	12.58	14.38	194	16.95	.38	16.20	17.70	193	16.92	.36	16.22	17.62
Safety***	238	20.8	.39	20.05	21.58	197	16.83	.32	16.20	17.45	189	19.60	.31	19.00	20.20
Friendship***	237	10	.30	9.44	10.60	195	12.54	.25	12.06	13.03	192	13.80	.23	13.35	14.25
Activity***	236	8.30	.33	7.64	8.95	200	11.62	.27	10.72	11.80	192	11.84	.262	11.32	12.35
Civic skills and attitudes															
Trust in societal institutions	232	29.50	.70	28.11	30.88	174	27.73	.59	26.57	30.88	166	29.18	.57	28.07	30.29

Table 12 (continued)

	Urban					Mixed					Rural				
	95% confidence interval					95% confidence interval					95% confidence interval				
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	interval		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	interval		<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SE</i>	interval	
				Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper				Lower	Upper
Perceptions of the government***	235	14.2	.41	13.42	15.04	195	15.94	.34	15.27	16.61	199	16.48	.31	15.87	17.10
Democratic knowledge***	220	4.36	.15	4.07	4.64	187	3.66	.12	3.43	3.90	195	3.56	.11	3.34	3.78
Future participation**	236	18.8	.40	18.05	19.63	185	19.66	.34	18.99	20.33	187	21.02	.32	20.40	21.64
Sociopolitical development															
Sociopolitical awareness***	237	22.5	.44	21.60	23.34	181	20.85	.37	20.13	21.58	180	19.85	.35	19.16	20.54
Global belief in a just world***	234	20.6	.59	19.10	21.42	183	24.17	.50	23.19	25.15	178	23.4	.47	22.48	24.31
Equality**	230	21.2	.33	20.51	21.80	194	22.21	.30	21.68	22.74	191	20.83	.25	20.33	21.33
Social responsibility*	234	14.6	.34	13.89	15.22	198	14.80	.78	14.56	15.35	192	14.34	.26	13.83	14.86
Action-oriented change**	237	17.20	.35	16.50	17.89	194	18.26	.29	17.69	18.83	196	17.23	.27	16.69	17.76
Community efficacy***	236	8.52	.25	8.03	9.02	195	10.24	.21	9.83	10.65	195	10.52	.19	10.14	10.90
Self-efficacy*	235	11.2	.23	10.75	11.67	194	10.49	.19	10.75	11.67	194	10.58	.18	10.23	10.93

Note. Significance values represent the strength of severity of conditions as a predictor when sex, family poverty, and age are held constant.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.



Source of data: DIGESTYC

Figure 1. Moderate and extreme poverty rates over a 10-year period in El Salvador. Data from DIGESTYC (2007).

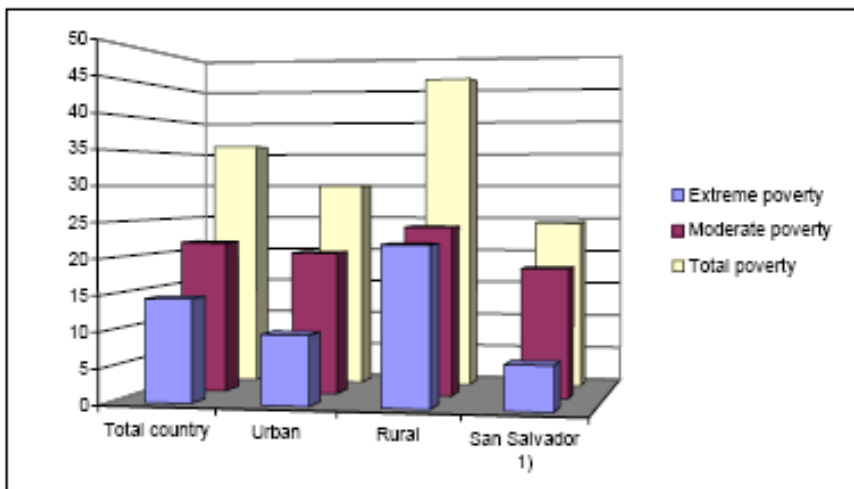


Figure 2. Extreme and moderate poverty rates by urban and rural areas in El Salvador in 2003. Data from DIGESTYC (2007).

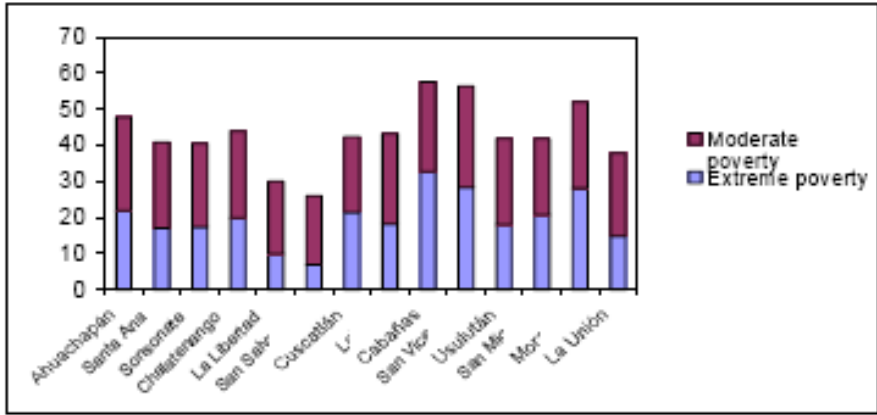


Figure 3. Moderate and extreme poverty by department in El Salvador in 2003. Data from DIGESTYC (2007).

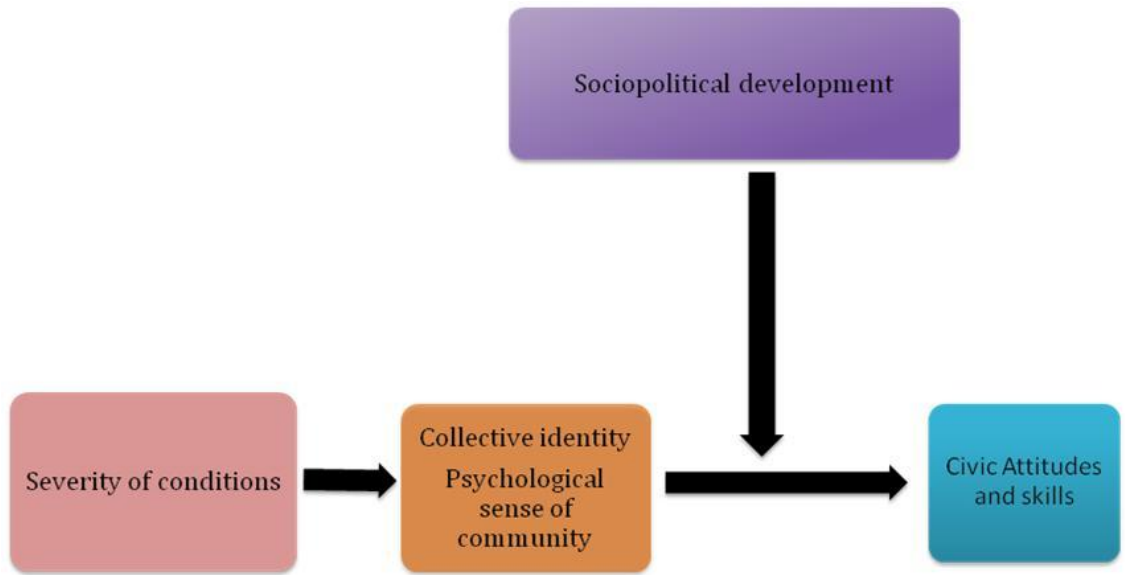


Figure 4. Conceptual model.



Figure 5. Photo of garbage in the community.



Figure 6. Photo of pollution in the community.



Figure 7. Photo of problem in the community: Drunk people sleeping on the beach.



Figure 8. Photo of soccer ball as an important item in teens' lives.



Figure 9. Photo of surfboards as important items in teens' lives.



Figure 10. Photo of a backpack as an important item in teens' lives.



Figure 11. Photo of a participant's dog.



Figure 12. Photo of poverty in the community (older group).



Figure 13. Photo of a house for the “poverty in the community” photo-assignment.



Figure 14. Photo of kids in the community for the “poverty in the community” photo-assignment.



Figure 15. Photo of two children for the “poverty in the community” photo-assignment.



Figure 16. Photo of a young boy taken for photo-assignment about adolescents' lives.



Figure 17. Photo of two teens playing soccer at school.



Figure 18. Photo of adolescents playing basketball at school during break.